

Magazine for members
Autumn 2012

SL



STATE LIBRARY®
NEW SOUTH WALES

Lewin's natural talent
Spirit of Conan Doyle
Crazy hillbillies
Mardi Gras



Message



Lewin: Wild Art, which opens in early March and is featured in this issue, is the latest of many large-scale exhibitions mounted by the State Library to expose our collections, and inform, educate, inspire and amaze our clients and visitors.

The effort and skill our curators and designers invest in our exhibitions reflects the significance of revealing the extraordinary items we hold and the importance of telling their stories, often stories which have not previously been told. In the case of *Lewin: Wild Art*, it is the story of John Lewin, his depictions of Australian flora and fauna and the development of illustration and printmaking in the recently established colony of New South Wales. Accompanied by a handsome book, *Mr JW Lewin: Painter and Naturalist*, this exhibition helps us understand how the new arrivals came to know Australia.

It is this bigger story of how we get to know our country, our people and ourselves which is the focus of our exhibitions program. Tourists, visitors, students and specialists drop into our galleries and also view the exhibitions online. From big shows like *Lewin: Wild Art* and the just-closed *Finding Antarctica* to small displays, pop-ups and online journeys (including Discover Collections on our website), our exhibitions inform and surprise.

As well as appearing onsite in our galleries on Macquarie Street, and online, the exhibitions go on tour. *Australian Cookbooks*, *The Governor*, *One Hundred* and *Carved Trees* were shown in 22 regional locations last year. *Beach, Bush and Battlers* will begin its regional tour in April 2012. The value of sending our exhibitions on tour was underlined when 18,000 people visited *The Governor* in Dubbo and 2000 checked us out online from that city – issuing a challenge to Albury, the show's next port of call!

ALEX BYRNE
NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive



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COVER
WARTY FACE HONEYSUCKER
[REGENT HONEYEATER]
(DETAIL), 1813, JOHN LEWIN

BACK COVER
GIGANTIC LILY
[GYMEA LILY] (DETAIL),
C. 1806, JOHN LEWIN

- 4 **NEWS**
Mapmaker's 500th
Refreshing the foyer
Far out!
Caddy for Koons
Paul Brunton OAM
Our times
- 8 **ON THIS DAY**
- 10 **EXHIBITION**
Natural talent:
John Lewin
- 14 **FEATURE**
Rolling on the river
- 18 **FEATURE**
Spiritualist adventures
of Conan Doyle
- 22 **DICTIONARY OF SYDNEY**
The rise of Mardi Gras
- 24 **A LIVING COLLECTION**
Our own hillbilly
magazine
- 28 **PROVENANCE**
Mickey's corroboree
- 30 **NEW DAYS OF RECORDS**
- 32 **NEW ACQUISITIONS**
Mission life*
Talking fish
- 34 **BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION**
A new journey
Rediscovering
Indigenous
Languages
On the high seas
Foundation welcomes
TAL & Dai-ichi Life
collection
- 37 **VOLUNTEERS**
A vital contribution
- 38 **FOR OUR FRIENDS**
- 40 **RECENT HIGHLIGHTS**
- 43 **Q&A**
Cassie Mercer

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that this article may contain images of deceased persons.



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NEWS

MAPMAKER'S 500th

In 2012, we celebrate 500 years since the birth of legendary mapmaker Gerardus Mercator. Born Gerhard Cremer in Belgium on 5 March 1512, Mercator later adopted the Latinised form of his surname, which means 'merchant'. According to the Library's Head of Maps, Andy Carr, Mercator combined his schooling in mathematics, geography and astronomy with remarkable talents in calligraphy and printing. He pioneered cursive italics for placenames on maps, and was the first to use the word 'atlas' for a book of maps. Mercator developed a method, still used today, of projecting the spherical earth onto a rectangular sheet of paper for navigational purposes.

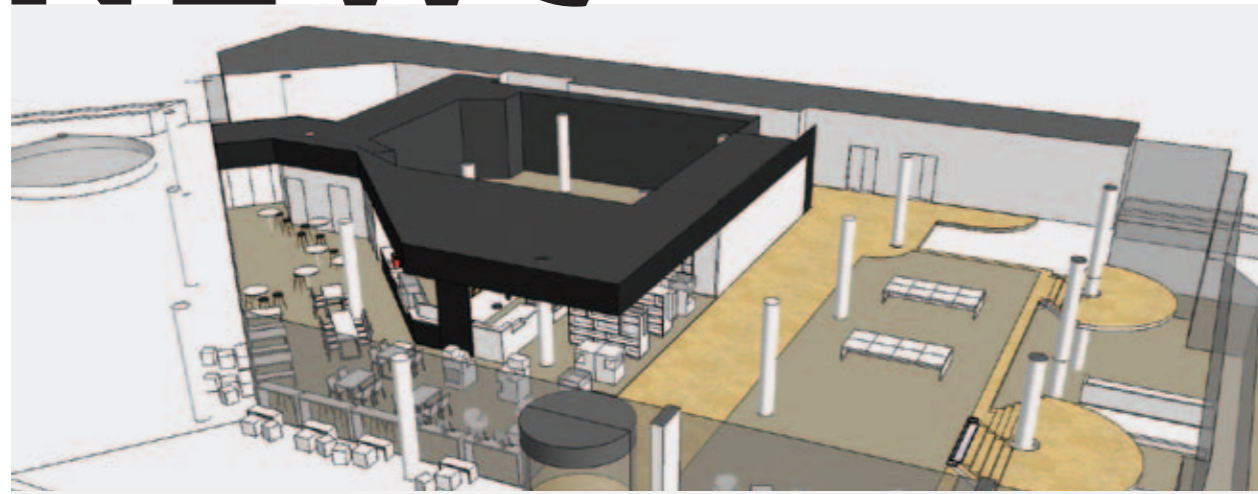
A portrait of Mercator (pictured left) with fellow cartographer Hendrik Hondius is on display in the Dalgety Walkway until 19 March.

DETAIL FROM ATLAS
SIVE COSMOGRAPHICAE
MEDITATIONES DE FABRICA
MUNDI ET FABRICATI FIGURA,
1630, ML X910/6A

GERARDUS MERCATOR NATUS IN RUPELMUNDÆ III NON. MARTII ANNO MDXII: VIXIT ANN. LXXXII. M. VIII. D. XXVI: DENATUS IV NON. DECEMBRIS ANNO MDXCIV.

LUDOCUS HONDIUS NATUS IN PAGO FLANDRIÆ DICTO WACKENE XVI KALEND. NOVEMBRIS ANNO MDLXIII: VIXIT ANN. XLVII. M. VII. D. XXIX: DENATUS XIV KAL. MARTII ANNO MDXCII.

NEWS



Refreshing the foyer

We're in the final stage of transforming our Macquarie Street building, with renovation work under way on the ground floor. The foyer will become a friendly, community-centred space for Library users and visitors, with a new look for Cafe Trim, the Library Shop, and our theatre-style auditorium. There will be a casual lounge area and express internet terminals. The State Library will remain open throughout the renovation, and the State Reference Library, Mitchell Library, events and exhibitions will operate as normal. You can visit our temporary shop in the Galleries during *Lewin: Wild Art*, and our temporary cafe in the McDonald's Room. Our cafe and bookshop will reopen for business on 1 May 2012.

Far out!

This autumn the Library is taking landmark documents of Australia's history to isolated regions of NSW. In a program generously sponsored by the Caledonia Foundation, our education team will run activities in schools, and the Mitchell Library's Senior Curator, Paul Brunton, will speak at local libraries. Bourke and Cobar are first up in March. Among the treasures heading there are Cook's handwritten observations of the transit of Venus from Tahiti in June 1769 — after which he charted the east coast of Australia. An original letter from Arthur Phillip to Lord Lansdowne, providing evidence on why Britain established a colony on the east coast of Australia, will be joined by the first letter written from Sydney in 1792 by convict Mary Reibey, in which she demonstrates the determination that made her a successful businesswoman. Outback residents will have a chance to see relics such as Cook's shoe buckles (pictured).

SHOE BUCKLES USED BY CAPTAIN COOK FOR COURT WEAR, R 206



Caddy for Koons

A photograph from the Library's collection has found its way onto a limited edition Bernardaud plate designed by New York artist Jeff Koons. George Caddy's photo of 'beachobatics' at Bondi in 1938 was one of almost 300 negatives found in a shoebox by his son Paul after George's death in 1983. A selection of these astonishing images was featured in the Library's *Bondi Jitterbug* exhibition in 2008. Koons admired the photograph because the acrobats' pose forms a shape similar to a peace sign. He said: 'The image is very powerful and references classical beauty through the equilibrium of mind and body.' The plate is being sold as part of a fundraising effort for the Art Production Fund.



Paul Brunton OAM

Congratulations to Paul Brunton for his OAM. Paul was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia on 26 January for 'services to Australian history through curatorial roles with the Mitchell Library'. Paul told the *Australian*: 'I'm honored to be selected for the Order of Australia award because it gives recognition to the archivist and librarian's role in preserving our valuable Australian history.' He will celebrate 40 years at the Library at the end of this year.

PHOTO BELOW BY BRUCE YORK



Our times

You can now search a huge range of British historical newspapers with Gale NewsVault — look it up through 'eResources' on our website, both in the Library and at home if you live in NSW and have our Library card. Gale NewsVault includes such esteemed publications as the *Economist* (1843–2006), *Illustrated London News* (1842–2002), *Financial Times* (1888–2006) and *Times Digital Archive* (1785–1985). The papers are digitised so you can see how they appeared on the day they were published.



10 March 1794

Reverend Samuel Marsden, new assistant to the chaplain of New South Wales, arrives in Sydney on the *William* with his wife and young child.

REVEREND SAMUEL MARSDEN, 1833, POSSIBLY BY RICHARD READ JNR ML 29



20 March 1834

Arthur Orton (AKA Tom Castro, or the butcher from Wagga) — later to gain infamy through his claim to the identity and fortune of missing heir Sir Roger Tichborne — is born in Wapping, London.

MEN OF THE DAY NO. 25 "BARONET OR BUTCHER", FROM VANITY FAIR, LONDON, 10 JUNE 1871 MSF 20 / 29



13 April 1937

Singer Gladys Moncrieff with her Pekingese and Pomeranian dogs on her 45th birthday.

GLADYS MONCRIEFF ON HER BIRTHDAY, 13 APRIL 1937, BY SAM HOOD PXE 789 (V.57) / 18



23 April 1792

The French navigator Joseph-Antoine Raymond Bruny D'Entrecasteaux lands in and names Recherche Bay, Tasmania, while seeking the missing explorer La Pérouse.

CIGNE NOIR DU CAP DE DIEMEN, FROM ATLAS POUR SERVIR À LA RELATION DU VOYAGE À LA RECHERCHE DE LA PÉROUSE BY LABILLARDIÈRE, PARIS: CHEZ HJ HANSEN, [1799 OR 1800] ML X980/ 15B



12 May 1820

English nurse Florence Nightingale is born in Florence, Italy. International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world on the anniversary of her birth.

SIX NURSES LEAN OVER THE BALCONY, MATER HOSPITAL, NEWCASTLE, 1939, BY SAM HOOD (FOR BUILDING PUBLISHING CO) HOME AND AWAY - 9647

on this

DAY

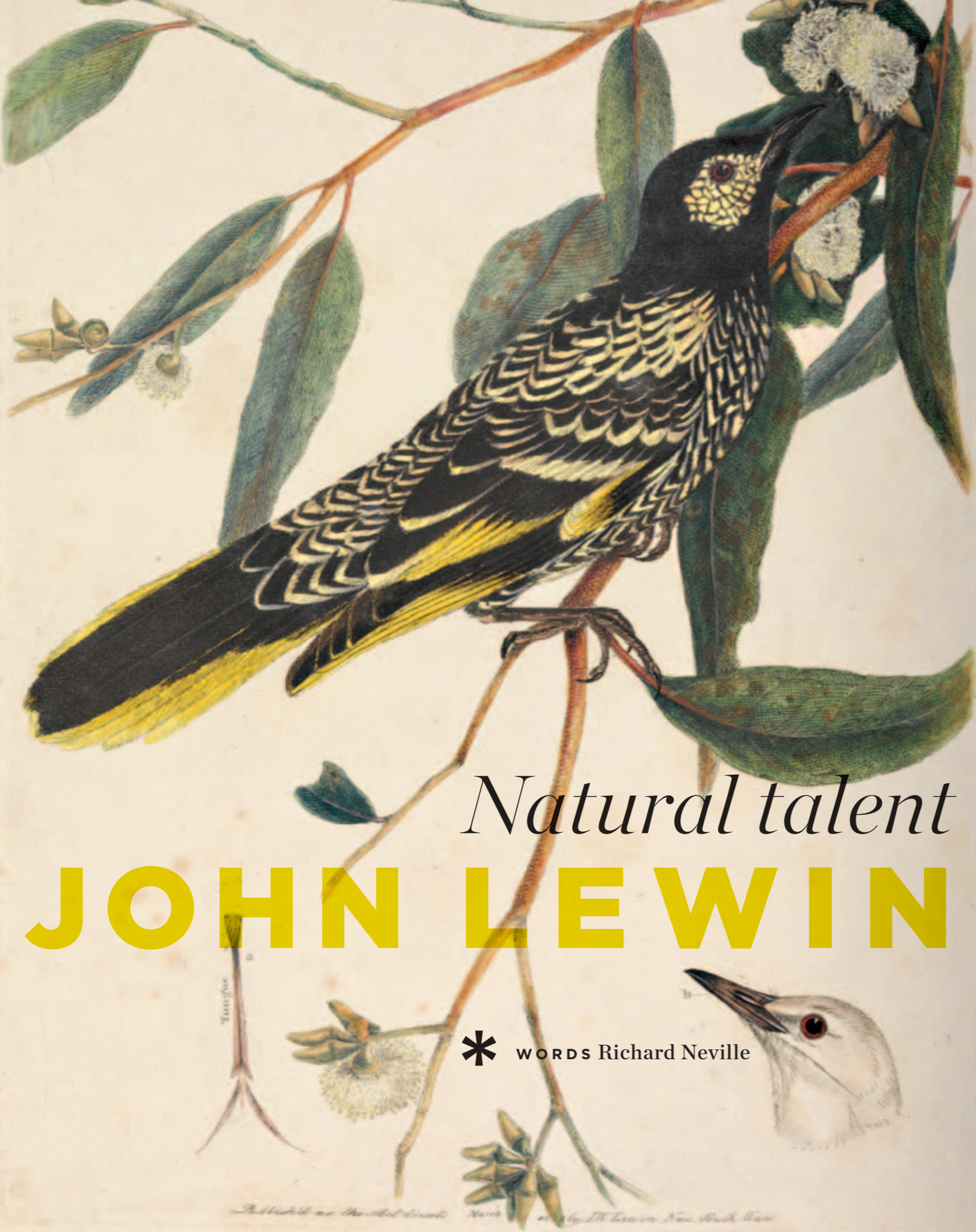
COMPILED BY Emma Gray, *Discover Collections*



29 May 1860

The first race meeting at Randwick Racecourse is held by the Australian Jockey Club and, according to *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 'fell but little short of the sanguine expectations we had entertained'.

RANDWICK RACECOURSE, SYDNEY, C. 1860s SPF / 338



EXHIBITION

Australia's first professional artist, John Lewin, was a 'practical naturalist' whose legacy deserves star treatment in a new book and exhibition.

Conventional histories of Australian art tend to skate over the first 70 or so years, dipping briefly into the stories of well-established names like Thomas Watling, Joseph Lycett, John Glover and Conrad Martens. It's not that the significance of their work is underrated — it's more that the nuances and complexities of colonial art are flattened into a grand narrative that starts with artists of the First Fleet struggling to draw gum trees, and ends when the Heidelberg School finally captures the essence of Australia in the late nineteenth century.

The pictorial collections of the Mitchell Library offer an important corrective to this view. I was introduced to them in the early 1980s as a Master's art history student and have been fascinated by them ever since. Indeed, they were where I met John William Lewin, a natural history illustrator who arrived in Sydney in 1800 with the intention of publishing illustrated books based on his observations of local birds and insects in their environments. Now, some 210 years on, Lewin will star in his own retrospective at the State Library, *Lewin: Wild Art*, which opens on 5 March 2012.

Lewin's strong design aesthetic, wonderful talents of observation, and his innovative approach to natural history illustration marked him as a significant colonial artist. In the 1950s a former Mitchell Librarian, Phyllis Mander Jones, compiled comprehensive biographical and bibliographical records about him. In 1960 the great art historian Bernard Smith wrote about him in his seminal *European Vision and the South Pacific*, describing his 1815 watercolours of the Blue Mountains as the 'rude yet distinct beginnings of an Australian school of landscape painting'. Rex and Thea Rienits chose his Scarlet and Black Honeyeater as the frontispiece for their *Early Artists of Australia*, which was published in 1963.

But after this initial interest, attention waned until the 1980s when, swept up in the excitement generated by the Bicentenary, colonial art began to attract scholarly and market interest. Big players, like Alan Bond and Robert Holmes á Court, started buying artworks for unprecedented prices. The often unpolished, naïve aesthetic of colonial art was now a virtue — a raw, authentic witness to the beginnings of Australian history.

Lewin was certainly not immune to this interest, which focused on his 1813 *Birds of New South Wales*. Hand-coloured, typeset, printed and published entirely in Sydney, it was Australia's first illustrated book and therefore highly collectable. In the 1980s it was selling for \$75,000 a copy; now it sells for around \$500,000. Of the 13 surviving copies, four are held by the Library.

In 1988 I was commissioned by Tim McCormick, one of Sydney's most knowledgeable antiquarian dealers, to write a book on Lewin, financed by a wealthy collector. It was an exciting commission. I focused on the areas previous researchers had not covered: the context of Lewin's life, the burgeoning natural history milieu in which he worked, his influences, and his colonial experiences and aspirations.

Frustratingly, his documentary record is thin and accounts of his life before he left for Australia, aged 30, are non-existent. But looking at his background suggests his motivations. Lewin, whose father was also a natural history illustrator and writer, was a 'practical naturalist', not part of the circle of gentlemen naturalists who dominated English natural history, but an artisan collector and illustrator.

Natural talent

JOHN LEWIN

* WORDS Richard Neville

WARTY FACE HONEYEATER
[REGENT HONEYEATER],
1813, PLATE 14, DL Q81/9



The book did not proceed, however, and I packed my research notes away in a filing cabinet. I joined the State Library in 1990, and kept a watching eye on Lewin. I was therefore delighted when, in 2007, Peter Crossing (now Library Foundation Chairman) offered to support a book and exhibition on the artist and his work. For Peter, Lewin combined his interests in natural history and art, and he was keen to support a project that celebrated Lewin's achievements in the context of his society.

Peter's very generous support resuscitated the project. The Library engaged NewSouth Publishing to publish a companion book to the exhibition, titled *Mr JW Lewin: Painter and Naturalist*, which will also be launched in March. Peter's support also meant the Library could afford to bring out to Australia a number of works from English collections, such as those at the Natural History Museum, the Linnean Society and the British Museum. Excitingly, too, the National Library of Australia will partner with the Library to jointly present the exhibition, which will move to Canberra in July 2012.

Revisiting my late 1980s research in 2010 was fascinating. The internet opened up a whole new range of research opportunities. Online catalogues and databases gave access to previously unsearchable books, newspapers and journals. Without scanned newspapers I could never have discovered that John Lewin's father, William, absconded from his apprenticeship in 1765, or that John's son moved to India (where he died). It also made it much easier to look online at comparative publications — many very rare — held in institutions around the world.

Yet it is not entirely a utopian search environment. The quality of images in online databases is often very poor. And as there is little Australian nineteenth century content online apart from newspapers, huge swathes of Australian print content cannot be so easily searched.

Good history, however, is not only about facts. It is also about establishing connections between facts and interpreting them. This is the creative part of history: building on a scaffolding of online and physical research.

Lewin's story is a fascinating one. He was an acute and innovative observer of Australian natural history, whose beautiful illustrations of the colony's flora and fauna were unlike anything else being produced at the time. He was also an early aspirational Australian, who settled comfortably into a country he described in 1812 as one of the finest in the world. Had he remained in England, Lewin would have had little opportunity to distinguish himself: in Sydney, he was one of the colony's leading artists, became the town's coroner, and died — according to the inscription on his tombstone — a gentleman.

Lewin: Wild Art explores his world. Through the generosity of Peter and Sally Crossing, and their Belalberi Foundation, a new generation will be introduced to the intriguing complexities of early colonial art, science and society.

Richard Neville is the Mitchell Librarian and curator of *Lewin: Wild Art*.

The exhibition is open at the State Library from 5 March to 27 May, and at the National Library from 28 July to 28 October.



OPPOSITE LEFT: *GIGANTIC LILY* [GYMEA LILY], C. 1806, DG SV*/BOT/2
 OPPOSITE RIGHT: *SCARLET AND BLACK HONEYEUCKER*, [SCARLET HONEYEATER] 1810, SV*/BIRD/AUS/2
 TOP: *PLATYPUS*, 1810, ML 1364
 ABOVE: *SYDNEY COVE*, 1808, ML 60
 LEFT: *THE NIGHT HAWK* [TAWNY FROGMOUTH], 1807, V/112 (DETAIL)

Extraordinary river charts, recently preserved by the Library, bring back a vanished mode of transport.

Nine rare pilot charts of the Darling River, held in the Library's map collection, evoke an earlier era. This was a time when paddle steamers (or riverboats) on the Murray and Darling rivers and their tributaries provided the major form of inland transport for goods, and a convenient mode of travel for the inhabitants. Created in the 1870s and 80s by riverboat captains, these charts enabled safer navigation of the river's constantly changing hazards.

Hand-drawn on tracing linen, and each unique, they are 38 or 48 centimetres wide and of remarkable lengths, ranging from seven to 42 metres. They cover sections of the Darling from its junction with the Murray River at Wentworth in far south-western New South Wales to Bourke in the north.

After travelling on a paddle steamer down river from Bourke in 1909, the renowned historian Charles EW Bean described such a chart in *The Dreadnought of the Darling* (1911): 'It was wrapped on two rollers like the scrolls on which ancient Romans wrote epic poems.' The rollers were held in sockets 23 centimetres apart and were either suspended vertically or laid flat in a glass-fronted box. Knobs on the rollers were used to turn the chart to the relevant section as the boat traversed the river. A lantern placed below illuminated the chart for night navigation.

The charts record the twists and turns of the Darling River's course, which in many places almost turns back on itself. Numerous hazards are noted: rocks, bars, shoals, rapids, snags and trees either in or overhanging the river. Dangers like these are often indicated by symbols or letters apparently in common usage at the time as they appear on all nine charts. Towns, pubs, homesteads, woolsheds, stockyards, huts, windmills and fences are also recorded along the banks — often accompanied by naïve sketches. The letters 'W.P.' appear frequently and indicate the location of the woodpiles needed to sustain the paddle steamers' boilers.



Riverboat captains annotated the charts to record where floods created new channels. They also marked the areas where trees or branches swept downstream were submerged when the river was high, becoming dangerous snags.

According to Ian Mudie (*Riverboats*, 1961), riverboats had plied the Murray and Murrumbidgee and their tributaries for some years before the first voyage up the Darling in January 1859. River navigator and entrepreneur Francis Cadell took the *Albury* on that pioneering trip, with George Johnston in command, from Wentworth to Mount Murchison Station, north of Wilcannia. William Randell followed on the *Gemini* soon after, reaching Fort Bourke Station on 21 February then proceeding up the Barwon River until halted by the Aboriginal fish traps (Baiaime's Ngunnhu) at Brewarrina — a journey of almost 1000 kilometres by land and just over 1600 kilometres by water from Wentworth.

OPPOSITE: DARLING RIVER, DARLING RIVER PILOT CHARTS, C. 1873-80, MAPS/1136/CHART 2
ABOVE: DARLING RIVER FROM BILLILLA (DETAIL), MAPS/1136/CHART 1

Rolling

ON THE RIVER



WORDS Joy Hughes



The advent of paddle steamers on the Darling opened up trade and communications and brought about a social and economic revolution in western New South Wales. Travelling upstream — generally towing barges — they carried supplies, mail and passengers who included clergymen, shearers, theatrical companies and circuses. Returning downstream, the barges were stacked with bales of wool destined for export. Wool was the mainstay of the river trade with huge quantities transported to South Australian ports or to Melbourne via Echuca, the major port on the Murray River. Although the Darling was navigable for only half the year and shipments were delayed, the wool still reached major ports sooner than if sent overland by bullock train to Sydney.

When the water was high, there could be as many as 30 paddle steamers on the river at the same time. Some were ‘snagging steamers’ engaged by the government to remove snags; others carried a diversity of goods for sale and were commonly known as ‘hawking steamers’.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the expansion of the railways provided a speedier and more reliable service for transporting wool and signalled the end of much of the river trade. Photographs in the State Library’s collections, however, show paddle steamers still towing barges laden with wool down the Darling in the 1920s and 30s. During World War II, some returned to the river when motor fuel was in short supply. The last journey of a paddle steamer on the Darling is said to have been in the 1970s.

Joy Hughes is a historian and regular user of the Library’s map collection.

A RIVER STEAMER
[EXCELSIOR] ON
THE DARLING, C. 1880s,
KERRY, SYDNEY, SHIPS FILE /
DARLING RIVER STEAMERS

Helena Forde’s Darling sketches

Large snags that could rip open hulls — and were submerged when the river was high — are depicted in some views of the Darling River by Helena Forde (nee Scott). A professional artist, Forde accompanied her husband Edward, a government surveyor, when he was sent to survey the Darling in 1865–66 to aid the proposed clearing of these hazards. Her album of watercolours was included in her cousin David Scott Mitchell’s bequest in 1907 and may be viewed on the Library’s website.



Preserving the pilot charts

State Library Foundation support has made it possible for the Library to preserve these fragile pilot charts of the Darling River.

The incredible size and often poor condition of the charts made them difficult to handle. Iron gall ink, one of several inks used on the hand-drawn charts, had caused the fabric to become brittle and develop tears and holes.

To start, we brush-vacuumed the charts to remove any loose dirt and mould. Then we repaired them with a lightweight Japanese tissue. As water exacerbates the damage caused by iron gall ink, we used an acrylic rather than water-based adhesive.

Several charts were made up of more than one length of cloth sewn or pinned together.

Some pieces were not attached. We removed the metal pins and reattached these pieces using a Japanese tissue and wheat starch paste, a process that can be reversed if necessary. Long strips of a heavyweight tissue were attached to each end of the charts for added protection when rolling.

A study of Japanese scroll-mounting techniques helped us devise a system to house the charts that would prevent further damage while rolling them. We cut archival board tubes to size and added handles. The tubes were encased in custom boxes with an additional tube for rolling out the chart.

The repaired charts are now more accessible and can be easily rolled out for research or display.

LANG NGO AND CECILIA HARVEY
Collection Preservation and Storage

ABOVE: STATE LIBRARY
CONSERVATOR CECILIA HARVEY
REPAIRS A RIVER CHART
PHOTO BY JOY LAI

LEFT: RED SANDSTONE CLIFFS
ABOVE ‘CUTTHRO’, 1866,
HELENA FORDE, ML PXA 551/9

The creator of Sherlock Holmes came to Australia with a mission beyond literary ambition.

On Friday 13 August 1920 the creator of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, sailed to Australia in the *Naldera* accompanied by his wife and children. Despite the international appeal of his detective stories, Conan Doyle was not on a literary tour; the Scottish author was travelling to the antipodes to promote Spiritualism.

Two illuminated addresses presented to the author from the Spiritualists of Sydney and Melbourne reside in the pictures collection of the Mitchell Library, purchased in 2004 through Christies in London. I came across these elaborate presentation documents while researching the construction of Australian identity in turn-of-the-century graphic culture, as the 2011 Library Council of NSW Honorary Fellow. They commemorate the author's visit to Australia and recognise his efforts in advancing local Spiritualism.

Centring upon the belief in life after death, the Spiritualist movement developed in the mid-to-late nineteenth century as an avenue for the reconciliation of religion and science. It gained momentum in the aftermath of World War I, when the devastating toll of human loss prompted a renewed desire to communicate with the dead. Raised as a Catholic, educated by Jesuits, and trained as a physician, Conan Doyle became dissatisfied with the strictures of religious dogma and the atheism associated with scientific materialism; he turned to spirit examination in the 1880s.

The bestselling novelist eventually gave up his literary career to promote Spiritualism, writing several non-fiction works on the movement and travelling to the United States, Canada and South Africa, in addition to Australasia, where he employed his renowned voice as a 'gramophone' on physical matters (Fox newsreel interview, 1927).



In *The Wanderings of a Spiritualist* (1921), Conan Doyle tracks the adventures, both 'geographical and speculative', of his visit to Australia. Braving a heat spell along the Suez Canal in which a passenger died and several stewards collapsed, he lectured on Spiritualism aboard the *Naldera*, reaching the coast of Perth on 17 September 1920. His party disembarked in Adelaide, where the author received a letter of welcome from Premier Hughes with an underlying appeal:

I hope you will see Australia as it is,
for I want you to tell the world about us.
We are a very young country,
we have a very big and very rich heritage,
and the great war has made us realise
that we are Australians,
proud to belong to the Empire,
but proud too of our own country.

OPPOSITE: SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE, FROM *THE WANDERINGS OF A SPIRITUALIST* (LONDON: HODDER AND STOUGHTON, [1921]), P. 8

ABOVE: ILLUMINATED ADDRESS PRESENTED TO SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE BY THE SPIRITUALISTS OF MELBOURNE AND VICTORIA, 1921, ARTWORK BY GOLDSWORTHY & DAVEY, PXE 934/1

spiritualist adventures of
CONAN DOYLE

* WORDS Molly Duggins



In the five months Conan Doyle spent in Australia he did find time to observe the nascent country, filling the pages of his travelogue with remarks on local economies, politics, scenery and natural history. He commented on the recent crisis brought on by drought, the 'remarkable' city of Melbourne, the beauty of Sydney Harbour and the 'grand' beach at Manly, where he was stung by a blue bottle. His itinerary led him from Adelaide to Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth, where he spoke on Spiritualism and exhibited a series of psychic photographs to an average of 2000 people at each meeting. Between lectures, his family went on scenic excursions, including a trip to the Blue Mountains where they visited the Jenolan Caves.

Generally well received, Conan Doyle's touring agenda was not met without controversy both in the press – particularly in the *Argus*, which described Spiritualism as a form of 'black magic' and a 'cranky faith' – and in the eyes of the public, with one vocal dissenter cursing the author: 'May you be struck dead before you leave this Commonwealth'. Conan Doyle was convinced the movement could be bolstered by 'spirituality in art, in thought, and in literature' and attempted to contact Norman Lindsay who apparently went to some trouble to avoid an encounter. According to John Hetherington in *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, the artist confided to a friend, 'I'd have liked to meet him, but I didn't want any association with his

spiritualism'. Despite such resistance, the Spiritualist movement had a small yet significant following in Australia during the 1920s, practised both at an individual and organised level and supported by publications such as the Melbourne-based *Harbinger of Light*.

Upon his departure, Conan Doyle was presented with illuminated addresses from members of the Enmore and Stanmore United Spiritualist Church in Sydney on 31 January and from the Spiritualist organisations of Melbourne and Victoria on 4 February 1921. Originating out of the Gothic Revival and the Arts and Crafts movement in the nineteenth century, such addresses were used as ceremonial tributes through the 1920s and 30s, gradually declining in fashion thereafter. Their decoration reflected an increasingly modern style combined with Australian iconography resonant with a developing national visual identity in the wake of the First World War.

Produced by Cook and Goldsmith, professional artists operating out of 554 George Street, the Sydney address combines a bold, modernist aesthetic with the meticulous detail of natural history illustration. Bound in black morocco inscribed with Conan Doyle's monogram, it depicts a golden-hued outline of Australia against a patterned background, framed by art nouveau flourishes that extend to an adjoining page containing three photo-portraits of the dedicators. Luminescent in colour, the address features a heraldic banner addressed to Conan Doyle followed by a message of gratitude from the committee members of the Enmore and Stanmore United Spiritualist Church, rendered in precise, calligraphic text:

We recognize in you a specially chosen leader, endowed with power to command attention from the most obdurate minds and we heartily rejoice to know that you have consecrated your life to the spread of our glorious gospel ...

Embellished with sprays of native flora, including waratahs, bottlebrushes, wattle, and a lone flannel flower, the address is surrounded by a watercolour of the Sydney Heads that presides dome-like over the composition and a coloured print of Sydney



Town Hall, the top of which has been trimmed to fit the outline of the Bight. Together, these images present a cosmopolitan and scenic picture of Sydney, enhanced by a taxidermic-like kookaburra perched in the lower corner, representative of Australia's diverse natural history. Upon receiving the address, Conan Doyle jested that this 'laughing jackass' reminded him of some of the lively adversaries he encountered on his journey.

Passing through Melbourne on the return voyage in the *Naldera*, the author was presented with a second address commemorating his 'great crusade beneath the Southern Cross' from leaders of the Victorian Council of Spiritualist Churches and the Victorian Association of Spiritualists, who convened a farewell assembly in his honour. Encased in a wooden box mounted with a metal figurine of a kangaroo, the decoration by Melbourne illustrators Goldsworthy and Davey is simpler than its Sydney counterpart, yet shares common themes in its framing of Australian identity.

As with the Sydney address, native flora not only evokes the Australian landscape, but also recalls the 'great bunches of wild flowers ... and rare bouquets' offered to Conan Doyle and his wife throughout their visit. A map of Australia features prominently in both addresses, the Melbourne address placing Australia at the centre of the globe. Both cater to the exotic appeal of Australian fauna, the kookaburra and kangaroo serving as emblematic reminders of the author's time in the antipodes.

In response to the Sydney address, Conan Doyle gave the assembly a synopsis of his touring expedition, which according to his calculations included 25 lectures to 50,000 people, the excess funds from which he donated to furthering the Spiritualist cause in Australia. Summing up his visit in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 31 January, he declared, 'My wife and I have had practically nothing but kindness, and will carry away the most pleasing memories' – memories crystallised in the extraordinary illuminated addresses he bore back across the Indian Ocean.

Molly Duggins is the 2011 Library Council of NSW Honorary Fellow and a PhD candidate in the Department of Art History and Film Studies at the University of Sydney.



TOP: MOLLY DUGGINS PHOTO BY HAMILTON CHURTON

LEFT: ILLUMINATED ADDRESS PRESENTED BY THE STANMORE SPIRITUALIST CHURCH, SYDNEY, ARTWORK BY COOKE & GOLDSMITH, C. 1920-21, PXE 934/2

CONAN DOYLE'S PARTY EN ROUTE TO JENOLAN CAVES, FROM *THE WANDERINGS OF A SPIRITUALIST*, P. 257



THE RISE OF MARDI GRAS

* WORDS Garry Wotherspoon

DICTIONARY OF SYDNEY

A rebranded Sydney Mardi Gras brings back memories of some of its more challenging moments.

What do Fred Nile, the Chinese Women's Olympic swimming team, Imelda Marcos, Pauline Hanson and Robert Mugabe have in common? They have all been the subject of satirical attention in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade, recently rebranded as the Sydney Mardi Gras.

This annual event – now with those bare-breasted Valkyries, the dykes on bikes, as a brassy prelude – has been a feature of the city for 34 years. Its origins lie in what began as a peaceful protest in June 1978 against the state's anti-gay laws that turned into a brutal confrontation with police, fought out in the streets of Kings Cross, and resulting in 52 arrests. When those arrested appeared at the city's Central Court a few days later, entry for the public was blocked by the police despite the magistrate's decision to open the court. This civil rights outrage led to further clashes, with another seven people arrested, and massive publicity across Australia.

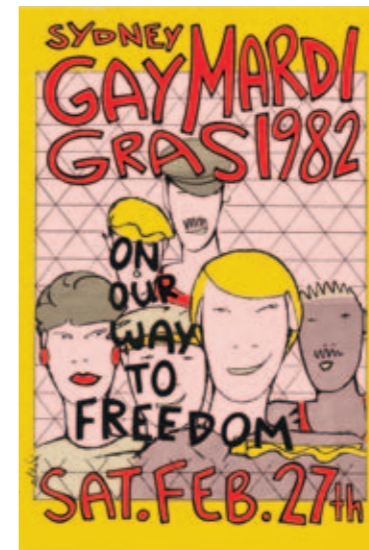
From such an iconic moment, a global event was born. In 1981, the parade was shifted to summer, in February. The event began to enjoy extensive media coverage from the mid-1980s, and the crowds continued to swell, from 200,000 in 1989 to over 500,000 in 1993. And when, in a controversial move, the ABC screened a 50-minute program of edited highlights at 8.30 pm, the show gave the ABC its best-ever Sunday night ratings. Still watched on the streets by tens of thousands of onlookers, and seen by millions on TV or via the internet, it has a worldwide reputation. Large numbers of interstate and international travellers fly in for the event, injecting around \$38 million each year into the state's economy.

Today, the parade is a pale imitation of its past glories. Over the years, several new entrants have been welcomed – symbolic of the changed perception of homosexuals in our society – including the state's police force, once the avowed enemy. Only a decade ago recent entrants such as banks and other

commercial enterprises wouldn't have been seen associating with anything that smacked of homosexuality. For them, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer communities have become a marketing target, and Mardi Gras a highly visible opportunity to showcase their wares. And the needs of television transmission – nothing to shock the children or offend the bigoted – have ensured it is now an anodyne ghost of its former self.

My two most memorable parades have been the first, in 1978, when what was to be one of our usual demonstrations – there were so many things to demonstrate against in those days – turned into that bloody battle; and a march two decades later when, clad in chador and Dame Edna Everage cats-eye rhinestone-infested glasses, my then partner and I showed our displeasure against Sharia law, with a placard saying 'Women in burqas support Mardi Gras'. But I should never have worn those red slingback stilettos; by the time I reached Taylor Square, I thought I would never walk again!

Garry Wotherspoon's papers, posters and oral history recordings are held by the Library. He is a contributor to the online history resource, the Dictionary of Sydney <www.dictionaryofsydney.org>. The Library also holds the records of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.



OPPOSITE: PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN JENNER FROM 'THE END OF THE EIGHTIES', PXA 669
ABOVE: SYDNEY GAY MARDI GRAS POSTER, 1982, POSTERS 455

SPURS

FEBRUARY, 1956
MITCHELL LIBRARY
Vol. 5 No. 1
22 MAY 57
Registered at the
G.P.O., Sydney, for
transmission by post
as a periodical.

AUSTRALIA'S ONLY NATIONAL COWBOY MAGAZINE
COUNTRY MUSIC — PEN PALS — RECORDS — NEWS AND PHOTOS

* WORDS Toby Martin



1/6

A LIVING COLLECTION

Singing cowgirls, yodelling boundary riders and crazy hillbillies found a voice in *Spurs* magazine.

OUR OWN HILLBILLY MAGAZINE

Before country music was called country music, it was called hillbilly music. Before it took on the traditional, parochial character it has today, it was young, modern and international. In researching my PhD on the history of country music in Australia, I discovered a source that exemplified both this sense of youthful exuberance, and the way that exuberance was maturing. That source was *Spurs: Australia's Only National Hillbilly Magazine*, held in the Mitchell Library.

Spurs captures the era when country music was at a peak — just before rock 'n' roll came to dominate youth culture. The photos in *Spurs* show performance styles that have fallen out of fashion: the madcap Schneider Sisters and their Schneiderphone, singing cowboys like Smoky Dawson, and Australia's first bona fide country music star, Tex Morton, who was a renowned whip-cracker and sharp-shooter to boot.

Spurs first appeared in 1952 and ceased publication in the early 1960s. It was published by radio station 2LM in Lismore until 1956, when it was bought by Slim Dusty and his wife and musical and business partner, Joy McKean, and published from Sydney.

As this history suggests, *Spurs* was characterised by a strong sense of affection and intimacy with hillbilly music. Before *Spurs*' appearance, hillbilly music, when it was written about at all, appeared in the back pages of popular music publications like *Australian Music Maker* and *Dance Band News*. Hillbilly music was corralled from the articles about swing and big band music into sections such as 'Hillbilly Cavalcade' and 'Cowboy Corner'. Often reviews of hillbilly music in such magazines in the 1930s and 40s used a mocking, down-home, yee-hah style: 'Waal folks, hyer is good ole Tex Morton, our own hill billy boy from the wilds of them thar Blue Mountains' (*Music Maker*, September 1937).

Not that *Spurs* didn't have a sense of humour — it wasn't above employing a similarly satirical register from time to time. A regular column entitled 'Zeke Sez' was written from the point of view of a semi-literate country bumpkin, replete with deliberate spelling mistakes and phonetic constructions: 'I still ain't much goode on these noo fanguld ritin masheens toooo meny gadgutesd on em I reckon' (*Spurs*, October 1952). The difference was that the satire, in *Spurs*' case, was done with a sense of affection and ownership.

THE SCHNEIDER SISTERS,
SPURS, VOL. 5, NO. 1,
FEBRUARY 1956

CHAD MORGAN as he is . . .



and



As "The Sheik"

Despite *Spurs*' willingness to joke about it, there was an underlying anxiety about the popular image of hillbilly music as trashy and low-class. The name change in 1953 from *Spurs: Australia's Only National Hillbilly Magazine* to *Spurs: Australia's Only National Cowboy Magazine* was part of a campaign by *Spurs* writers and others in the community to call their music something more respectable, like 'cowboy'. This campaign eventually resulted in the label 'country' music, and mirrored a similar campaign in America.

One of the main objections to the term 'hillbilly' was that it conjured up images of idiocy and moral degeneracy. As a 1956 article by Garth Gibson entitled 'Give It A Name' suggested, the word hillbilly conveys 'the impression of an old hobo sitting in a shack surrounded by empty hooch bottles, crooning stupid ditties to himself'. Cowboy or country and western conjures up images of rugged masculinity, resourcefulness and upstanding moral behaviour. It also set the scene in which such behaviour could take place — the wide-open plains of America or Australia.

The differences between 'cowboy' and 'hillbilly' music were aesthetic as well as moral. While hillbilly music was characterised by *Spurs* writers as groups of drunken men, raucously playing instruments such as the banjo, fiddle or jug, cowboy music was solo, reflective and lonesome — one cowboy or cowgirl singing and playing the Spanish guitar.

Morality was an important aspect of the cowboy persona in this period. *Spurs* published 'The Gene Autry Code', named after the popular American singing cowboy. These were 10 rules for real cowboys to live by, such as 'A cowboy is a non-drinker and a non-smoker' and 'A cowboy is clean about his person, in thought, word and deed'. Australian cowboy singer Smoky Dawson published his own 'Code of the West' with similar rules of conduct. Such concerns with purity demonstrate the demands for culture of moral worthiness in 1950s and 60s Australia.

Spurs writers' objections to the term 'hillbilly' also reflected post-War concerns about the 'Americanisation' of popular culture in Australia. Contributors argued that terms such as 'cowboy', 'songs of the stockmen' and 'bush ballads' better reflected the Australian character of the music than 'hillbilly'. This was to prove a particularly resonant

aesthetic distinction. Some of the biggest names of country music in the past 40 years — Slim Dusty, John Williamson, Lee Kernaghan — have sought to distance themselves from an American style in favour of the so-called 'bush ballad'.

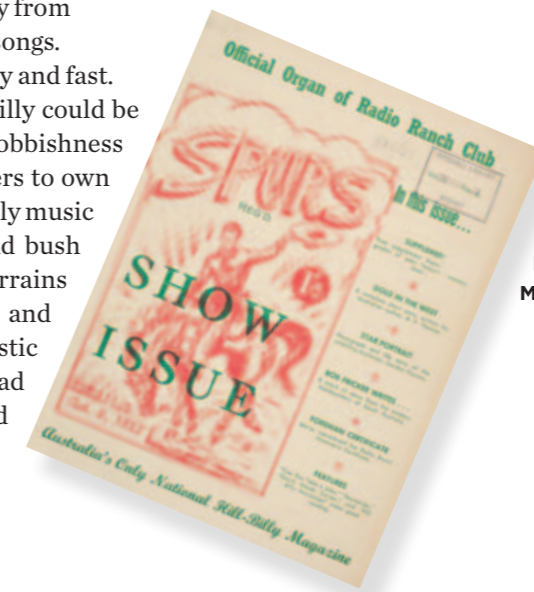
Despite *Spurs*' repeated protestations, 'hillbilly' music continued to be represented in its pages. Tex Banes, for example, was a regular *Spurs* contributor, an active member of the Melbourne Hillbilly Club and the leader of hillbilly band The Hayseeds. Within the Hayseeds set, Banes would perform with his 'Hillbilly Hornchestra' — a homemade contraption consisting of a washboard, bicycle horns, cowbells and a rusty tin pot. Photos of Banes showed him dressed in full hillbilly regalia — fake beard, checked shirt, sack-cloth pants — playing the Hornchestra with his fingers and prosthetic toes. *Spurs* described his performance as 'a riot of sheer comic delight'. The riotous comedy of the hillbilly routine could be interchanged with the sentimentality of the cowboy persona; photos of Banes show him as a hillbilly and as a cowboy.

The Schneider Sisters were another popular comedic hillbilly act during the 1950s and 60s. Mary Schneider played a homemade instrument known as the 'Schneiderphone' which, like Banes' Hornchestra, featured a washboard and bicycle horns. Photographs of the Schneider Sisters showed them dressed in cowgirl costume rather than recognisably hillbilly clothing, which was rarely worn by female performers. But their musical performances were a long way from the sweet femininity of most cowgirl songs. They were madcap, exaggerated, funny and fast.

Ultimately, playing at being a hillbilly could be another strategy to circumvent the snobbishness of cultural elites. It allowed performers to own the stereotype by sending it up. Hillbilly music could branch out beyond cowboy and bush ballad songs into other musical terrains such as rock 'n' roll, jazz or swing, and use instruments other than the acoustic guitar. Hillbilly singers, such as Chad Morgan, could be comedic and satirical; a quality often lacking in the serious, sentimental style of much country music in Australia.



Spurs offers the heady thrill of seeing another world laid out before you — a world where cowboys were rock stars, hillbillies were comedians and singers still yodelled. The magazine has much to tell us about cultural history in Australia: it shows the beginnings of a galvanised, self-conscious country music community; it shows a developing tendency towards 'family values', a rural focus and the sense of Australianness so prevalent in country music today; and it shows the way in which these values were, to some degree, the result of anxieties about moral purity and Americanisation in Australian society in the 1950s and 60s.



Toby Martin is a historian who recently completed a PhD thesis called 'Yodelling Boundary Riders: Country Music in Australia, 1936-2010'.

ABOVE: TOBY MARTIN PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK
 FAR LEFT: CHAD MORGAN, *SPURS*, VOL. 5, NO. 1, FEBRUARY 1956, P. 16
 LEFT: *SPURS*, VOL. 1, NO. 6, OCTOBER 1952

PROVENANCE

Sydney in 1868 was in the grip of its first royal visit. Queen Victoria's second son, His Royal Highness Prince Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh, aged 23, was received with enthusiasm as he toured the eastern colonies in the royal sloop *HMS Galatea*.

March 12 was a sunny day. Crowds thronged the jetty and marquees between the beach and rocky cliffs at Clontarf, in Middle Harbour, as the prince arrived by steamboat to attend a picnic lunch to raise funds for the Sydney Sailors' Home.

Hidden from view on the other side of a bushy hill were 300 Aboriginal men, women and children, many from the south coast of New South Wales, waiting to perform a welcome corroboree arranged by local members of parliament Richard Hill and George Thornton. The men had been provided with pipes, shirts and trousers and the women with blankets, in order, according to *The Empire* (11 March 1868) 'to do honour to "the Queen's picaninny" as they call the Prince, in befitting costume'.

LF Mann, writing in the *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal* (vol. 23, 1932) recalled the Aboriginal performers 'camped at Kirribilli practising for this great event, making their boomerangs from the local trees and using them, as they danced round with their bodies painted in many designs'.

The planned corroboree never took place. After lunch, the prince was walking along the beach when a shot rang out. A would-be assassin, an Irish rebel named Henry James O'Farrell, had shot him in the back close to his spine. He was rushed to Sydney Hospital, where nurses trained by Florence Nightingale nursed him back to health, and he sailed to England on 4 April. O'Farrell was hanged at Darlinghurst Gaol not long afterwards.

Artworks in the Library's collection give us an insight into the spectacle that might have been. A handwritten note on the reverse of 'Aboriginal dance' is a clue to the identity of the corroboree's organiser: 'Drawn by Old Micke the conductor of the corobarry before the Duke of Edinburgh'. 'Old Micke' is the Aboriginal artist we know as 'Mickey of Ulladulla'. The note was probably written by Mary Ann Gambell, wife of the lighthouse keeper at Ulladulla, who encouraged his work.

The figures of dancing men in Mickey's picture, waving spears and boomerangs, are wearing trousers.



The dancing women wear skirts, but the seated women are wrapped in blankets. Mickey drew many other images, in a naïve European style, of corroborees, battles, animals, plants, fish, boats and ships and the daily life on the Aboriginal reserve at Ulladulla. A constantly repeated motif shows Mickey, who was lame, supporting himself with two sticks and wearing a top hat and long coat, standing next to a songman beating his clapsticks.

Mickey of Ulladulla died in 1891. He achieved fame after his death when five of his works were exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893, for which Richard Hill and George Thornton contributed *Notes on the Aborigines of New South Wales*.

On 22 January 1935 'Miss M. Olley' donated three of Mickey's artworks to the Mitchell Library. It was tempting to think this could have been the artist Margaret Olley, but she was only 12 years old at the time. The donor was most likely Miss Matilda Sophia Olley, daughter of the Reverend Jacob Olley, a congregational minister for many years at Ulladulla, where she was born in 1873.

Keith Vincent Smith was the curator of the exhibition *Mari Nawi: Aboriginal Odysseys* at the State Library in 2010 and is the author of a book of the same title.

'Aboriginal dance' can be viewed on the Library's website as part of *Discover Collections — History of our Nation — Indigenous Australians*.

IMAGES: CEREMONY, C. 1880s, MICKEY OF ULLADULLA, V / 93 (DETAIL OPPOSITE)

Mickey's CORROBOREE



New days of eRECORDS

With the Library's eRecords project, which began three years ago, almost due to create its one millionth electronic catalogue record, researchers tell us they're finding leads they may not otherwise have come across.

Dr Patricia Curthoys was awarded the Australian Religious History Fellowship for 2011 and is examining 'The (Protestant) Church and the Great Depression'. Having used the Library's resources since the 1980s, Patricia has found greater availability of electronic records not only makes the research process less laborious, it delivers better results.

'Before eRecords,' she says, 'if you didn't have a clear sense of who were the significant people in a given area you could miss things. Now, if I'm studying the Maitland area, for example, I can begin with a simple keyword search of Maitland that may bring up a lot of relevant smaller collections that I may have missed.'

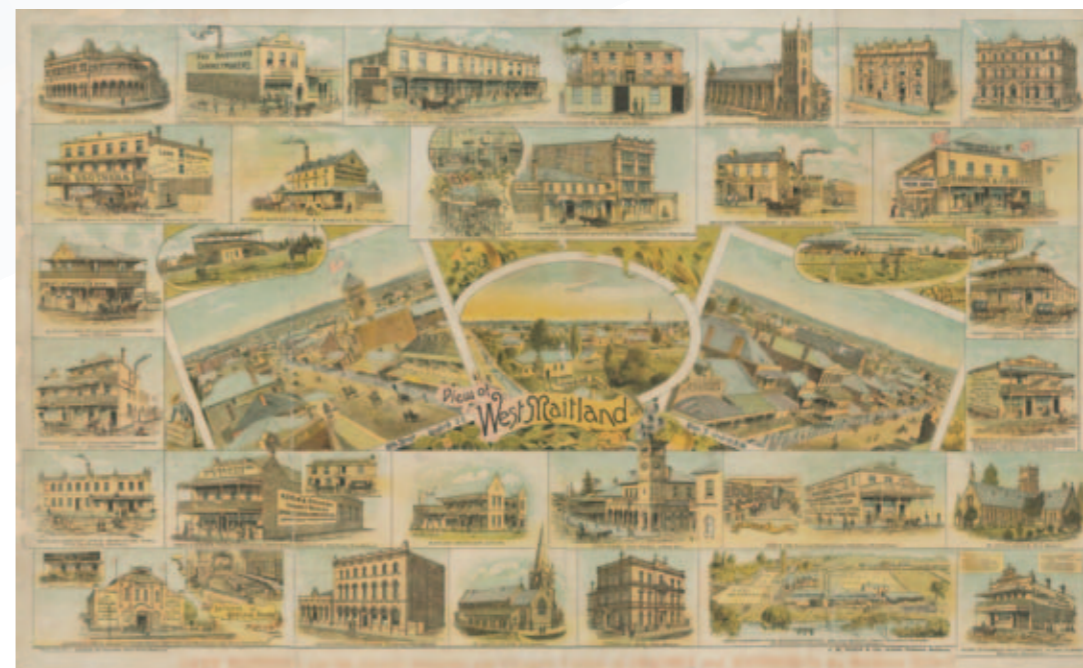
Amanda Kaladelfos was the David Scott Mitchell Fellow for 2010, looking at 'Citizens of Mercy: Bushrangers, Punishment and Public Opinion in colonial NSW'. She set out to 'examine popular conceptions of crime, punishment and justice during the later colonial period'.

'In the old days,' says Amanda, 'I would search online, often finding limited materials, then trek into the Library and spend hours poring over the card catalogues, racking my brain for possible subject headings, and then handwriting hundreds of request slips. Now the online catalogue gives me access to more information in the quickest possible time.'

'By keyword searching my research topics – bushrangers, crime and capital punishment – and sorting all records by date, I can easily track major trends and changes over time. I can see the changing nature of publications on these topics, from popular culture to scholarly interventions in different eras. It would be impossible to so quickly ascertain such changes using the old system of multiple, complicated record systems.'

When the NSW Government-funded eRecords project is completed in 2013, it will make around two million books, newspapers, magazines, manuscripts, pictures, maps and oral history searchable online.

BEN WOODS
eRecords



TOP: ENGRAVED HORN [SCRIMSHAW], C. MID-18TH CENTURY, LR 23

ABOVE: VIEW OF WEST MAITLAND FROM PHOTOS BY M MOSS, NO DATE, FW NIVEN & CO., LITHOGRAPHERS

THESE ITEMS WERE GIVEN ELECTRONIC RECORDS AS PART OF THE eRECORDS PROJECT

new acquisitions

Mission life

The personal papers of Alma Smith and Alva Atkins – two generations of missionaries working with the United Aborigines Mission – are a valuable recent donation to the Library.

Born in 1896, Alma Green (later Smith) came under the influence of the Sydney City Mission as a teenager and later met Rev. EJ Telfer, a founder of the UAM. By 1920 she had begun a lifelong career as a missionary, initially working at La Perouse. She continued missionary work at Purfleet near Taree, Cabbage Tree Island in north-eastern NSW, and Box Ridge, further inland.

In 1925 she met and married Cyril Smith at Coraki. Together they worked on missions across NSW before they retired from fulltime work in 1934. They moved back to Coraki as ‘associate workers’, conducting an itinerant ministry to Aboriginal people



living in bush camps. Alma and Cyril had five children, one (Cyril jnr) dying as an infant. They remained at Coraki until their deaths; Alma died in 1973 and Cyril in 1982.

Their eldest daughter, Alva, was born in 1928. She also became a missionary for the UAM, beginning with a post at La Perouse before graduating from the Sydney Bible Training Institute in 1947 and moving to Purfleet. Alva continued work at Woodenbong near the Queensland border in 1951 and then returned to Sydney to train as a midwife. In 1955 she was stationed at Gnowangerup in Western Australia, moving back to Sydney almost a decade later to work at Mission Publications Australia. Taking a new position at Bourke, she married David Atkins there in 1969 and they returned to Coraki. Alva died at Nambour Hospital, Queensland, in 2004.

These letters and photographs provide an insight into the careers of two remarkable and passionate women who were well known and respected in Aboriginal communities. They also give a rare glimpse into the lives of Aboriginal people on reserves, or missions, in NSW and Western Australia in the mid-twentieth century.

RONALD BRIGGS
Indigenous Services Librarian



Talking fish

A ground-breaking oral history collection called *Talking Fish* is an important recent addition to the Library’s collection.

While heated debates in the media about the Murray–Darling river system mostly focus on water management reforms, we hear less about the health of native fish populations, estimated to be just 10 per cent of the levels before European settlement.

As part of its strategy to revive fish populations – including Murray cod, blackfish and callop (yellow belly) – the Murray Darling Basin Authority is working with locals to improve fish habitats. Recognising the great benefit of oral history, the authority, in partnership with state government agencies, initiated the *Talking Fish* project in 2010. Professor Heather Goodall and Dr Jodi Frawley of University of Technology, Sydney, in collaboration with aquatic ecologists, set out to interview locals with an intimate relationship to the river. They travelled across 12 regions of the basin, interviewing over 130 recreational and commercial fishers, including many from Indigenous communities.

The result is a rich body of recorded memory, covering changes in fish species, water quality, vegetation and fishing methods. Scientists and natural resource managers can now draw on the detailed observations of fishing communities to help them understand environmental changes and devise strategies to restore the health of Australia’s great river system.

The digitally recorded interviews, along with transcriptions, photographs and other information, are available through the Mitchell Library Reading Room.

SALLY HONE
Curator, Oral History



‘Aunt Evelyn taught us a lot about fishing. It was just a short walk down to the river from where we lived. You could go down to the junction where the Coxs Creek meets the Namoi at Boggabri any afternoon and come back with a hessian sugar bag, half full in no time. You could go down there by mid-morning and start catching fish and actually eat them for lunch. The fishing has changed a lot since then.’

Robert Horne
Chairman of the Red Chief Land Council
Namoi River

‘So this is where angling and science can come together. Astute, observant, consistent anglers can provide a lot of basic information without realising just how important it is to do that.’

Dr Bryan Pratt
Canberra-based pathologist/ecologist



TOP RIGHT: ABORIGINAL GIRL AT BOURKE, FROM PAPERS OF ALMA SMITH AND ALVA ATKINS, PXA 1303/2

ABOVE: A MISSIONARY WITH ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND CHILDREN AT BOX RIDGE, 1920S
PXA 1303/20

ABOVE LEFT: JIM HANLEY WITH 10 KG MURRAY COD
ABOVE RIGHT: BABY, CAT AND COD, COURTESY OF CAROL HANNAN
IMAGES ACCOMPANYING THE TALKING FISH ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION, SOUND RECORDING: CY MLOH 647

a new journey

‘Make me sound like an excited teenager if you like,’ Library Foundation Chairman Peter Crossing tells *SL* in the lead-up to the exhibition *Lewin: Wild Art*.



So many of Peter Crossing’s lifelong passions come together in the first retrospective exhibition on colonial artist John Lewin, it’s clear why he had to be involved from the start.

‘The Lewin exhibition has many things that interest me: botany, birdlife, colonial history, painting and rare books,’ says Peter. Natural history illustrations created before 1830 are an enduring fascination for Peter: ‘This art is the clearest way of showing how Europeans reacted to what they saw in this strange place.’

Having grown up on a farm, Peter’s boyhood interest in plants and animals led him to study agricultural economics at Sydney University. An opportunity to work for the World Bank Group took him to Europe, living in Rome and travelling to Africa, the Middle East and Asia for almost a decade, before returning to Sydney and life as an investment

banker. In Rome, Peter consolidated his knowledge of European art. This helped him understand the traditions that artists such as Lewin came from, and the challenges they faced in a new environment.

Back in Australia, Peter had begun his quest to see every species of bird in this country when the species count was a manageable 650. Over the years, he got his count to an impressive 550 but the target keeps moving, with the latest species tally nearing 850. ‘It takes you to some beautiful remote places,’ he says, ‘and you have a purpose when you get there.’

Peter spends his weekends on the family farm in the Southern Highlands. His wife, Sally Crossing AM, who shares his passions, works in the not-for-profit sector: originally in cancer consumer advocacy leading Cancer Voices NSW and, more recently, launching the peak health consumer advocacy body, Health Consumers NSW.

Some years ago Peter’s family purchased the spectacular watercolour of the Gynea lily, produced by John Lewin on commission for Governor Bligh. This artwork will feature in the exhibition, along with a first edition of Lewin’s *Birds of New South Wales* from 1813. Peter finds this book compelling. ‘Not only is it the first illustrated book produced in Australia,’ he says ‘but Lewin’s images also show an attractive naturalness, having been drawn from life. They are undeniably Australian.’

Looking into the art of this period, Peter became aware that Lewin was the only major early Australian natural history painter who had not received a retrospective. This led to discussions with Mitchell Librarian, Richard Neville. ‘I knew Richard had written about Lewin for his Master’s thesis,’ says Peter. ‘We agreed that, as well as the exhibition, a thoroughly researched, beautifully produced book would help create awareness about this overlooked artist.’

‘The highlight for me,’ says Peter, ‘is being part of the process; you see the exhibition gradually unfold before your eyes. I’m involved in the discussions as the curator and the exhibition team put together an exciting exhibition: from identifying species to design, marketing, securing loans from galleries and museums in Australia and overseas, through to the finished product of a first class exhibition both in Sydney and Canberra.’

Peter’s message, both personally and as Chair of the Foundation, is that the Library is full of opportunities for people to fulfill their interests while helping to secure a larger audience for its treasures. ‘No matter what your interests are – it may be natural history, maps, photography, literature, Indigenous languages or social history – the Foundation is very good at identifying how your interests could match with what the Library has to offer.’ The Library has an ambitious acquisitions program and an imperative to bring its treasures online.

Peter believes that much of the community is mystified by the Library. While it attracts an average of 8000 visitors a day (2500 in person and 5500 online), ‘the richness of the heritage collection is not fully understood’. The Foundation’s mission, therefore, is to work with the Library to ‘bring this heritage collection out into the community’.

In the meantime, Peter will encourage everyone he meets to visit *Lewin: Wild Art*. ‘It’s a picture of early 1800s Australia,’ he says ‘as well as an interesting personal story about a young man who went across the world to make his living as a painter. The images he produced are fascinating and beautiful.’



Rediscovering Indigenous Languages

Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO officially launched the Library’s new collaborative project, Rediscovering Indigenous Languages, on 2 December 2011 (see *SL* Spring 2011, p. 34). The Hon. Victor Dominello MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, expressed the State Government’s support for the initiative on behalf of the NSW Premier, the Hon. Barry O’Farrell MP.

Peter Crossing, Chairman of the State Library Foundation and David Peever, Managing Director of Rio Tinto Australia, spoke about the importance of this partnership to both organisations. The research phase is well underway with Professor Michael Walsh researching the Library’s archival records for Indigenous wordlists or vocabularies collected from 1788 to the 1930s. These are often the only surviving records of Indigenous languages from NSW, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania. The outcome of the project will be online access to this rare material, which will increase public awareness of languages and cultural history.

The launch concluded with a superb performance from the Gondwana National Indigenous Children’s Choir.

GONDWANA NATIONAL
INDIGENOUS CHILDREN’S
CHOIR AT THE LAUNCH OF
REDISCOVERING
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

discover/collections

On the high seas

Work has started on a new Discover Collections online story which will give family history enthusiasts, genealogists and social historians a glimpse of life on board the ships bringing fresh waves of migrants to Australia in the 1860s.

Shipboard: The 19th Century Emigrant Experience will showcase online a range of shipboard newspapers, journals, diaries and letters, as well as shipping ephemera such as souvenir passenger lists, tickets and menus.

Personal stories of life onboard will be part of the online collection, such as the detailed account of unmarried migrant woman Fanny Shorter, who travelled on the *Duke of Buccleuch* from Plymouth to Brisbane in 1884. Photographs and drawings from the period will be digitised to illustrate the grandeur of the immigrant ships and the sometimes harsh, or mundane, experience of life on the high seas.

This digitisation project is sponsored by Mr Robert John Pritchard, who sadly passed away in early December. His foresight in understanding the importance of preserving this material will live on through this online collection.



Foundation welcomes TAL & Dai-ichi Life collection

The extraordinary TAL & Dai-ichi Life collection of 741 natural history watercolours is one of the largest archives of the First Fleet period and much of it was unknown. It is the Mitchell Library's most significant addition of early colonial material since the 1930s.

To celebrate the recent arrival of the collection from the UK, an exclusive event was held for those generous Foundation donors who supported the acquisition appeal. Over \$130,000 of private funds were raised to boost the Foundation's commitment to partly fund this significant collection.

Aylmer Bourke Lambert, a wealthy gentleman collector and botanist in the 1790s, compiled the collection from Surgeon General John White's specimens and drawings brought from Sydney to London in 1795. The 13th Earl of Derby, a legendary collector of natural history material, acquired the drawings from Lambert's estate sale in 1842. The albums are in excellent condition, having remained in the Derby library ever since.

The six bound albums comprise the internationally acclaimed 'Derby drawings' and are an evocative record of the genuine wonder and pleasure with which Europeans viewed Australian natural history. The exquisite drawings and watercolours of Australian fish, flowers and plants look incredibly pristine, with astonishing depth of colour, as if they were freshly painted.



RIGHT: 'THE QUARTER DECK', PHILLIP PARKER KING, PXC 767/146

TOP RIGHT: FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS VIEW THE TAL & DAI-ICHI LIFE COLLECTION



A vital contribution

In 2011 our talented and committed group of over 150 volunteers contributed a total of 12,300 hours to support the Library by leading tours, assisting staff and performing painstaking work behind the scenes to significantly enhance access to the Library's collection.

Some of their recent achievements are:

- guiding tours of the Library and exhibitions for 1421 people over the year
- providing assistance at events such as Sydney Open and the Australian Antiquarian Book Fair
- transcribing World War I diaries and the journals of early explorers such as Sir Thomas Mitchell
- sorting, rehousing and entering data for 146,025 negatives from the Australian Consolidated Press archive
- re-scanning important photographic collections such as the Sam Hood, Government Printing Office and Australian Photographic Agency photographs to produce high quality images
- sorting the Library's archive of event photography
- helping relocate the Library's ephemera collection
- assisting with mailouts across the Library
- presenting talks as part of the Speakers Program to 1100 people this year
- giving interpretive tours of the Shakespeare Room every Tuesday.

An enthusiastic group of volunteers is taking part in a University of Melbourne project to reconstruct the pre-twentieth century climate in south-eastern Australia. They have been combing the Library's printed and archival collections to help create an accurate picture of Australia's climate history in the absence of comprehensive scientific records (see *SL* Winter 2010 for more information about this project).

At the volunteer Christmas party on 28 November the NSW State Librarian and Chief Executive, Alex Byrne, paid tribute to our volunteers on behalf of staff and users of the Library and welcomed the 19 new volunteers who joined us in 2011.



ABOVE: VOLUNTEER GARY COOK GUIDES A TOUR OF THE LIBRARY PHOTO BY MERINDA CAMPBELL

LEFT: VOLUNTEERS PAT GIBSON AND MARGARET EVANS IN THE MITCHELL LIBRARY READING ROOM PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK

friends Being a Friend gives you a different perspective on the Library. You'll enjoy a closer involvement with our work and contribute to the Library's exciting future.

for our friends

For the calendar: *Lewin: Wild Art* exclusive Friends event

The first-ever retrospective exhibition on natural history artist John Lewin highlights his remarkable contribution to our pictorial record of early Australia. Curator of the exhibition, Mitchell Librarian Richard Neville, will give Friends a special introduction to the exhibition on Wednesday 14 March. For more information please call (02) 9273 1593.

Exhibition tours

Enjoy a personal tour of the exhibition with one of our volunteer guides. Free tours are on Tuesday and Thursday at 11.30 am. Meet in the Mitchell Vestibule near the information desk.



More than a fairy tale

A new book from Friend of the Library Robert Holden is an illustrated biography of May Gibbs. In *May Gibbs More Than a Fairy Tale: An Artistic Life*, Robert Holden and Jane Brummitt explore Gibbs' early life and artistic career. In a quest to develop as an artist, Gibbs travelled to England where she became an early supporter of the suffragettes. One of the few women to become a commercial success as an artist, she did so by turning to fantasy and children's illustration. This fascinating biography features beautiful reproductions of May Gibbs' work.

Special offer: Friends can purchase *May Gibbs More Than a Fairy Tale* at the Library Shop for \$40 (RRP \$50).

Friends on TV

On the October 2011 long weekend, 20 lucky Friends had the opportunity to be the audience for a special taping of the ABC's *First Tuesday Book Club*, which was held in the Library's Friends Room. Jennifer Byrne interviewed Alexander McCall Smith, one of the world's most prolific and popular authors. His books include the *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, *44 Scotland Street* and *Sunday Philosophy Club* series. After the filming, Friends chatted with McCall Smith and had their books signed by the author.



MARY JANE MAHONY AND
ALEXANDER MCCALL SMITH

JOINING OR RENEWING
PLEASE GO TO www.sl.nsw.gov.au/support

OR CONTACT US AT
State Library of NSW Foundation
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: (02) 9273 1593
Email: friends@sl.nsw.gov.au



the library shop

Open 7 days
(02) 9273 1611
libshop@sl.nsw.gov.au
www.sl.nsw.gov.au/shop



The Library Shop is having a makeover. Visit our temporary shop in the Galleries from 5 March for a selection of books and gifts including Richard Neville's *Mr JW Lewin: Painter and Naturalist*. A new-look shop will open on 1 May.



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01 AT THE AUSTRALIAN ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR, 10-12 NOVEMBER PHOTO BY HAMILTON CHURTON

02 JIM MINTO, CEO TAL LTD, STEVEN BELL, STATE LIBRARY CONSERVATOR, DR ALEX BYRNE, NSW STATE LIBRARIAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE, THE HON. GEORGE SOURIS MP, MINISTER FOR THE ARTS, AND THE HON. BARRY O'FARRELL MP, PREMIER OF NSW, AT THE TAL & DAI-ICHI LIFE COLLECTION MEDIA EVENT, 11 NOVEMBER PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK

03 DR PETER TYLER BEFORE GIVING THE BEN HANEMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE, 24 NOVEMBER PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK

04 JUDITH ADAMS, GREAT NIECE OF ANTARCTIC EXPLORER MORTON HENRY MOYES, AND BRENDAN COWELL, *FINDING ANTARCTICA* MEDIA EVENT, 1 DECEMBER PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK

05 DR ALEX BYRNE, MAGGIE PATTON AND ROBERT CLANCY OAM, *FINDING ANTARCTICA* EVENT, 6 DECEMBER PHOTO BY BELINDA CHRISTIE

06 IN THE GALLERIES WITH A MAP JIGSAW, 13 DECEMBER PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK

07 SAMANTHA HAGAN AND TYLER WAKEFIELD WITH PENGUIN ICE SCULPTURE, *FINDING ANTARCTICA* EVENT PHOTO BY BELINDA CHRISTIE

08 TARA MOSS AND DOMINIC KNIGHT AT THE LIBRARY FOR THE LAUNCH OF TARA'S BOOK, *THE SPIDER GODDESS*, 15 DECEMBER PHOTO BY PAUL CUSH

09 KATE MIDDLETON AND REBECCA GIGGS, COOL READINGS, TUESDAYS IN THE GALLERIES, 20 DECEMBER PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK

recent highlights



Cafe Trim

Our new-look Cafe Trim will open for business on 1 May. In the meantime pick up a coffee, tea, cold drink or snack from the McDonald's Room in the Macquarie Street building.

Phone: (02) 9273 1744
Fax: (02) 9273 1272
venuehire@sl.nsw.gov.au
www.sl.nsw.gov.au/using/venuehire



laissez-faire

‘Q&A

Cassie Mercer

Inside History magazine is a labour of love for its editor, Cassie Mercer.

WHY START *INSIDE HISTORY*?

I've worked for magazine publishers in Sydney and London for the past 10 years, and I love the process of having an idea for a story, researching it, seeing the pages designed and then getting it onto the shelf. And my mum is a historian so I caught her passion for it.

We wanted to produce an Australian history magazine for the newsstand with a high-quality and engaging format, and we wanted to offer a platform for researchers, professional and amateur, to showcase fascinating stories that otherwise may not be recorded.

WHAT ARE SOME UNUSUAL STORIES YOU'VE FEATURED?

Peter Macinnis penned a terrific article on the monsters our ancestors believed lived in the bush. And Hazel Edwards recently wrote about how she caught the genealogy bug when she saw a photo of her ancestor who looked identical to her. We have a dress and image historian who has helped settle a few family arguments by dating

photographs. One of my favourite stories was about a family historian who visited a vintage fair in Queensland and happened upon some photos and letters from her ancestor dated 100 years earlier!

HOW HAVE YOUR ANCESTORS INFLUENCED YOU?

I have seven convict ancestors on my mum's side, while my dad's family emigrated from working class London in the 1920s. I've always thought they must have been pretty gutsy — either surviving a dreadful journey on a convict ship, or choosing to move to the other side of the world. One convict ancestor was on the Second Fleet ship *Neptune*, which was one of the horror ships. A third of the convicts died on board or soon after arrival. Mine was one of the survivors.

WHO DO YOU ADMIRE?

I admire the thousands of volunteers across the country who give up hours of their time to promote Australian history — whether it's helping to document records and oral history through their local society, correcting

thousands of lines of newspaper text through Trove, leading walking tours or campaigning to protect a historically significant building. All because they're passionate about our history and want to preserve it.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?

We're hard at work on our Anzac issue, researching stories from both world wars. We've been talking to pilots who were at Milne Bay during World War II, and people who experienced life on the home front.

WHAT'S THE LIBRARY'S MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR FAMILY HISTORIANS?

I love the eResources on the Library's website. I spoke last month at a historical society meeting about how to research early Irish convicts, and one of their members told me how valuable the eResources have been for her research. She can access digitised records from the UK for free, which her English friends have to pay for. And it's wonderful to walk off the street into a fantastic free exhibition at the Library.



PRINTED BOOK OR E-READER?

There's room for both. I've always loved the feel of old books, and the smell of a library, but it's exciting to publish in different ways. As well as our printed issues of *Inside History*, we have an iPad version and will be launching an Android one this year. We can include more images in the iPad issue, and use sound and video to enrich a story — such as a rare recording from the Library of meteorologist Morton Henry Moyes' experience in Antarctica, part of our coverage of the Library's recent exhibition *Finding Antarctica*.

Friends of the Library can phone (02) 9590 9600 to receive a 10 per cent discount subscription to *Inside History*. www.insidehistory.com.au

Lewin: Wild Art

5 March – 27 May 2012

