Winter 2019

SL

STATE LIBRARY®
NEW SOUTH WALES

Living Language

Message

Long ago and far, far away I found myself in a governing body meeting at my old college. The Fellows were engaged in a tough debate about the future of their library. The World Wide Web (as it was called) had just been invented, and a near majority of my colleagues felt that libraries would probably not survive its spider-like approach. In the end, the pro-library lobby (just) won the day, and the building is now open 24 hours a day.

We are seeing similar things here in New South Wales. Public libraries across the state are being renewed and reinvigorated by enthusiastic communities.

This year marks the 80th birthday of one of our most important pieces of civil legislation — the *Library Act* of 1939. You can easily consult it (via the web of course), and if you do you will see that one of the State Library's core statutory obligations is to support, advise and be an advocate for public libraries.

The *Library Act* grew out of a report prepared by the Libraries Advisory Committee in 1939. Here is a brief taste of what that report said:

> Public library service is a national necessity.
>
> Without libraries the education of the citizen cannot be carried beyond the school or lecture room.
>
> Research is essential to commerce and industry, and to the spread of amenities through the country. Without libraries its results cannot be communicated, and research itself is without an essential tool. Without libraries the citizen has no check on indoctrination and propaganda.
>
> Public libraries may supply reading for recreation. There is every reason why they should supply the better type of recreational reading, but their essential purpose is the supply of literature and information necessary to the progress and prosperity of the community as a whole.

The rise of the internet has, if anything, assisted libraries in their work, which remains, in essence, as it was described in 1939. In the end, arachnoid e-encroachment has made libraries stronger. This in turn is making our living communities stronger. Good examples of happy marriages between the human and the digital, the old and new, will be found in two forthcoming exhibitions at the Library this winter — *Living Language* and *Dead Central* — which you can read about in this issue of *SL*.

The futures of libraries have never been more positive. Please come and share them with us.

DR JOHN VALLANCE FAHA
State Librarian

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COVER
Melissa Jackson and Marika Duczynski with projection of Sydney Language, photo by Joy Lai, see *Living Language* exhibition, page 12

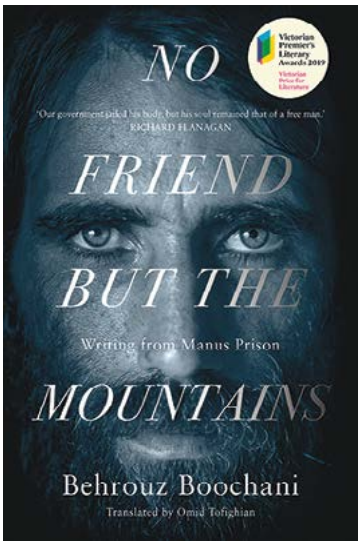
NSW GOVERNMENT

Reading list

Books shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards.

sl.nsw.gov.au/pla


The Trauma Cleaner
TOO MUCH LIP
MELISSA LUCASHENKO
CHRIS HAMMER
SCRUBLANDS
Shine Mountain
JULIE HUNT
Alexis Wright
Tracker
THE LUCKY GALAH
TRACY SORENSEN
stephanie bishop
MAN OUT OF TIME
THINGS I'VE THOUGHT TO TELL YOU SINCE I SAW YOU LAST PENELOPE LAYLAND
RICHARD FIDLER & KÁRI GÍSLASON
SAGA ÍSLANDS
GERARD MURNANE
BORDER DISTRICTS
Leave Taking
Lorraine Marwood
Miss Ex-Yugoslavia
Sofija Stefanovic
BOY SWALLOWS UNIVERSE
TRENT DALTON
I am out with Lanterns
EMILY GALE
CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE
The Erratics
VICKI LAVEAU-HARVIE
eileen chong
THE LIFE
KRETSER COME
Blindside
Mark Reid
Axiomatic
Maria Tumarkin
HOME IS NEARBY
Magdalena McGuire
THE LEBS



Special Award

At the glittering NSW Premier's Literary Award ceremony in the Mitchell Library Reading Room on 29 April the audience was moved by Behrouz Boochani's acceptance speech from Papua New Guinea, through a phone held by his translator. Boochani received the Special Award for *No Friend But the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison*, which, according to the judges, 'adds a vital voice to Australian social and political consciousness, and deserves to be recognised for its contribution to Australian cultural life'.

Coral Thomas Fellowship

The biennial Coral Thomas Fellowship has been increased to $100,000 to enable scholars to engage in deep and focused research into Australian culture, history and society. The Fellowship honours Coral Kirkwood Thomas nee Patrick (1920–1996), and was first awarded in 2016 to Dr Rebe Taylor. The current Fellow, Professor Grace Karskens, is using the Library's collections to tell new cross-cultural and environmental stories about one of Australia's most beautiful and historically significant rivers: Dyarubbin, the Hawkesbury River. Applications are now open for the Library's 2020 Fellowships.

www.sl.nsw.gov.au/fellowships

Grace Karskens, photo by Joy Lai

UNESCO seven

The original manuscript for Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians*, published in 1894, was included on the UNESCO Memory of the World register in February 2019. The manuscript, acquired from Turner's granddaughter Philippa Poole in 2000, shows the origins of the classic novel that gave young Australian readers their first female hero. It's the seventh Library item or collection to be inscribed by UNESCO, and one of 11 collections of national significance from around Australia added to the list this year.

Manuscript for *Seven Little Australians*, originally titled 'Seven Pickles'

NEWS

Laughing matter

Australia's only prize for humour writing was awarded at the Library on 2 May as part of Sydney Writers' Festival. The Russell Prize for Humour Writing was established through the bequest of Peter Wentworth Russell.

The winner was David Cohen for his wry, eclectic collection of short stories about 'dysfunctional men', *The Hunter and Other Stories of Men*, published by Transit Lounge. The judges praised Cohen's collection for 'its original and imaginative narratives, its assured evocative style, the obvious warmth of the narrator for all his flawed characters, and most of all, for its sustained comic vision'.

Awards coordinator Sara Fishwick with shortlist, photo by Joy Lai

Capturing time

After much plotting, careful planning and collaboration among our Digitisation and Collection Care teams, in March 2019 the Library completed the digitisation of the final volume in our small but spectacular collection of Books of Hours. These fragile volumes are extremely tightly bound, so to keep the book open while supporting the spine, one of our book conservators designed a custom-made cradle. Images can now be viewed through the Library's catalogue.

www.sl.nsw.gov.au/blogs/capturing-time-digitising-book-hours

Digitising a Book of Hours

Interrobang

The following is one of approximately 350 questions answered each month by the Library's 'Ask a Librarian' service.

? In the *Sydney Gazette* dated 21 May 1803, there is a report of a Masonic meeting held in the house of Sergeant Whittle of the New South Wales Corps. Do you have any information about Whittle and the possible location of the house?

! The Library holds a copy of *Rum Rebellion: A Study of the Overthrow of Governor Bligh by John Macarthur and the New South Wales Corps* (1939) by H Evatt, which has many references to Whittle. He enlisted in the NSW Corps on 17 March 1791 in the UK, and arrived in the colony on 7 October 1792 on the *Royal Admiral*.

Whittle was present at the arrest of William Bligh. An iconic illustration of the arrest is believed to have been commissioned by him and proudly hung in his house after the event. The picture's depiction of Governor Bligh as cowardly has been controversial.

Some details of Whittle's military history and land grants can be found in *A Colonial Regiment: New Sources Relating to the New South Wales Corps, 1789–1810* (c 1992), edited by Pamela Statham. One of the grants is for a property in South Street (formerly South Row, and renamed O'Connell Street in 1810). This is likely to have been his address at the time of the rebellion, so could be the location of the Masonic meeting.

www.sl.nsw.gov.au/ask

Take 5 TICKETS

Compiled by Anna Corkhill,
Curator, Research & Discovery

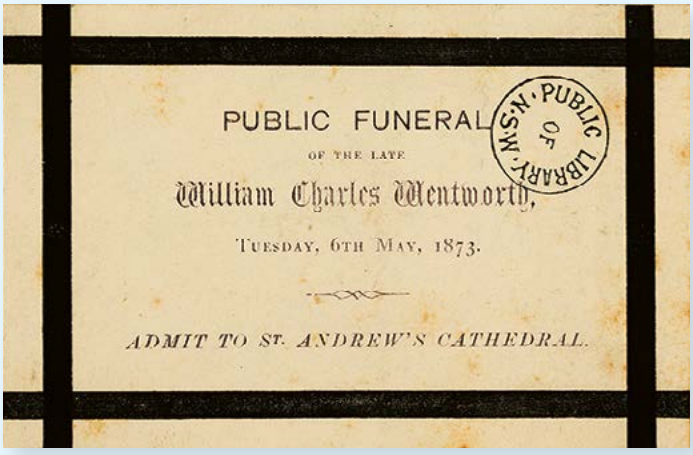
Exhibition

Two years after he returned to England from New South Wales, Sir Edward Macarthur, son of pastoralists John and Elizabeth, bought this season ticket for the International Exhibition, or Great London Exposition, of 1862. Decorative arts by William Morris and early ice-making refrigerators were among the exhibits.

A 2919/Item 5

Membership

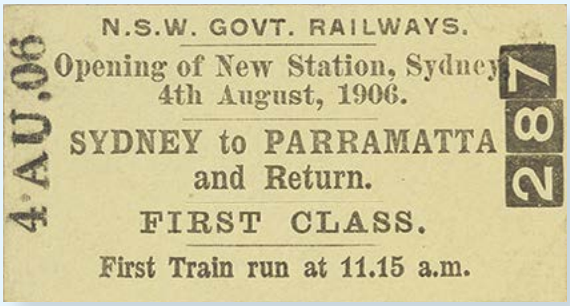
Since the Sydney Cricket Ground (originally the Association Cricket Ground) opened at Moore Park in 1854, it has been used for test cricket, rugby union, rugby league, Australian rules football and other sports. Membership to the ground was established in 1877.



Funeral

Australian explorer, journalist, politician and author William Charles Wentworth was so popular a public figure that a ticket was required to attend his state funeral in 1873. Although he died in England, it was Wentworth's wish to be buried at his home in Sydney.

QA923.29/W479/1A1



New station

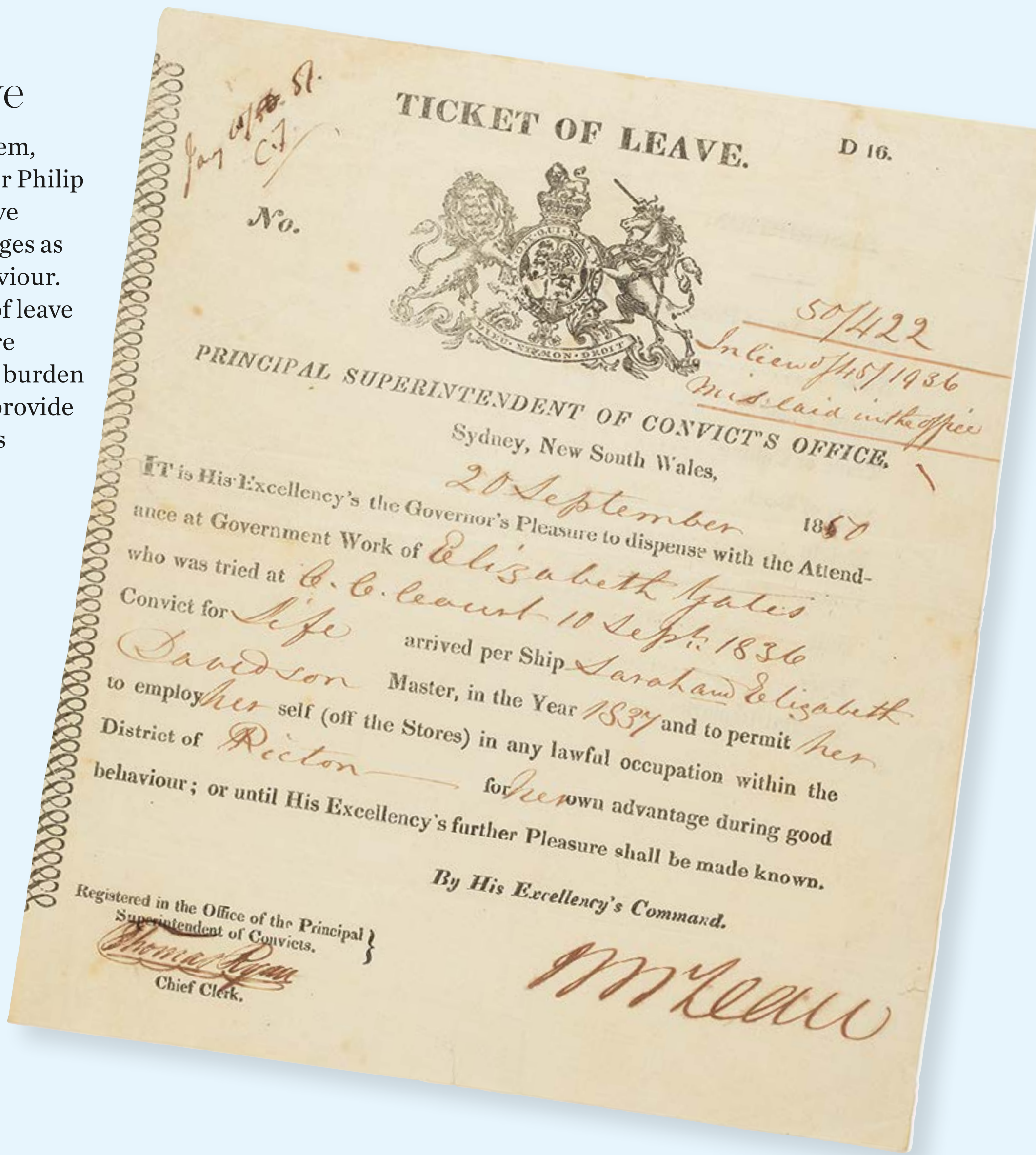
Sydney's main nineteenth-century cemetery was cleared to make way for the new Central railway station, which opened on 4 August 1906. The story of the Devonshire Street cemetery is told in the Library's *Dead Central* exhibition, on now.

Ar 84/8

Ticket of leave

The ticket of leave system, introduced by Governor Philip Gidley King in 1801, gave convicts certain privileges as a reward for good behaviour. Convicts with a ticket of leave could marry and acquire property, lessening the burden on the government to provide them with food from its limited stores.

MLMSS 5264/Box 1



TICKET OF LEAVE. D 16.

No.

50/422

PRINCIPAL SUPERINTENDENT OF CONVICT'S OFFICE,
Sydney, New South Wales, 20 September 18[illegible]

It is His Excellency's the Governor's Pleasure to dispense with the Attendance at Government Work of Elizabeth Yates who was tried at C. C. Court 10 Sept. 1836 Convict for Life arrived per Ship Sarah and Elizabeth Davidson Master, in the Year 1837 and to permit her to employ her self (off the Stores) in any lawful occupation within the District of Picton for her own advantage during good behaviour; or until His Excellency's further Pleasure shall be made known.

By His Excellency's Command.

Registered in the Office of the Principal Superintendent of Convicts.
Thomas Ryan
Chief Clerk.

STREETON *in Sydney*

Artist and subject were in perfect accord when Arthur Streeton painted Sydney.

Although Arthur Streeton is usually associated with Melbourne, and Victoria more generally, he spent an important part of his early career in Sydney, where he painted some of his most impressive and memorable works, such as *Fire's On* (1891), *Cremorne Pastoral* (1895), and *The Purple Noon's Transparent Might* (1896).

Before coming to Sydney, Streeton had spent a summer living in an abandoned mansion in Templestowe and painting with Charles Conder. Conder had come from Sydney in 1888 to join Tom Roberts and Streeton, and in July 1889 the trio organised the famous *9 by 5 Impression Exhibition*, a key point in the history of Australian art.

The idyllic period at Heidelberg did not last long. As an economic downturn gave rise to a depression in 1890, Conder left for Europe, and Streeton and Roberts moved to Sydney. Roberts joined the artists' Curlew Camp at Sirius Cove in Mosman, while Streeton stayed nearby with his sister and her husband. Later, he joined Roberts at the harbourside camp.

There, Streeton observed light bounce off the surface of the water, reflecting the brilliance of the sky above. He studied these effects at all times of day and night, and produced a group of small panels that are some of the jewels of Australian art.

There is something special about oil paint being applied to the warm tone of a cedar panel. In Melbourne, Streeton and his colleagues had painted their 9 x 5 inch

works on small cedar panels, designed as cigar box lids, which had been provided by the artists' friend Louis Abrahams, whose family was in the tobacco business.

In Sydney, Streeton used larger and longer drapers' panels, obtained from clothing manufacturer Reuben Brasch, who had established the Curlew Camp. The larger format made it possible for Streeton to paint something just as fresh and bright but more substantial than 9 x 5 impressions. One of the earliest is the little masterpiece of colour and light *Circular Quay* (1892), now in the National Gallery of Australia.

In Sydney, Streeton developed a more incisive eye and a more precise handling of paint. There is an exactness in the density of his oil paint so that when it is put down on the panel, it retains its freshness and autonomy.

The newly acquired State Library panel, measuring 15.5 x 70 cm, shows a panoramic view of Sydney Harbour from Curraghbeena Point in Mosman looking across Cremorne Point to Fort Denison. Streeton depicted the scope of the harbour in a carefully orchestrated composition.

At first he draws our attention to the white sail in the busy left half of the panel; then to the ship on the right, travelling in the opposite direction. Immediately beyond it, we see smoke rising into the sky from a distant ferry set against the darkest tone on the far shore, the visual centre of gravity of the composition. Our attention is then led to the ship further out and then towards the right side of the composition, where activity is dormant and our eyes come to rest.

Every mark, dash and dot on this panel has a purpose, like musical notes creating a melody. Everything is painted with a heightened sense of awareness, the artist and his subject in perfect accord. When we have taken in the wide composition, we can marvel at the beautiful passages of paint and colour on every square inch of this spectacular painting.

A small label on the back — 'NB-S from ECB-S 10th Nov 1894. In memory of two happy years in Sydney' — provides us with its romantic provenance. The panel was a gift to Admiral Nathaniel Bowden-Smith from his wife, Emily Cecilia, in memory (as the label says) of two happy years in Sydney. Bowden-Smith was the Commander of the Australian Fleet in Sydney (1892–94) and lived at Admiralty House. Later, the little panel left for England with them. It was sold by their descendants in 1986.

Lou Klepac OAM, art historian and publisher

Panoramic view of Sydney Harbour and the city skyline*, 1894, by Arthur Streeton is on display in the exhibition *Paintings from the Collection

The acquisition of the Streeton painting is supported by the State Library of NSW Foundation.

LIVING LANGUAGE

A major exhibition opening in July at the Library will celebrate UNESCO's International Year of Indigenous Languages.

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages at a critical time. In Australia, roughly 90% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages still spoken today are considered endangered, and many communities are doing extraordinary work to protect, promote and pass on their languages. These languages are at the core of our memories, our expression and our ability to sustain our cultures and identities, and their destruction has had profound impacts on Aboriginal people in Australia since 1788.

There were more than 250 languages spoken in Australia before 1788, and even more dialects. Our languages are among the oldest on the planet, and include ancient sign languages and non-verbal forms of communicating still practised throughout Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples relied on sophisticated trade routes and relationships bolstered by shared languages and established protocols for communication. The richness and diversity of Australian languages reveals a world that has been dismissed and dismantled by colonisation, a world that continues to speak to us from just below society's surface.

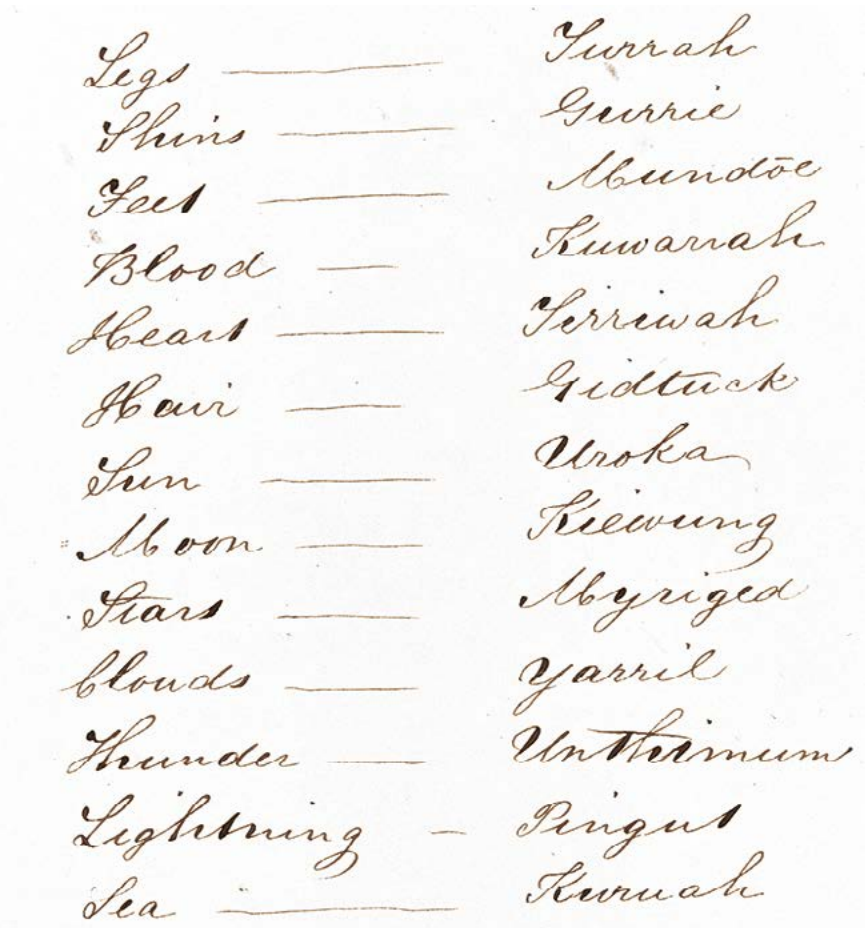
Biraban (Johnny McGill) and Threlkeld

The following is an excerpt from the *Sydney Gazette* and *NSW Advertiser*, 12 January 1830:

> A native Chief, of the name of Barabahn, has resided for a considerable time with the Rev. Mr. Threlkeld at Lake Macquarie, and by his intelligence and steady application has been of great service to Mr. T. in his endeavours to reduce the Aboriginal language to a grammatical form. Of the honourable proficiency which that gentleman has made in his arduous under-taking, he attributes no small share to the assistance afforded him by Barabahn; and having reported this to the GOVERNOR, HIS EXCELLENCY was pleaded to confer upon the Chief, in the presence of his numerous countrymen at Parramatta on Wednesday last, a badge of distinction, consisting of a brass plate bearing this inscription — 'Barabahn, or Mac Gil, Chief of the Tribe at Bartalah, on Lake Macquarie ; a Reward for his assistance in reducing his Native Tongue to a written Language.' In suspending this badge upon the breast of the Chief, His EXCELLENCY commended his laudable conduct, and expressed the pleasure he felt in thus rewarding it.

Beerabahn or MacGill, Chief of Bartabah or Lake Macquarie, c 1830, by HBW Allan, SAFE/PXD 1465/Box 2/15

Opposite: Damien Webb, photo by Joy Lai



The exhibition *Living Language: Community, Culture, Country* will celebrate the strength, diversity and richness of our Aboriginal languages in New South Wales. It will touch on the complex historical relationships between different language groups, and present stories of strength, trauma and joy that have been shared with the Library's Indigenous Engagement Branch through countless hours of consultation, research and outreach.

Living Language will highlight early attempts by colonists to understand Aboriginal languages. One of the key figures from that time is First Fleet officer of marines William Dawes, who recorded his conversations with the young Aboriginal woman Patyegarang between 1788 and 1791 in exceptional detail.

As well as representing the earliest attempt to transcribe and understand the Sydney languages, Dawes' notebooks are important because they retain the conversational context which is crucial for contemporary language work. Unlike many people who recorded language in wordlists, Dawes attempted to show it as it was spoken and to recognise the speaker's intelligence, wit and clarity.

TOP: Damien Webb, Ronald Briggs, Melissa Jackson, Marika Duczynski, photo by Joy Lai

ABOVE: 'Vocabulary of the language of the natives at Port Stephens' (detail), 1845–50, by Charles Macarthur King, MLMSS 7771

To read the words of Patyegarang is to come close to seeing the new colony through the eyes of an Aboriginal person, and to be reminded that despite the violence of colonisation there were figures on both sides who were trying to understand each other. These notebooks will be returning from the United Kingdom to Gadigal country for the exhibition.

The Indigenous Engagement Branch has worked with dozens of language groups over the past six months to understand the Library's role in responding to the language needs of Aboriginal people and communities. This role hinges on opening up the collection and building reciprocal relationships with Aboriginal language speakers and knowledge holders. It requires us to recognise that languages were not 'lost' but were systematically diminished, and it asks us to remember that generations of Elders have managed to keep language and culture strong despite decades of assimilation policies.

The generosity of Elders and Aboriginal communities in supporting this exhibition has been extraordinary. Being able to spend time on Country speaking with people about their language journeys has been a tremendous honour. We hope it will imbue the exhibition with a sense of life and joy that reflects the incredible and ancient history of our languages, and the strength we carry with us into the future.

Damien Webb (Palawa), Manager, Indigenous Engagement; Melissa Jackson (Bundjalung), Librarian, Indigenous Engagement; Marika Duczynski (Gamilaroi), Project Officer, Indigenous Engagement; Ronald Briggs (Gamilaroi), Curator, Research & Discovery

***Living Language: Community, Culture, Country*, a free exhibition from 13 July to 17 November 2019**

This exhibition and the extensive consultation process have been made possible through the generosity of the State Library of NSW Foundation and financial support from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Notes from the road

Over three hectic weeks in March 2019, we visited nine regions of New South Wales that represent 17 separate language groups, including Anaiwan, Bundjalung, Gumbayngirr, Dhangatti, Wiradjuri and Gamilaroi. Our overall feeling from these visits was an appreciation of the generosity with which these communities shared their time, knowledge and stories.

A common theme that emerged was the idea of a 'secret language', which reflected the traumatic history of language dispossession. Community members were so worried about being found speaking their language that they hid away to talk to each other. Individuals sometimes locked themselves away in rooms or cupboards so that they could talk to themselves.

We were also moved by the communities' willingness to take us to places that were very special to them. Each community was at a different stage of the language revival process, and this was reflected in the venues chosen for our meetings. Some communities had purpose-built cultural centres, while others had been given small rooms to run their operations.

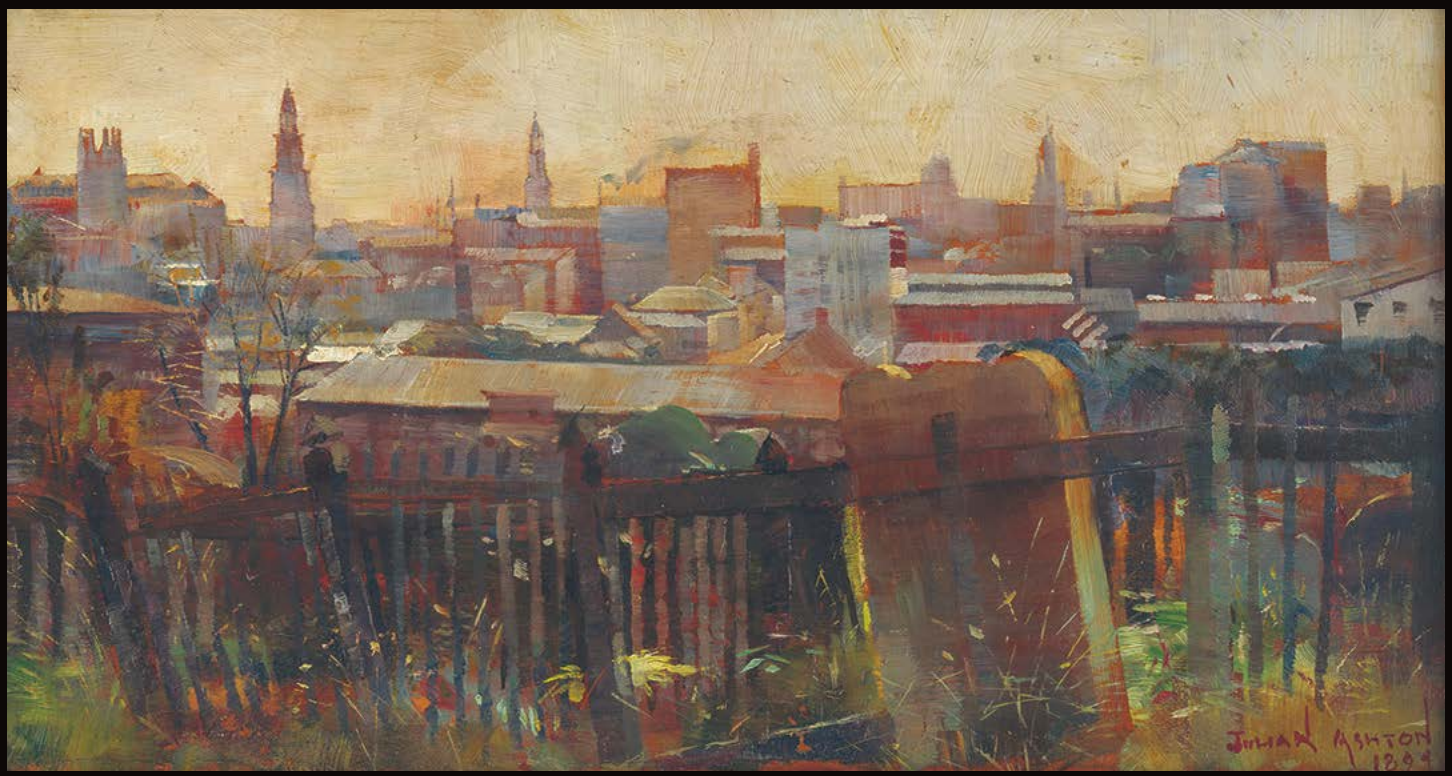
There was an overwhelming enthusiasm among communities for reviving language, but their initiatives were often hampered by a shortage of resources like dictionaries, vocabularies and teaching aids, and exacerbated by a lack of financial support.

Marika Duczynski and Melissa Jackson on Lightning Ridge at sunset, photo by Avryl Whitnall

EXHIBITION

DEAD CENTRAL

* WORDS Elise Edmonds



A NEW EXHIBITION TELLS THE STORY OF A LOST CEMETERY IN THE CENTRE OF SYDNEY.

Set in concrete in neat lines within Botany's Pioneer Memorial Park are headstones from a vanished Sydney cemetery. Enduring the wind, salt and air pollution for more than 100 years, these 746 headstones are remnants of the Devonshire Street cemetery that once sprawled across sandy, uneven ground bounded by the city's Elizabeth, Pitt and Devonshire streets — where Central Station now stands.

The major cemetery for nineteenth century Sydney, its burial ground was divided by walls into seven sections denoting religious denominations. The oldest was the Church of England section, then Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Wesleyan, Quaker and Jewish sections.

Consecrated in 1820, the cemetery filled up over the following decades. After it was officially closed in 1867, family vaults continued to accept new burials. By the end of the nineteenth century, the entire ground was overgrown and uncared for; burials had been made within every square inch, even under paths. Rubbish was often dumped from neighbouring terraces, and at night it was a dangerous, insalubrious place.

In January 1901 the state government announced its intention to clear the cemetery to make way for Central Station. Well over 30,000 bodies were buried there. Descendants were given two months' notice to decide where their forebears' remains would be reinterred. Those not claimed would be transferred to Bunnerong cemetery, an extension of Botany cemetery.

Before the graves were exhumed, two dedicated locals from nearby Albion Street, Surry Hills, set about documenting the cemetery. Married couple Arthur and Josephine Ethel Foster were standing next to the headstone of ex-convict and successful businesswoman Mary Reibey when they decided to photograph and copy the inscriptions.

Mrs Foster photographed the headstones as Mr Foster cleared away the undergrowth and inked the text carved into the stone to ensure the words were clear. He also copied the inscriptions into notebooks. While the couple primarily documented the Church of England section, their record is extraordinary — it allows us to look

ABOVE: Mr and Mrs Foster photographing the Devonshire Street cemetery, c 1900, courtesy Royal Australian Historical Society, S00045

OPPOSITE: The Old Cemetery, Devonshire Street, 1894, by Julian Rossi Ashton, ML 207

back to nineteenth century Sydney and read the tragic accounts of short lives and misfortunate deaths, for example:

Harriet Mary Sheba
Only daughter of
Joseph Hyde Potts
Who ceased to breathe
On the 5th day of December 1838

Sacred
to the memory of
William Oliver
who was accidentally killed
by a Bullock Cart
April the 2d. 1821
Aged 34 Years

Catherine Jane, who departed this life
in the 22nd year of her age,
having never recovered from the
shock and affliction occasioned by
the awful and sudden death of her husband
who met his fate
by the falling of his horse.
Likewise their son Alexander, aged 2 days.

While headstones and burial monuments feature in the foreground of the images, there are often glimpses of the surrounding landscape — the undulating land, the looming dark trees, the texture of the old brick walls and the terrace houses built right up to the edge of the cemetery. In the distance are the landmarks of smoke stacks and church spires.

The Fosters worked on their project in their spare time — Saturday afternoons, Sundays and holidays. Mrs Foster took hundreds of photographs and Mr Foster transcribed about half of the 1220 Church of England monuments, along with parts of other sections.

Devonshire Street cemetery, labourers preparing ground for Central railway station, c 1901, Royal Australian Historical Society, PXD 1248/Box 1

The Burial Files

Complementing the *Dead Central* exhibition, *The Burial Files* podcast reveals the fascinating story of the 30,000 souls once buried in the sands of the Devonshire Street cemetery. Hear insights from historians, curators, archaeologists, forensic experts and railway enthusiasts.

Subscribe now via iTunes, Google Podcasts or SoundCloud

Their work attracted the interest of journalists after the resumption of the cemetery was announced in the press. As the *Australian Star* reported in February 1901:

> A LADY PHOTOGRAPHER, with her attendant genius holding the umbrella ... to shield her from the bright and ardent sun of an easy and cool summer's day, was there and she even wanted to take the photographs of Constable Williams and the representative of the 'Star', doubtless under the belief that such persons were part and parcel of the whole panorama ...

In her booklet *Odd Bits of Old Sydney*, published in 1921, Mrs Foster reflected on photographing Sydney in the early twentieth century:

> We all realise how rapidly the old is giving place to the new, and only by means of pictures will those who come after us know what Sydney was like once upon a time. And in looking at pictures of quiet streets, quaint old homes, beautiful gardens and fine old trees, they will understand why many today still call this queenly city 'Dear old Sydney'.

The Fosters were among the founding members of the Australian Historical Society (now the Royal Australian Historical Society) in 1901. After Mr Foster's death in 1924, the couple's meticulous documentation of the cemetery and other Sydney landmarks was purchased by the Library. Mrs Foster did not photograph or write again on Sydney's history, but she remained closely involved in the RAHS until she died in 1955. Arthur and Josephine Ethel Foster are buried at South Head cemetery.

The exhibition *Dead Central* pays tribute to the vanished cemetery and to the work of the Fosters. The story is told through a 35-minute recording, which you listen to on your own device as you move through the exhibition. It will take you on a journey back to nineteenth century Sydney, to a place that was once outside the boundaries of the town; a place where Sydney buried its dead.

Almost 120 years after the Devonshire Street cemetery was cleared, the headstones that remain standing at Botany cemetery are still beautiful — though altered. The old stones are covered in lichen, and the predominant colour of the scene is rust-red. The many examples of Victorian-era stonemasonry — angels, seraphs, sacred hearts and crosses, draped urns and broken columns — contrast with the modern cemetery. And some of the inscriptions can no longer be deciphered.

Elise Edmonds, Senior Curator, Research & Discovery

***Dead Central*, a free exhibition until 17 November**
(We recommend that you bring your own headphones.)

Inking the text on the headstone for Dennis Ryan, c 1900, by Josephine Ethel Foster, PXB 768/Album 2/9


ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD YOUTH DAY STRENGTHEN PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONGRESS OF PEOPLES FOR PEACE
CÂY TRE VIỆT-NAM
VUI CỬA VUI NHÀ
NHÂN DÂN

FEATURE

A MYTHICAL *country*

WORDS Sheila Ngoc Pham

Looking through Vietnamese art posters collected in the 1950s elicits complicated feelings all these years later.

In 1956, Australian writers Mona Brand and Len Fox boarded a cargo ship from Melbourne to Rangoon en route to Vietnam. Though newly married, this was not their honeymoon; they were making their way to Hanoi to take up two postings with the North Vietnamese government to help its employees and others improve their English. Their friend Wilfred Burchett, a notable Australian journalist, had recommended them for the roles.

When Brand and Fox made up their minds to go, they had little idea of what to expect. Two years later, they found leaving 'an emotional wrench'. 'As the train left the station and the haunting sounds of one of our favourite lullabies filled the air, we both broke down,' recalled Brand in her autobiography, *Enough Blue Sky* (1995).

Alongside their day-to-day work in Vietnam, the couple wrote and published several books, including Fox's *Chung of Vietnam* (1957) and *Friendly Vietnam* (1958), and Brand's *Daughters of Vietnam* (1958). The Library holds these books, the last two as part of the Dame Mary Gilmore collection. However, the Library has an even more astonishing legacy of Brand and Fox's time in Hanoi: their enormous trove of Vietnamese art.

This collection largely comprises art posters and other ephemera. Most were commercially printed and sold cheaply, and these works were presumably much admired by Brand and Fox, as there are yellowed marks visible on the corners of many of the pictures from having once been taped to their walls.

Back in the 1950s, what did Australians know of Vietnam? This was the time, of course, before the country was thrust onto the world's stage in the 1960s and 70s. Perhaps many of Fox's contemporaries could

Posters and artworks from Vietnam, 1952–61, collected by Len Fox and Mona Brand, POSTERS 2462, 2464, 2434

OPPOSITE: Sheila Ngoc Pham, photo by Joy Lai

relate to what he wrote in *Friendly Vietnam*: 'Vietnam has always seemed to be a mythical country, a land that you hear about but do not visit.'

In a way, I relate to this as well. For the first part of my life, Vietnam was a country I would often hear about but did not visit — until I was almost 30 and finally made my way there for the first time. But Vietnam wasn't a myth so much as the place where my family's story began.

Given the turbulent events that eventually led us to a new life in Sydney, I began my research into these artworks with some discomfort. After all, Brand and Fox were active members of the Communist Party of Australia, and moved to Hanoi to support the newly formed government of North Vietnam under the leadership of Hồ Chí Minh. My parents, on the other hand, were born and raised in South Vietnam, and became staunch anti-Communists. But where possible I strive to overcome such stark ideological divides, guided by my own sense of curiosity and a desire for connection, which often leads to unexpected rewards.

For one thing, stumbling across these miraculously preserved works has allowed me to reach back into Vietnamese history in a way I hadn't known was possible here in Sydney. Also, the more I read of Brand and Fox's writing, the greater the sense of kinship I've felt. It's clear they were sincere anti-war intellectuals who took great delight in learning about Vietnamese culture and history beyond the topical concerns of colonialism and war. Without much by way of Vietnamese language, their interactions and observations are impressive.

Being activists for Aboriginal rights in Australia, it's not surprising that they were both keenly interested in Vietnam's many ethnic minorities; in the collection are several beautiful sketches of Hmong women.

Brand and Fox did not venture below the 17th parallel that separated North and South Vietnam during their time in Hanoi, and they viewed the regime of South Vietnam with immense skepticism. Yet, even though they ostensibly supported 'the other side', it is inspiring to read how intrepid they were, going off to live in Vietnam at a time when few Australians knew anything at all about the country.

Many works in the collection are by contemporary artists. Some had been trained in Western art traditions and had begun contributing to a modern style of Vietnamese art. But what I've found most fascinating are the examples of folk art. These popular artworks were produced — and continue to be produced — by artisans from Hanoi and surrounding villages. One set of woodcut paintings depicting tigers came from the Hàng Trống and Hàng Nón streets of Old Hanoi, where Brand and Fox would have often walked.

There are also several examples of Đông Hồ folk woodcut painting, produced by a village in Bắc Ninh province, not far from Hanoi. These charming illustrations feature chickens, pigs, frogs, fish and other animals, all symbols of good wishes such as abundance, prosperity and honour. Many of these

posters would have been used as decorations to celebrate the arrival of Tết, as the lunar new year was — and still is — the most important event on the Vietnamese calendar.

The colours in Vietnamese folk art were traditionally derived from natural sources, and the origins of the pigments described in *Vietnamese Folk Paintings* (2012) read like poetry: 'The black was produced from bead-tree charcoal or ash from burnt bamboo leaves or straw. Verdigris was used for the blue. Red or yellow colours were created from Flamboyant or Royal Poinciana (*Delonix regia*) tree. A deep red colour was sourced from powdered red stone.'

Looking at the collection, I'm reminded of how much Vietnam is a part of the Sinosphere, which is hardly surprising given the thousand years of Chinese colonisation. Among the mythological, religious and historical stories depicted in the artworks are great figures from Chinese history such as Trương Phi (Zhang Fei/張飛) and Triệu Tử Long (Zhao Yun/趙雲). My father would refer to these legendary military generals from the second and third centuries.

The country that Brand and Fox encountered, however, was not necessarily a nation mired in the deep past. Having ousted the French colonial forces, it was looking towards the future. In the collection are many examples of propaganda art, emotive works aimed at rallying people behind Communism and President Hồ Chí Minh. In Brand's autobiography, she recalled the deep admiration she felt on meeting the president for the first time. 'He greeted us warmly in English, asking if, being Australians, we found the weather too cold.'

As compelling as these artworks are to me, the truth is I can't help feeling an enormous sense of loss when I look at them. They are a reminder of the intangible gulf between Vietnam and Australia for someone like me. That grief is why I also felt particularly moved when I read Fox's plea in *Friendly Vietnam*: 'Is it too much to hope that since our countries have been brought close together by the advance of science, our people may come closer too — Australian mothers talking with Vietnamese mothers, Australian poets with Vietnamese poets, Australian music lovers with Vietnamese music lovers ...?'

Fox's simple wish for Australia to become closer to Vietnam would come to pass; but he could not have predicted what else would occur after he asked that question more than 60 years ago. Back then, it was perhaps just beyond the imaginable that someone like me would one day be able to inhabit both of these identities — Australian and Vietnamese — at the same time.

Sheila Ngoc Pham is a writer, producer and radio maker. She is currently undertaking a PhD at the Australian Institute of Health Innovation.

Posters and artworks from Vietnam, 1952–61, collected by Len Fox and Mona Brand, POSTERS 2462, 2464

A SPLIT AMONG SYDNEY'S FEMINISTS IN THE 1920s WAS A CRITICAL MOMENT IN THE MOVEMENT'S HISTORY.

The FEMINIST CLUB *at war*

WORDS James Keating

On 13 October 1929, Sydney's *Sunday News* announced that the Feminist Club of New South Wales was 'at war'. Despite the breathless headline, its analysis was astute.

The club had reached a crossroads: its members were divided over whether to remain independent and risk fading into irrelevance, or amalgamate with more vibrant organisations and return to the fore of debates about women's status in interwar Australia. The decision, and the robust discussions that brought it to a head, had left the feminist scene 'agog', or so the *News* reported.

The story soon slipped from the headlines, yet beneath the scandal the 'war among feminists' offers a fascinating snapshot of women's organising at a moment of flux.

The Feminist Club had been established in 1914 as a political salon. Reflecting widespread impatience with the decade-old promise that the right to vote would hasten the expansion of women's rights, the club outgrew its founders' intimate vision. It soon had over 150 members, committed to securing the 'equality of liberties, status, and opportunities' between men and women 'in every sphere of life'.

Despite such bold rhetoric, the club's plush inner-city rooms and pursuit of important but bourgeois goals like the *Women's Legal Status Act 1918* (which allowed women to become lawyers and Justices of the Peace, and stand in municipal and state elections) typified the limits of mainstream feminism. Its zenith coincided with the presidency of Millicent Preston Stanley, who became one of the Act's beneficiaries in 1925, winning an Eastern Suburbs seat for the conservative Nationalist Party and becoming the first female Member of the Legislative Assembly in New South Wales. After a decade at the helm of the club, Stanley resigned in 1928. The decision, triggered by her bruising defeat at the 1927 state election, initiated the most 'troublous period' in the club's history.

Her succession by Ada Holman, who was married to a former Labor premier, suggested the club had shifted leftwards. But if Holman hoped to build an inclusive organisation, she was thwarted. Months after her election, she was forced to resign when members protested her support for the alcohol lobby during the state prohibition referendum.

OPPOSITE: *Al fresco* (detail), 1927, by Herbert Badham, ML 1444, on display in *Paintings from the Collection*

Jessie Street, a rising star in Sydney feminist politics, was her replacement. Despite her unanimous election, members warned Street that they 'were not making wild promises to support her in everything she might do'. Rather, she 'could be assured of loyal support when [they] believed she was working in the best interests of the Feminist movement'. The moment was telling. As Street understood, determining these interests and whether they remained compatible with the fortunes of the eponymous club, would define her time in office.

On accepting the presidency, Street began dealing with the club's £1085 debt. To insiders, her concern was perplexing. Although her confidante Linda Littlejohn refused to join the executive because she was reluctant to shoulder 'a burden which is none of my making', others were more sanguine. As club patron Ruby Rich explained, 'the debt as a hindrance to the Club ... has not played ... an important part in the expression of opinion of the [membership]'.

In response, Street delivered a masterclass in persuasion. She convinced members that the debts were unsustainable and had to be paid off. To Rich, whose £465 surety — alongside Street's £100 — sustained the club's borrowing, Street explained that their imminent bankruptcy meant Rich had to 'assume the attitude of a beneficent benefactor' or forfeit the money to their creditors. Rich paid up,

but lamented Street's aggressive tactics, which she summarised as 'you must give £465 NOW or YOU will be responsible for the breaking up of the Club'.

Once the guarantees had been secured, it became apparent that Street's beneficence had strings attached. She had no intention of safeguarding the club's exclusive 'social amenities' or resuscitating a brand of feminism she considered moribund.

Instead, she had a grander ambition: to amalgamate Sydney's feminist groups into a 'giant congregation'. Whereas the club's selective membership rendered it 'impossible to do any Feminist work', Street and her allies sought to build a mass organisation. Their agenda, centred on the pursuit of marriage and divorce law reform, political representation, and economic independence for all women, was not radically different from the Feminist Club's, but they believed that mobilising '1000s of women' offered a greater chance of success.

Freed from its creditors, the club, Sydney's only women's political organisation with its own premises and full-time secretary, could house the 'biggest woman's movement' in the state's history. Crucially, it would be renamed the United Associations (UA). As Littlejohn explained, 'the name Feminist', with its narrow ideological and class connotations, 'prevented people joining to any great extent'.

In her desire to drop such a recent inclusion in the Australian lexicon from the organisation's title, Littlejohn hit a sore spot. Although the club's executive supported 'the principle of amalgamation', they voted to remain separate. While some deplored the 'inequity' of admitting newcomers at reduced rates while affording them 'the same comforts' as existing members, others resented the threat to their identity. Despite dissenters' insistence that they were

Jessie Street (left) looks on while her mother-in-law Lady Belinda Maud Street performs the official opening of the United Associations' new club rooms, 29 May 1936, MPG/208

Women's rights activist Linda Littlejohn, c 1939, Fairfax archive of glass plate negatives, National Library of Australia

motivated by conviction rather than 'vanity', the two were intertwined. As one member explained, 'we are not militant, but we do wish to preserve the name Feminists'.

Stunned by the turnaround, Street demanded another vote. In the meantime, she leaked the club's accounts and details of its impending rent renegotiations to friendly journalists, prompting the press to predict its demise. As members reeled from the exposures, Street delivered the coup de grâce: cancelling £200 in loans she had organised months earlier, then resigning as president.

Her assault on the Feminist Club's viability backfired. In November the executive again vetoed amalgamation. Whether or not Millicent Preston Stanley instigated their dissent, as Street suspected, she returned as president in 1930.

Hers was a pyrrhic victory. By responding in the press, the club prolonged the saga, adding credence to the headlines — the feminists really were at war. If Street had exaggerated its debts, her claims turned prophetic. Over the following year, 70 members resigned. As well as forcing those who remained to turn inwards, fighting to prevent liquidation as the Depression hit, the exodus left the club more reliant on its former pillars: Stanley and the politics of maternalism.

Seeking to avoid further publicity, both camps buried the hatchet in public. But privately, tensions remained high. The Feminist Club erased the splitters from its records, now held by the Mitchell Library, while the United Associations' founders insisted Stanley had 'wrecked' the amalgamation so that she could re-enter public life from an established 'jumping off place'. Insiders doubtless noted her absence from the UA's celebration of the *Guardianship of Infants Act 1934*, the pinnacle of her political career.

When Street attended the club's 21st birthday party the following year, her entrance was sweetened by the United Associations' success. Established in 1929, it was her and Littlejohn's making. While the Feminist Club carried on at 77 King Street, the UA took its message into the world. It targeted new audiences, especially via radio, a medium members exploited to reach that most intimate and important arena: the family home.

Littlejohn's transformation from a habitué of Sydney's social pages to 'Australia's leading feminist', by way of her broadcasts for 2GB and by-line in the *Australian Woman's Weekly*, was the clearest manifestation of this policy. Like their suffragist forebears, the pair parlayed domestic celebrity into international influence: Littlejohn as chair of the Geneva-based feminist group Equal Rights International, and Street through a variety of causes, most notably as vice-chair of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (1947–49).

For many Sydneysiders, the 'war' that engulfed the Feminist Club was a diversion, confirming their prejudices about women in public life. Little did they realise the UA would become Australia's most successful mid-century feminist organisation, reshaping domestic and international politics by advocating for women's economic liberation.

Behind the pejoratives that titillated newspaper readers lay a serious contest over the meaning and direction of feminism. Ironically, given their elevated social standing, for Street and Littlejohn it was a movement for all white women (neither was moved by their contemporaries' critiques of Australia's treatment of its Indigenous peoples).

For their part, the club and Millicent Preston Stanley refused to relinquish the word 'feminism'. Despite its decline, the Feminist Club met on King Street for another half century, chaired on and off by the indefatigable Stanley, insisting she had 'always been a feminist', until her death in 1955.

Dr James Keating was the Library's 2018 David Scott Mitchell Fellow.

Broken Bay
South Head
very bad & rugged as above
Good Pasture for Sheep
Geographical Miles.
English Miles.
Thousands of paces.
Sept. 90.
Sandy Rocky and very bad Country
and ebbs to the Northward along the Shore
A patch of good Land
Nº Head
Lat: 33.50 S.
Long. 151.26 E.
South Head
Pt. Jackson
Kangaroo Ground
good Land
exceedingly rocky sandy & barren
Barren Sands
Sandy barren Swampy Country
Flood sets to the S.ward
Botany Bay
Sandy & barren
Pt. de la Peyrouse
C. Banks
Pt. Solander
Swampy & barren.
brushy
Land worse
frequent marks of the Natives
Country from here to Rofe Hill is good
Redoubt
Rofe Hill
Profpect Hill
9 Dec. 89.
better Country
27 Aug. 90
1st Aug. 1790.
The Land hereabouts nearly as between Profpect Hill and the River.
Country worse
Country tolerable frequent Ponds of bad stagnate water.

The CABIN *in the* WOODS*

The madness of a free settler and a convict found expression on the outskirts of the new colony.

WORDS James Dunk

For months after a gang of bushrangers raided his farm at Prospect Hill, Charles Bishop was anxious to find a companion to live there with him. The outlaws had woken him at 3 o'clock one morning in March 1804, demanding that Bishop give up his weapons. When he shouted back that he would shoot anyone who entered, the front and back doors were immediately broken open and two gun barrels pointed in from each direction.

Bishop stood at his fireplace, a pistol in each hand, 'watching right and left'. The bushrangers rushed in, overpowered him, and left with his substantial arsenal and his convict servant, whom they pressed into service. 'If I had had a 2nd person to have stood by me,' Bishop wrote to the governor, 'they would have been easily dispersed.'

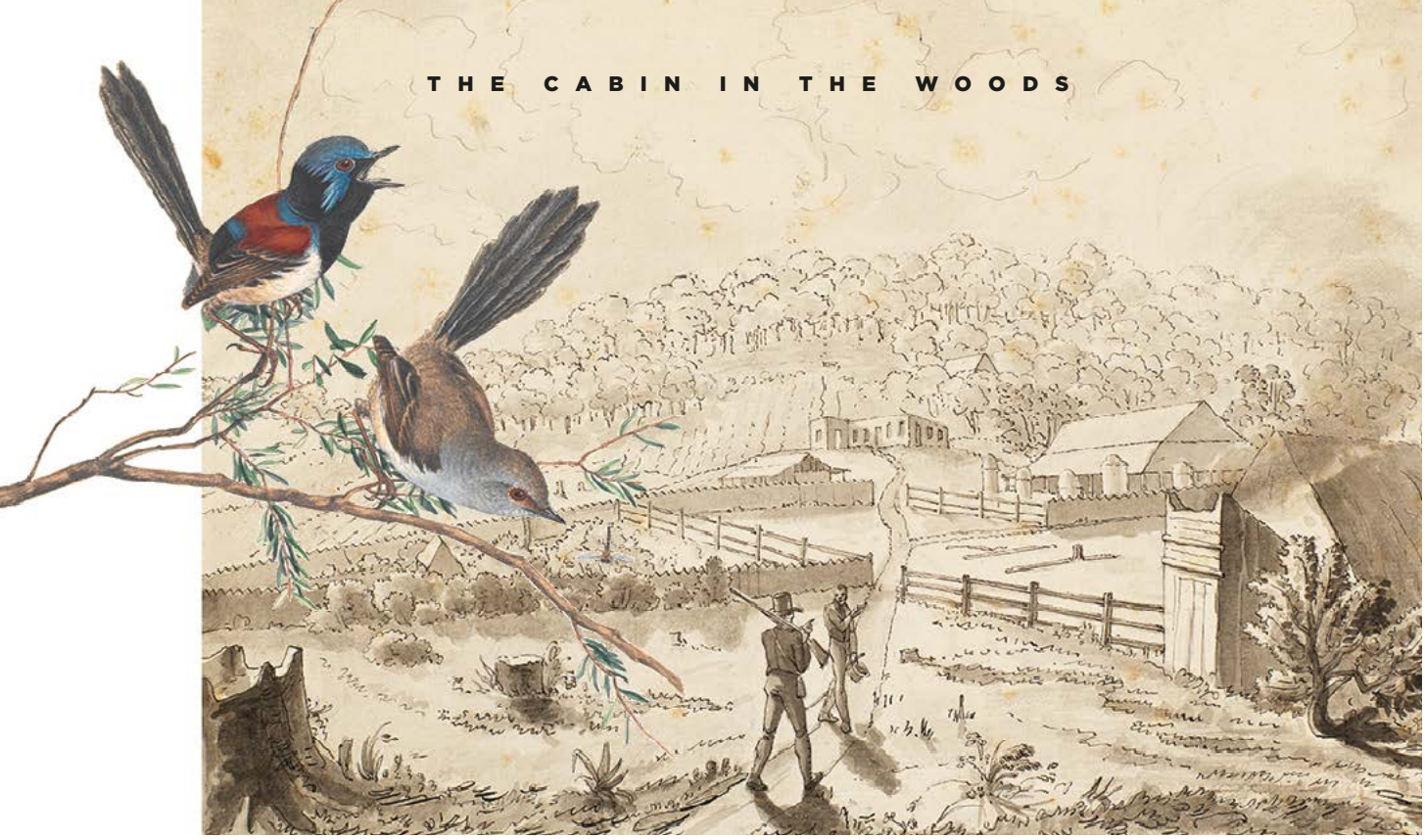
Little more than a year earlier, Bishop had a business partner: naval surgeon and sailor George Bass. A merchant seaman working the new markets at the edges of the East India Company's monopoly, Bishop had crisscrossed the oceans from India and Cape Colony to China and Chile. Reaching the southern shores of Australia, he entered into the brutal sealing industry, making use of unskilled ex-convicts to beat, skin and boil down seals.

In 1798, Bass helped the navigator Matthew Flinders survey those shores, and the following year he began a commercial partnership with Bishop. Their sealing ventures were truncated in 1803 when Governor Philip King introduced controls to limit the devastation of the seal populations, and the partners turned their attention north, to Tahiti, looking to capitalise on the flourishing pork trade.

But Bishop was beginning to show signs of madness, and Bass left him out of his ambitious plans for an illegal trade venture to Peru. 'Bishop's ill health has thrown all cares & concerns upon my head both for ship & cargo,' he complained to his wife late in 1802. Writing to his father-in-law, he was less circumspect: 'Bishop has been totally useless to me and the concern for many months past, indeed ever since I left him at Otaheite in February … I shall leave him here to recover. It is more than probable he will be in the grave before I return.' Bass sailed through the Heads in February 1803 and was never heard of again.

Though Bishop wrote to Governor King — by chance an old naval comrade — for redress after the theft, he had little hope of success. Prospect Hill was a remote community, and the safety of those who built and farmed there could not be guaranteed.

James Dunk, photo by Joy Lai;
Map of the hitherto explored country contiguous to Port Jackson (detail), 1791, by Watkin Tench, D DL Q79/64



Bushrangers, absconding convicts, and skirmishes with Aboriginal people were common, as Stephen Gapps has shown in *The Sydney Wars*.

So when Bishop met a convict of unusual refinement at Judge Advocate Richard Atkins' house, he was warm and inviting. The convict, John Grant, had been a young bankrupt poet in Buckinghamshire, England, when he fell for a rich heiress. His neighbour, the woman's lawyer, helped arrange her marriage to a major in the army and cast aspersions on Grant's character. In retaliation, Grant forced a duel upon the lawyer, and shot him in the upper thigh, ruining his jacket.

For this he was sentenced to death, then granted the mercy of transportation across the seas. With a satin waistcoat and a silver creamer, a harpsichord and a violin, Grant embraced his 'emigration' as a second chance. He befriended the officers of the *Coromandel*, tried to ignore the '199 abominable villains' on board, and purchased a hogshead of rum (about 250 litres) in San Salvador to use as capital to establish a merchant business in the colony.

Sydney was a dynamic place with a volatile economy, where, according to deputy judge advocate David Collins, the 'passion for liquor operated like a mania'. The officers of the New South Wales ('Rum') Corps boarded ships and bought goods at wholesale before retailing them at exorbitant prices. Rum quickly became a currency, used to pay convicts for taskwork completed outside their obligatory labour. Many consequently became bibulous and obstreperous.

As part of a general campaign against spirits, King confiscated John Grant's rum and remunerated him at a reasonable rate. This rank injustice set Grant spiralling into a wild conflict, with King and the other representatives of the Crown, and with the 'horrid system' of transportation, which he derided as an affront to the Magna Carta and the glorious British common law.

Grant had been at Atkins' house seeking patrons, and found one in Bishop: a 'gentleman of great respectability', and a man of 'noble mind', as 'open and artless as my own'. He accepted Bishop's invitation to live with him at Prospect Hill, in a little

Illustrations by from *Birds of New Holland with their Natural History*, vol 1, 1808, by JW Lewin, SAFE/C 943

Voyage a Bathurst (nouv. holl.), Une vue de Prospect Hill, Maison de Camp de M Lawson, 1819, by J Alphonse Pellion, SV/302

cottage set amid the verdant forest which sprang from rich volcanic soil. It was 'a beautiful farm', wrote Grant, only five miles from Parramatta through the woods, perched upon the tallest outcrop in the Cumberland Basin. Grant wrote happily of his first days 'in such a sweet House of his Here (for I am now with him!)'. He 'sometimes went out shooting Parrots etc. (with which the Woods abound) in Company with my friend Bishop,' using paper bark for wadding.

In time he became friends with John Lewin, a naturalist who was very taken with New South Wales, and one of the most exquisite painters of its wildlife. Lewin was granted 100 acres nearby, and as their friendship grew Lewin asked the young poet to help edit the text of his collections of animal and insect drawings. 'I know no employ more congenial to my poor harass'd mind,' Grant wrote home to his family, 'for I love Nature in all her Works.' In his 'Panegyric on an Eminent Artist', included in some editions of Lewin's *Birds of New Holland*, Grant sang to the artist: 'Draw/ Insect, or Bird, or crimson Warrataw,/ In each, in All, thine Art we can forgive,/ When things inanimate appear to Live.'

Grant seems to have filled the empty place in Bishop's affections, in addition to helping to secure his farm. 'He advises me to accept no offers from Judge Atkins,' he wrote home, 'but to wait patiently, to live with him, to keep him company, to amuse myself as I please.' Bishop's voice breaks into the pages of his companion's diary: '"and why Grant!" (he will say) "will you be anxious about leaving me?" Adjoining my Farm is another of 40 acres,' he said. 'You shall settle near me. Think no more of England, make this your adopted country, as I certainly shall do.'

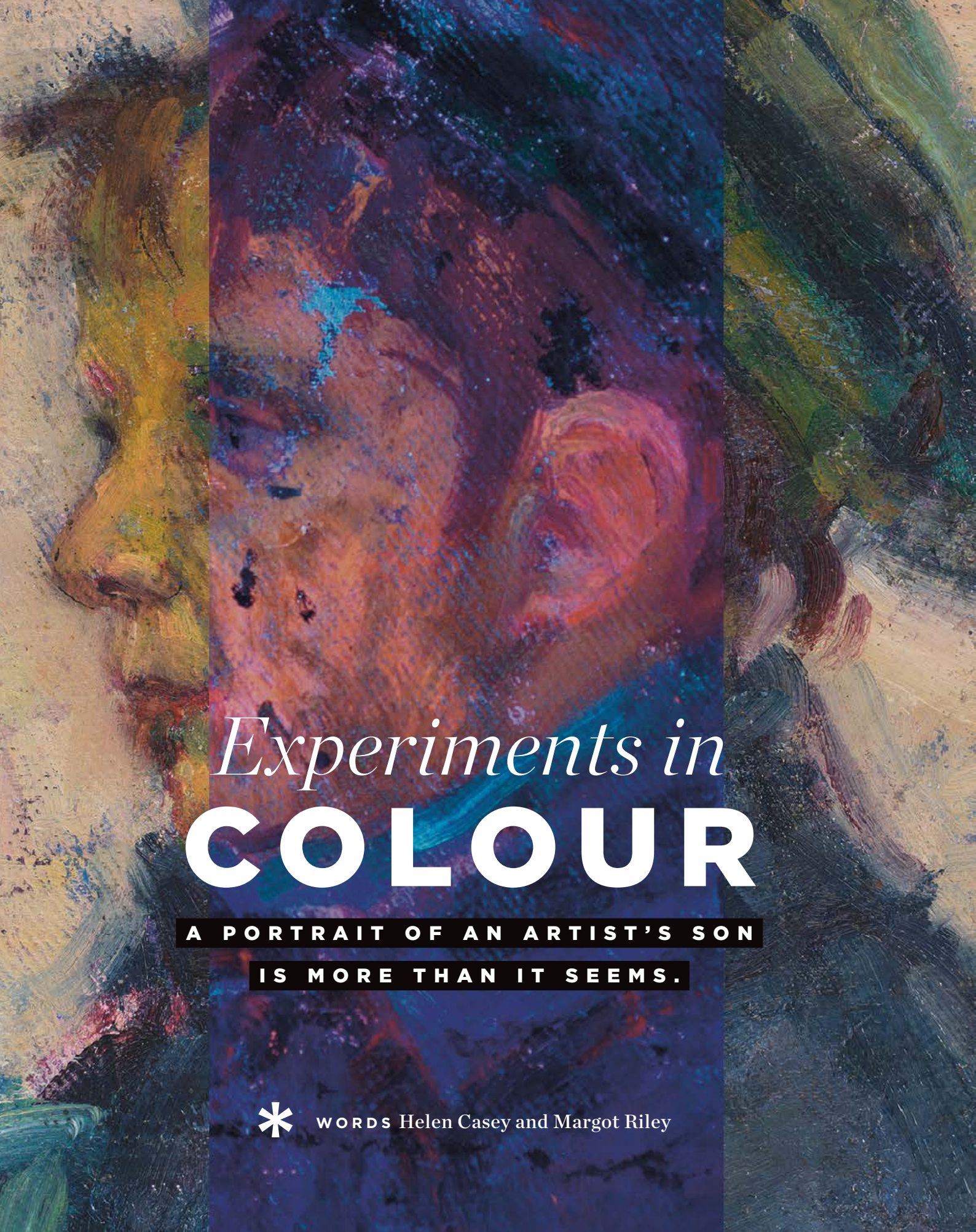
Grant was deeply moved. But Bishop's mental health continued to deteriorate, and after six months of music, companionship, and poetry (for Bishop, too, was a 'poet in his way — i.e. on sea-subjects'), the landholder was conveyed to the nearby goal, where the colony's insane were housed with reoffending criminals.

Grant himself was not well. Witnesses had testified at the Old Bailey that his obsessions amounted to insanity. Despite the second chance he had been given through transportation, his mind began to buckle in the colony. The gibbet that had been swinging over Pinchgut Island in Sydney Harbour when he arrived remained burned in his memory; the precarious place of convicts at law, the strong discretionary power of the governor, and life under the shadow of the flogging frames and gallows proved too much for him. He barely survived exile on Norfolk Island, where he was often imprisoned, and found his way back to England in 1811 with a certificate of sanity from William Bligh.

The cottage in the woods at Prospect Hill, overlooking the plains below, captures something striking about life in colonial Sydney. It was an 'idyll', filled with beauty and warmth, and it was a house of madness. If we peel back the walls and doors, the poetry rushes out, the music fades, and in their place we find the anxiety of maritime trade, the violence of the frontier, and the severance of exile.

Whether it was recognised formally, like Bishop's, or whispered and joked about, like Grant's, madness offers a glimpse of the breakdown of men and women in the midst of the great energies being expended to begin new lives. Tracing its contours and telling its stories helps us see a place like Sydney with new eyes.

Dr James Dunk is a research fellow at the University of Sydney. His book, *Bedlam at Botany Bay*, will be published by NewSouth in June 2019.



Experiments in COLOUR

A PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST'S SON IS MORE THAN IT SEEMS.

WORDS Helen Casey and Margot Riley

Australian Impressionist artist John Peter Russell is best known for his beautiful, turbulent seascapes, but the Library has an intriguing example of another of Russell's preferred genres — *la vie intime*, or family life — on show in the *Paintings from the Collection* exhibition.

This small oil sketch of the artist's eldest surviving son, Jean Sandro Russell, was painted at Belle-Île, off the coast of Brittany in Northern France, in 1894 when Sandro was about five years old. The artist's relationship to his subject is proudly etched into the portrait's surface: 'Jean Sandro Russell aetat V.J.P.Russell did it. B.I. 1894'. Russell and his Italian wife, Anna Maria 'Marianna' Mattiocco, had 12 children in all, but only one daughter and five sons lived to adulthood.

Sometime later, this portrait was despatched to a French friend living in Sydney, Edward Perier, whose portrait Russell had painted during a short visit home in the early 1880s. Perier's son, the photographer AJ Perier, would pass the tiny canvas onto the Library in 1954.

Living most of his life in France, Russell's encounters with Vincent Van Gogh, Claude Monet, Henri Matisse and other leading figures in the European art world led the wealthy expatriate engineer-turned-artist to embrace the more experimental aspects of Impressionism. He maintained his connection to antipodean art practice through correspondence with Tom Roberts. Coincidentally, these letters — in which Russell discussed his theories, struggles and experimentation with new art materials and techniques — are also held at the Library.

Russell's 'proof of life' sketch of his son vibrates with a robust energy. The artist was achieving his best work at this point in his career, striving to paint what he saw rather than what he knew. He aimed to transfer his emotions directly onto canvas, using the

Impressionist's six-colour palette and technique of applying 'broken colour' that he described and illustrated in his letters to Roberts.

The portrait had undergone previous restoration work, most likely after its acquisition by the library. The canvas was affixed (or 'marouflaged') to a masonite backing. Areas of paint loss, which can be seen as dark patches in the UV image, were filled and retouched.

In preparation for permanent display in the Library's new galleries, uneven old infills were replaced, and the discoloured retouching was redone. During this process, we noticed unusual pigmentation in the boy's face and wondered if the portrait might contain evidence of Russell's experimentation with colour.

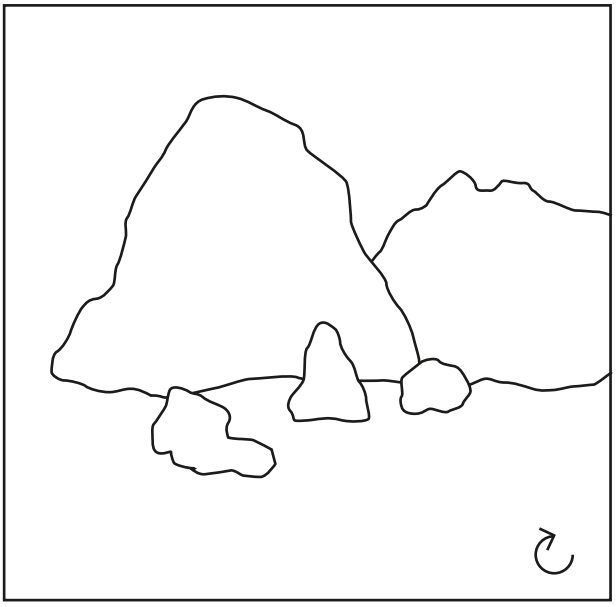
Since the exhibition's opening, we have carried out more in-depth analysis of the materials and techniques used in the portrait to see what secrets might be revealed. This began with an X-ray fluorescence scan of the painting's surface to help to identify pigments.

The scan showed the presence of Cadmium Yellow, one of the six pigments listed by Russell in a letter

OPPOSITE: Jean Sandro Russell (detail), 1894, by John Peter Russell, ML 146

MIDDLE BAND: UV image (detail), courtesy Art Gallery of NSW

ABOVE: Conservator Kate Hughes performing an X-ray fluorescence scan



written to Roberts on 23 December 1887. Newly available at that time, early mixes of this colour were not as stable as they are today. With exposure to air and light, the pigment became transparent, allowing any colours underneath (particularly darker shades) to show through.

Cadmium Yellow can further darken through proximity to Emerald Green (copper acetate arsenic). The X-ray fluorescence scan picked up copper and traces of arsenic, which indicate the presence of Emerald Green, or 'Paolo Veronese' as named on Russell's pigment list.

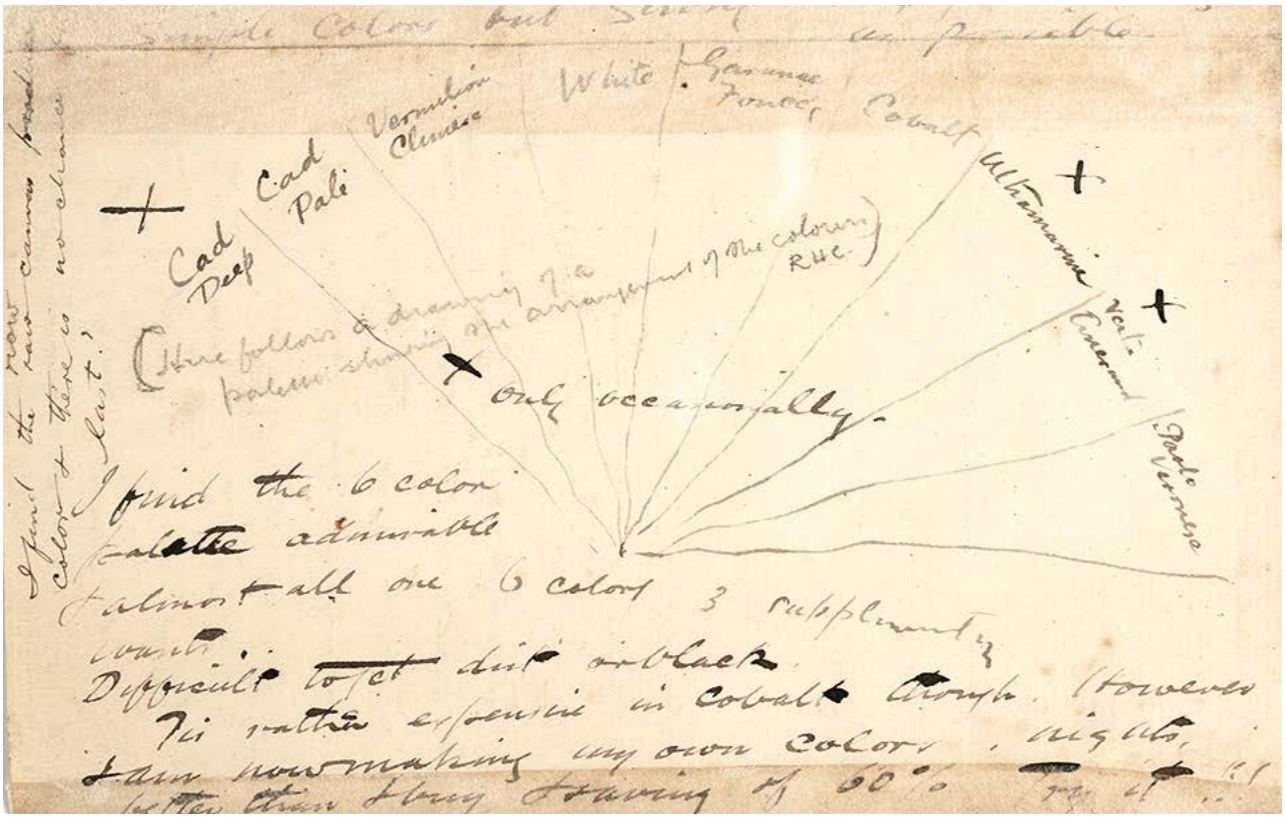
Also detected were Veridian, or chromium oxide hydrate, which Russell listed as 'Vert Emeraud'; lead and zinc white, listed as 'White'; and 'Garance Fonces', an organic dye derived from the madder root which has a strong fluorescence under UV light. Russell's list also included 'Vermillion' and 'Ultramarine' which, though not examined, can be seen in the portrait.

The Library's conservators discussed the X-ray florescence results with Dr Paula Dredge, Senior Paintings Conservator at the Art Gallery of NSW. When the gallery mounted a major retrospective of Russell's work last year, conservators analysed the techniques and materials in many of Russell's paintings.

X-ray fluorescence showed that Russell used Lead White in the landscape layers, and Zinc White in the portrait. It is believed that Russell first began using Zinc White in about 1900, so the presence of

ABOVE LEFT: Jean Sandro Russell, 1894, by John Peter Russell, ML 146

ABOVE: X-ray fluorescence scan, courtesy Art Gallery of NSW



zinc could suggest that he began using this pigment earlier than previously thought, or that the portrait was painted later, perhaps based on the series of drawings of Jean Sandro made in 1894.

Dr Dredge was also intrigued by the amount of variation in the background pigment in the Library's portrait. Knowing that Russell often painted over old canvases, she suggested that we courier the painting to the gallery's conservation labs for digital X-ray, infra-red and UV examination. These non-invasive tests produced a set of insightful images.

The X-ray exposed a landscape image beneath the child's portrait. When turned on its side, outlines of rock formations could be seen — now covered by boy's hat and coat — that were similar to those portrayed in Russell's Belle-Île views. The portrait's background partially masked a secondary layer of colours like those Russell used to depict the sky and sea.

Infra-red imaging revealed another layer of paint between the landscape exposed by the X-ray and the top portrait layer. This showed that Russell had reworked his original composition to create a more cliff-like rock formation, like those seen in his Belle-Île series, before turning the canvas for its final use.

John Peter Russell's primary artistic quest was the pursuit of pure colour, and it is clear that this small painting was once much more luminous than it appears today. But this father's tender portrait of his son still retains its poignant beauty, and analytical investigation has revealed the intricacies of the artist's materials and techniques.

Helen Casey, Senior Conservator, Collection Care, and Margot Riley, Curator, Research & Discovery

Thanks to Kate Hughes, Paper Conservator, State Library of NSW, for carrying out X-ray florescence analysis, and to Dr Paula Dredge, Senior Paintings Conservator, Art Gallery of NSW

Further reading

Wayne Tunnicliffe (ed), *John Russell: Australia's French impressionist*, Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of New South Wales, in association with Thames & Hudson Australia, 2018

ABOVE: Letter from John Peter Russell to Tom Roberts (detail), 23 December 1887, ML A2480

EVERYTHING A

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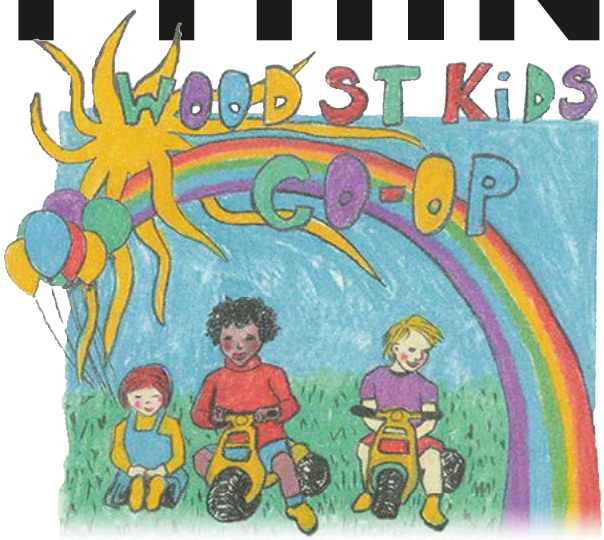
EVERYTHING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

WORDS Helen Cumming

EVERYTHING



A feminist newspaper from the early 1980s brings back memories of lively co-op meetings, nutritious sandwiches and high ideals.

In 1981, when I was a member of the Wood St Kids Co-op — a parent-run childcare centre — one of the other mothers asked if I'd be interested in helping to put out a feminist newspaper. That's how I got involved in the collective that produced the anarchist-feminist paper *Everything*.

Over those 12 months I worked on two issues. One had the theme of childcare, while the second focused on housing and how it affected women living mainly in the inner city, some alone, some in share houses and others with partners and young children.

Reading through issues of *Everything* in the Library's collection has been a visceral experience for me. It has provided me with more than facts about early 1980s life, creating a portal into the feelings and sensations of another place and time.

THE ZEITGEIST

The 1970s and 80s were exciting years, full of possibilities. Many people were looking for ways to join together in collectives or cooperatives to provide childcare, to express political viewpoints and share life experience, and to consume the freshest food in the most economical way. What we lacked in money, we made up for with time and youthful energy.

It was also a time when people of all ages and walks of life seemed to be realising that they didn't necessarily have to wait for 'somebody to do something' about matters that concerned them. Banding together in groups, they could do something themselves. Years later, working as an editor on a heritage education kit, I was fortunate enough to meet the women from Hunters Hill who successfully joined with Jack Mundey and the Builders' Labourers Federation to protect their local area known as Kelly's Bush.

It was a time when the Workers' Educational Association regularly ran courses on women's health and feminist literature, including a series of classes I attended, given by sociologist Madge Dawson. The Women's Press and Virago Books had kicked off and were publishing not only new authors but republishing neglected female writers from the 1920s, 30s and 40s, and Madge led classes that introduced me to many wonderful writers.

Wood St Kids Co-op Reunion cartoon, 2008, illustration by Patsy Chingwile, courtesy Helen Cumming

OPPOSITE: *Everything: Anarchist Feminist Magazine*, 1979–85, F305.420994/2

THE COLLECTIVE

In the *Everything* collective we had French and Spanish speakers, women who worked in refuges and health centres, singers, long-time activists, artists and illustrators, and enthusiasts like myself, eager to learn about getting a newspaper out on a collective basis. There were women experienced with printing as well as those with writing, layout and graphic design skills.

We all brought life experience to the task, along with the mantra: the personal is political. So we wrote about our lives and the things that supported or alienated us, and we shared what we had learned and observed.

Writing our stories meant opening ourselves up. Love and loss were apparent in the childcare issue, with one woman writing about the death of her daughter in a braver and more honest way than I may have appreciated at the time. In my case, contributing articles helped me to clarify my ideas and then write about them as objectively as possible.

I also learned about a key feature of collective decision-making: while it invariably takes longer, there is also time for the less experienced to learn from the more established members. We were able to share skills and I learned a lot from the collective.

Because I had been involved in the Kids Co-op for around four years at that stage, I was familiar with the process of discussing ideas with others while aiming for group consensus. And that was a skill I could bring to the *Everything* collective.

THE KIDS CO-OP

The Wood St Kids Co-op provided high-quality, low-cost childcare to support the whole gamut of parenting experiences. There were full-time parents with between one and four children. Some parents worked full-time while their partners did shifts at the co-op, some worked part-time, others were students or self-employed builders or shopkeepers. But sometimes the co-op offered the simple but profound benefit of being able to leave your child for an hour or two while you had a doctor's appointment, did your shopping or met a friend.

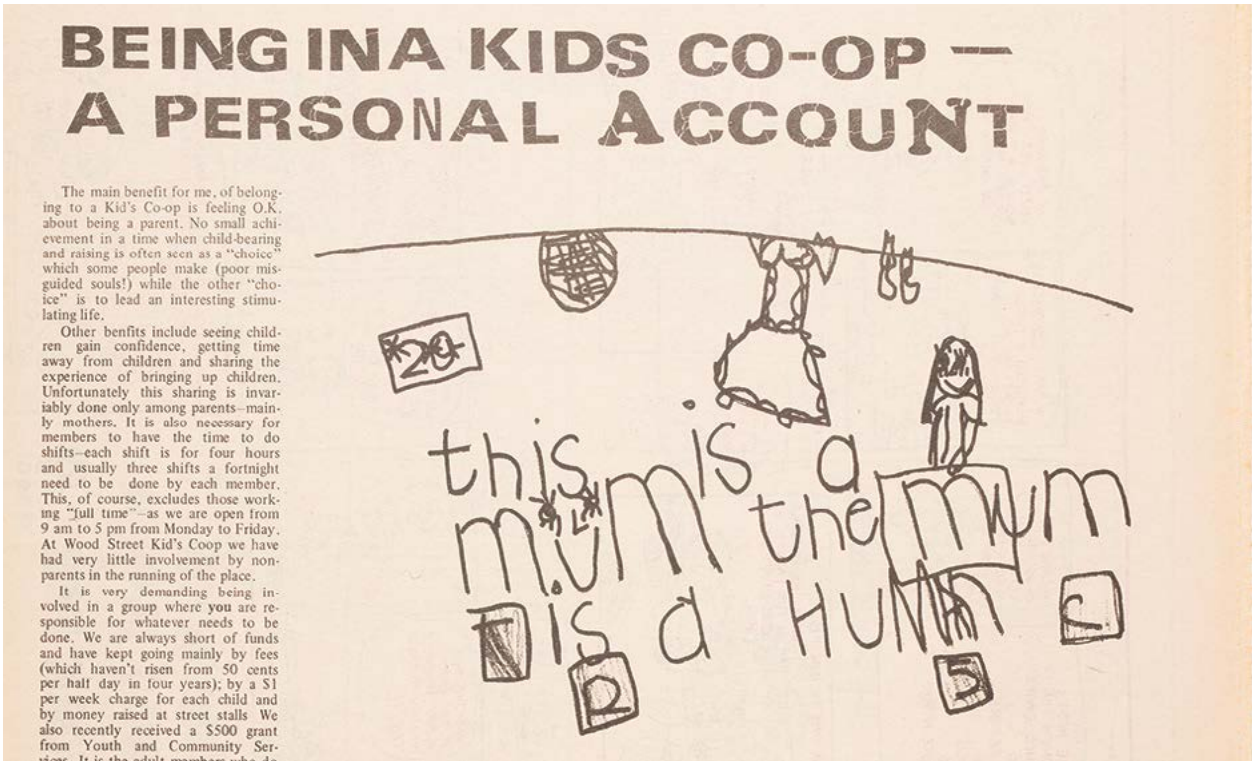
Looking back, I can see how much support fellow Kids Co-op members gave to each other and what a huge difference it made to my life. Sharing both your love for your kids and your frustrations with parenting was invaluable. As I wrote in the *Everything* article:

> The Co-op definitely breaks down the isolation that many parents of young children feel. It also helps to fight against the competitive aspects of child raising — the 'my child is more advanced than yours' — 'how to have a brighter child' mentality, that can be so destructive. When you know each other's children so well, you know them as people, not as athletes in some kind of obstacle race — leaping over toilet training, weaning, bottles and thumb-sucking to emerge fully developed and reciting the ABCs at three and a half years old.

But with freedom comes responsibility. That meant turning up on time for half-day shifts three times a fortnight (or organising a replacement if you couldn't make it), attending night-time meetings, coming to weekend working bees and running street stalls to raise the money needed to keep going.

We cooked healthy food for lunch and created wholesome snacks. We fed the children vegeroni and soyaroni with grated cheese and made sandwiches with grated cheese, carrots and hummus. We cooked and cleaned up, over and over, leaving everything as clean as possible for the next couple of people on shift.

Changing nappies, reading stories, supervising play, encouraging sharing. Comforting children after their parents left. It took commitment and energy and could be draining.



BEING IN A KIDS CO-OP — A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

The main benefit for me, of belonging to a Kid's Co-op is feeling O.K. about being a parent. No small achievement in a time when child-bearing and raising is often seen as a "choice" which some people make (poor misguided souls!) while the other "choice" is to lead an interesting stimulating life.

Other benfits include seeing children gain confidence, getting time away from children and sharing the experience of bringing up children. Unfortunately this sharing is invariably done only among parents—mainly mothers. It is also necessary for members to have the time to do shifts—each shift is for four hours and usually three shifts a fortnight need to be done by each member. This, of course, excludes those working "full time"—as we are open from 9 am to 5 pm from Monday to Friday. At Wood Street Kid's Coop we have had very little involvement by non-parents in the running of the place.

It is very demanding being involved in a group where you are responsible for whatever needs to be done. We are always short of funds and have kept going mainly by fees (which haven't risen from 50 cents per half day in four years); by a $1 per week charge for each child and by money raised at street stalls We also recently received a $500 grant from Youth and Community Ser-

this mum is a mum this is a human

Hardly a perfect organism, the co-op's numbers waxed and waned. At times strong personalities clashed, and patience could be stretched when a group of assertive two-year-olds was cooped up inside on a rainy day.

Yet, in my experience, optimism prevailed and people found ways to work well together. The co-op lived on (1977–88) developing cooperative work practices, can-do attitudes and the pragmatism needed to get through a shift with up to 14 children under four years of age, with only one other adult for company.

We all developed our arsenal of cheer-up weapons. Some played music or led painting or dress-up games. We read books to the children, with *Where the Wild Things Are* among the favourites.

We were also indebted to the co-op members, usually men, who didn't do shifts but came in on weekends to build shelves, knock holes in walls, paint, plaster and mow the lawn. Everyone had something to contribute and this made things work.

We celebrated children's birthdays at each other's houses at daytime parties where the parents stayed and partied too. We formed a community and, for some, lifelong friendships.

EVERYTHING ELSE

That for me was 1981 and inner city living, captured in the *Everything* newspaper. A life of small children, collective decision-making, and a certain political earnestness. Writing this article, I was able to share *Everything* articles with my children, bringing back memories for all of us.

This was a time when men and women bonded together over shared childcare and life experiences, sometimes meeting lofty ideals, other times confronting the imperfections in themselves and their fellow humans — and then discussing it at length during long, lively co-op meetings.

These feminist newspapers — magazine is too glamorous a word for two-colour issues on low-grade paper — reveal some of the stories from a time that is relatively recent but now seems like another world.

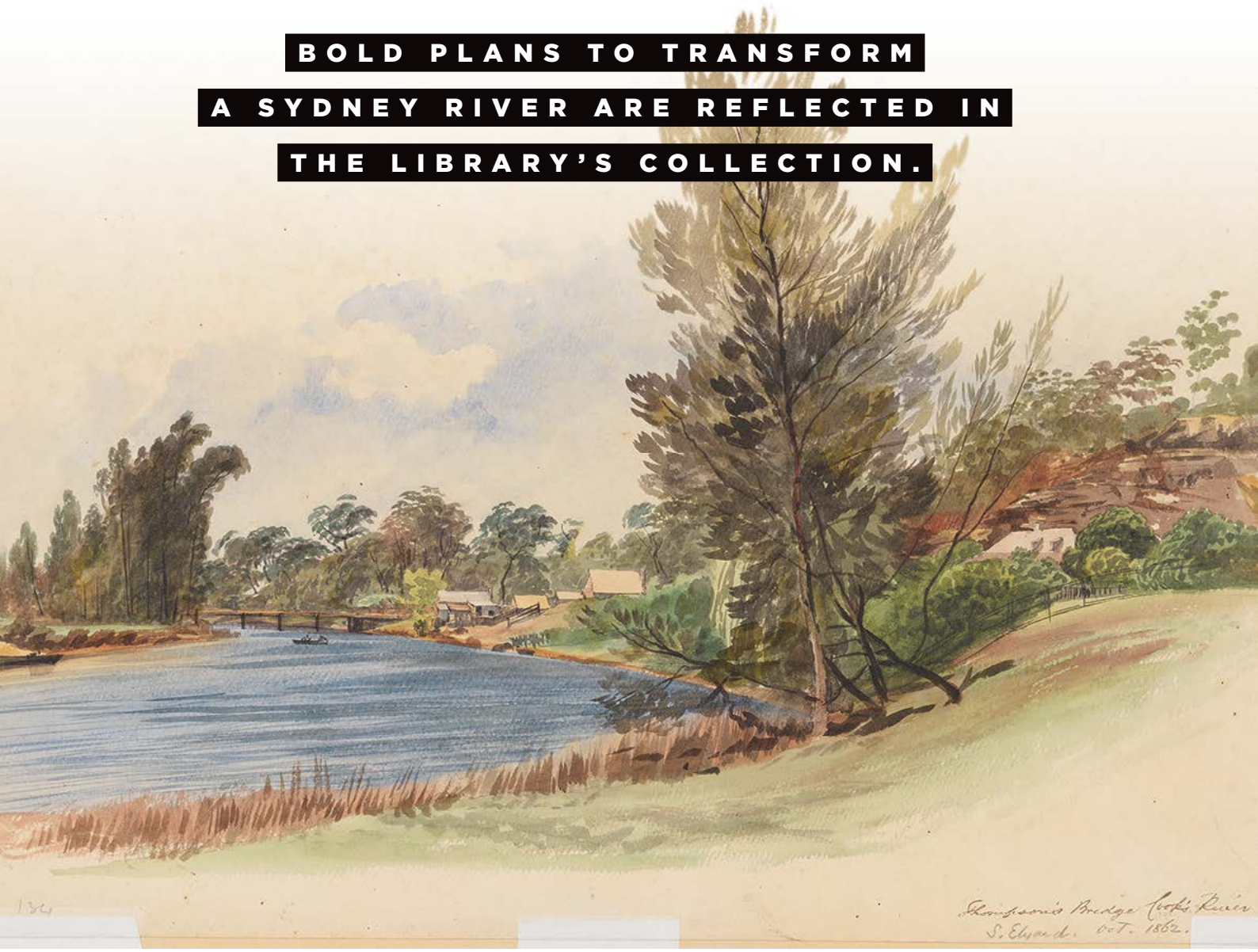
Helen Cumming was an editor and the manager of Publications & Design at the Library from 1997 to 2017.

Detail from *Everything*, August 1981, no 4

RIVER DREAMS

WORDS Ian Tyrrell

BOLD PLANS TO TRANSFORM A SYDNEY RIVER ARE REFLECTED IN THE LIBRARY'S COLLECTION.



While the Sydney Harbour Bridge was being planned and built in the late 1920s and early 30s, a project in the south of the city was being fiercely debated. Said to rival the bridge in cost and importance, it was never completed, but its story tells us much about how Sydneysiders valued, or did not value, their waterways.

Back in 1896 an engineer named Joshua Henson proposed cutting two canals to link the Cooks River in inner south-western Sydney with the Parramatta River. The aim was to encourage water-borne commerce, and to flush out pollution from urban and industrial development. Canals were still an important and cheap mode of transport in many countries, and Henson hoped that building one would solve a multitude of problems.

The Cooks River had become a smelly eyesore after a dam was built at the present-day Princes Highway in 1839 to augment the colony's water supply. The project failed to achieve its aim, but the dam did have another impact. It prevented the dispersal of pollution caused by the growth of farming and agricultural processing businesses such as tanneries in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Later, in the twentieth century, waste from manufacturing was also dumped into the river.

It was hoped that joining the river to Sydney Harbour via the Parramatta River would allow tidal flushing of industrial waste to clean the river, like a giant washing machine, while providing a watery highway for small commercial vessels. Henson's plan was taken up by the Cook's River Improvement League, first formed in 1908, which became particularly active after it was reformed in the early 1920s. A copy of the rare pamphlet outlining Henson's scheme is in the Library's collection, along with the League's colourful campaign literature.

Though the idea of twin canals was quietly dropped as too expensive, the river's banks were dredged and regularised, commencing in 1936, to stop river siltation from impeding the flow of the water and increasing urban flooding. After the upper river was concreted, mostly between 1938 and 1943, many people came to think of it as a canal. Downstream, the addition of steel piling and further dredging after 1946 added to the industrial appearance of the river.

But it had become a canal to nowhere. It was never finished, barges never plied their trade upon it, and the concreting only exacerbated flooding and meant that more pollution was carried downstream.

In the 1950s, with the idea of a canal abandoned, the Cooks River Valley Association was formed to lobby councils and the state government to finish dredging downstream, clean up the river, stop further factories being built along its banks, and create a pleasant place for recreation.

Artworks in the Library's collection document the presence of Indigenous people, and trace the changes in landscape since the nineteenth century. Samuel Elyard's paintings of the river bank at Tempe, and early sketches and watercolours of the river upstream, show the early history of European occupation and the dreams of turning wild nature into a pastoral paradise for the colonial 'gentry'.

By contrast, photos from the 1970s show a stark landscape wrought by dredging, canalising, and the dumping of river silt upon wetlands and farmland. These images provide a benchmark to evaluate the changes in vegetation since that time.

OPPOSITE: Thompson's Bridge, Cook's River, 1862, by Samuel Elyard, DG*D 15/vol. 6/f. 60a

Records of the Cooks River Valley Association and the Total Environment Centre, established in 1972, along with the papers of conservationist Milo Dunphy, all held at the Library, form a rich set of sources to understand the impact of urban pollution and the birth of modern environmentalism in Sydney from the 1950s to 1980s.

Dunphy is best known for agitating for national parks, but he also worked to stop coal loaders, protect urban parks and clean up rivers. He fronted a landmark Cooks River Valley Environmental Survey in 1976 that proposed a thorough planning process for designing recreational space and mitigating the pollution and flooding problems of the river's past.

Though Dunphy became the spokesman for the project, the report was put together by architect David Boddam-Weddon, and it was through his work and the activism of the Total Environment Centre that a landscape design and interdisciplinary approach to environmental management of rivers first came to the fore in Sydney.

Along with further records at Campsie Library in the City of Canterbury-Bankstown, these sources show that the famed effort to protect bushland at Hunters Hill was not the first campaign against the destruction of urban bushland in Sydney. In the 1960s, residents in the Cooks River catchment successfully opposed the levelling of Nannygoat Hill at Earlwood to make way for football fields. They also opposed planned expressways through the Cooks River valley, and through Wolli Creek, one of the river's most important tributaries.

The successful opposition to the Wolli Creek Expressway, which was pushed underground as part of the M5, led to the creation of a regional park. This action preserved and allowed rehabilitation of one of the few areas of bushland left in the inner city in the 1980s. Bush regeneration schemes there and across the valley followed in the early 2000s.

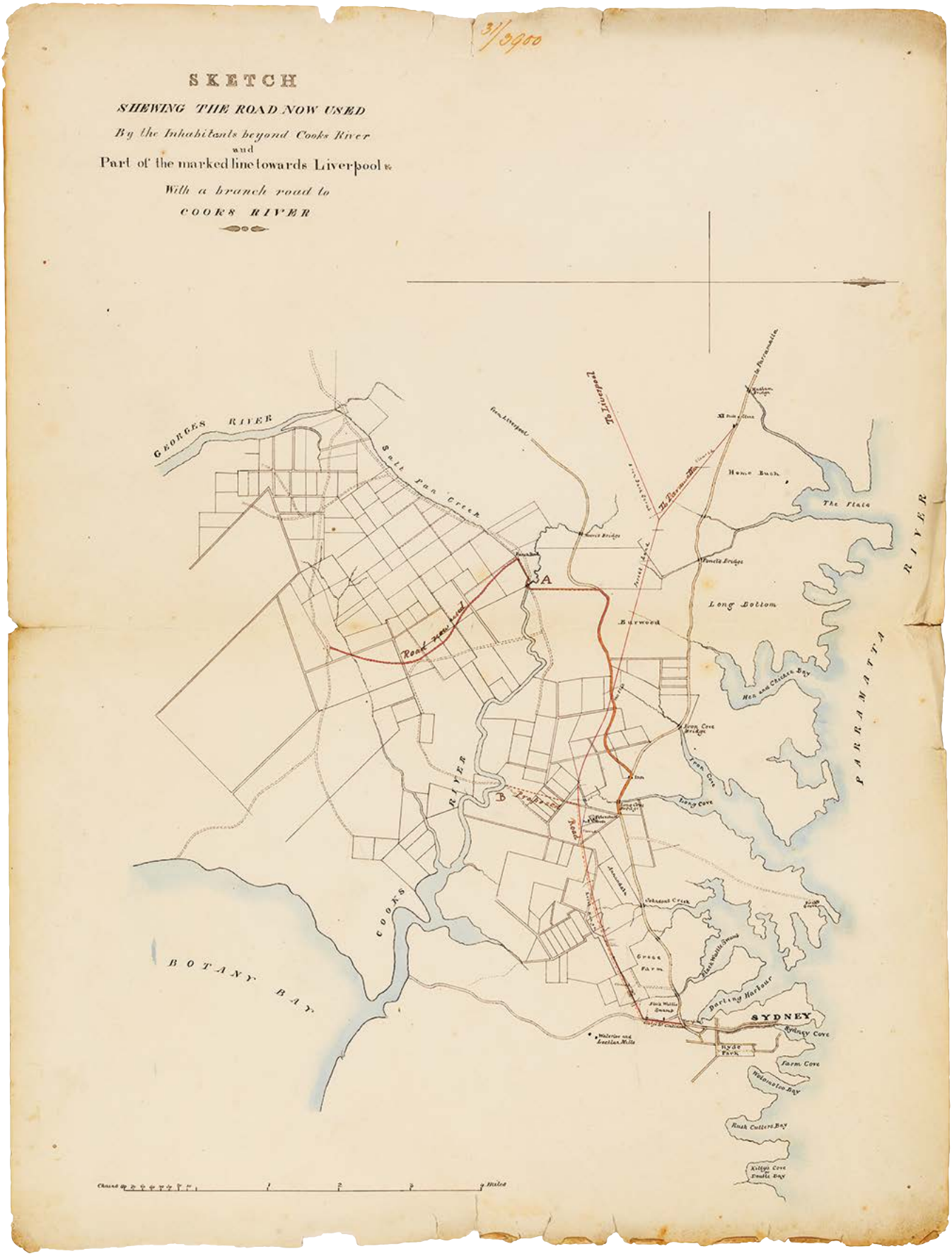
The Cooks River valley is a very small place by world and even Sydney standards, but its history demonstrates larger themes of environmental change and its impact on rivers, the land, and people. Researching the history of the Cooks River was like looking through a microscope and seeing, in these records, the intricate and colourful relationships of humans to environment in Sydney's recent past.

Ian Tyrrell's *River Dreams: The People and Landscape of the Cooks River* (NewSouth) was shortlisted for the Community and Regional History Prize of the 2018 NSW Premier's History Awards.

ABOVE LEFT: *Our Ocean to Ocean Opportunity* ... 1925, Cooks River Improvement League, 627.1/S

ABOVE RIGHT: Cooks River activity booklet years 4–6, NSW Government Litter Reduction Campaign, c 1986, Q 363.7288099/3

OPPOSITE: Sketch shewing the road now used by the inhabitants beyond Cooks River ... 1831, Dixson Map Collection, Ca 83/10


3/3900
SKETCH
SHEWING THE ROAD NOW USED
By the Inhabitants beyond Cooks River
and
Part of the marked line towards Liverpool
With a branch road to
COOKS RIVER
GEORGES RIVER
Salt Pan Creek
Liverpool
Home Bush
The Flats
PARRAMATTA RIVER
Long Bottom
Burwood
Hen and Chicken Bay
Iron Cove
Long Cove
COOKS RIVER
BOTANY BAY
Johnsons Creek
Darling Harbour
SYDNEY
Sydney Cove
Farm Cove
Woolloomooloo Bay
Rush Cutters Bay
Double Bay

DETECTIVE *work*

Librarians at the State Library of NSW answer almost 5000 information requests each year on a variety of subjects.

ASK A LIBRARIAN

A question that came through our online 'Ask a Librarian' service recently was deceptively simple: 'Are you able to identify the Sydney street where the attached photo was taken?'

The request came from the archive of the ANZ Bank, based in Melbourne, which had received the picture without an explanatory note. The archive needed to determine whether it was important enough to keep, as the large image was mounted onto a display panel and would be difficult to store.

We started by looking for clues in the picture that might help identify the location and period. The dress style of the girls in white, and the horse and cart just visible at the bottom of the street, suggested that it was taken in about 1900.

An early contender for the location was the Rocks. However, the type of buildings shown in the Library's collection of photographs of the area during the rat cleansing operation in 1900 (PXE 90–95), didn't match those in the photograph.

The three signs that could be seen on the buildings seemed like the strongest clues. But we couldn't read the company name on the first sign, and the second appeared to be a billboard rather than a business in this location. This left us with one good lead: 'JW Crichton & sons' plumbers and gasfitters'.

Locating the business wasn't straightforward, though, as JW Crichton moved premises many times. Searching the Sands post office directories, government gazettes and newspaper articles, we found listings for JW Crichton & Sons and James Crichton, Plumber, based in, living in, buying land in or working in at least eight Sydney sites: Castlereagh Street, Hunter Street, Jamieson Street and the corner of Margaret & Clarence streets, in the city; Queen Street, Ashfield; Point Piper Road, Paddington; Gloucester Street, Balmain; and Ultimo technical college.

We quickly ruled out Ashfield, Paddington and Ultimo using Google Maps. Then we looked through ArchivePix, the City of Sydney Archives digital photograph bank, concentrating on the streets in the shortlist and looking for the distinctive bell tower to the right of picture.

We had a 'Eureka!' moment when we noticed the tower in a photograph from the 1890s looking along Pitt Street from the corner of Hunter Street. Consulting a 1910 map of central Sydney through the City of Sydney's 'Historical Atlas of Sydney' website, we found that the building on the corner was the Union Bank of Australia.

Searching ArchivePix with this company name located another image showing part of Hunter Street that matched the original image. The Union Bank of Australia merged with the Bank of Australasia in 1951 to form ANZ Bank.

This location of the photograph is only a two-minute walk from the Library, but the tower is long gone, and the street looks very different today. Since we provided the information to the ANZ Bank archive, they now recognise its value in their collection and have decided to retain it, despite its size.

Nicola Jessurun,
Librarian, Information & Access

www.sl.nsw.gov.au/ask
www.photosau.com.au/cos
atlas.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

TOP: Corner of Pitt and Hunter streets, 1890s, SRC10156, courtesy City of Sydney Archives

ABOVE: Hunter Street, 1889, SRC17812, courtesy City of Sydney Archives

OPPOSITE: Corner of Pitt and Hunter streets, c 1900, ANZ Bank archive

A COLOURFUL PAST

DIGITAL COLOURING TECHNIQUES CAN BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO HISTORICAL IMAGES.

> The perception of color in the environment always carries visual, associative, synesthetic, symbolic, emotional, and physiological effects with it.
>
> — Frank Mahnke, *Color, Environment and Human Response*, 1996

The art of hand-colouring photographs has been around for almost as long as photography itself. From the mid-nineteenth and into the early twentieth century, professional colourists applied paint to black and white images to enrich them with a greater sense of realism. Before photography, painted portraits had been able to immortalise colourful details in clothing, interiors and landscapes.

In the past few years, digitally colouring historical images has exploded in popularity. This is partly due to the accessibility of photo editing software, but also to the enormous range of high-resolution images in online catalogues like the Library's. A new generation of colourists is taking the practice to a level of realism that surpasses traditional techniques.

Communities of professionals and hobbyists have sprung up on the internet to discuss techniques and share feedback. Famous figures like Marilyn Monroe and Abraham Lincoln, Depression-era families, and photojournalists' records of everyday life are among the plethora of subject matter that receives digital treatment and online admiration.

When Colarts Studios hand-coloured images of war for exhibition across Australia in the 1920s, it wanted to give the audience a strong sense of the places depicted in the photographs. Today, the most common argument for colouring images is that it creates a point of connection between now and then, and breathes new life and interest into historic archives. Colour can also bring depth to an image and uncover details that are masked by grey tones.

While colourists can achieve a high degree of accuracy through research, details such as the colour of a family car or a child's dress are often lost to time. Some detractors fear that a digital artist's interpretation could be taken for fact, or that a manipulated image might become more prominent in internet search results than the original.

But colourists stress that their work is meant to complement rather than stand above the original. The result should draw attention to the image itself, not to the colourisation process behind it. These modern techniques can help us relate to scenes of the past, and see that life was as colourful then as it is now.

Russell Perkins, Imaging Officer, Digitisation & Imaging

OPPOSITE: Example of digital colouring in process: Lee Gordon's Drive-In Beefburgers, photo by Australian Photographic Agency, 23 March 1961, ON 173, d7_10319, digitally coloured by Russell Perkins

ABOVE: Journalists in an RAAF aeroplane at Williamtown RAAF base to cover a flypast over Sydney, photo by the Australian Photographic Agency, 6 March 1956, ON 173, d7_01371, digitally coloured by Russell Perkins

Remembering RUBY

The late Ruby Faris has left an important legacy to the Library.

Volunteers have supported the State Library for more than three decades, offering assistance in many areas. Not only do they give their time freely, but they also share their experience, enthusiasm and knowledge. Each time I meet a volunteer, I'm reminded of the extraordinary contribution they make to this Library.

One very special volunteer was the late Ruby Lillian Faris. Ruby was the fourth of six children of John Thomas Faris (1886–1962) and Estrella Ruby Lillian Faris nee Curtis (1888–1976). Her parents were both born in New South Wales, and married in Sydney in 1916. Ruby was born in 1927 and grew up in Hatfield Street, Mascot. In 1957 her sisters Mavis and Shirley bought the Hatfield Street property, where Ruby lived with their parents until their deaths. The house was sold in 1977, and Ruby moved to Newtown.

After a career that included working at Australia House in London and at the University of Sydney's Burkitt Library, Ruby joined the State Library as a volunteer in 1988. Although she pursued many interests including music, swimming, People's Messiah and Toast Masters, Ruby described the Library as her 'favourite venue' and was drawn to the volunteer program because of the sense of community and social connectedness it inspired.

Ruby's main role was as a gallery host for exhibitions, including the Library's major *ONE Hundred* centenary exhibition in 2010. She was able to share with visitors her enormous passion for the Library and its collections. Her dedication was acknowledged by the Library in 2008, when Ruby was awarded a gift to mark 20 years of service.

Ruby died in 2016, leaving one final contribution to the Library in the form of a bequest of over $2 million dollars, in memory of her parents Estrella and John. This extraordinary gift has contributed towards the new galleries and associated exhibitions in the Mitchell Building. As a great ambassador for the Library's work and an enthusiast for our exhibitions, I know that Ruby would have been delighted with these galleries, which have brought so many new visitors to discover the wonder of our collections.

Susan Hunt, Director, State Library of NSW Foundation

Your planned gift can make a difference

Please consider supporting the future of the Library by making a gift in your will. Whatever amount you can afford, when multiplied by the contributions of many supporters, will significantly strengthen our wonderful Library.

There is an opportunity to join the Library Circle — a group of people who have made a commitment to the Library by including us in their will.

Please contact Susan Hunt,
Director of the State Library Foundation
on (02) 9272 1529 or susan.hunt@sl.nsw.gov.au

OPPOSITE: Ruby Faris receives a 20-years-of-service award from former State Librarian Regina Sutton, 2008

Introducing our
FELLOWS

We welcome the 2019 Fellows, who are using the Library's collections to generate new perspectives on Australian culture, history and society.

MEREWETHER FELLOW

Dr Rebecca Hamilton

'Conservation Mapping: A Case Study of Sydney's 19th-century Water Reserves'

Drawing on historic data to test claims of 'pristine' environments thought to have escaped European development.

DAVID SCOTT MITCHELL FELLOW

Dr Isobelle Barrett Meyering

'Pipi Storm Theatre Company: A Cultural History of Children's Rights'

Examining the growth of the idea of children's rights from the 1970s through the papers of the Pipi Storm Theatre.

DR AM HERTZBERG FELLOW

Dr Elizabeth Humphrys

'Pressed and Strained: The Lives of Metal Workers in the Era of Globalisation, 1970–1990'

Looking at how changes to the metals industry, brought about by globalisation, have impacted on the lives of its largely blue-collar workforce.

CH CURREY FELLOW

Dr Ian Hoskins

'Re-imagining the Pacific: Exploring White Australian Identification with Its Near Neighbours, 1870–1970'

Exploring the under-appreciated relationship of European Australia with the Pacific, prior to the independence movements of the 1970s.

NANCY KEESING FELLOW

Dr Kate Forsyth

'Charlotte Atkinson: Australia's First Children's Writer'

Examining the life of Forsyth's relative Charlotte Atkinson, who anonymously published the first children's book written in Australia.

AUSTRALIAN RELIGIOUS HISTORY FELLOW

Dr Stephen Jackson

'Sunday Morning Empire: Protestantism and Empire in the British World, 1880–1970' Considering how Protestant Sunday schools helped frame an imperial identity in the early part of the 20th century.

The Fellowship program is supported by the State Library of NSW Foundation.

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Applications for the 2020 Fellowships close on 15 July 2019. For more information and to apply see sl.nsw.gov.au/about-library/fellowships

FROM LEFT: Rebecca Hamilton, Isobelle Barrett Meyering, Elizabeth Humphrys, Ian Hoskins, Kate Forsyth; Stephen Jackson not pictured; photo by Joy Lai

Recent **HIGHLIGHTS**

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01 Kim McKay AO, Robyn Hamilton, Adam Lindsay, Dr Roslyn Russell, Dr John Vallance, UNESCO Memory of the World inscription, 27 February 2019, photos by Joy Lai

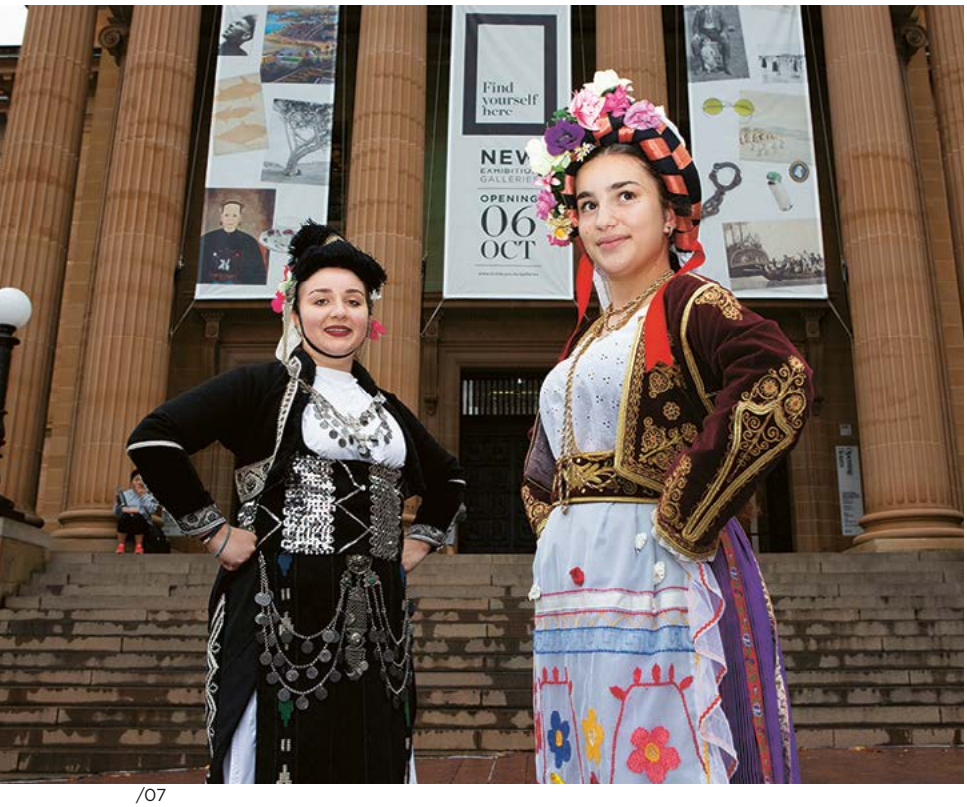
02 Peter Poole, great-grandson of Ethel Turner, UNESCO Memory of the World inscription, 27 February 2019, photos by Joy Lai

03 Consul General of Greece, Christos Karras, Ms Patricia Manolas, Associate Professor Nick Doumanis, Senator Arthur Sinodinos, UNSW Greek Australian Archive launch, 13 March 2019, photo by Gene Ramirez

04 Family Creative Hub tour of the Library, with Information and Cultural Exchange (Parramatta), 8 March 2019, photo by Joy Lai

05 Nathan Sentance, 'Talking Deadly', 27 March 2019, photo by Joy Lai

06 Costa Georgiadis, Cassie McCullagh, Frances Rings, Paul Brunton OAM, UNESCO Pitch, 3 April 2019, photo by Joy Lai



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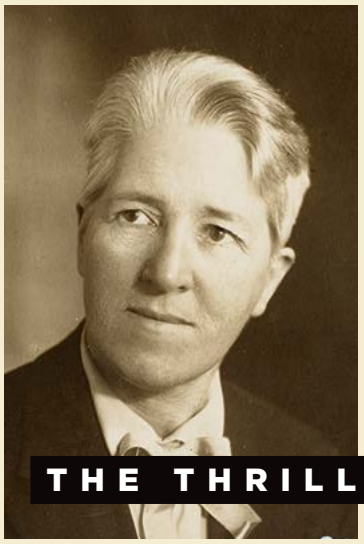
07 Erifili Kandylas (left) wearing a traditional Greek outfit from the Corfu region, and Kiriaki Mandarakas wearing an authentic Greek outfit from Macedonia, UNSW Greek Australian Archive launch, 13 March 2019, photo by Gene Ramirez

08, 09 All Hallows Catholic Primary School tour of *Quick March! The Children of World War I* exhibition, 15 March 2019, photos by Gene Ramirez

10 Erin Gough, winner of the Ethel Turner Prize for Young People's Literature, NSW Premier's Literary Awards, 29 April 2019, photo by Joy Lai

11 Prize-winners Trent Dalton and Billy Griffiths, NSW Premier's Literary Awards, 29 April 2019, photo by Joy Lai

12 The Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP, Premier of NSW, and Michael Mohammed Ahmad, winner of the Multicultural NSW Award, NSW Premier's Literary Awards, 29 April 2019, photo by Joy Lai



THE THRILL OF THE CHASE

In Emeritus Curator Paul Brunton's experience, if someone writes 'Please burn this after you read it' on a letter, the recipient often disregards the instruction. While you might expect to find this imperative on the letters of illicit lovers, spies and literary curmudgeons, in the 1930s Mitchell Librarian Ida Leeson used these words in an attempt to prevent her own missives from getting into the wrong hands.

Leeson had shown such a talent for building the Library's collection that the Library Trustees had faced a dilemma when her promotion to the senior position of Mitchell Librarian was recommended. In those days, when the Principal Librarian was on leave, it was the convention for the Mitchell Librarian to take his place as head of the Library. But this would have left a woman in charge! According to Paul Brunton, the Trustees created the position of Deputy Principal Librarian so that a man stood in between Leeson and the top job.

As part of his lecture series, 'The Thrill of the Chase', Paul will share the story of how Leeson engaged in secret correspondence with a Melbourne book dealer to secure the Angus & Robertson archive for the Library. Thanks to Leeson's subterfuge, the Angus & Robertson papers have been used extensively over the years, not just by literary historians but also by scholars and writers exploring Australian publishing, editing, and copyright law.

In another story that will feature in the lecture series, the Library acquired the Tasman Map of 1644 after a tip-off from anthropologist Daisy Bates, who wrote to Principal Librarian William Ifould from the Nullarbor desert. The prized map — the basis for the floor mosaic in the Mitchell Vestibule — was in the possession of Roland Bonaparte, grand nephew of Napoleon, and Bates had read that Bonaparte intended to bestow it on Australia.

Paul has visited Bonaparte's former home in Paris, which is now a Shangri-La Hotel. He was thrilled to see the carved balustrades bearing the 'RB' of Bonaparte's initials and the room that was once the library where the map had been on display. Having come so close to one of the Library's remarkable stories of provenance, Paul left the hotel and walked along the streets of Paris's Right Bank with a spring in his step.

See *What's On* for booking details for 'The Thrill of the Chase' lecture series with Emeritus Curator Paul Brunton OAM on 15, 22 and 29 August.

Friends

Friends become part of the life of the Library with a free subscription to *SL* magazine, exclusive use of the heritage Friends Room, collection viewings, special lecture series, bimonthly Reading Lounge book club, free Family History consultation, discounts (or free tickets) to Library talks, discounts at the Library Shop and Cafe Trim, and many more benefits. Why not join today, or spread the word and give someone a gift membership?

For more information, please contact Helena Poropat in the Friends Office
Email: friends@sl.nsw.gov.au
Phone: (02) 9273 1593

www.sl.nsw.gov.au/join/friends-state-library

Ida Leeson, 1933, photographer unknown, P1/977

Daisy M Bates, CBE on a railway station platform, 1934, photographer unknown, P1/2051

Q&A

Michael Mohammed Ahmad

Writer, editor, teacher and community arts worker Dr Michael Mohammed Ahmad won a NSW Premier's Literary Award for his novel *The Lebs*.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BEST REACTIONS TO YOUR NOVEL *THE LEBS*?

The best reactions to *The Lebs* are always when the racists, white supremacists, colonialists, orientalists and imperialists are offended.

AS A WRITER, HOW DO YOU ADDRESS RACISM IN SOCIETY?

I don't ever try to address racism in my writing. It's unfortunate that my reality as an Arab-Australian Muslim man has been smeared by an ongoing history of racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia: my earliest memories are crammed with media and political narratives which demonised Arabs and Muslims as drug-dealers, gang rapists and terrorists. Racism is simply the natural by-product of writing honestly about my experiences.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

I would have liked to say that I am proud to have written a work which subverts stereotypes and negative perceptions of Arab and Muslim communities in Australia. But following the Christchurch massacre on 15 March 2019, I feel very little pride in anything I've ever attempted to achieve.

WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR YOU AS MUSLIM-AUSTRALIAN WRITER IN THE PAST DECADE?

In Islam, we have a saying: 'If you take one step toward Allah, Allah will take two steps towards you.' But in Australia it often feels like Muslims take one step forward, two steps back. For a moment, in that 'post-race' era we were all raving about, didn't it feel like things were getting better? And now, all of a sudden, it feels worse than ever before ...

AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE SWEATSHOP WESTERN SYDNEY LITERACY MOVEMENT, WHAT ADVICE DO YOU GIVE ASPIRING WRITERS?

That depends on the writer. My advice to writers of colour is to always write as a political act of self-determination and survival: reclaim and rewrite your own story with honour, dignity and courage. My advice to white writers is don't touch what doesn't belong to you.

HOW CAN LIBRARIES AND PUBLISHERS PROMOTE DIVERSITY IN THE AUSTRALIAN WRITING COMMUNITY?

Support the following writers: Claire G Coleman, Alison Whittaker, Ellen van Neerven, Evelyn Araluen, Omar Sakr, Maxine Beneba Clarke, Khalid Warsame, Julie Koh, Randa-Abdel Fattah, Tamar Chnorhokian, Omar Musa, Peter Polites, Roanna Gonsalves, Maryam Azam, Stephen Pham, Shirley Le, Sara Saleh, Sarah Ayoub, Ruby Hamad and Winnie Dunn.

We can take care of the rest.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU?

At the moment, it's a toss-up between writing my third book, overthrowing the government or going to Macca's for a Big Mac.

Photo by Stelios Papadakis

In the Amaze Gallery

Covers of the sensational *Pix* magazine are now on display in the Amaze Gallery.