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or interested in museums and
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Formerly *Museum National*.

FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of *Museums Australia Magazine* is on the theme of 'Keeping and Sharing: stories from people who make our museums and galleries work'. You will find a wide range of experiences here: from creating exhibitions and websites to promoting public programs to the diverse experiences of volunteers, and the positives (and negatives) of trying to establish a museum operation. We also look at the question of how a collection relates to its environment; and how one of our leading art galleries put its collection on-line. My thanks to Sue Scheiffers for assisting in sourcing articles for the theme of this issue.

A new look for *Museums Australia Magazine*

From February 2006 *Museums Australia Magazine* will appear in two formats: a smaller print version mailed to members every quarter; and material delivered via the newly designed *Museums Australia* website. This move is in response to the findings of the reader survey conducted last year; and in line with the need for responsible financial management of the organisation.

The website gives us the capacity to bring you news and views in a more timely fashion — a recurring problem of a magazine that appears every three months is that current topics are not always able to be covered. Members will be able to access the website and read about breaking news and views. It will also feature longer articles and other features that have formerly been part of the

content of *Museums Australia Magazine*. We are committed to providing regularly updated features, and invite all our readers to keep that news coming — another advantage of this strategy is that we will be able to accommodate more articles than has been the case in the past.

With this November issue of *Museums Australia Magazine* we say goodbye to the design team that has worked so hard over the last six years, first with *Museum National*, and then with *Museums Australia Magazine*, to produce a quality product every time. Led by Kathie Griffiths (formerly Griffiths and Young Design, now GRiD Communications), the team has included Tanya Grabow, Rachel McKenzie and Liam Camilleri. We would also like to thank Phil Abbott and his team at Goanna Print.

ROSLYN RUSSELL



COVER IMAGE

Loving Cup celebrating Admiral Lord Nelson. Courtesy of Australian National Maritime Museum (see story on page 7).

ARTEFACTS

TERRIBLE TWO'S CULTURAL CHAOS

The fearsome force of hurricanes Katrina and Rita has left some of the United State's Gulf Coast cultural institutions bludgeoned and bruised, but thankfully many escaped barely grazed.

According to the American Association of Museums, more than 126 historical and cultural sites were subject to the storms' wild whimsy. While the New Orleans Museum of Art suffered the more specific damage of a 13.5m metal sculpture by Kenneth Snelson ending akimbo in a lagoon, others such as the Marine Life Oceanarium in Gulfport, Mississippi, were completely demolished.

Some of New Orleans's iconic house museums have also reported varying degrees of damage. Beauvoir, the Biloxi home of Confederate President Jefferson Davis was heavily damaged, but Davis's papers were saved. Likewise, some French Quarter historic properties were touched up by the tempest but most of the collections are reportedly safe.

THE LIFE OF A LAG

'Located only one hour's drive from the picturesque Snowy Mountains, South Coast beaches and attractions of Canberra', the NSW Department of Corrective Service's website presents an enticing picture of the Cooma Correctional Centre. Cooma Correctional Centre can, however, truly offer an

authentic visitor experience without the inconvenience of losing personal freedoms. With the recent opening of their gaol museum, visitors can trace the changes from Australia's convict beginnings of the First Fleet to today's twenty-first century offender management. According to NSW Corrective Services Commissioner Ron Woodham in the *Cooma-Monaro Express*, 'Low security inmates will continue to be part of the project as they will be trained as museum tour guides and will work as sales staff in the museum section as well as serving refreshments to visitors.' A mock prison cell, artefact restoration and the sale of inmates' arts and crafts are features of the museum, which also has plans to have a mobile component and take the history of corrections to the community.

TAPPING INTO TROUBLE

A UK performance artist, whose body of work includes attempting to catapult a 76-year-old pensioner into space (to highlight how society mistreats the old) and walking backwards for 18kms with an 11kg turkey on his head while shouting at fat people (as a comment on chronic obesity levels), has recently hit the headlines again, this time in the name of water conservation and, of course, art.

Mark McGowan's exhibition at the House Gallery in Camberwell, South London, was simplicity itself, a turned



The Holden Prototype No.1, constructed in Detroit and shipped to Australia as the definitive model for millions of Holden cars. It was the first test car for the 48-215, popularly known as the FX, the model before the FJ

Photo: Dragi Markovic, National Museum of Australia

on tap in an everyday sink was to be left running for a year, full bore — an estimated 15 million litres destined for the drain.

'Basically it's an art piece for people to come and look at and enjoy aesthetically, it is also a comment on a social and environment issue,' said McGowan in a press release, while also pointing out that London's leaking Victorian water mains lost nearly 1000 million litres of water in 2003/04.

While death threats and sabotage (people kept turning 'The Tap' off) failed to stem McGowan's artistic expression, Thames Water's plan to lay siege to the gallery and cut off their supply succeeded in turning the tap dry.

Echoes of the tap are planned for McGowan's next exhibit — this time featuring a car (an Audi 80) running everyday for one year. This time he hopes that the car can produce tens of thousands of tonnes of carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide (smog) and also particles, which are really bad for asthma sufferers, especially children.

THE NATION'S TREASURES ON SHOW

Some of Australia's most famous objects will be on show from December onwards at the National Museum and the National Library. The Museum's 'treasures' exhibition, *Captivating and Curious*, opens on 14 December; and *National Treasures from Australia's Great Libraries*, showcasing iconic items from Australia's national, state and territory libraries, begins its nationwide tour on 3 December.

Captivating and Curious will give Australians the opportunity to see such evocative objects as the anchor cut loose from Matthew Flinders' ship *Investigator* in 1803, during his epic voyage of circumnavigation of the landmass he named 'Australia'; the preserved carcass of a thylacine; a 'kingplate' or breastplate worn by Aboriginal leader 'King Pepper'; a movie camera used by Frank Hurley;

Azaria Chamberlain's black dress trimmed with red ribbon; and a gigantic kewpie doll from the closing ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. And of course the cars — a 1927 Crossley Landauette used in 1927 to bring the Duke and Duchess of York to the ceremonial opening of Parliament House; and the No. 1 Holden Prototype. *Captivating and Curious* will display more than 450 objects, and celebrate the diversity of the National Museum's collection, until 17 April 2006.

National Treasures from Australia's Great Libraries displays — in the same way as the *Treasures from the World's Great Libraries* did in 2001-2002 — a wide range of documents and objects of national significance garnered from the immense and diverse collections of Australia's great libraries. Some may seem surprising as library exhibits

— Ned Kelly's helmet, a yellow and black convict uniform and Don Bradman's bat from the 1930s Ashes series — while others are celebrated items of documentary heritage. These include Captain Cook's *Endeavour* journal and the Eddie Mabo Case Papers, wonderful natural history drawings by Indigenous and European artists, Henry Lawson's pen, and a POW diary written on a roll of toilet paper.

National Treasures will be on display in the National Library of Australia from 3 December 2005 to 12 February 2006. It will then travel to the State Library of Victoria; Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery; State Library of New South Wales; State Library of Queensland; and the Flinders University Art Museum; State Library of Western Australia; and the Museum and Gallery of the Northern Territory between March 2006 and August 2007.

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REGIONAL ROUNDUP

PAPER WORLDS: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF MAPPING

Without maps, how would we know how to get from one place to another, or indeed, even where we are?

A major new exhibition at the Newcastle Regional Museum, *Paper Worlds: the art and science of mapping*, explores the many varieties of maps from geographical, topographical, hydrographical and celestial maps charting the physical (and occasionally spiritual or mythical) aspects of the heavens, earth and the seas to thematic maps, used for political or education purposes.

A highlight of the exhibition is the map collection of Professor Robert Clancy, an international authority on maps and Newcastle resident. His collection features many items dealing with the early mapping of Australia, as settlers took over their newly granted land.

The exhibition also features interactive components for visitors to gain a hands-on understanding of the theory and practice of mapping, as well as its future in digital formats, such as computer-based cartography and satellite technology.

Paper worlds: the art and science of mapping is on display at Newcastle Regional Museum, cnr Wood and Hunter Streets, Newcastle West until 1 December 2005.

MARIE BYLES: A SPIRITED LIFE

Committed conservationist, mountaineer, author, feminist, Australia's first practising female solicitor, founding member of the Buddhist Society of NSW: Marie Byles had an extraordinary life, with almost too many accomplishments

to list. Now the National Trust is celebrating her contribution to the cultural life and environmental heritage of Australia with a travelling exhibition.

Earlier this year, Byles' home in Cheltenham, in Sydney's north, was opened to

the public, with an afternoon of discussion and exploration of the property led by Julie Petersen, public programs manager at the National Trust of Australia (NSW).

Ahimsa, as it is called, was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1971, eight years



before Byles' death, although she lived out her life there.

Commissioned in 1938, *Ahimsa* is a simple fibro and sandstone structure which bears testament to Marie Byles' passion for the environment and conservation by blending seamlessly into the surrounding landscape. Also on the property is 'The Hut of Happy Omens', built by Byles with the help of a group of young Quakers to provide a place for like-minded individuals to have discussions and meditate.

In addition to her legal career, which extended until she finally stopped working at the age of seventy, Marie Byles spent much of her life climbing and exploring, becoming very involved in marking tracks, naming mountains and lakes, and taking photographs from vantage points never visited before.

Bushwalking was also a keen interest for Byles, with a group of women writers, including Eleanor Dark and Dymphna Cusack, forming part of her network of friends and fellow walkers. She was also

instrumental in campaigning for the establishment of the Bouddi National Park in NSW.

Marie Byles wrote prolifically about her experiences, and together with photographs of her home and adventures in Australia and abroad, and of course accounts of her considerable input into public life, we can piece together a clear picture of this pioneering woman and her endeavours.

The National Trust exhibition, *Marie Byles: A Spirited Life*, will be on display at Grossmann House, Church St, Maitland from 1 November until 11 December; at Erina Centre, Erina from 15 December to 30 January 2006; and at the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum, 244 Howick St, Bathurst from 6 February until 31 March. The grounds of *Ahimsa* and the 'Hut of Happy Omens' are open to visitors.

Pictures (left)
Above: *Ahimsa* verandah
Below: Back door, *Ahimsa*
Photos: Freya Purnell



HRH Crown Princess Mary of Denmark 2005
by Jiawei Shen (b.1948)
oil on canvas
214.0 x 138.0cm
Collection: National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
Commissioned with funds provided by Mary Isabel Murphy 2005

PRINCESS MARY IN NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

In a long blue gown with a pale sash accented by the Danish Order of the Elephant, Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mary of Denmark is a slim and elegant figure flanked by a classical column (a reference to the Amalienborg Palace in Copenhagen) and a view of Danish architect

Jørn Utzon's Sydney Opera House, in Jiawei Shen's portrait unveiled in October at the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra. Andrew Sayers, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, noted that the portrait 'gracefully fuses Danish and Australian cultural iconography'.



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FOLLOW THE LACHLAN MUSEUM TRAIL

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GLEN JOHNS

Country museums have a lot to offer, as members of the Lachlan Chapter of Museums Australia discovered when they met to discuss the development of the Chapter's website.

Of course in the beginning a website was only on our wish list. We had admired the web-trails developed by other organisations and thought it a good idea. But developing our own ...?

All of our members are small volunteer-run museums. What would we feature on the site? Where would we get the expertise to put it together? How would we pay for it?

Our starting point was informal discussions with Leanne Leihn at the Boorowa CTC (Community Technology Centre) to obtain an overview of how a website was created.

The Boorowa Museum was chosen as the 'guinea pig' and together with Leanne they worked on a basic format.

- Firstly, they decided that it was most important to tell tourists where they were in relation to cities like Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.
- Secondly, they answered the question as to why travellers should include the Boorowa Museum in their holiday itinerary. They decided that the three most significant items or exhibits featured in the museum should provide the 'drawcard'.

Leanne prepared a template and presented it to a meeting of the Chapter. The members were sold — well, almost.

'How much would it cost?' echoed around the room.

Leanne had come prepared: '\$16,000.'

That left us (mentally) shell-shocked.

Where would we get \$16,000?

It was resolved that each member organisation would decide how much they could contribute financially, and perhaps the Chapter would be able to obtain a grant for the balance.

Three months later the Chapter met again. With cash in hand, proposed gifts in kind and minimising Leanne's prospective travel budget by using local 'stringers', it was found that we were still \$9,000 short. A grant was the only way the Lachlan Web Trail could become a reality.

We decided to make a grant application to the NSW Ministry for the Arts. Our application was researched, prepared and posted off.

Probably the worst part about making a grant application is the waiting time between lodgement and learning of your results — not unlike an exam really!

We were successful!

Members then set about the task of choosing the three significant items they wanted to include in their section of the website. The items selected were photographed and statements of significance checked to assist in preparing the body copy and captions. The project provided members with a unique opportunity to examine their museum's collection and appraise selected items, not only on their significance but as marketing tools. Many objects were 'in' one day, only to be discarded the next.

Small parcels of photographs began to arrive on Leanne's desk. The Internet 'hotted up' between members and the CTC.

Another meeting was scheduled and Leanne presented a website working copy. 'Too many words' — 'I'd like a different

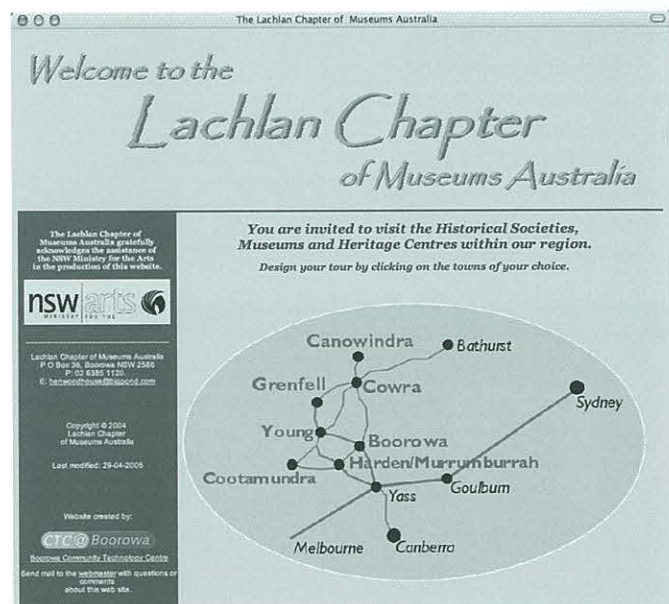
background colour' — 'That picture did not come out very well' — 'Not enough sizzle in the presentation'. Back and forth it went. For some it meant returning home and almost starting again.

There were smiles all round at the following meeting as Leanne presented the web trail, together with news that a working copy was also available on-line. Just a few minor adjustments this time and AMOL (now CAN — Collections Australia Network), who had kindly agreed to host the web-trail, would introduce the Chapter to the world.

Each year more than four million tourists visit Australia, whilst hundreds of thousands of Australians travel to all parts of their own country. Canowindra, Cowra, Grenfell, Cootamundra, Young, Harden-Murrumburrah and Boorowa nestle in the South West Slopes of New South Wales. They form the Lachlan Chapter.

Include the museum trail on your next holiday. Look us up on www.amol.org.au/lachlanchapter — and make sure you pop into the local museum when you are in town — you'll be made most welcome.

...IN THE BEGINNING A WEBSITE WAS ONLY ON OUR WISH LIST. WE HAD ADMIRERD THE WEB-TRAILS DEVELOPED BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS. BUT DEVELOPING OUR OWN ...?



GLEN JOHNS IS THE COORDINATOR OF THE LACHLAN CHAPTER OF MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOOROWA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Left: Nelson figurehead
Right: Reverse side of loving cup commemorating Nelson
Courtesy of Australian National Maritime Museum



EXHIBITING A NATION'S PRIDE

Few military heroes have captured a nation's imagination or embodied its pride as did England's Admiral Lord Nelson with his victories over France, led by Napoleon Bonaparte. These began in 1797 with the Battle of Cape St Vincent, then the Battle of the Nile in 1798, and the triumph at Trafalgar in 1805 that culminated in Nelson's fatal wounding on the deck of his flagship, *Victory*.

The Australian National Maritime Museum is celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar with two exhibitions: *Nelson and Trafalgar* features engravings from the museum's own collection relating to Nelson's life and achievements, including *The Death of Nelson*; and an exhibition of commemorative souvenirs celebrating Nelson's life and career — and his untimely death. This exhibition, which includes a Malacca walking cane with an ivory bust of Nelson, a copy of a white plaster life-mask of the great Admiral, several free-standing busts, loving cups, trinket, snuff and match boxes, and even fridge magnets — testify to the enduring power of Nelson's fame.

The exhibition is located below the Museum's carved and painted wooden figurehead of Lord Nelson from England's largest timber battleship, HMS *Nelson*, which passed from Britain's Royal Navy to the Victorian Colonial Navy and then the Royal Australian Navy.

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SHOESTRING EXHIBITIONS



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Main: Olympic volunteer uniforms mounted on coat hanger and dowel 'mannequins'

Far left: Far left: 'Cycling prawn' from Sydney 2000 Olympics in front of the *Lady Denman* ferry

Left: Olympic memorabilia in a purpose-built cabinet. Dimensions approximately 1200mm by 800 mm

Middle: *Café Culture*: local content consisted of furniture, crockery and cutlery, hanging panels, the news wall, a symbolic juke box and replica posters.

Bottom: Exterior view of Temporary Exhibition Gallery, Lady Denman Heritage Complex

Photos: Morgan Sant and Roslyn Russell



MORGAN SANT

Volunteer-run community and regional museums generally don't have a large amount of money to spend on permanent or temporary exhibitions. But they do have other resources — skilled labour, ingenuity, generous supporters — on which they can draw. So, faced with (say) paying over \$2000 for a single professionally-made display cabinet the choices are simple: do it yourself or go without. We are lucky that most small museums rise to the challenge and that we can use our regional chapters to exchange ideas.

The Lady Denman Heritage Complex in Huskisson is at the larger end of the range of volunteer-run museums. Part of our physical space is a temporary exhibition gallery (TEG) with about 150 square metres of floor space (fifty linear metres of wall), and another gallery with about twenty linear metres of wall. The Complex has an active program of temporary exhibitions with a turnover of about six weeks.

In 2004 (July through September) we presented the MGnsw travelling exhibition *Milkshakes, Sundaes and Café Culture*. This comprised a set of panels which took up about twenty square metres of the TEG, leaving us with three blank walls and about 130 square metres of floor space to fill with local content telling the rich stories of cafés in the Shoalhaven, many of which were owned and operated by Greek immigrants.

At about the same time two of our volunteers who are avid Olympic enthusiasts suggested that we celebrate the Athens Olympics with a nostalgic revisiting of the Sydney 2000 Games. To coincide with the 2004 Games the exhibition had to run from 14 August to early October. There was no problem with content. Our volunteers had a large private collection of memorabilia, Shoalhaven Council had a significant collection which it was keen to exhibit, local Olympians loaned us their uniforms and (perhaps not surprisingly) we discovered a large local network of Sydney volunteers who all had something to contribute. The outcome was *Sydney 2000 Revisited*.

The main physical requirements for these two exhibitions can be summarised quickly:

- Hanging panels to display our local content for *Café Culture*
- Floor displays evocative of pre-1960s cafés
- Display cabinets for the small but valuable items of Olympic memorabilia

→ 'Mannequins' for about fifteen Olympic uniforms
Hanging panels are easy and cheap. A flat panel, hollow core door, painted white with two hooks makes a light but rigid panel on which to attach laminated photos and cuttings. (When not used in this way they also serve as trestle tops.)

The floor displays for *Café Culture* brought out some creative ingenuity. Period furniture was borrowed and arranged. A 'news wall' was made from photocopies of old newspapers aged by soaking in diluted coffee. Many 1960s cafés had juke boxes. We couldn't get one without paying a large rent, so we made a façade, painted it brightly (adding the words 'juke box' in case it wasn't obvious), and put a CD player behind it with 1950s music.

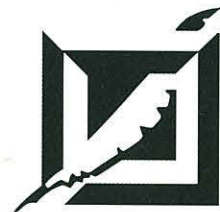
The Olympic exhibition posed different problems. We quickly needed simple but secure display cabinets. The key to minimising

cost was to make them so that the transparent tops for three cabinets could be made from a single sheet of 4mm Perspex. The front and back of the cabinet rise 4mm above the sides and have narrow ledges. The Perspex is thus supported on all four sides. Access to the cabinets was prevented by fixing narrow rectangular aluminium pieces with security screws that couldn't be undone with a conventional screwdriver.

The method of making the mannequins was also simple but effective. Each one consists of a piece of 25mm dowel, a coat hanger, and a wooden base covered in fabric in the Olympic colours. Where a uniform also included trousers another piece of wood was shaped to form a waist. The real skill was in dressing the mannequins in a way that belied their crude construction.

Overall costs of work for these two exhibitions were about \$500 and over half of that was for Perspex and dowel. All of the items that we made are re-usable; they sit in store waiting for the next exhibition. There is also another enduring outcome: we have built the capacity and confidence of volunteers to present public exhibitions imaginatively and effectively.

DR MORGAN SANT IS PRESIDENT OF LADY DENMAN HERITAGE COMPLEX, HUSKISSON, NSW



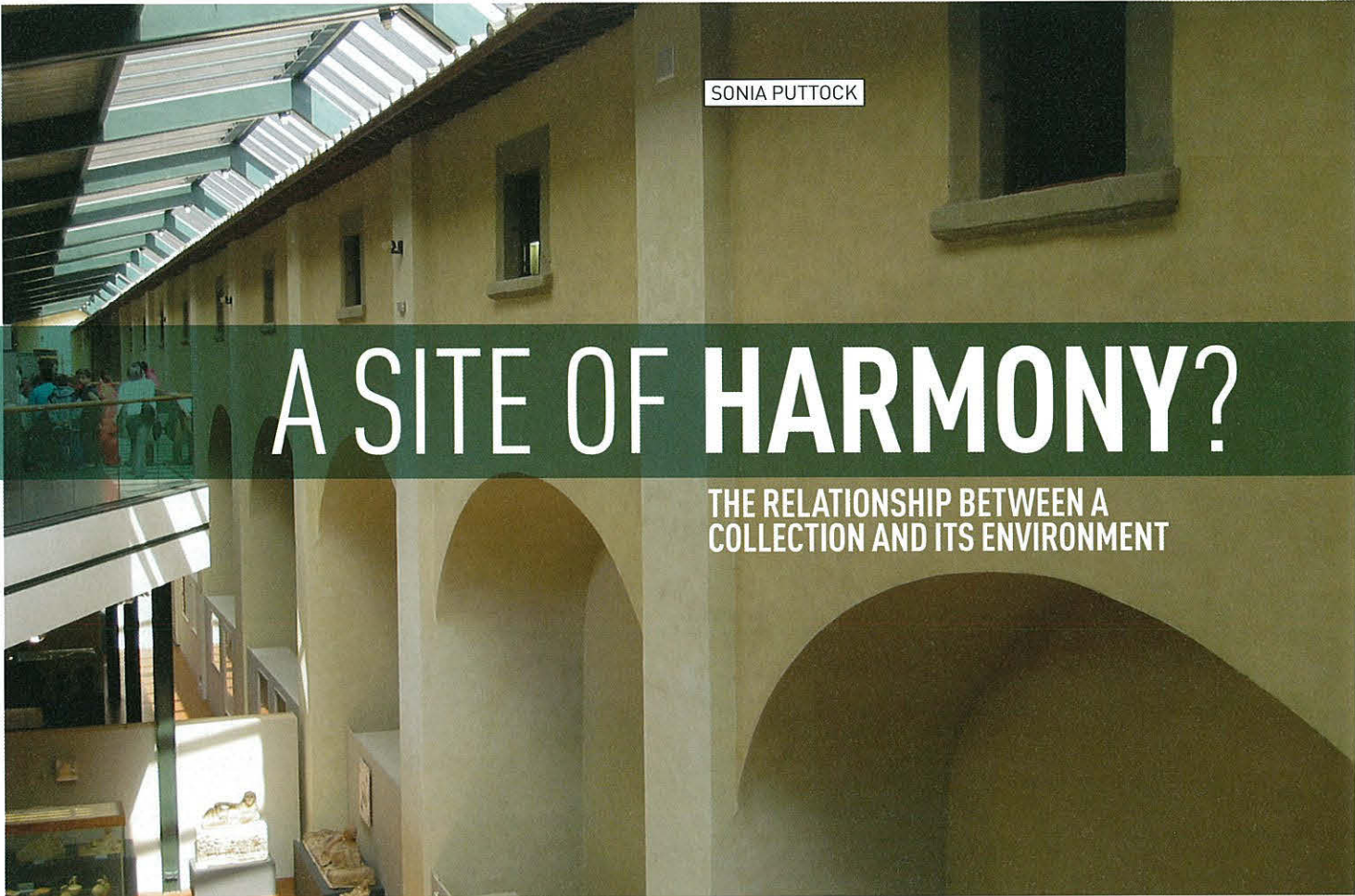
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SONIA PUTTOCK

A SITE OF HARMONY?

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A
COLLECTION AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

THE BUILDING IS THE FIRST THING
VISITORS SEE, AND IT CAN OFTEN
INFLUENCE EXPECTATIONS.

On a recent trip to Italy I was once again struck by that contentious question about the aesthetic suitability of a collection's environment. The building in which objects are housed is one of the many factors which must be considered if a display is to deliver a successful interaction between artefact and visitor. The suitability of the building and the seemingly endless search for innovation has produced some excellent designs, as well as some expensive blunders. This article does not criticise individual designs, but aims to question the constant struggle between novelty and pertinence which sometimes leads to the built environment being regarded as separate from the collection it contains.

When I started to write, I was aware that my bias as an ancient historian would colour my judgement. Yet every visitor to a museum carries a preconceived idea of what that person thinks he or she wants to see. Personal taste is always present, but occasionally so is indifference. Does everyone who visits the British Museum go there because they are interested in seeing its wonders? Or are there a few who go because it just happens to be on their itinerary or it is expected of them? Each visitor carries a unique set of experiences and concepts, and I am no different. This article therefore presents an individual's point of view.

The museum building is the first thing visitors see, and it can often influence their expectations. A futuristic design can set the

right mood for a Science Museum experience. Classical sculptures in the Capitoline Museum in Rome are housed in a building incorporating a Roman structure which was itself an early form of museum 2000 years ago; while the spirit of the collections of the Galleria dell' Accademia and the fifteenth-century Spedale degli Innocenti in Florence and the Museo Nazionale di San Marco in its Benedictine monastery in Pisa are reflected in their atmospheric surroundings. One only needs to watch the reactions of visitors in these museums to realise that this harmonious relationship between artefacts and building has a beneficial effect on the viewing experience. A European country rich in both historic buildings and artefacts of the Late Mediaeval and Renaissance periods finds it relatively easy to provide a suitable setting.

But is the provision of such a suitable building so straightforward in Australia? Can we successfully display ancient artefacts in a country with a relatively new built environment? Many artefacts found within Australian museums are not antiquities, but objects manufactured within the last 200 years. Are these also housed in suitable structures? Some of these artefacts are certainly displayed in historic buildings, or buildings which do complement them. These collections, however, often belong to small museums, especially ones specific to an area or a period. For example, at the Sydney Visitor Centre at The

Rocks, the artefacts are displayed in a multi-storied wooden building with an interesting past — it was a lodging home for sailors. Building and objects complement each other.

Yet that collection also contains some objects which were not manufactured within the Rocks area, or in the last 200 — or even 2000 — years. Indeed a second century BC Hellenistic carved gemstone and an ancient Egyptian ushabti (figurine) are displayed there. But they do have a connection with the Rocks: they were excavated in the area. The relationship between object and environment is harmonious.

Sometimes such a connection cannot be made, but even so there are ways to supply it. In the Archaeological Museum in Florence the ancient artefacts of Egypt, Greece, Etruria and Rome are housed in the Palazzo della Crocetta, built between 1619 and 1621. In places the integrity of the early decoration has been preserved, for surviving patches of frescoes can be seen on the modern plastered ceiling, the rest of which has been decorated in accordance with the objects in that room. For example in the Egyptian rooms, these ceilings are blue dotted with stars, imitating the decoration found on the vaults of some Egyptian rock-cut tombs. Columns and cornices around the rooms are painted to give the appearance of grey granite carved with hieroglyphs. It is not overpowering, but is just enough to set an atmosphere. In a room housing several mummies and assorted grave-goods the ornate, Egyptian-styled glass cabinets have been retained. These fittings date from the nineteenth century, and are part of the history of both the collection and the building. As historical objects in their own right, they do not look outdated or out of place, but actually enhance the experience. This is a feeling often missing in a modern museum. In fact, I felt a distinct, and exciting, affinity with Flinders Petrie, Howard Carter — and even Indiana Jones — whilst I was there.

In Tasmania, the artworks in the gallery of the Academy of the Arts (University of Tasmania, Launceston) are displayed on stark white walls. Yet an upward glance provides the visitor with a slight shock, for towering over the exhibition area are the massive girders and machinery of the original railways workshop. The Academy and the adjoining Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery are housed in the historic railyards buildings. But despite, or perhaps because of, the contrast between old and new, fine art and industry, the atmosphere is not of dominance or disagreement. In fact I had the impression that the building was part of the exhibitions and in some way acted as an umbrella-like protector.

Extensions to the award-winning Verulamium Museum in St Albans, UK have been built with 'Roman' red brick and flint, echoed in the remains of Roman structures and other more modern buildings nearby. The style is understated and is suggestive of a circular Romano-British temple. This extension houses the entrance/exit and the gift shop. As the building is located on an archaeological site, the layout of the original forum area is displayed near the entrance. In common with the Academy of the Arts in Launceston, the whole complex is pleasing and harmonious: an effect not lost on the visiting public.

As mentioned previously, every museum visitor has a bias, or a pre-conceived idea of what they will see. Have some museum curators become afraid of exploiting such a bias in case they are regarded as being 'old-fashioned', or not innovative enough? Are we, the products of a technological age, afraid of returning to the origins of collecting, and relying too much on multimedia to get our messages across to visitors?

Of course there can never be a definite answer to this question. Personal preferences make sure of that. There will always

be a need — and a place — for innovations such as electronic and interactive media even within the older type of museum. I spent quite a long time exploring the excellent electronic time line in the Churchill Museum in the original Cabinet War Rooms in London. But perhaps it is time to consider whether we are trying too hard to produce something new, something even more entertaining. Perhaps we also try too hard to give a museum building a life and meaning of its own, rather than emphasising a harmonious relationship between the object and its home. The concepts of the past are not always bad.

SONIA PUTTOCK
ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM
UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND



Photos: Sonia Puttock

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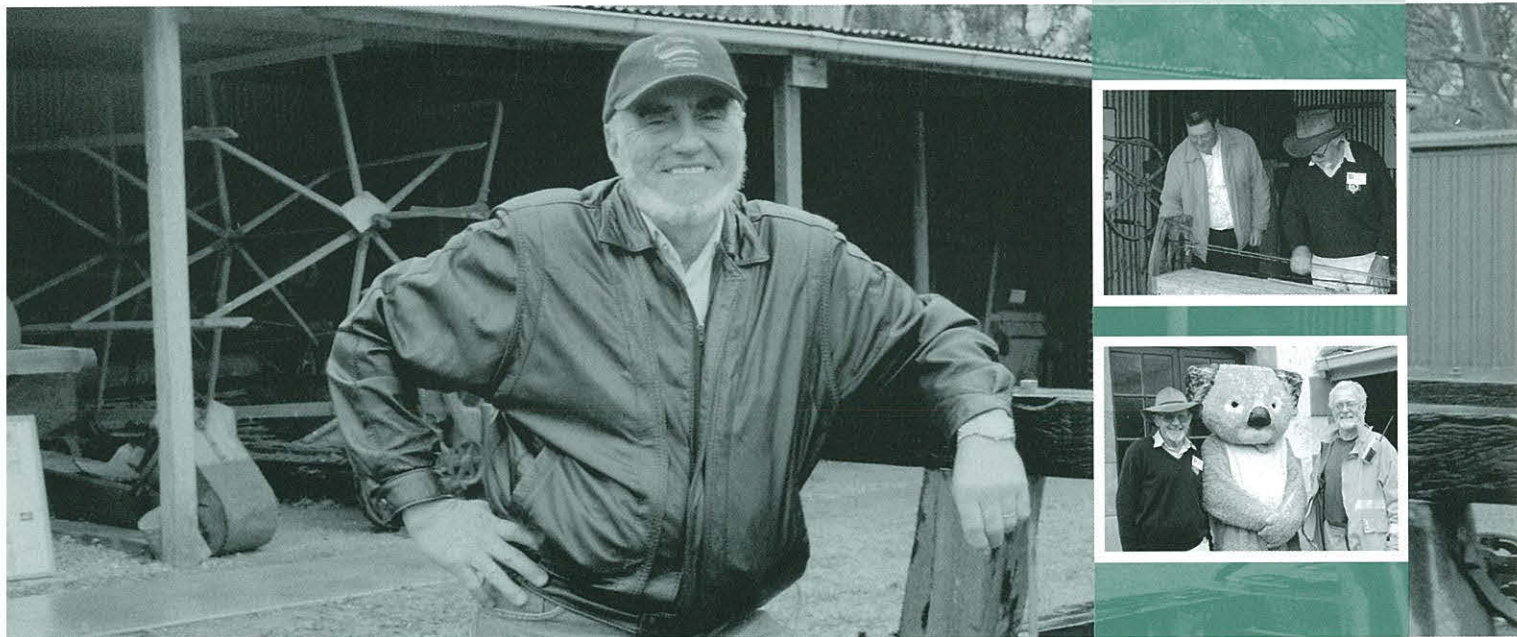
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LIVING TREASURES AT STRATHALBYN NATIONAL TRUST MUSEUM

SUE SCHEIFFERS



Museums are acknowledged repositories for the treasures of a community. They provide a safe haven for outdated everyday household objects and tools, documents represented by letters, cards, invitations, legal negotiations relating to property, births, deaths and marriages, long forgotten technology and the unique stories told in the often fading photographs.

However this is only part of the story. The other type of treasure sometimes not so widely recognised or celebrated is human. One group of these is those elderly folk who sit at the entrance and keep museum doors open weekend after weekend. They greet visitors and tell stories, and have lived through the times and events captured in the museum displays. Their memories often form the basis on which parts of the past in their community are recorded.

The other group of living treasures is less visible to visitors. The outdoors is the habitat for the (mostly) men who bring their skills to the museum. In many places they have grown up with, and made their livings from, what have often become the heaps of rusting agricultural artefacts behind the shed and in the backyard.

This article focuses on a few of the latter group in the South Australian country museum at Strathalbyn, in a fertile farming district. The advent of the freeway which brings Adelaide within commuting distance has led to a rapid increase in population, among whom are recent retirees who have come to enjoy the lifestyle. They generously take their time and skills to the local museum.

Space only allows details of a small number of our 'treasures' to be recognised.

There is Ron, who at eighty years young arrives on his little motor scooter and has an encyclopaedic knowledge of all things equine. In an amazingly short amount of time he has cleaned up the carts and wagon and sorted out the tangle of 'Horse stuff', built stands and supports, and is well on the way to providing a meaningful interpretation of this aspect of the collection.

There is Dave, who arrived just as the museum began a History Trust of South Australia-funded major upgrade of one of the main indoor displays. He led the rest of the team, and sawed, hammered and whistled away over six months to produce a beautiful new set of displays, which we were proud to have Minister John Hill officially open in May. Then Dave took off into the backyard, and is working on converting a heap of rusty old iron into a working model of a horse-powered device. This will ultimately drive an old chaff cutter which the team is currently also restoring to working order.

There are Noel, Rob, Trevor, Terry, John and Roy, who weekly push their mowers around the acre of grass and attend to the myriad of tasks required to upkeep a heritage building and its surrounds. They prune and dig and paint and sand, and generally ensure that the building and its surrounds are presented as well as possible to visitors.

In addition to this backyard work they also present a profile at open days and public occasions. They provide interactive interpretation to anybody who stops to look at and question things, and can often tell stories of their own experience with those objects.

Undoubtedly it is these generally hidden treasures who are the backbone of our museums. Without them our buildings would deteriorate and a whole section of the stories would continue to wait to be told — or perhaps never be told — to visitors to our museums.

SUE SCHEIFFERS IS PRESIDENT OF MA SOUTH AUSTRALIA, AND GUEST EDITOR FOR THIS SECTION OF *MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA MAGAZINE*

Main: Dave Finnie
Inset above: The Hon Alexander Downer MP watches Ron Bert make rope the old fashioned way
Inset below: Ron Bert with CFA friends
Photos: Sue Scheiffers

MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA MAGAZINE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

The Editor would like to thank the other members of the Editorial Committee for their expertise, assistance with ideas and contacts for potential articles, and support. They — and former members of the Committee who are no longer active — are truly 'treasures' of our museum sector.

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Leanda Coleman
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Bill Richards
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Susanne Briggs
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Claire Martin
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PROMOTING OUR TREASURES

'How does the general public hear about the treasures on show in museums and galleries? Here four press and publicity officers emerge from behind the scenes for once, and talk about the work they — and their colleagues in museum and gallery public affairs across Australia — do to promote events in their institutions.

'I LOVE HISTORY, AM CAPTIVATED BY THE MACHINATIONS OF THE MEDIA AND RELISH TRYING TO REACH A TRULY NATIONAL AUDIENCE.'

Leanda Coleman, National Museum of Australia

Leanda Coleman is Acting Director of Public Affairs at the National Museum of Australia

I've been working in public affairs at the National Museum for the past three years. I love history, am captivated by the machinations of the media and relish trying to reach a truly national audience. I worked for six years as a journalist and sub-editor in country newspapers — where I enjoyed seeing people churn through old editions to help piece together their history. As a journalist different stories demanded very different approaches but three things were crucial: communicating the facts clearly and accurately, seeing all sides of any story and telling a compelling story — and they remain with me at the Museum. I'm particularly interested in making sure news of the National Museum's exhibitions, research, acquisitions and events reach people well beyond Sydney and Canberra. The richness of the stories the Museum tells and its contemporary take on everything from architecture to museum practice mean it has attracted a lot of publicity since opening in 2001. As the Museum evolves, so has the role of the Public Affairs team, and while we still generate plenty of headlines, more time is spent working closely with other institutions, universities, embassies and community groups to promote the Museum and its many projects.

THE OVERRIDING CHALLENGE IS TO ENSURE THAT THE MUSEUM REACHES THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

Bill Richards, Australian National Maritime Museum

Bill Richards enjoys a busy round as Media and Communications Manager at the Australian National Maritime Museum.

Located on Sydney's inner-city Darling Harbour, the museum that opened in 1991 has matured into a large-scale and lively maritime precinct.

On the water it has one of the world's largest, most diverse museum fleets. There are shipwrights at work, activity in conservation laboratories and model workshops, a major research library, a 15,000-name migrant Welcome Wall, a yacht charter fleet and, in the middle of it all, the soaring white museum building with its wealth of exhibitions and associated activities.

There are a lot of colourful and interesting stories to tell, and the overriding challenge is to ensure that the museum reaches the whole community — mums, dads and kids as well dedicated 'seafarers'.

Bill trained in journalism on Brisbane metropolitan newspapers and studied part-time to gain a BA degree, Diploma in Journalism and Diploma in Public Administration from Queensland University.

An experienced reporter, feature writer, sub-editor and pictorial editor he went to London where he joined the *Sun*, a national daily, for four years.

Back in Australia he joined the staff of the National Trust in Sydney where he became Deputy Director with responsibility for marketing, publishing and retailing. He is the author of a book on the National Trust and the architectural heritage of NSW.

In his present position he advises ANMM Director Mary-Louise Williams on external relations, manages media liaison, writes speeches, co-ordinates the work of the voluntary Speakers Panel and tends to a variety of other tasks like staging the opening celebrations for new exhibitions. He has one assistant and receives further occasional support from a consultant.

Rewarding work... Sure enough, and the visiting journalists who ask him when he's likely to leave, he says, all have to wait their turn.

'ONE OF THE MOST GRATIFYING PARTS OF THE JOB IS TO WALK THROUGH AND SEE HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE, INCLUDING SCHOOL CHILDREN.'

Susanne Briggs, Art Gallery of New South Wales

Susanne Briggs is currently a press officer at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, a position which she describes as truly her 'dream' job.

When the position at the Art Gallery became available earlier this year, I applied. Interestingly, four friends, three of whom are journalists, sent me the ad. They knew my interest in the Art Gallery and it was where I could combine my appreciation of art with my experience with working with the media. That was five months ago. It's a changing gallery, and at any time there can be five or more exhibitions. The first challenge was the Archibald, which is nothing short of 'celebrity status'. It brings people into the gallery who may not normally visit.

The gallery is a thriving environment and one of the most gratifying parts of the job is to walk through and see hundreds of people, including school children.

Susanne originally wanted to be a social worker but abandoned the idea and studied communications, drama, social science and, recently, counselling. She has worked in media relations for twenty years, both in Australia and overseas, in areas of social change, culture and the environment.

'I FEEL SO LUCKY TO ENJOY MY WORK ... IT IS REWARDING TO PROMOTE SOMETHING THAT I BELIEVE CAN INSPIRE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE...'

Claire Martin, Art Gallery of New South Wales

Claire Martin has been press officer at the Art Gallery of New South Wales for the past twelve years and thoroughly enjoys her work.

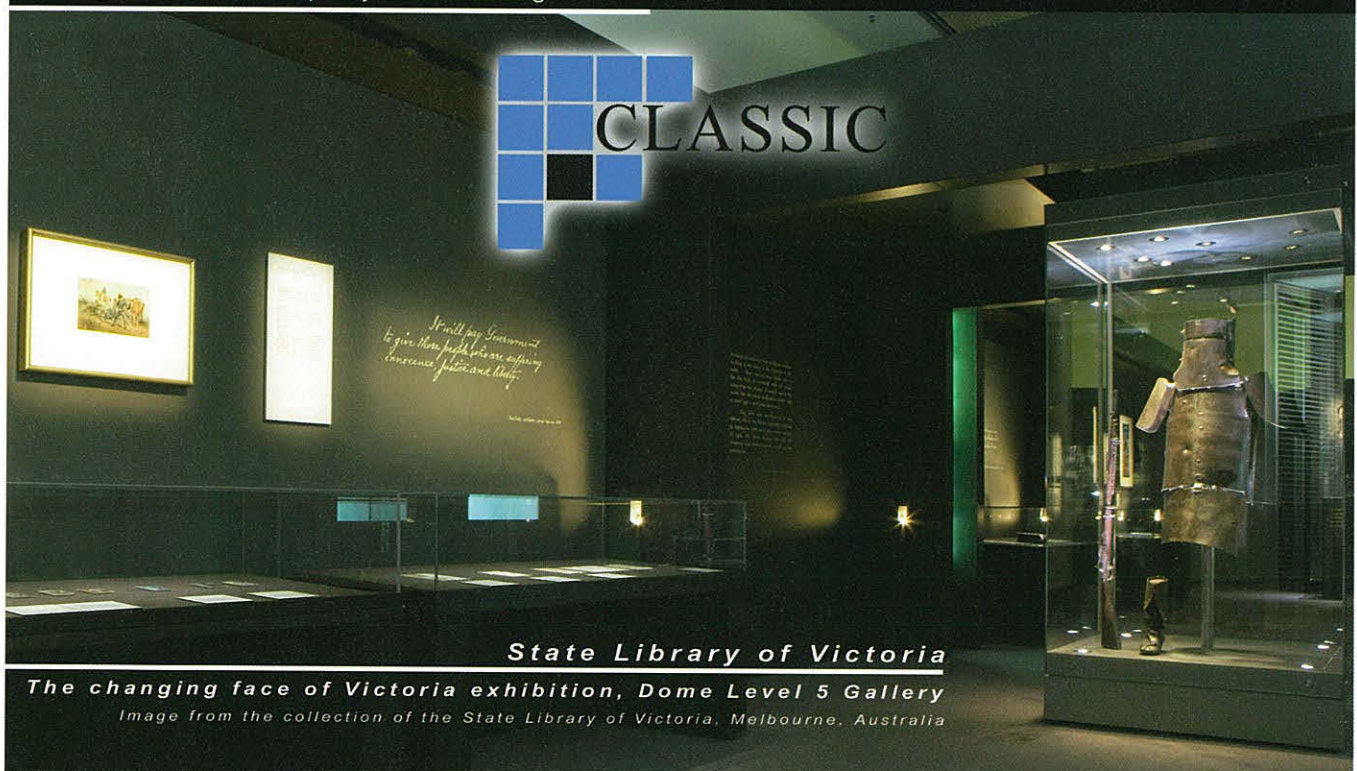
Claire came to the job with a BA Honours in Art History and post-graduate diploma in Marketing. Previously, she'd worked for the Arts Council of Great Britain and London Arts Board in the UK.

I feel so lucky to enjoy my work; people often suggest this is not normal! Walking into this vibrant building with all the different personalities both on and off the walls presents an enjoyable challenge every day.

The Art Gallery of New South Wales has an extremely dynamic program of exhibitions, which keeps the job varied and busy. It is rewarding to promote something that I believe can inspire and make a difference to people's existence.

The job is all about communicating and over the years (not meaning to sound like an old timer!), the way we communicate has changed somewhat in that the majority of the communication is now done via email or telephone. We print very little compared to two to three years ago. I miss the face to face contact but the system is so efficient these days it's hard to keep up sometimes!!

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State Library of Victoria

The changing face of Victoria exhibition, Dome Level 5 Gallery

Image from the collection of the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia

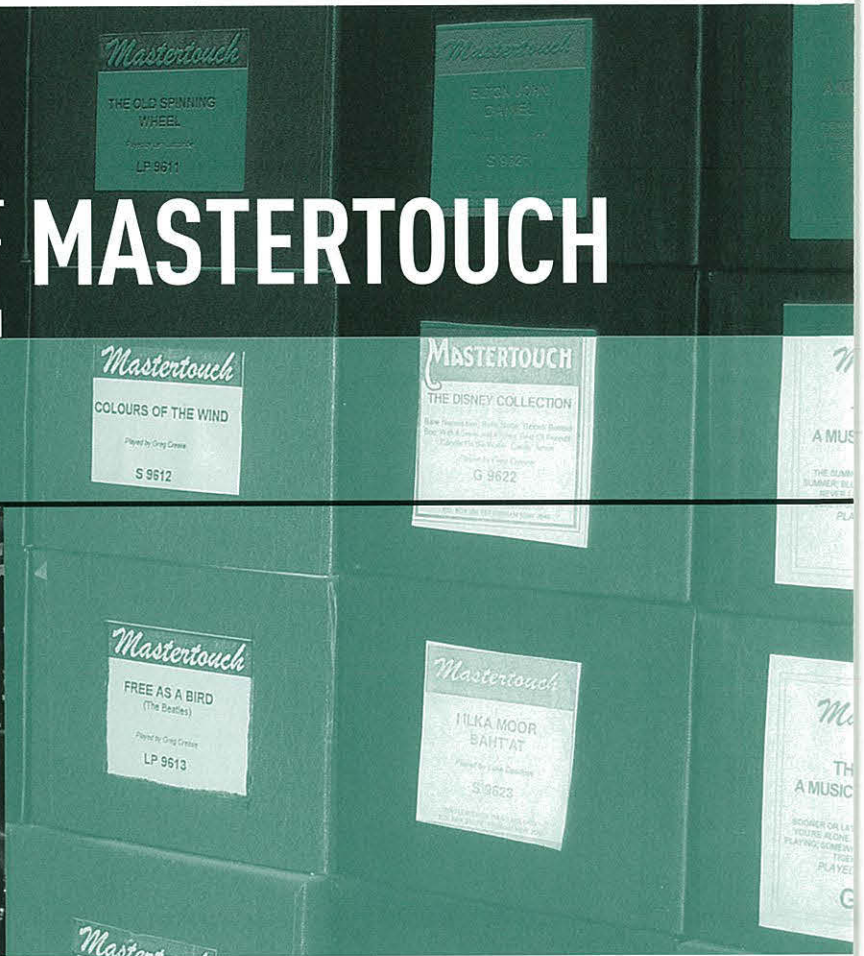
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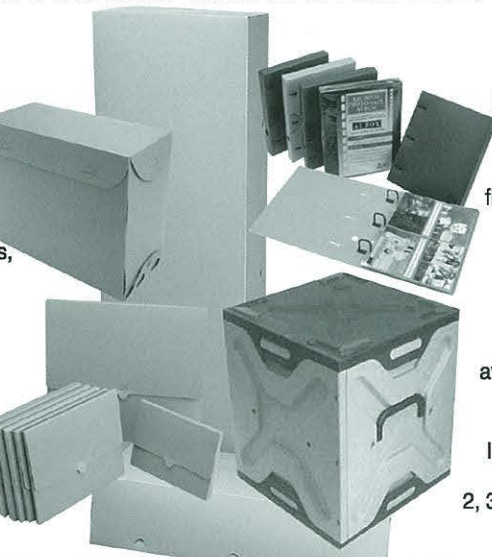
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On 30 June 2005 the 85-year-old Mastertouch Piano Roll Company formally ceased production. The machinery was turned off, the staff dispersed, and one of Australia's oldest iconic brands was no more. The field is now left to the world's last full-time manufacturer of player piano rolls, America's century-old QRS Company, still operating in Buffalo NY. Preserving what can be saved of Australia's considerable heritage in this field, including the archive of thousands of rolls, will most likely fall to the National Film and Sound Archive as well as to private collectors. But the loss of Mastertouch as an entity — with its antique machinery, collections, arcane skills and knowledge, customer base and support organisation — encapsulates the dilemma of trying to save private heritage which is also part of the public memory.

For decades the owner of Mastertouch, Barclay Wright, had

THE DENOUEMENT CAME IN A STORMY AGM ON 21 MAY 2005, WHEN THE EXISTING BOARD WAS ALMOST ENTIRELY REPLACED.

maintained his loss-making company and built an associated instrument collection with the financial help of family and friends. The friends realised that long-term survival lay in the creation of an incorporated membership body which could operate Mastertouch on a non-profit basis as a public working museum, keeping its skills and dynamic intact, keeping the piano roll medium alive and developing its support base to sustain it financially. Music Roll Australia (MRA) was set up in 1983 with the ultimate intention of acquiring Mastertouch, but meanwhile operating as a 'friends' group supporting the owner.

The transition finally came at the eleventh hour, in July 2004. With the company unable to pay creditors and verging on closure, MRA concluded an unusual lease agreement with Wright under which it took on financing and management of the operation as a step towards ultimate ownership four years hence, while he became general manager. But as MRA's well-qualified board took the initiative and began changing a private business into a public museum, it also took painful — if essential — steps to stem huge trading losses by reducing both staff and unsustainable activities. It was a bridge too far. In early 2005, by which time it was clear the lease arrangement was not working out as expected, MRA was faced with the sudden prospect of purchasing Mastertouch and its building — not an unreachable objective, but certainly an unexpected one.

The denouement came in a stormy AGM on 21 May 2005, when the existing board was almost entirely replaced. Most of the new board were current or former Mastertouch employees who favoured MRA returning to its support group role. Six weeks later, however, the building was up for sale, Mastertouch had closed and there was no operation left to support. There appears little prospect of reviving the impetus towards establishing the Mastertouch Museum.

Visiting the heritage-listed Mastertouch building, a former fire station in the Sydney suburb of Petersham, is a rich experience. One passes through a time warp into another era. Music rolls are digital recordings, but unlike CDs and DVDs the manufacturing process is mechanical and every stage is observable and

understandable. The heyday of the player piano was the 1920s. Much of the machinery and instrument collection predates that time, yet some of the best-arranged rolls ever created were recorded in recent years. Like much else in the building, the evocative period theatrette shows the handiwork of numerous volunteers who have contributed to Mastertouch's legacy. But in the end it is all private property, and if the building is sold and refurbished, and its contents dispersed, those who contributed to creating the experience may feel cheated by the course of history.

And there's the rub. While few of us may own million-dollar art collections or their like, we share the instinct to preserve heritage by private acquisition. And that raises the question of its survival beyond our custody, for surrendering it is as certain as death and taxes. It may mean planning to put it, and thereby part of ourselves, into institutional hands. But we lose control, and museums and archives may revise, reinterpret and remould our creation in ways we wouldn't expect or approve. It's a prudent institution which avoids, if it can, ongoing commitments which it can't be certain to sustain.

Australia will be the poorer for the loss of a special part of its musical heritage — one which could never comfortably fit into an existing institutional structure, and needed one of its own.

RAY EDMONDSON HAS SERVED AT VARIOUS TIMES AS PRESIDENT AND BOARD MEMBER OF MRA, AND IS A FORMER DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE.

Left: Ray Edmondson watches Adrian Jorgensen cutting a piano roll
Background: Mastertouch pianola master rolls — where will these be housed?
Photos: Roslyn Russell



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SALLY STEPHENSON

FROM TO MEDICAL RESEARCHER MUSEUM WORKER



I can't remember a time when I didn't love to visit museums and explore historic sites. At school I used to undertake my own projects and spend hours in the basement of the State Library of South Australia examining the archived photographs. Although I chose to pursue a career in medical research, I continued to visit every museum possible. Working in Oxford, UK for over three years certainly gave me the opportunity to live and breathe history. I worked successfully in medical research for many years, running my own laboratory. Nevertheless the politics and self-centredness of many who were apparently in a caring profession drove me to resign at the end of 2003. The decision was made easier by a desire to spend time with my then six-month-old daughter.

In 2002, I caught a severe case of the museum bug. Kate Walsh, Manager of Community History Programs for the History Trust of South Australia, is almost entirely to blame! My parents had a few years previously moved to the tiny township of Prospect Hill in the southern Adelaide Hills. Prospect Hill no longer has any shops, but it has a museum. The museum was formerly the home, general store, post office, telegraph station and farm of the Griggs family. The older buildings date from the 1870s and are state heritage-listed. My mother was on the local Community Association committee, which owns and runs the museum, and thought I'd be interested to attend a museum strategic planning day being run by Kate. Within two months of that meeting I was the Vice-President of the committee, a position I've held ever since. At first I was living in Adelaide, but at the end of 2002 my husband and I moved to the town of Meadows, six kilometres from Prospect Hill. We wanted to be near the rest of the family, get out of the city, enjoy the sense of community of a country town and be able to bring up a child in a safer environment.

I have had the most wonderful time working at the Prospect Hill Museum. My background in medical research provided many of the skills I would need at the museum. I write all the grant applications, for example, and have written all the policies and procedures, none of which existed previously. I obtained several grants, including a major one from the History Trust of SA to develop

the dairy into a permanent exhibition of the history of dairying in the Adelaide Hills. After undertaking an oral history training course, I thoroughly enjoyed interviewing former and current dairy farmers, and those who worked in the dairy factories. I did all the research for the display, sourced the photographs and wrote the text. I also prepared the sound track for the dairy museum. My craziest moment was probably standing outside in the pouring rain on a cold winter's night trying to capture on tape cows mooing during milking, whilst avoiding the occasional torrent of faeces!

What else do I do in the museum? Virtually everything, except the heavy lifting. I do the cataloguing, letters and paperwork associated with donations, coordinate open days, special activities and travelling exhibitions, prepare museum brochures, develop children's activities, research and write new interpretive labels for current exhibitions that lack interpretation, participate in museum floats as part of the local country fair, undertake training, organise training for other volunteers, organise and participate in working bees, digitise photographs, write press releases, write articles for the local newsletters, act as museum photographer and volunteer coordinator, liaise with the council's Community Development Officer, Cultural Development Officer and Manager of Tourism, give tours of the museum, run the Museum Committee and write the minutes.

Working in a regional, volunteer-run museum would have to be one of the best ways to experience almost every aspect of running a museum in a very short space of time. It is a wonderful and exciting challenge. At times it is frustrating, with the lack of human and financial resources, but the rewards are there, such as winning the SA Great Community Award last year, and hearing children visiting the museum say, 'This is cool!'

DR SALLY STEPHENSON
PROSPECT HILL MUSEUM

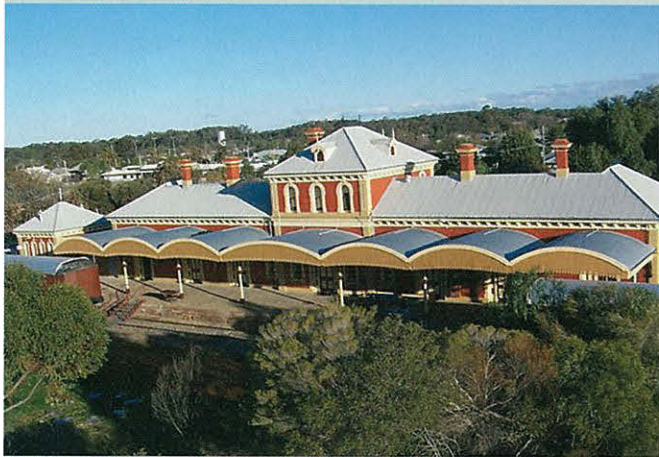
Left: Sally with Margaret Anderson, History Trust of SA

Right: Sally and Anne

Courtesy of Sally Stephenson

'DUNERA DAY' AT HAY

WHEN THE *DUNERA* ARRIVED IN SYDNEY, OVER 2000 REFUGEES WERE TAKEN BY TRAIN TO HAY, WHERE THEY WERE INTERNED FOR THE WAR'S DURATION



Aerial photo of the newly restored heritage-listed Hay Railway Station
Courtesy of Dunera Museum, Hay

The story of the voyage of SS *Dunera* from England to Australia in 1940 is not a happy one. German and Austrian Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe were herded onto the ship for a journey marked by sadistic treatment by the crew, and all manner of physical and psychological deprivations.

When the *Dunera* arrived in Sydney, over 2000 refugees were taken by train to Hay, where they were interned for the war's duration in Hay Camps 8, 7 and 6. Many of the 'Dunera Boys', as they later became known, stayed in Australia after the war, and some of them rose to prominent positions in Australian life.

The sixty-fifth anniversary of their arrival in four steam trains at Hay station was commemorated on Saturday 3 September as 'Dunera Day' at Hay. The Dunera Museum in Hay has two railway carriages, which are now housed at the newly refurbished Hay Railway Station, itself a heritage-listed building. The restoration of the station, which saw the end of rail services to Hay in 1982, was celebrated by NSW Railcorp Heritage the day before the Dunera commemoration.

The atmosphere of World War Two in Hay was recreated for the commemoration of Dunera Day. A searchlight located at Hay Railway Station beamed its ray into the night sky. The old fire siren wailed and steam trains were heard again in the railway yards.

The fire siren was a signal during the war to Hay residents to let them know that an airman on night flying exercises from Deniliquin Air Training field had become lost. At the sound of the siren Hay residents would drive out to the airport and shine their car headlights on the runway so that the pilot could land.

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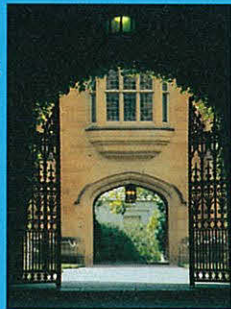
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GRAHAM BARLOW

VOLUNTEERING AT SWAN REACH

Born in 1946 at Minlaton SA, I joined the Post Master General Department (Telstra) in 1965 and for the next twenty-five years worked in Adelaide, Port Lincoln, Alice Springs, Riverland, Clare and Mt Gambier. During our time at Mt Gambier I volunteered to assist with restoring flood damaged telephone systems in Brisbane in January 1974, went to Darwin for three months in January and again in September 1975 after Cyclone Tracy, and was stationed at Mt Gambier during the Ash Wednesday fires. After taking a redundancy package in 1990 we remained in Mt Gambier for two years, after which we decided to move to Swan Reach, which is just twenty-eight kilometres from where I met my partner of thirty-five years, while I was working in her hometown of Blanchetown.

Located on the River Murray, Swan Reach is a ferry crossing town, located between Adelaide and Loxton, with a population of about 300. The town supports a sheep and grain farming community along with almond, grape, orange, lemon, potato, avocado and Geraldton Wax cut-flower industries. The town boasts a hotel with a fantastic view of the river, general store, take-away, garage and farm supply business and a great community.

After purchasing and restoring the old Bank of Adelaide manager's residence, I joined the Swan Reach Progress Association, Agricultural and Horticultural Show Society, published my family history and joined the Mid Murray Lands Local History Group. Then in 2003 I was honoured by being awarded the Australia Day Citizen Award by our Mid Murray Council.

Four years ago the Mid Murray Council kindly permitted our Local History Group, which consists of eight volunteers, to

establish a museum in the town's original school building. We are a self-funded organisation, relying heavily on obtaining various grants, entrance fees of a gold coin, souvenir and rabbit trap art sales, so that we can provide a service to our community and visitors. Our local council has continued to support our efforts by providing the site on a peppercorn lease agreement, and since the museum's inception has donated several thousand dollars for projects in and around the museum, including removal of two very large pepper trees, funding the construction of a 6m x 12m shed, building extensions to the museum and assistance with equipment purchases.

Our museum, which is currently registered with the History Trust of South Australia, has two main themes: education; and a social reflection of community life along the River Murray and farming districts. Our small collection consists of historic items ranging from an 1892 book titled, 'How to Manage a Husband, containing the opinions & experiences of more than 100 women', through to a model of Edward John Eyre's supply ship, the *Waterwitch*, which sank at Morrundie (15kms upstream from Swan Reach) in 1842.

One of our aims is to encourage and involve the local school students in some of the museum's projects, for example, painting a mural on one of the museum's structures and designing a database for our photograph collection. Also, by appointment, we provide a schoolroom enactment, where children are seated at some of the school's original desks and given a ten-minute lesson by our President, Mrs Joan Wilkinson, who once taught in the building when it was the local school. It is hoped that their experiences will

OUR SMALL COLLECTION CONSISTS OF HISTORIC ITEMS RANGING FROM AN 1892 BOOK TITLED, 'HOW TO MANAGE A HUSBAND, CONTAINING THE OPINIONS & EXPERIENCES OF MORE THAN 100 WOMEN', THROUGH TO A MODEL OF EDWARD JOHN EYRE'S SUPPLY SHIP, THE WATERWITCH...

Local History Group



Photos: Graham Barlow

encourage them to become more involved with the museum in later years, as they will be the caretakers of our history.

Some of our past projects were to publish a 400-page book on the history of Swan Reach, establish a web site <http://www.geocities.com/history4sr/> and supply information and photographs for the People's Voice 1901-2001 project. Future projects that we hope to carry out, when funding

permits, are to construct a blacksmith shop and a replica of one of the Swan Reach Aboriginal Mission Houses, refurbish a quarter-scale model of an early wooden ferry and arrange an Indigenous display within the museum.

GRAHAM BARLOW ENJOYS VOLUNTEERING HIS TIME TO THE COMMUNITY.

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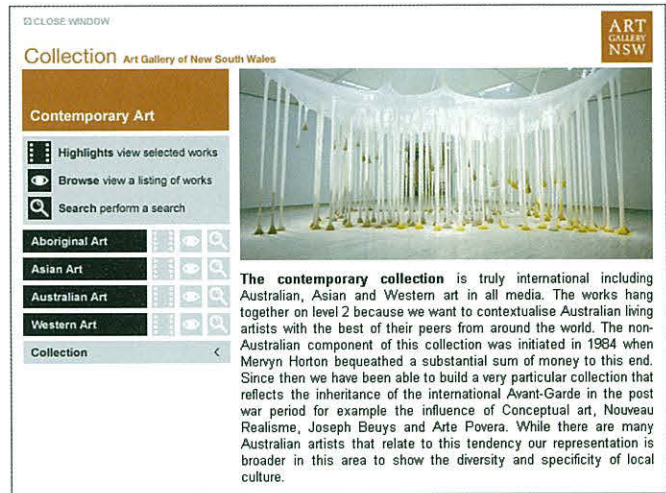
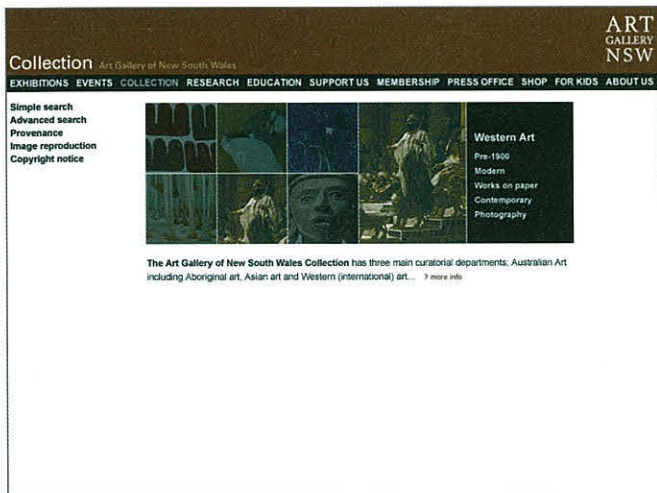
SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, MEDIA STUDIES AND ART HISTORY



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

CRICOS Provider Number 00025B

ON-LINE ACCESS TO THE ART GALLERY OF



JESMOND CALLEJA

Image 1

Image 2

The paradigm for publishing is forever evolving. With the widespread availability of web publishing technologies, the Internet has become increasingly important for museums, galleries and the public. The presence of the web and success of popular search engines have fuelled expectations for quick, easy, and successful results in the quest for information and knowledge. Increasingly, scholars, students and other explorers are turning to the web for their research needs and relying less often on traditional research sources.

Cultural institutions have immensely rich information contained in publications, research papers, exhibition catalogues, and databases, but access to much valuable information about the kind of materials museums hold is rarely available through web search engines. If this problem alone was solved, and all the hidden web resources were suddenly available for indexing, the difficulty of finding reliable, useful, precise information would be seriously compounded, not alleviated. This can be addressed by collecting and indexing metadata records, thereby providing greater precision (essentially the traditional library approach of creating descriptive metadata and building union catalogues). Metadata is simply data about data, or information known about an image in order to provide access to it.

A particularly promising solution is to explore the utility of combining the best of traditional library and museum techniques with the best of new Internet techniques like large scale, machine harvesting of information. This is possible because of new developments in web workable technical protocols as a way to package and transfer information, and the development of international standards for describing museum metadata content.

The emergence and power of the virtual on-line medium has created a rush of expectations. In New South Wales, the cultural, government and private sectors have hyped the need for an on-line presence, especially where the web is seen as a virtual team-building experience that crosses geographical and other boundaries. While there can be few arguments against the potential of the web to offer this experience, the

question of web rationale or integrity of representation has only recently come into question. In conceiving the Digitisation Project, the Art Gallery of New South Wales was responding to instructions from the New South Wales government to make its collections available to the public, once and for all.

The Digitisation Project was officially launched in 2000. Its principal objective was to have a dynamic, database-driven website that would present a thematic route of entry for exploring the collections — bearing in mind the diverse nature and requirements of potential users — that was capable of indefinite expansion and development. This immediately defined two main aspects: the creation of an on-line database for the collections; and a new front end operating over the top of the database to deliver material dynamically in different forms for different audiences.

The Collection Management System (CMS) already in use at the Gallery had to be adapted to accommodate a whole range of new material. The CMS is a revelation-based product from a New Zealand based company, Vernon Systems. Once the cataloguing mechanics had been worked out, a plan was devised for the transfer of existing collection records onto the system. As the ability to view the collections on-line was important, a scheme for digital photography of the collections was also put into practice. A simple, quick, search-the-collection interface was built, and went live in December 2002.

The Gallery's web team members realised they needed to analyse the behaviour of this new web audience as they added content and revised the design and organisation of the site. The team also became aware that results from a curatorial search did not provide a true cross-reference to works that could possibly fit into more than one curatorial department. Major adjustments to previously entered data were undertaken on the CMS. A decision to build a more robust system search engine and incorporating the Vernon CMS web browser was implemented. Creating a new front end to operate on-line over the top of the database required considerable thought and planning. The new system needed to be able to serve up material from the database in a

NEW SOUTH WALES' COLLECTION

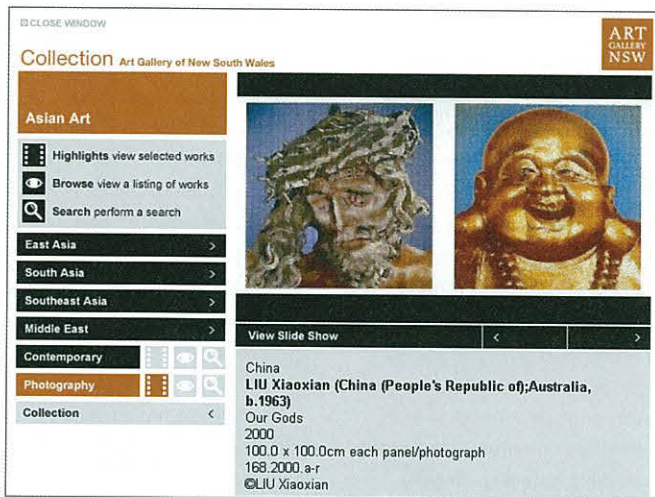


Image 3

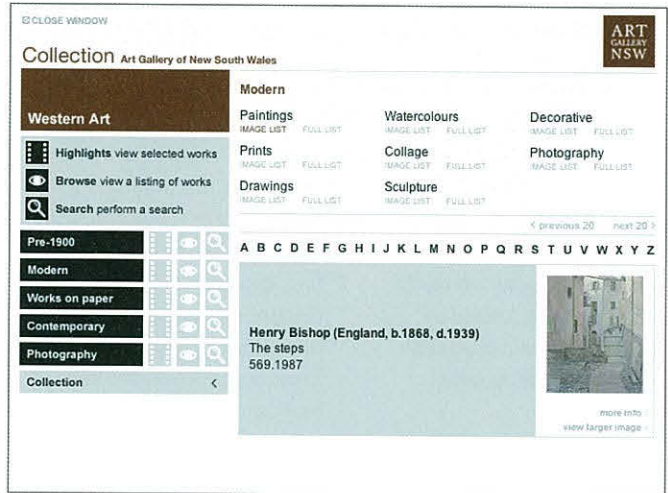


Image 4

form suited to the needs of each category, and to be able also to search through and cross-reference multi-disciplinary curatorial departments. Choosing the appropriate design elements was crucial, as this was of paramount importance in ensuring that the site would capture and keep a visitor's attention in the limited time and space available in the on-line environment.

A simple browse through the collection heading system, to make navigation through the collections easily understood, was devised. This appears as the starting point through which one can steer through the collection. The browser allows the user to navigate through the primary curatorial departments within the Gallery's collection. When particular features are 'moused' over, a link to the relevant sub-curatorial departments is activated [image 1]. After the required department is chosen, the user is presented with a new window and a legend provides a series of three choices [image 2].

Firstly, the user is able to browse through selected highlights within that sub-department and inspect some of the Gallery's most popular works simply by one click. A colourful image, together with brief image details, is provided [image 3]. If the image is further clicked a larger sized image with full contextual and descriptive data can be seen. Secondly, the user can elect to browse-view a listing of works held within that sub-department. When this is chosen a new smaller window appears on the screen. Here the user is prompted to narrow the search and to delve deeper into that collection and browse through medium [image 4]. When browsing specifically in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art and Asian Art collections, the user is able to focus on particular geographical regions before being prompted to narrow the search by medium. Thirdly, when the required search is activated, the user is presented with a list of works (together with thumbnails) held within that particular collection. The user is also able to perform a simple search at any given moment.

Packaging of the system on-line involved the complete redesign of the Gallery's website to set it within a logical arrangement. The newly redesigned website went live in June 2005. The new system now enables the Gallery to perform the upload of data and digital

images 'in-house' and directly onto the server. The great benefit of the system is its overall flexibility. The captioned image sequences can be extended indefinitely, and the captions themselves altered at any time on the database. New curatorial, geographical regions and media can be added by the Gallery at any time. In this way, the site will continue to grow and develop along with the collections. Direct control of the website by the Gallery has been extremely beneficial, and has provided advantages of speed and integrity.

Copyright has been another area in which the Gallery has been a leader in the field. In a commitment to artists' integrity and moral rights, the Gallery decided to digitally watermark content published onto the website. The Copyright team has been working with the interpretation of the new legislation and negotiating with Viscopy to establish new industry guidelines that provide us with manageable costing for the website. This process has been carried out in consultation with peer institutions, and the license we use is being adopted as a standard document.

With the advent of the World Wide Web, many cultural institutions have been concerned that access to collections via the Internet may reduce people's desire to visit real institutions. In fact the very opposite is likely. Those who previously had little idea of the wealth of objects and associated knowledge available in museums and galleries may have their interest awakened; at the very least they are unlikely to have it dulled. Others are likely to find this extra means of access a complementary route to the knowledge available from museums.

JESMOND CALLEJA

SENIOR REGISTRAR — COLLECTION SYSTEMS INTEGRATION
ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

**YOU CAN LOG INTO THE GALLERY'S WEBSITE
ON WWW.ARTGALLERY.NSW.GOV.AU AND
CLICK ON COLLECTION TO FIND THE WAY TO A
VIRTUAL VIEW OF WHAT IS IN THE GALLERY.**

KOREAN UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS AND A VARIETY OF VILLAGES

Andrew Simpson and Tennille Noach from Macquarie University attended ICOM 2004 in Seoul. They set up a web log to share the experience with Museum Studies students back in Sydney. This article incorporates some of their reports during an excursion organised and hosted by KAUM (Korean Association of University Museums).

The UMAC (University Museums and Collections — an ICOM subcommittee) program was opened by Mr Kidong Bae, Chair of the Korean Association of University Museums (KAUM) and Secretary-General of the ICOM Organising Committee. He gave the audience a detailed insight into the history of

university museums in Korea.

Up until the 1970s Korean law mandated that universities must have museums, as part of a policy to ensure the collection of archaeological relics for continued research in specific areas. These museums are historically linked to the period of Japanese occupation, when they acted as an anti-colonial measure to safeguard Korea's heritage. Social policy changed in the 1980s. There was a shift towards private colleges; university museums were no longer a legal requirement. Despite the policy changes, the period from the 1980s to the present was a very active collecting phase for Korean university museums and a period of strong museum

development. Currently one third of all museums in Korea are university museums.

After presentations at Seoul National University, we got to see some museums. One of the highlights of this visit was the Kyujanggak, or Royal Library. The most stunning piece on display was a map of the known world produced by Korean scholars from a wide range of sources in 1402. Delegates crowded around this incredible object to identify the geographic features of their countries of origin. It is a breathtaking piece of work, with Korea in a prominent central position. It clearly shows the Yellow River, the Great Wall of China, the Great Lakes of Africa, the Mediterranean,

the Red Sea, and what could even possibly be Lake Baikal.

In discussions with the Curator of the Kyujanggak we discovered that the map is not the original, but a copy. The original was transferred to Japan during the occupation and remains there today. We wondered whether Koreans were pressing for the repatriation of the original.*

After a four-hour trip to the south east to visit Yeungnam University and an address from its President, Sang Chun Lee, we visited a unique Korean University facility, a Korean folk village. This consisted of Joseon Dynasty traditional Korean houses with long, low bowed roofs, elaborately decorated tiles, raised floors and a central



* POSTSCRIPT

courtyard. These buildings had been rescued by the University from encroaching urban development and reconstructed on site at the University. Its purpose is to remind students of their cultural heritage and provide a traditional mode for the communication between scholars and students.

The University Museum at Yeungnam was typical of many Korean university museums. The focus is cultural heritage: the collections consist of archaeological relics recovered from the area as part of university research programs. This is the primary reason why university museums in Korea receive money from the government.

Our Korean hosts stressed that museums within universities are not funded directly by the Ministry for Culture. The Ministry for Education gives support to the University. The University retains autonomy over the expenditure of funding. Therefore much depends on the view of senior university management as to whether an institution's museum receives adequate resources. This situation resonated with the experience of many of the international delegates, especially the Australian contingent. KAUM was, however, pleased to announce that they had lobbied for, and received, the equivalent of \$1 million specifically for developing exhibitions over the next year (2005). The thought of KAUM's Australian equivalent securing a separate budget line from our federal government had us all daydreaming.

After an overnight stay at the University's International House we moved on to Yangdon

Village. This village has not been relocated and remains an occupied, living and working village. It is well managed and visiting tourists undergo a controlled program to help them understand traditional heritage. In one house we met a lady who was used to groups being guided through the village. Her house has been occupied by twenty generations of her family. This accomplishment represents a remarkable island of stability in a modern mobile westernised nation. The village was well known because one building was the birthplace of a famous scholar some hundreds of years ago; the building was brightly painted and locked. We were told the lock was to prevent other women from using it as a birthplace for their children! When one of the Europeans half jokingly suggested that hiring out the room for this purpose would provide an income stream for heritage preservation, our guide vigorously shook his head and indicated this was simply not feasible.

The last stop for the day was a visit to Kiemyung University. This is a wealthy private university with a spectacular university museum. The museum has incorporated many western display ideas and the layout of the exhibition halls was fairly familiar to most international visitors. At some other university museums many of us were surprised at the different use of space around objects in exhibitions. The more significant an object the more space it needs when on display. The more significant it is the less interpretive material (text, graphics) required. The power of the object speaks for itself. This different display methodology in some of the

more traditional museums was strange to many of us without a significant understanding of Korean culture.

Kiemyung University also has its own traditional village. It has just finished building it at a total cost of US \$40 million. This includes a dramatic water landscape, traditional ornamentation by specialised craftsmen of all the large beams that hold up the heavy roofs, traditional and modern kitchens, an advanced floor heating system, whiteboards and computers. It will have a similar purpose to the folk village at Yeungnam and will run as a business for the University.

At all the universities we visited the hospitality of our Korean hosts and the organisation by KAUM staff and volunteers was superb. Their great generosity and enthusiasm for sharing their rich culture with us was a wonderful experience for everyone who attended. There is a strong sense of optimism today amongst young Koreans, particularly in terms of their hopes for preserving a distinctive Korean culture in the face of globalisation. To illustrate this they pointed to the new Minister of Culture, Dong-Chea Chung, who was previously a leading filmmaker. The rise of someone from the creative industries to political power was obviously a source of significant pride. We explained that this might be the equivalent of Philip Noyce doing Rod Kemp's job in Australia!

ANDREW SIMPSON AND
TENNILLE NOACH, DIVISION
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원문 재현 원출(原出)된 금속활자본 "직지" JIKJI
THE WORLD'S oldest movable metal type printed book. 1377

This map is not the only important item of Korean documentary heritage that lives outside its country of origin. The oldest surviving book printed using movable metal type, the Jikji, was created in Cheongju City in 1377. A Museum of Early Printing and a monument there celebrate this achievement — but the book remains in the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Above: Museum of Early Printing and Jikji monument, Cheongju City, Korea
Photos: Roslyn Russell

Opposite page: The map of 1402 on show in the Kyujanggak, or Royal Library, Seoul National University
Courtesy of Andrew Simpson and Tennille Noach

MA in ACTION

Museums Australia ASSOCIATION IN ACTION

NEWS ABOUT PEOPLE

Michael Brand

Michael Brand's appointment as the new director of the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, California, has arguably landed the Australian access to art's 'golden goose'.

Brand's career trajectory has followed a rising path from Canberra as the founding head of Asian art at the National Gallery, to Brisbane as assistant director of the Queensland Art Gallery, and then on to the United States for a successful stint as director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond.

But come January, Brand will have access to the Getty's enviable acquisitions budget, part of a \$7.2 billion endowment.

Dr David Pemberton

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery has made Dr David Pemberton their inaugural senior curator of Antarctic and Southern Oceans for an upcoming exhibition due to open in January 2006.

As Senior Curator of Vertebrate Zoology since 1999 at the TMAG, Dr Pemberton's interest primarily in predators stemmed from studying hyena in South Africa to investigating the ecology of 'tigers' and 'devils' in Tassie.

His interest in Tasmanian fauna has diversified with his long standing research into fisheries and marine bird and mammal interactions, with extensive involvement in seabird conservation programs in Southern Ocean islands and Antarctica.

MOVING ON

Andrew Durham has returned to Australia to become the director of Artlab (SA). He was working at the Conservation Centre in Liverpool, UK.

Craig Judd has replaced David Hansen as Coordinating Curator Arts and Humanities at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Carolyn MacLulich, formerly Head of the Education Division at the Australian Museum and member of the Museums Australia National Council, is now a Research Associate at the Museum of Anthropology, UBC, Vancouver, Canada.

Christopher Menz has been appointed as Director of the Art Gallery of South Australia, replacing **Ron Radford** who moved to the directorship of the National Gallery of Australia.

Katherine Russell has been appointed Learning Coordinator at the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra.

Sue Scheiffers is now Volunteer Coordinator (part time) for the National Trust of South Australia.

Peter Scrivener, formerly Director Museum Development for Museums & Galleries NSW, has moved to the exhibitions unit at the State Library of NSW.

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STEPHEN WEIL: MEMORIES!

Stephen E Weil, scholar emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Education and Museum Studies and former Deputy Director of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, died aged 77 in Washington on 9 August. His wife Wendy Luke, three children and four grandchildren survive him.

Australians knew Steve personally from several visits, notably in 1989 to the CAMA Conference in Brisbane where his keynote address presented both sides of the argument about deaccessioning; a decade later, with Wendy, to the ICOM conference in 1998; then to lead initial discussions with museum community leaders on the goals and structure of the Museum Leadership Program established by the Gordon L Darling Foundation through the auspices of Museums Australia at the Melbourne Business School (University of Melbourne) and afterwards as a faculty member for the Program. No list of appointments and service record capture his wisdom, his generosity, especially as a mentor, or his humour. Like all really wonderful people, Steve was modest. I once asked him if he expected his writings would make a difference, impact on what happened. 'Heavens no', I think he said.

Steve began his museum career as an administrator at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York in 1967. He joined the Smithsonian in 1974 and retired in 1995. Yvonne Shinoster, writing in the *Washington Post* of 14 August, quoted him as saying that the ultimate goal of a museum was to improve people's lives. Through the 1980s, '90s and up to 2003 he presented seminars all over the Americas and in many other countries. He served on many committees and received many awards.

Steve's contributions were 'all of a piece': themes of what museums contribute, how that can be assessed, how people comprehend museums. Not the creampuffery of worthiness — the goal of continuing to exist or the proposition that museums were all equally valuable — but rather the hardball of addressing relative contribution to the community whose support they rely on. In his many articles — many collected in four books — he addressed issues and challenges which our museums, though diverse, face in common, challenges too often considered in isolation. He did so with verve and unique insights, with frequent reference to varied fields of knowledge and provocative debate.

In a 1989 article he pointed to three developments: a tendency to see museums in terms of their functions rather than their purposes; the assertion that collection and care of objects is at the heart of the museum

enterprise; and the extraordinary technical proficiency developed in the care of objects and in their display. The issue, he proposed, was how museums could make manifest the underlying values in the objects displayed. 'However we choose to deal with such issues, we will have to begin in the realm of thought, not collections management.' So museums are about ideas, not things!

In articles and presentations from around 1990 he contributed an outstanding suggestion to assess performance and achievement to the otherwise often trivial debate about performance indicators and 'museums' merits'. Purposiveness and capacity were the two critical areas to focus on. Effectiveness and efficiency were important but, especially in the case of efficiency, not to the extent usually accorded them. In 1999, in the special issue of *Daedalus* on America's museums, he observed 'museums have changed from being about something to being for somebody'. Steve always provided much for us all to talk about.

Admiration for him by the museum community was shown by the presentation in 1995 of the Distinguished Service to Museums Award by the American Association of Museums. In accepting he referred to his 'conversation' with fellow professionals over the previous twenty-five years about how museums benefit the public. Recalling the 1970 AAM meetings in New York when members of the Art Workers Coalition rushed the stage to demand decentralisation of museum services, the release of political prisoners and more, Steve went on to talk of how those charged with countering these assaults were forced to think far longer and harder about how museums benefit the public. (Consider reactions even today by many authorities to such demonstrations in our democracies.)

Steve had a fund of stories. His response to a joke about Einstein going to heaven and visiting Descartes based on 'I think, therefore I am' was another version and a story about the Dalai Lama ordering a hot dog from one of those rolling frankfurter carts in downtown Manhattan. The vendor, thinking in terms of ketchup or mustard or onions, asked what he wanted on it. 'Make me one with everything', the Dalai Lama replied.

Steve Weil contributed uniquely and immeasurably to the value of our lives as museum people. May we keep his ideas always close before us.

DES GRIFFIN IS A FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM, SYDNEY. FRANCES LINDSAY AND BERNICE MURPHY HELPED WITH THIS ARTICLE.

REVIEWS

ALAN SISLEY

Pro Hart: Retrospective.
A travelling exhibition developed by Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne. On show at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, Gymea, 9 December–5 February 2006; Tweed River Regional Gallery, 23 February–16 April 2006; and many more...

Orange Regional Gallery recently concluded showing the first touring retrospective exhibition of paintings by Broken Hill artist Pro Hart. When I was offered the exhibition by the Monash Gallery of Art I had no hesitation in accepting.

I believe Hart has been unfairly denigrated by the art scene, and that he has made a good number of potent and original works over a long career. I know also that he has made many potboilers of dubious quality — but there are plenty of famous Australian artists in that category.

He works in five or six distinct styles, and these are all represented in the exhibition. The entire show of around seventy large works comes from his own collection, although many are not on show regularly in his Broken Hill space.

Hart's subject matter has remained fairly constant from his early years. Indeed he seems, like many untutored artists, to have arrived at his various styles early and not changed much thereafter. From 1962 we find underground mining scenes and symbolic works using mining tools and clothes. In these, empty miners' shirts stand for a universal experience of working life, and shovels become blank and accusatory masks worn by authority figures.

There are religious themes from over the decades. Pro is an active Christian, but by no means a humourless believer — he also has amusing pictures about church life and the spiritual quest. These are highlights of the show, including a couple of Breughel-influenced Tower of Babel pictures where the complex tower derives from a pit head.

His powerful Deposition picture shows both his penchant for universalist symbolism, and his careful observation. The cross to which Christ is nailed is riddled with twisted nails, a familiar sight to anyone who has worked underground, where electrical and communications cables are routed and rerouted with new sets of nailed supports on the main beams over the years. The rhythmic echoes of these nails with the crown of thorns are particularly successful.

The artist seems to have been a life-long conspiracy theorist, and throughout his career has used faceless shovel-masked figures to represent alleged conspirators — Fabians, Australian Republicans, even the Barrier Industrial Council cops the treatment. Hart clearly sees himself as a complete individualist, suspicious of all organised authority. His leering masked conspirators are memorable, although his level of paranoia is alarming. For instance he puts the Barrier Industrial Council in the same masks as the tormentors of Christ!

Hart may be largely self taught, but despite his carefully managed image of individualism, he has clearly benefited from the presence of the oldest Regional Gallery in NSW in Broken Hill, as well as good educational facilities for the miners as a result of the



Pro Hart, Yabbie Eaters, 1996
Reproduced courtesy of the artist

strong unions in that town.

The well-known works of bush life and back street Broken Hill abound. These pictures speak to people of a country life they admire, or of a lifestyle they have lost long ago. In this show most of these paintings are about Broken Hill life. And perhaps because they were truly and directly observed, they largely avoid the kitsch label hung on many of his bush scenes.

So, the show was of a higher quality that many art cognoscenti may suspect, and the works in certain of the 'lines of site' we arranged when hanging the show, would not have looked out of place in any state or national gallery.

Yet the show was not hugely popular, receiving a middling audience, by no means a blockbuster, but a good audience of paying visitors at \$5 or \$2 concession. What was noticeable was that the show attracted a *different* audience.

It seems our regular audience stayed away, and many people came who were certainly not regular visitors. I think quite a few were on their first visit to Orange Regional Gallery.

So from our observations I would suggest that it is possible

to divide Australians into two groups: those who like Pro Hart and those that don't.

Those who do are certainly the larger group but those that don't are the art mafia, the trendy opinion makers, those who buy from the top-end commercial galleries, and the critics in metropolitan newspapers.

The regional galleries have been the first to show the work of Pro Hart, and that other star of Australian art, Ken Done, but as yet I don't think either has made it to the state galleries.

I do believe that the metropolitan venues are missing an opportunity to gain a new audience by excluding Done and Hart, who I guess would be both the most popular and the most successful artists in Australia. I am inclined to think that this is reason enough to show them in a state gallery, which after all, is owned by the people of the state.

But as with many follow-the-leader purchases by the state galleries, they will acquire Done and Hart later, when they will have to pay six times as much for them.

ALAN SISLEY IS DIRECTOR OF THE ORANGE REGIONAL GALLERY, NSW.

ANNE KIRKER

Dutch Masters from the Rijksmuseum. NGV International.
24 June–2 October 2005.

Melbourne has got it sussed when it comes to attracting visitors during the city's coldest season. In tandem with Art Exhibitions Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria has established a 'Melbourne Winter Masterpieces' program, introducing high quality art works to its audiences through an annual blockbuster. As much as I hate this word, it aptly conjures up the scale and extraordinarily popular response to the first in this series held last year, *Impressionists*, from the Musée d'Orsay, and now in 2005, *Dutch Masters* from Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum.

A great deal of positive and informative press coverage has already been given to the ninety-four Netherlandish paintings and decorative art objects from Amsterdam, including NGV director Gerard Vaughan disclosing in the *Age* that his museum had passed up the chance to acquire a Vermeer in 1924, when it was felt the price was too high. This episode is 'history now', as they say, and *Dutch Masters* brings one of the artist's rare and exquisite paintings to Melbourne, *The love letter* (1669–72). When I viewed it in July, there was no disfiguring glass on the picture, and it was protected in the same way as its companions in the suite of exhibition spaces, with a simple low-set barrier which allowed one to peer quite closely to take in the meticulous detail.

Because many readers will have caught at least one of the newspaper accounts and a number will have visited

the exhibition itself, I shall concentrate here on taking MAM readers on a brief tour, describing personal highlights and a few disappointments. Realising that crowd control would be an issue, the designers wisely planned the spaces to give maximum room for visitors, with a clear route for moving people along from one theme to another. No bottlenecks were apparent. Firstly, one entered a deep burgundy room (not the hue that drains life out of pictures; more subdued and nondescript). Instead of walls or rigid barriers to prevent visitors from straying, soft flocked patterned silk hangings hung at intervals, ceiling to floor. In all, I found the design elegant and restrained, allowing primary attention to be given to the works themselves.

The Introductory wall label, written in an informed yet accessible style, set the tone of the exhibition: 'Here we are introduced to the best Dutch seventeenth-century artists and the culture in which they lived and worked, as seen through their eyes.' Other texts punctuating and enlivening the display spaces were quotes from contemporary sources, appropriate for each theme guiding the presentation of exhibits. Without favouring one work over another, all of the exhibition labels included interesting commentaries.

Paralleling the handsome catalogue with its traditional format (authored by guest curator Ruud Priem and including contributions by Ted Gott, other staff members from NGV, and experts on the subject within Australia) the themes in the exhibition were typical of how art history has classified and admired the heyday of Dutch painting. Given in straightforward terms, they included 'Landscape', 'Society

and Religion', 'Regents and Patricians in the Republic' and 'Genre Painting'. A further section (seemingly covering a multitude of subjects), was 'The Artists and their World'. In terms of audience attention, it was here that the still lifes — fruit and flowers populated with tiny insects; rich drapes, porcelain, glassware and precious metal vessels, some regarded symbolically as vanitas (reminding us of our mortality) — were clearly favourites in the exhibition.

One of the surprising delights of the show was to come across the juxtaposition between a painting and the actual object portrayed within it, specially Backer's portrait of *Johannes Lutma, Amsterdam silversmith* (c.1640) and Lutma's great salt cellar (1639) displayed in the wall case alongside. Generally, however, I was disappointed with the small number of decorative art objects on display. According to senior curator Ted Gott it was, however, actually a coup to borrow the glassware, silver and gold vessels and a few delftware specimens from the Rijksmuseum, as the institution normally does not lend these most fragile holdings.

This quibble aside, it was marvellous to see a number of NGV's own paintings in the exhibition, including Rembrandt's *Two old men disputing* (1628) and *Portrait of a white-haired man* (1667), which equalled the quality of their Amsterdam counterparts. Equally familiar yet differently powerful, the wall of rustic landscapes by Ruisdael and Hobbema were hugely popular, reminding viewers of the appeal such works had for subsequent generations of painters elsewhere — think England's Constable. Likewise, the commanding

painting by Bakhuysen of *The man-of-war 'Brielle'* (1689) could be the quintessential model for numerous British marine subjects populating gracious drawing rooms in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries — Australian visitors loved it.

The flourishing beginning and last touch to this outstanding exhibition was the huge digital photo hanging over the entrance of the NGV, taken from the Rijksmuseum's neo-gothic front door. How better to remind visitors of the masterpieces within!

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ROSLYN RUSSELL

Judith McKay, Showing off: Queensland at World Expositions 1862–1988
Central Queensland University Press and the Queensland Museum, 2004.
ISBN 1 876780.

International exhibitions, World's Fairs, Expos — whatever term was in vogue at particular times to describe the phenomenon — have enjoyed considerable scholarly attention of late. In Australia, there has been intensive study of specific exhibitions (Sydney 1879) and venues (the Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne). Australia's role as host and participant in these spectacles of consumption and, dare it be said, boosterism, has been examined; and their contribution to the genesis of major museums — the Powerhouse and Melbourne Museum — acknowledged.

Now Judith McKay adds a significant piece to the jigsaw puzzle of international exhibitions and their interaction with the Australian nation-state and its geopolitical relations with the rest of the world. She examines the international exhibition phenomenon through the lens of one state, Queensland. Such a focus means that her work is comprehensive without becoming overwhelming. Confining the study to one colony, then state, delimits it in time and space.

Queensland began exhibiting itself — its produce and wares, and its natural attractions — a scant three years after separation in 1859 from the parent colony of NSW. Its inaugural representation was in 1862 at the London International Exhibition of the Works of all Nations, the first to follow the parent of them all, the Great Exhibition held in the Crystal Palace in London's Hyde Park in 1851. McKay's study traces the progression from 'when Australia's northeastern state entered the world stage as an exhibitor' to '1988, when Queensland hosted its own epoch-making World Expo'. (p.1.)

Over that period Queensland exhibited 'officially' in no less than twenty-three international exhibitions, constructed the first 'Australian' exhibition building in London in 1872, and held its own International Exhibition in 1897. The zenith of Queensland's exhibitionary efforts, though, came well after the age of the great nineteenth-century exhibitions had passed. As McKay remarks, with a hint of justified pride, 'Queensland's greatest achievement in expositions was World Expo 88, the biggest celebration of Australia's Bicentenary and the only sizeable exposition to be held in Australia during the twentieth century'. (p.1)

What were the distinctive Queensland elements

presented in competition with the goods of the rest of the world? What displays did Queensland produce to attract the attention of exhibit-surfeited visitors? How did these displays change in response to changing industries and markets? McKay writes in relation to the question of how Australians define and project 'identity': 'The ever-changing exhibits recorded here suggest that projections of identity serve specific ends at specific times, and have a fair component of puffery and propaganda'. (p.1)

The narrative outlines the shifts in emphasis in Queensland's exhibiting goals, from a focus on attracting capital and labour in the later nineteenth century; to trade, first of all with the rest of the British Empire, and later with the wider world. Attracting tourists to the 'Sunshine State' rose rapidly up the agenda as the twentieth century progressed.

McKay gives a thorough account of the many and varied exhibition objects and structures that were designed to achieve the organisers' and the government's goals, including obelisks and towers of primary produce, a gold battery, a railway carriage and even a 'big cheese', displayed at Wembley in 1924, then cut up and sold. She also provides pen portraits of some of the stalwarts of Queensland's promotional efforts. The many illustrations in this elegant production allow the reader to imagine the effect of some of the more extravagant — and quirky — displays on contemporary visitors.

Negative aspects are not neglected; McKay's treatment of past representation by Queensland of its Indigenous people confronts this without flinching. Nineteenth-century exhibitions saw Indigenous people represented in ways which denied their essential humanity. An example of this

was a pair of mummified figures of Torres Strait Islanders displayed in the Queensland court in Sydney's Garden Palace in January 1880. Insensitivity to the fact that these were the bodies of fellow-Australians led the *Sydney Morning Herald* reporter to refer to them jestingly as 'distinguished Queenslanders'. The next month another mummified figure, dubbed 'the Aboriginal Cheops' but in reality Naada, a leading elder of the Trinity Bay Aboriginal people, was put on display. All three figures were located directly underneath the general ethnological court in the Garden Palace, which aimed to illustrate the ideology of Social Darwinism. McKay summed up the prevailing attitude: they were 'at the other end of civilisation's scale from white Australians' (p.35)

Showing off is a major contribution to the literature on Australia's involvement in international exhibitions — and a stimulus to further examination of their role in national representation. With this study, Queensland has again taken a prominent position in 'exhibiting itself'.

ROSLYN RUSSELL IS MANAGING EDITOR OF *MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA MAGAZINE*

ELIZABETH TRIARICO

***Manifesting Medicine*, Edited by Robert Bud, Artefacts series: Studies in the History of Science and Technology. Science Museum, London, 2004. ISBN 1-900747-56-1.**

This fascinating publication is the first of a series titled 'Artefacts: Studies in the History of Science and Technology'. It is the result of a very successful collaboration between three major

repositories of science and technology heritage material: the Deutsches Museum, Munich, the Science Museum, London and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

The 'Artefacts' series has been developed by and for science/technology historians and curators. The aim is 'to build a bridge between historical research and the use and application of historical knowledge in education and the public understanding of science and technology'. (xii.) Each volume focuses on a specific theme and objects are the basis from which to explore a wide range of scientific, technological and social issues.

Manifesting Medicine is a collection of interesting and well-written essays which draw on recent research in the history of science and technology. Together they illustrate that objects are rich sources of information and that there are many and varied ways in which curators and historians can work with objects to unlock their fascinating stories.

The book is divided into two sections. The first contains five object-based studies exploring specific historical events and their social impact through significant museum artefacts: early blood transfusion apparatus, a plastic human replica, the Geiger counter, open heart surgery equipment and packaging for the contraceptive pill. The studies not only provide an understanding of the purpose of the objects, but also offer a rare insight into the meanings that they held for those who were associated with them.

For example, Kim Pelis' study of the medical innovation of human to human blood transfusion is an intriguing story which is approached from a variety of angles. Stylistically it is one of the most interesting studies in the book. The story of James Blundell's life and transfusion work is

told as a type of historical fiction by using a stylised narrative voice. Pelis clearly demonstrates that Blundell was very much a product of his time, which is reflected in the design of his apparatus and his belief that blood has a life energy. According to Pelis, Blundell was greatly influenced by the Romantic and Gothic movements of the time. Numerous interesting connections are made between the innovation of blood transfusion and the contemporary Gothic romance tales of Shelley's Frankenstein's monster and Polidori's 'The Vampyre'.

Equally compelling is the study of the phenomenon of the 'Transparent Man' by Klaus Vogel, which explores the symbolic power of this lifesize plastic model. It was originally created as an alternative means of gaining an understanding of the interior of the human body and was put on permanent display in the German Hygiene Museum in 1930. The importance of the model as a symbol was reflected in its location within the museum, the way in which it was presented (as an attempt to express the human form artistically), and finally by the material itself. The symbolic power of this exhibit reinforced the image of the Hygiene Museums as a 'temple' of hygiene.

The second section of 'Manifesting Medicine' contains two excellent reviews which use specific examples to illustrate the changing role of medical museums and displays. Tim M. Boon, Curator of Public Health at the Science Museum, London, reviews the 'Health Matters' gallery at the Science Museum and reflects on its place in the development of the Museum's interpretation of medical history.

Ken Arnold, Exhibitions Unit Manager at the Wellcome Trust, covers a period of over 400 years and investigates more

than fifty medical museums and the kinds of medical history they portray. He clearly outlines his premise that not only are objects significant, but that their study is enhanced by understanding the history of the museums themselves. He discusses in detail how these collections are interpreted and various strategies now being employed to make medical museum collections more accessible to the public. This includes new style displays, temporary thematic exhibitions and cross-disciplinary approaches that bring together science, technology and art.

I would be interested to see how successful the new style medical displays actually are with the public: no mention is made of who the public is or how the displays would be evaluated. I think visitor research and evaluation of medical history displays would be an excellent topic for a future *Manifesting Medicine* review essay.

As a newcomer to the world of medical history and medical museums I found Arnold's review extremely interesting and informative. The review links in well with the previous essays and also refers to some of the artefacts and institutions. I do have to admit however, that I was disappointed that the review did not include any references or examples from Australia.

I think that the sponsors, the Deutsches Museum, the Science Museum and the Smithsonian Institution, should be congratulated for initiating this series and in particular for the *Manifesting Medicine* volume. I believe the issues and concepts discussed are extremely interesting, thought provoking and would be relevant to a wide range of historical collections and museums. I would urge Australian museums to consider seriously this highly successful object-based approach to historical research, which could be easily applied to their own collections and display history.

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NINA STANTON

***Opening Doors: Learning in the Historic Environment: An Attingham Trust Report.* Edited by Giles Waterfield. London, 2004. Available at: www.attinghamtrust.org**

It is hard to ignore the historic environment in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. On average some 15 million people per annum visit the membership properties of the Historic Houses Association alone. While it is hard to correlate those numbers with visitors to historic sites in Australia, the thought expressed in *Opening Doors: Learning in the Historic Environment* that history has 'never been hotter' (p.27) applies here and in many other countries. The pity is that this hunger for history is largely satisfied through the medium of television while real places where history happened go begging.

Opening Doors is a survey of education and interpretation in historic buildings and sites in Great Britain. It was inspired by *A Common Wealth*, the 1999 report on education in museums compiled by David Anderson, who was a keynote speaker at the 2005 Museums Australia conference.

It is an initiative of the Attingham Trust, which brings together professionals from around the world for unique courses integrating the study of country houses with the landscape they occupy and the collections they harbour, including Royal collections. (Since its

foundation in 1952 nineteen Australians have attended various Attingham schools).

Opening Doors is ambitious in its scope, drawing on places of worship, archaeological sites, country houses, industrial archaeology, historic precincts and museums based in historic buildings. The potentially daunting nature of the publication is lightened by numerous case studies, well worth reading. For instance, Segedunum, a Roman fort, juxtaposes an eighteenth-century pit head with the remains of Hadrian's Wall and thus makes the nature of change vivid, while William Wordsworth's cottage has poets-in-residence who offer poetry sessions for visiting schoolchildren.

Also scattered through as marginalia are quotes which encapsulate the potential of the historic site not only as an educational resource, but, as Simon Schama says, 'At a time when our moorings seem to be about to come loose history can anchor us.' (p.27)

The report makes a number of major recommendations. One states: 'Government departments should extend to the site-based heritage learning sector the investment currently awarded to museums and galleries.' (p.11)

In the Australian context the Historic Houses Trust of NSW is evidence of the positive impact of government funding on the conservation of historic sites and their interpretation. The community-anchored National Trusts in each state must look on with envy.

Opening Doors sets out to identify the benefits of on-site heritage education and enjoyment, citing, for example, Stockport Council's Tudor timber-framed manors that offer well-planned history programs. In Ulster, educational tours through the villages such as Caledon and Killyleagh attract pupils from

diverse backgrounds who then meet and engage with each other against the backdrop of their shared environment.

What holds governments back from recognising the importance of learning in historic sites? In Australia there are two possible reasons. First, sites receiving government funding often hang off the coat tails of a number of different departments. Consequently, the historic site voice is diffused and so is the funding.

Opening Doors recognises this situation in another recommendation: 'In each country, an existing body should be empowered by Government to act as a single advocate and co-ordinator for heritage learning with far ranging responsibilities.' (p.11) The eagerly awaited Heritage Strategy for Victoria is expected to put in place plans that will gather the various bodies in that state around one table.

Second, rarely do you see a critical review in the media of the visitor experience in an historic house. Art exhibitions get reviews as a matter of course. Could houses learn from galleries how to attract media attention and government funding?

Perhaps the answer for historic sites is not to rely on the notion that 'history is hot', but to combine history with aesthetic education – an approach many educational programs in historic houses neglect entirely. Not only is there potential for educators in historic properties to develop the aesthetic eye of the visitor, but, as the report notes, buildings and gardens, as well as ruins and landscape, can inspire awe, wonder and pleasure. 'They can relieve us from the limitations and monotony of everyday life and provide an alternative, positive experience.' (p.128) The potential of historic sites to nourish both mind and soul is enormous.

Unfortunately it is a chicken

and egg dilemma — you can't create excellence in learning without funding and funding is usually held back until there is recognition of potential benefits. *Opening Doors* contains some useful directions to get going.

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SUE HARLOW

The New Town Square: Museums and Communities in Transition.
By Robert R. Archibald. Walnut Creek CA, Altamira Press, 2004. ISBN: 0-7591-0288-0

Robert Archibald argues that the United States is suffering a serious 'crisis of place', a loss of identity in a society that has become impersonalised and homogenised. The crisis is symbolised by the disappearance of the town square: not just the physical space where people congregated and socialised, but also the metaphorical town square of local character, whose special qualities connected its residents to each other via the past and the present, making each community different.

Archibald suggests that it is the special role of public historians and museum people to arrest this crisis of place by making museums the new 'town square'. By working collaboratively with their communities, he maintains it is the special responsibility of museum historians to identify and preserve what is distinctive in a place. Museums can assist communities by constructing a shared story, inclusive of all. Expanding museums' mission in this way will ensure they remain relevant to their communities and contribute to the betterment of towns and cities.

Archibald's arguments that the lack of social space and cohesion is impacting on the health of United States communities can equally be applied to many places in Australia, particularly in the Northern Territory (with which I am most familiar). Those of us working in the regional and community museum sector know too well that this is an age of declining resources and ageing volunteers, yet with increasing demands from more sophisticated visitors. *The New Town Square* provides another timely reminder of the necessity of collaboration between community groups, and not just the traditional project partners such as youth groups and health organisations.

Throughout the book Archibald points to the changes that have led to the diminishing sense of identity and place amongst communities. As an example, he cites the changes that have transformed his childhood town from the distinct culture of his boyhood to a town that is becoming subsumed into an American monoculture. He recalls the local shops and their owners as people who had a stake in the community but who have gradually all been replaced by large corporations, such that shoppers are no longer friends and neighbours but consumers and strangers.

In other case studies, he laments the trend by which bigger and more private housing is now the norm; where there is little planning for social spaces, since people no longer walk or socialise in the neighbourhood; where the use of cars enables communities to spread out, so people are now unable or unwilling to walk. Archibald is not against 'progress', and accepts that change will continue to happen, but he insists that society needs to shift attitudes and reuse, adapt, and be less obsessed with what is new.

The New Town Square

addresses many issues associated with the decline of a community sense of identity and place. Nevertheless Archibald is optimistic about the future, and the ability of museums to move into a more proactive stance by fostering meaningful relationships with all groups within a community and encouraging interested people to conserve significant objects and to collect significant stories.

Only the last few chapters suggest details on how museums can play a pivotal role in community revitalisation through projects that go beyond the museum itself. He insists that museums need to be broad-based and inclusive, to ensure their objectives match those of the people they serve. This is an optimistic view, assuming that there are enough people out there who want, and have the time, to revive a sense of community in the face of cultural homogenisation.

I found some aspects of the book repetitive, but was nevertheless consistently fascinated. As the book is based on Archibald's five years of lectures and radio vignettes, the subject is detailed and well considered.

With many years' experience in the museum field and many more watching the changes to the cities with which he has been associated, Archibald is well qualified to comment. The line he advocates — that museums can no longer remain separate from their communities and survive — has for some time been the subject of museum discussion in Australia. It is certain that many museums are making some of the changes Archibald suggests, but for too many community museums little has changed over the past twenty years.

SUE HARLOW IS THE REGIONAL MUSEUMS SUPPORT OFFICER IN THE MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, CURRENTLY ON 12 MONTHS' LEAVE.

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