

Magazine for members  
Winter 2012

# SL



STATE LIBRARY®  
NEW SOUTH WALES

Olympic memories  
Transit of Venus  
Mysterious Audubon  
Wallis album



# Message



## Passages

Permanence, immutability, authority tend to go with the imposing buildings and rich collections of the State Library of NSW and its international peers, the world's great libraries, archives and museums.

But that apparent stasis masks the voyages we host. In those voyages, each visitor, each student, each scholar finds islets of information and builds archipelagos of understanding. Those discoveries are illustrated in this issue with Paul Brunton on the transit of Venus, Richard Neville on the Wallis album, Tracy Bradford on our collections on Olympians such as Shane Gould and John Konrads, and Daniel Parsa on Audubon's *Birds of America*, one of our great treasures.

All are stories of passage, from Captain James Cook's voyage of geographical and scientific discovery to Captain James Wallis's album that includes Joseph Lycett's early Newcastle and Sydney watercolours. This artefact, which had found its way to a personal collection in Canada, has now been repatriated to New South Wales, in the care of the State Library.

These are inspiring stories of sharing knowledge across the globe. It is the same inspiration that drives the National Year of Reading, which we are celebrating in 2012 with many events. We are promoting the personal and societal benefits of being a reader, and how we go on imaginative voyages with great creative writers or learn from the experiences of others – as I have done while reading Andrew Tink's excellent *Lord Sydney: The Life and Times of Tommy Townshend* (2012), which describes his influence on the character of the early colony.

And briefly, I am pleased to note that the Library's role in supporting and celebrating writing and its passages has been highlighted by the Premier's decision to bring the NSW Premier's Literary Awards and NSW Premier's History Awards home to the State Library.

**ALEX BYRNE**

NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive



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### COVER

SHANE GOULD HOLDING ALOFT THE TEAM MASCOT FOLLOWING THE 400 METRE FREESTYLE MEDAL PRESENTATION, MUNICH OLYMPIC GAMES, 1972, MLMSS 7025/7X

### BACK COVER

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PENGUIN BOOKS

JANE EYRE  
—  
CHARLOTTE BRONTË



PENGUIN BOOKS

DRAGONS ARE EXTRA  
LEWIS HASTINGS  
BIOGRAPHY



PENGUIN BOOKS

DEFY THE FOUL FIEND  
JOHN COLLIER  
FICTION



PENGUIN BOOKS

ARIEL  
ANDRÉ MAUROIS  
THE BODLEY HEAD



PENGUIN BOOKS

A SOUTH SEA DIARY  
S. W. POWELL  
TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE



PENGUIN BOOKS

THE RAINBOW  
D.H. LAWRENCE  
FICTION



PENGUIN BOOKS

THE CASE OF THE LATE PIG  
MARGERY ALLINGHAM  
MYSTERY & CRIME



PENGUIN BOOKS

CHARLES LAMB AND ELIA  
EDITED BY J. E. MORPURGO  
A new book specially prepared for this series



PENGUIN BOOKS

KIMONO  
JOHN PARIS  
FICTION



PENGUIN BOOKS

HASHISH  
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PENGUIN BOOKS

DEATH ON THE NILE  
AGATHA CHRISTIE



PENGUIN BOOKS

HANGOVER SQUARE  
PATRICK HAMILTON



PENGUIN BOOKS

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WORLD  
H. G. WELLS  
THE BODLEY HEAD



PENGUIN BOOKS

HASSAN  
JAMES ELROY FLECKER



PENGUIN BOOKS

A PROBLEM A DAY  
R. M. LUCEY  
MISCELLANEOUS



PENGUIN BOOKS

BRIDESHEAD REVISITED  
EVELYN WAUGH  
FICTION



PENGUIN BOOKS

SCOWLE AND OTHER PAPERS  
BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



PENGUIN BOOKS

MY FRIEND MAIGRET  
SIMENON



PENGUIN BOOKS

MUSIC AT NIGHT  
ALDOUS HUXLEY  
ESSAYS & BELLES LETTRES



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MURDER IN THE MAZE  
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PENGUIN BOOKS

GO SHE MUST  
DAVID GARNETT  
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PENGUIN BOOKS

LOOKING FOR A BLUEBIRD  
JOSEPH WECHSBERG  
BIOGRAPHY



PENGUIN BOOKS

PUZZLE FOR FIENDS  
PATRICK QUENTIN



PENGUIN BOOKS

WITH MYSTICS AND MAGICIANS IN TIBET  
ALEXANDRA DAVID-NEEL  
THE BODLEY HEAD





# S



## Elegance in exile

State Library conservators have prepared 21 drawings and watercolours for display at the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra this winter as part of the exhibition *Elegance in Exile* (1 June to 26 August). On show will be the work of four convict artists — Richard Read senior, Thomas Bock, Thomas Griffiths Wainwright and Charles Rodius — who are credited with producing ‘the most significant and elegant portraits of the colonial period’.

In 2010–11, items from the Library’s collection were displayed at 49 exhibitions in Australia and overseas.

MRS [ELIZABETH] MARSDEN WIFE OF REV. S. MARSDEN, RICHARD READ SNR, 1821, MIN 74



## Classic line-up

When the Library’s Penguin Books collection (see photo pp. 4–5) was purchased in 1981, it was one of the largest sets of Penguins ever offered for sale, a representative sample of almost 3000 editions from 1935 to 1970. But 30 years later, the Library still had no catalogue records for them.

Then, in 2011, the launch of a training program for new librarians was a chance to dig them out. For Jan-Amanda Harkin, one of four librarians given the task of cataloguing these publishing icons, the collection has great appeal. ‘The public has an affection for the Penguins,’ says Jan, ‘they gave people access to affordable, but quality, literature.’ Far from pristine first editions, ‘they’ve been used, lent, read many times,’ says Anatta Abrahams, who oversees the training program. ‘It’s all part of their charm, and their purpose.’ Over 2500 new records for the Penguins have so far been added to the catalogue.

MICHAEL CARNEY AND JAN-AMANDA HARKIN WITH PENGUIN BOOKS PHOTO BY HAMILTON CHURTON

## Reading hour

The Reading Hour on 25 August is a call to action for people of all ages to encourage families to ‘share a book with your child for 10 minutes a day, an hour a week’. Part of the National Year of Reading, events will be held throughout the day in libraries, bookshops and other public places.



National Year of Reading 2012

## Biography and business

By the time you receive *SL* magazine, judges will have chosen from a record 63 National Biography Award entries to announce the winner (on 14 May). The longlist for Australia’s pre-eminent prize for biographical writing and memoir ranges from autobiographies by musician Paul Kelly and former prime minister John Howard, to city biographies of Sydney, by Delia Falconer, and Melbourne, by Sophie Cunningham. On presenting the longlist, chair of the judging panel, Peter Rose, commented that ‘Biography — in its many styles and guises — is in rude health.’

In other awards news, renowned journalist and author Trevor Sykes has won Australia’s largest and most significant award for business literature, the \$30,000 Ashurst Business Literature Prize, for *Six Months of Panic: How the Global Financial Crisis Hit Australia* (Allen & Unwin). The National Biography Award and Ashurst Business Literature Prize are administered by the Library.



NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY AWARD SHORTLIST

## Library takes on Premier’s awards

A reinvigorated Premier’s Literary Awards and Premier’s History Awards will be managed by the State Library, with an awards ceremony in November 2012 in the Mitchell Library Reading Room. ‘This historic location, which has fostered so much historical and creative writing, is the perfect setting for these awards,’ NSW Premier Barry O’Farrell announced on 5 April. The Premier stated that the awards would be enhanced and receive the recognition they deserve, with the Library well placed to promote regional involvement through its public library network. In 2013 the awards will revert to coincide with the Sydney Writers’ Festival and NSW History Week.

# NEWS



## French connection

Could you be a Huguenot? With the ever-increasing interest in genealogy, the Library’s Huguenot records are proving a popular resource for those seeking to establish a French connection in their family line. The Huguenots were French Protestants who fled religious persecution between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. According to family history librarian David Berry, the Library has ‘all the essential sources for tracing Huguenot ancestry’.

A significant resource is the *Quarto Series of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, which brings together the surviving Huguenot church registers for England and Ireland, and many other useful records. A Library volunteer, Cecile Ramsey Sharp (now deceased) — known as ‘Miss Huguenot’ to Library staff — spent 15 years indexing the Quarto Series. Researchers around the world use her microfiche index to identify Huguenot ancestors. You’ll find these resources in the Family History Service on the lower ground floor of the State Reference Library, where librarians can help you in your search.

HUGUENOT FAMILY PORTRAIT: PERDRIAU FAMILY, SYDNEY, FROM *ELUSIVE FREEDOMS* BY RALPH J PERDRIAU, 1966





## 5 June 1788

The precious herd of cows transported to Sydney with the First Fleet stray and become lost. The area where they are finally found in 1795 is then named Cowpastures (near present-day Camden).

VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT HUT AT COWPASTURES, 1804  
SSV1B / COWP D / 1



## 19 June 1822

John Bigge's damning report into the state of the colony is printed in London. Among other things, Commissioner Bigge criticised Governor Macquarie's extravagance in town planning.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INQUIRY INTO THE STATE OF THE COLONY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, 1822, BY JOHN THOMAS BIGGE DSM/Q991/7A2



## 4 July 1934

Billie Samuel leaves Sydney GPO on her attempt to break the women's cycling speed record to Melbourne. She arrives three days, one hour and 20 minutes later at the Melbourne GPO, breaking Elsa Barbour's record by six hours.

BILLIE SAMUEL ON THE MALVERN STAR BIKE, 4 JULY 1934, BY SAM HOOD. HOME AND AWAY - 4237

## 6 July 1813

The first commercial export of fine wool from NSW is shipped by John and Elizabeth Macarthur to the UK, founding the Australian wool industry.

JOHN MACARTHUR, C. 1850s  
DG 222



on this

# DAY

COMPILED BY Emma Gray, *Discover Collections*

## 10 August

### FEAST DAY OF ST LAWRENCE

Today is the feast day of Saint Lawrence, one of the patron saints of librarians and archivists (the other is Saint Jerome). Lawrence was burnt to death in Rome in AD 258.

SAINT LAWRENCE, FROM BOOK OF HOURS FROM THE WORKSHOP OF JEAN COLOMBE OF BOURGES, C. 1480  
ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT SAFE 1 / 7C



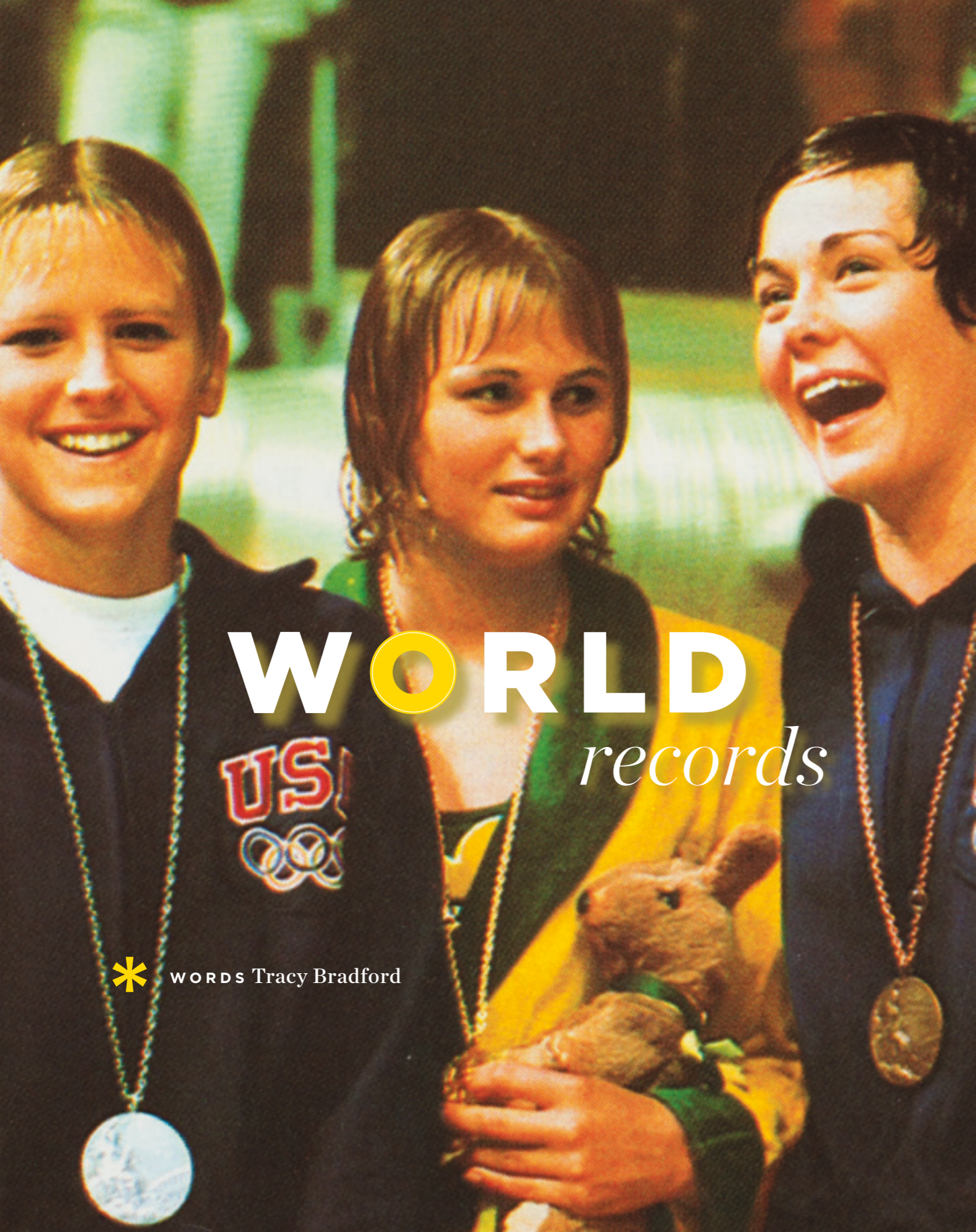
## 24 August 1917

Author Ruth Park is born in Auckland, New Zealand. She is best known for the classic Australian novels *The Harp in the South*, *Playing Beatie Bow* and *The Muddle-headed Wombat*. Ruth Park died in 2010.

RUTH PARK, PRE-1947  
PHOTOGRAPH P1 / PARK, RUTH







# WORLD records

\* WORDS Tracy Bradford

## FEATURE

Diaries and memorabilia of two young swimmers reveal the ordinary and the incredible experiences of Australia's elite athletes.

On 22 November 1956, the Games of the XVI Olympiad opened in Melbourne, the first Olympic Games to be held in the Southern Hemisphere. The following day, at Crown Street Women's Hospital in Sydney, a baby girl was born to Shirley and Ron Gould. Sixteen years later, Shane Elizabeth Gould would be the golden girl of the pool at the Munich Olympic Games, a household name in Australia and around the world.

While 2012 sees London host the 30th Olympic Games, it also marks the 40th anniversary of a remarkable Olympic debut by one of Australia's most talented swimmers – and her Olympic swan song. At the age of 15 years and nine months, Shane Gould's prodigious talent in the swimming pool yielded three Olympic gold medals, one silver and one bronze from the five events she contested. The great American swimmer Mark Spitz, with an astonishing seven gold medals, was the male swimmer of the Games, and 'our Shane' the standout female swimmer. Despite her young age, her success was not unexpected. By early in 1972, Shane already held all five freestyle world records – 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1500 metres – and she went into the Games holding the 100, 400 and 1500 metre records. In addition she was the Australian and Commonwealth record holder in the 200 and 400 metres individual medley and the 100 metres butterfly.

Introduced to competition swimming as a nine-year-old by Ken Wyles of the Sans Souci swimming club, Shane achieved success – a silver medal in the 50 metres breaststroke – at her first competition, the NSW State Swimming Championships, after only a month of training. An innate competitiveness fuelled the young Shane's quest for better times and further success. This drive led her to seek out the highly regarded coach Forbes Carlisle when the family returned to Sydney after a brief time in Brisbane. The Carlisles – Forbes and his wife Ursula –



had a reputation for training successful elite swimmers, and it was this reputation which led the young Shane to the Ryde swimming club in 1970.

The dedication and hard work required of a swimmer with elite aspirations are evident in the training logbooks which form part of the Shane Gould papers held by the State Library of NSW. A daily record, the logbooks record the distances and times swum in training, race results, height and weight and general health information as well as comments from the coaches on performance at training and in competition. They shine a light on the life of an elite athlete and the dedication required to achieve their goals.

Along with the logbooks, the Library also holds Shane's diaries, including one from the 1972 Munich Olympic Games.

OPPOSITE: SHANE GOULD (CENTRE) WITH AMERICAN SWIMMERS SHIRLEY BABASHOFF AND KEENA ROTHAMMER, 200 METRE FREESTYLE, MUNICH OLYMPIC GAMES, 1972, MLMSS 7025/7X

ABOVE: SHANE GOULD'S 1972 MUNICH OLYMPIC TEAM BAG, LR 82; LADIES SILK SCARF FROM 1964 TOKYO OLYMPICS, FROM JOHN KONRADS COLLECTION, MLMSS 8125/15



While it is easy to forget — in the light of her achievements in Munich — that Shane was not yet 16 years old, the diary of her Olympic experience helps to remind readers of her youth. She records her nervous excitement at competing on such a large stage under the scrutiny of millions of spectators world-wide. Her joy at winning gold is obvious, as is her disappointment at feeling unwell during her program of events. At the end of the first day she comments:

200 IM Final: It doesn't feel as though I've won an Olympic Gold medal, really. On the dias I shed tears, the people stood up & cheered & I waved to them with the team mascot (since 1956) kangaroo. After I got the medal box, received kisses everywhere, I was so happy.

The camaraderie shared by many of the athletes is on display in the diary entry which describes how she visited her friend and great rival, Keena Rothhammer, who beat her in the final of the 800 metres freestyle. That night, not far from where the young swimmers were unwinding in the American team's accommodation, 11 Israeli athletes and a policeman were killed by Palestinian terrorists in an attack which shocked the world.

Shane's diary entry, while brief, poignantly conveys her sense of disbelief about the attack: 'We went for a walk at 2am ONLY 3hrs before 2 Israeli Olympians were killed by Arab guerillas!' Subsequent entries clearly convey her disappointment at having to leave the Village early for security reasons and missing out on experiencing the Games as a spectator rather than a competitor. She retired from swimming soon after.



TOP RIGHT: JOHN KONRADS (CENTRE) AND AUSTRALIAN TEAM MATES, MLMSS 8125/13

ABOVE: ENTRY DATED 28 AUGUST 1972 FROM SHANE GOULD'S DIARY, DESCRIBING HER VICTORY IN THE 200 METRE INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY FINAL, MLMSS 7025/1A



In addition to her training logbooks and diaries, the Shane Gould collection includes photographs, letters, postcards, telegrams, invitations, scrapbooks, printed items, Olympic Games ephemera and Shane's official Olympic team bag. Together they document a short chapter in the life of a remarkable Australian woman.

Complementing the Shane Gould collection, which the Library acquired in 2000, is the John Konrads collection. Acquired at auction in August 2011, this collection also includes swimming diaries, logbooks and lap times, scrapbooks, photographs, correspondence, ephemera and objects relating to John's Olympic experiences in 1956 (Melbourne), 1960 (Rome) and 1964 (Tokyo).

Like Shane Gould, John Konrads showed enormous talent at a young age. Born in Riga, Latvia, in 1942, he migrated to Australia after World War II with his family, eventually settling in Bankstown, Sydney. Along with his sister, Ilsa, John took up swimming and trained under Don Talbot at the Bankstown swimming club. Between them, they went on to set 37 world records.

While still only 13 years old, John was selected to attend, though not compete in, the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. In an eight-day period in January 1958, he set six world records and another eight by

March that year, becoming the first ever swimmer to hold every freestyle world record from 200 metres to 1650 yards. At the 1958 Commonwealth Games in Cardiff, Wales, he won gold medals in the 440 and 1650 yards freestyle, and at the 1960 Rome Olympics he won gold in the 1500 metres freestyle, and two bronze medals for the 400 metres freestyle and the 4 x 200 metres relay. He also competed in the relay at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. In a remarkable career spanning 1956 to 1964, John Konrads broke a total of 25 world records. After his retirement from competitive swimming in 1964, he became a professional swimming coach in Paris and later pursued a career in marketing.

Although his diary entries aren't as regular or detailed as those of Shane Gould, they still provide an insight into the planning and training that goes into making an elite athlete.

John and Ilsa Konrads enjoyed enormous popularity during their careers, and arguably were the first 'superstars' of Australian and world swimming. Their popularity is attested to by the amount of fan mail in the John Konrads collection, along with several scrapbooks of photographs and newspaper cuttings compiled by an admiring fan.

While they are two high-profile Olympians represented in the collections of the State Library, Shane Gould and John Konrads are by no means the only Olympians represented. Substantial collections relate to Olympic swimmers Wilhelmina (Mina) Wylie and Harold Hardwick, and track and field athletes Eileen Wearne and Basil Dickinson. As the Library's collections continue to grow, it is very likely we will be reading in future editions of *SL* magazine about the acquisition of collections of current and recently retired Olympians.

**Tracy Bradford is the State Library's Head of Manuscripts.**

**A selection from the Library's Olympic collections will be on display in the Dalgety Walkway from 23 July until the end of August.**

JOHN KONRADS (RIGHT) AND AUSTRALIAN TEAM MATES, POSSIBLY IN OSAKA IN 1958, MLMSS 8125/13



A previously unknown collection of drawings from 1818, the Wallis album adds rich texture and new insights to our understanding of colonial life.



# PRIDE OF PLACE

## The Wallis album

\* WORDS Richard Neville

It's a great story: an album of Australian colonial drawings is discovered in the back of a cupboard in Canada. Yet how it got there remains a mystery, one of many that surround this important artefact.

The album was compiled by Major James Wallis, commandant of the Newcastle penal settlement between 1816 and 1818. Wallis was responsible for a significant program of public works — the best known is probably Nobbys breakwater. Governor Macquarie praised Wallis's 'humane and judicious' oversight of almost 700 convicts under his charge, and his 'zeal, ability and judgement', but Wallis's own correspondence suggests that Newcastle was much less ordered and compliant than Macquarie asserted.

Wallis was also a keen patron of the arts and an amateur artist. For a brief period, under his command, Newcastle became the epicentre of cultural activity in New South Wales. The town boasted a number of artists and craftsmen among its convicts: most prominent of these were the painter Joseph Lycett and the engraver Walter Preston. Wallis came up with a number of projects to employ this talent: the two collector's chests, now in the Library's collections, are magnificent results of this collaboration.

Wallis also commissioned a series of 12 views of the major settlements of the colony, engraved by Preston. Suggesting the artist had used whatever material happened to be lying around, Wallis later made much of these engravings being produced on 'common sheet copper which is employed for coppersing the bottom of ships'. Was it a coincidence that at the same time he was requesting copper from Sydney for a boat being constructed at Newcastle?

Wallis took these engravings back to England where they were issued in two editions by travel publisher Rudolph Ackermann. The first edition, with images only, is called *Australian Views*. The second, published in 1821 with an extensive text,

is titled *An Historical Account of the Colony of New South Wales*. The legend, printed beneath many of the engravings, notes that they are from 'Original drawings by Capt Wallis'. This has been a point of dispute among colonial art historians for years, because many of the images are stylistically similar to the work of Joseph Lycett.

In the 1830s Wallis, now retired, began to reflect on his career. As we might these days compile photograph albums of our travels, Wallis started to arrange the collections of watercolours he had acquired, or made himself, over the course of his lengthy career. It is probably during this period that he wrote, with great affection and some sentimentality, a brief unpublished memoir (acquired by the Library in 2006) about the years he spent in Newcastle. In it he recalls the area's beautiful scenery, and the 'delightful days almost peculiar to New South Wales' he experienced there.

ALL IMAGES ARE WATERCOLOURS FROM THE ALBUM OF ORIGINAL DRAWINGS BY CAPTAIN JAMES WALLIS AND JOSEPH LYCETT, C. 1817-18, PXE 1072  
OPPOSITE: BURIGON, NERANG DOLL, TRIMNIER, WALKER [8] NERANG WOGEC BY JAMES WALLIS  
ABOVE: A VIEW OF THE COVE AND PART OF SYDNEY ... BY JOSEPH LYCETT





## AWABAKAL ANCESTORS

On 20 February the Hon. George Souris MP, NSW Minister for the Arts, unveiled the Wallis album at Newcastle Art Gallery. Nola Hawken, a woman of Awaba, gave the Welcome to Country. This is an excerpt.

It has been for thousands of years that my Aboriginal ancestors, the Awabakal people, have lived in this land. It is my absolute pleasure to now welcome you here today on this auspicious occasion in anticipation of this unique and precious 'Wallis album' ... our family album really! I can't tell you how heartening it is to think that there are still so many people interested in the Awabakal story and landscape. Today as we gaze into these portraits and landscapes, perhaps we will remember these paintings have captured individuals who are, indeed, relatives of the Awabakal peoples.

Living on the Isle of Wight in the 1840s, Wallis focused on his Newcastle watercolours. He took a copy of *An Historical Account of the Colony ...* and had a local book binder add additional pages onto which he pasted his drawings. His widow gave this album to Wallis's nephew in 1866, and from there it somehow found its way to the back of a cupboard in London, Ontario, Canada. The Library purchased it, with the generous support of its Foundation, in October 2011.

The 39 watercolours and drawings, never seen publicly, are in excellent condition. Many appear to be the original drawings for the engravings published in *An Historical Account of the Colony ...* which Wallis had claimed as his own work. But, interestingly, underneath these drawings Wallis has written 'Drawn by a convict' — clearly Joseph Lycett — conclusively disproving his own published assertion of authorship. Perhaps Wallis felt that as a gentleman and officer, and as the person who commissioned the drawings from a convict, he was entitled to claim them as his own. It was not the first time this had happened. In the 1790s the Surgeon General John White decided that convict artist Thomas Watling should not be acknowledged if his drawings were published in a manuscript White had written.

Wallis's arrangement of the drawings within the album is unusual. Illustrations like *The Fish of New South Wales* were compiled, collage-like, by cutting

out individual drawings of fish and pasting them onto a larger sheet. It is possible that this page was intended to help design the fish panel on the collector's chests. Other images include botanical watercolours by Lycett. Wallis notes that Australian flowers 'exceed in beauty and variety those of any other part of the world' — the beauty and variety of Australian nature he also sought to physically corral, through his collections of actual birds and insects, into the collector's chests.

Most striking, however, are Wallis's own drawings of the local Awabakal people. Wallis recounted, with great affection, his friendship for local elder Burigon, or Long Jack as he was sometimes known. In *An Historical Account of the Colony ...* he talks of Burigon as a 'brave expert fellow', and in his later written account he recalls hunting expeditions he undertook with him: 'I remember poor Jack ... ministering to my pleasures, fishing, kangaroo hunting, guiding me thro trackless forests ...'

Wallis pasted drawings of Burigon and his brother Dick into his album. Curiously, while his earlier memoir records in some detail Burigon's murder of Dick, in the album it is erroneously recorded that 'Dick killed Burigon one day with one blow'. Burigon was actually murdered by a convict in 1820. But this was not the only depiction of Burigon in the album. He also appears in a series

of four remarkable large watercolours which Wallis himself made of the Awabakal people. Again Wallis employed a collage technique, pasting cut-out figures of Aboriginal people onto a pre-prepared landscape background. In one the people are identified, which was unusual. And to assert their authenticity someone has written, 'These figures of the natives are all drawn by Major Wallis 46th Regt'.

These images are precious. For Awabakal people today, they are treasured, moving and rare depictions of their ancestors. For everyone, they are bold reminders of the Awabakal people's connection to Newcastle. Wallis's images, too, reflect a more respectful association between Aboriginal people and Europeans. While there is no doubting that Europeans dominated the relationship, Wallis's watercolours suggest, at least briefly and locally, a sense of understanding not built around the usual stereotypes.

This wonderful artefact is a time capsule of one man's affection for a place in colonial New South Wales. Compiled many years after Wallis lived in the colony, it is a rich record of a particular kind of colonial experience, of pleasurable memories and genuine curiosity.

**Richard Neville is the Mitchell Librarian.**



OPPOSITE: *THE FISH OF NEW SOUTH WALES*, JOSEPH LYCETT

TOP LEFT: *BURIGON OR JACK [ & ] DICK*, JAMES WALLIS

ABOVE: THE WALLIS ALBUM



# Chasing VENUS

\* WORDS Paul Brunton



It's our last chance to witness the transit of Venus, but questions of its role in the British settlement of Australia will remain.

On 6 June, the planet Venus will make a journey of six-and-a-half hours across the face of the sun. Because these transits usually occur in pairs within eight years of each other — the first of this pair was in 2004 — then not again for more than 100 years, no one alive today is likely to see this phenomenon again.

The transit of Venus was first observed in 1639. Its next appearance, in 1761, has been called 'the first global scientific event', involving 120 observers from many countries. Its significance is clear. By recording, from various locations, the time taken for the transit, it is possible to calculate the distance of the earth from the sun. Astronomers realised this would yield information about the size of the solar system, and the distances between planets and between the stars and the earth — useful knowledge, not least for navigation.

Unfortunately, the observations were not satisfactory. There was too great a variation in the final calculations, with the sun's distance ranging from 125 to 154 million kilometres. Another chance was coming up in 1769, and it was important to grasp the opportunity as another transit would not occur until 1874.

The Royal Society, Britain's foremost scientific body, petitioned King George III for funds for an expedition to the South Seas to observe the 3 June transit. Observations from the southern hemisphere were needed for comparison with those from the north. In February 1768, the King granted the society £4000 and the government agreed to provide a vessel and crew.

By the end of March, the vessel *Earl of Pembroke* had been purchased — later to be renamed *Endeavour*, the most famous ship in Australian history. She was a Whitby collier, like the vessels in which James Cook gained his sailing experience, and the type he would later prefer for his expeditions. Cook had no say in the selection, nor was he the first choice as commander.



The Royal Society had chosen Alexander Dalrymple, a hydrographer, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and a passionate believer in the existence of a great southern continent. But on 2 April, the Admiralty vetoed his appointment as commander — as he was not a naval officer — and Dalrymple refused to go only as the astronomer. A new commander was needed — and urgently. Cook was chosen in little more than a week. But why him?

James Cook had returned from North America in November 1767. Since 1758, he had performed valuable surveying work there, particularly in Newfoundland and Labrador. From 1766 his surveys and sailing directions were progressively published. In that year, he had observed an eclipse of the sun and used this information to calculate the longitude of the place of observation. This was published by the Royal Society in 1767.

OPPOSITE: FORT VENUS, TAHITI, ERECTED TO OBSERVE THE TRANSIT. SYDNEY PARKINSON, FROM *A JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO THE SOUTH SEAS*, 1784, DIXSON LIBRARY, Q78/10  
 ABOVE: CHART OF THE ISLAND OF OTAHEITE (TAHITI), BY JAMES COOK, 1769, PUBLISHED 1773, DIXSON LIBRARY, Z/CA77/1



This was all relevant experience. However, at the age of 39, this labourer's son from Yorkshire was still only a master whose most important command so far had been of a brig with a crew of 20. There were experienced officers available. It seems that Hugh Palliser, Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador and Cook's former captain, and Philip Stephens, the influential secretary to the Admiralty, were responsible for the appointment. If so, their judgment was certainly vindicated, but even they could not have envisaged that Cook would become the greatest seaman of any age. He explored large swathes of the earth's surface and proved once and for all, on his second great voyage, that there was no unknown south land, the notion of *terra australis incognita* having existed since classical times. In late May he was appointed lieutenant.

The ship and commander were in place, but the location for the observation had still not been decided. As charts of the South Pacific were incomplete and not always accurate, any island selected may have needed relocating. Then, in the nick of time, it was made clear. On 28 May, Samuel Wallis returned to Britain on the *Dolphin*. The crew had, in June the previous year, been the first Europeans to sight Tahiti, where they stayed for five weeks. This was providential because Tahiti was almost in the centre of what was believed to be the optimum area in the South Seas to view the transit, and Wallis had provided precise latitude and longitude. Furthermore, reports from the crew of mountains, seen to the south, probably led to Cook being given additional orders: to sail south, following the observation, and seek out this elusive southern continent and, if that failed, at least investigate the east coast of New Zealand.



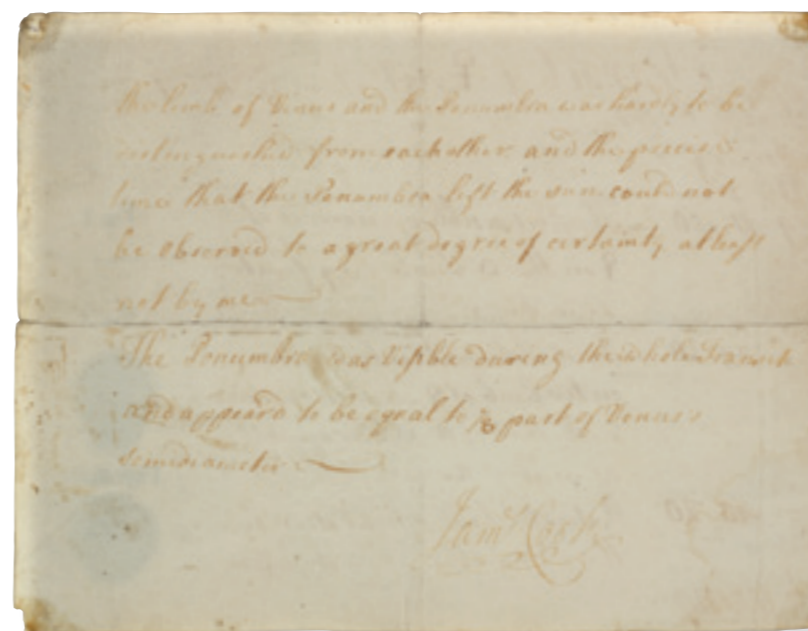
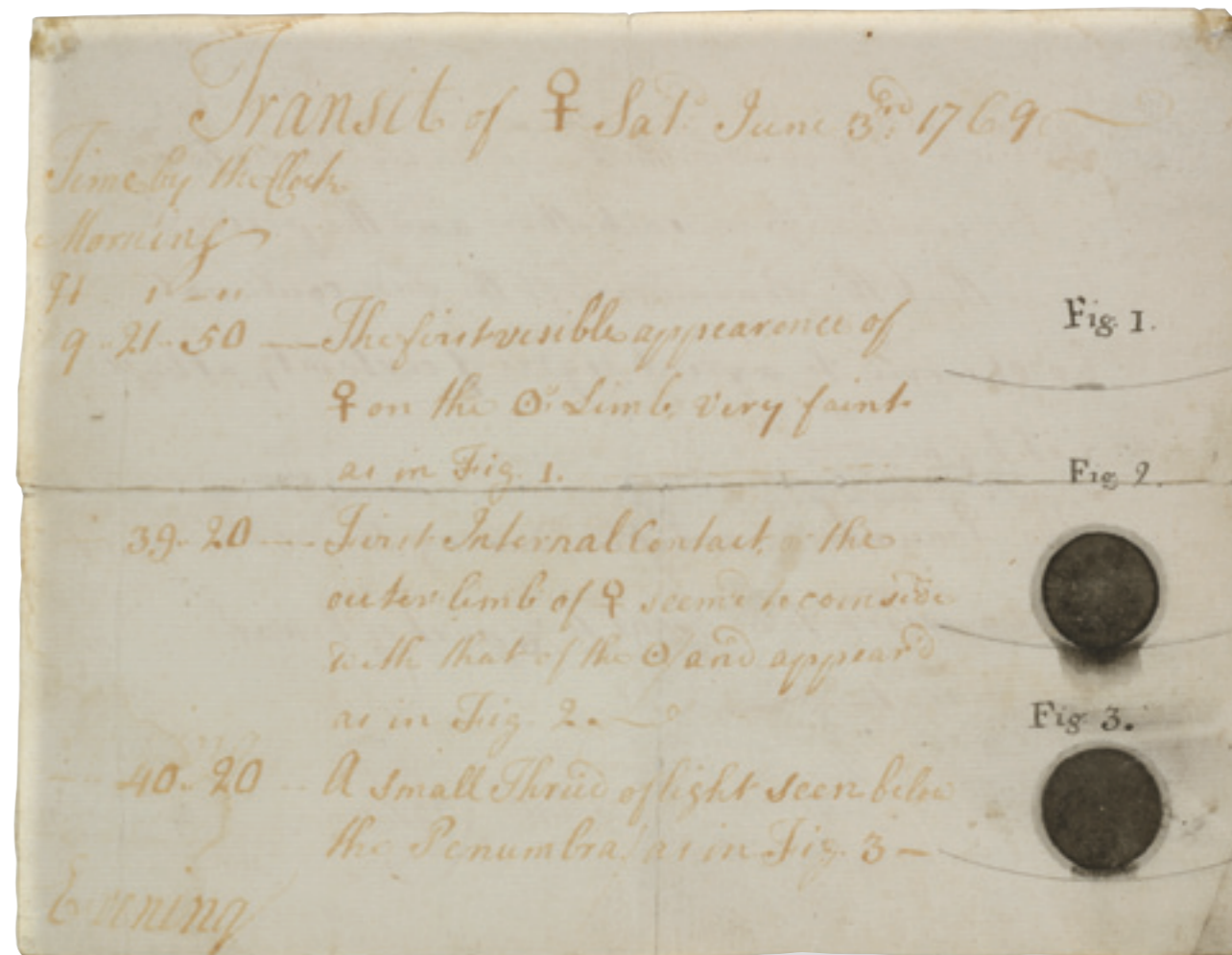
On 3 June 1769, Cook observed the transit from Tahiti. That assignment completed, he sailed south as instructed. He found no continent. He circumnavigated and charted New Zealand. He then sailed west and sighted the east coast of Australia at Point Hicks near the present-day New South Wales–Victorian border. Sailing north, he produced the first chart of the coast and, at Possession Island in Torres Strait, claimed for Britain a place he called, for reasons which remain obscure, New South Wales.

On board was the 27-year-old milord, Joseph Banks, on his own variation of the grand tour, this one around the whole world. Around nine years later, in 1779, Banks would successfully propose the east coast of Australia to a House of Commons Committee enquiring into a suitable location to transport Britain's convicts. After another nine years, in January 1788, the First Fleet arrived. The sequence of events began with the observation of the transit and ended with the British colonisation of Australia. But it could have been otherwise.

What if someone other than Cook had been chosen? Would he have gone that extra mile, as Cook did when, after circumnavigating New Zealand, he had fulfilled all his orders and could have returned home but instead pursued the eastern extremity of New Holland? It was a decision that demonstrated Cook's mettle and catapulted him into the top rank. Without it, the east coast of Australia would not have been an option as a destination for the convicts.

Because Tahiti was discovered just in time, Cook was given additional instructions. Otherwise, Cook and the *Endeavour* may now be remembered only for their role in observing the transit of Venus.

**Paul Brunton, Senior Curator, Mitchell Library, will host a dinner at the Library on 1 June to celebrate the transit of Venus.**



OPPOSITE: JOSEPH BANKS RETURNING IN TRIUMPH FROM HIS VOYAGE OF A LIFETIME, ENGRAVING FROM A PAINTING BY BENJAMIN WEST, 1773, DIXSON LIBRARY Pf 69

ABOVE: OBSERVATIONS AND REMARKS ON THE TRANSIT OF VENUS BY JAMES COOK, 3 JUNE 1769, MITCHELL LIBRARY, SAFE 1/26.



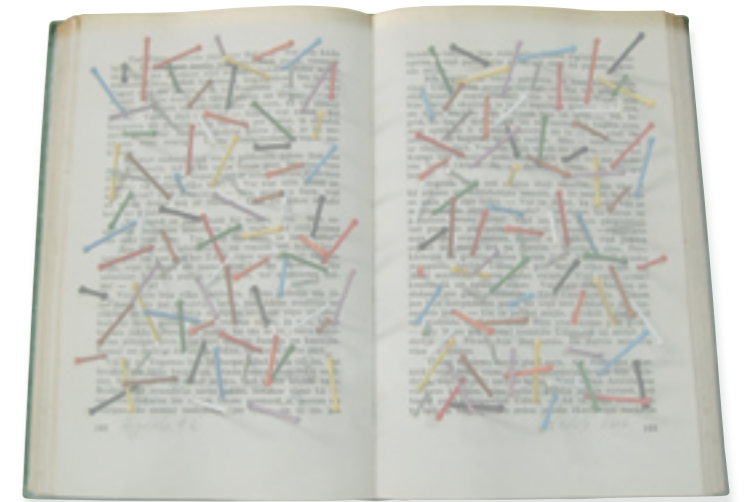
An exhibition of artworks using found books is a chance to reflect on the beautiful and confronting ways artists have used books.

Ideas take a physical form in books as they do in artworks. Altered books like those featured in the upcoming exhibition *Recycled Library* highlight the role of books in bringing order, and as vehicles for storage and memory. By taking something mass-produced and creating an individual artwork, artists who use books as a medium are reflecting on this cultural icon in a time of new technology.

The union of images and text in books dates back to the illuminated manuscripts of AD 400–600, but at that time pictures served only to decorate the text. The genesis of books made by artists can be traced to the British poet, painter, and printmaker William Blake (1757–1827), who developed new printing methods to integrate image and text. At Kelmscott Press in the 1890s, William Morris reinvigorated the ideals of book design and pushed for a harmony of type and illustration so that each book would be seen as a whole. This extended to all aspects of production, including the paper, the form of type, the spacing of the letters, and the position of the printed matter on the page.

At the end of the nineteenth century *livres d'artistes* were developed by French art dealers and publishers who wanted to combine classic text with illustrations by artists of the day. In the early twentieth century, artists such as Picasso and Matisse drew on this tradition, but moved away from merely illustrating the words to creating an avant-garde art form with a fusing of image and text.

By the 1960s, artists' books were flourishing. Artists engaged with the concept of the book as a symbol of information and knowledge systems. As they were cheap to produce and had the potential to reach a large audience, artists' books appealed to practitioners who believed in making art inclusive and democratic. As well as a range of material from medieval manuscripts to the modern private press, the Library holds over 200 artists' books produced in Australia over the past 30 years.



In the late twentieth century another shift occurred when artists began to consider books as objects that could be transformed. Under the influence of other art forms such as sculpture, book art emerged as a separate medium to artists' books. Where illuminated manuscripts and artists' books enhance the contents of the book, altered books often obliterate the contents. The text is rendered unreadable, ensuring that ideas are conveyed through the concept rather than the text or image.

Altered books occupy a space of tension; where books invite engagement, artworks are hands off, frustrating the reader but rewarding the viewer. Altered books negate one kind of reading for another.

OPPOSITE: SCHACH #1 (CIRCLE) / SCHACH #2 (TRIANGLE) / SCHACH #3 (SQUARE), 2006, ALEX SELENITSCH, THREE BOOKS, ARTSPACE MACKAY COLLECTION

ABOVE: STIGMATA NO. 2, 2006, JÁNIS NEDÉLA, FOUND BOOK, NAILS, PAINT, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

# Recycled LIBRARY

\* WORDS Louise Tegart





*Recycled Library* is an exhibition of works by Australian artists who use books as a major conceptual and creative element in sculptures, collages and photographs. The exhibition investigates the symbolism of 'the book' in an era in which the printed page is in danger of being superseded by digital technology. Many of the artists in *Recycled Library* are renowned for their work in other mediums, but all have an interest in the primacy of the book.

*Recycled Library* is drawn predominantly from the collection of Artspace Mackay and is curated by its former director, Michael Wardell. In 2005, the gallery decided that artists' books would be a core area of collecting, and in 2006 it introduced a biennial National Artists' Books Award (The Libris Awards) and a Focus on Artists' Books conference to develop and promote the collection. The Artspace Mackay collection is the third largest collection of its kind in Australia after the National Gallery of Australia and the State Library of Queensland.

Many of the artists in this exhibition have used second-hand books as a way of questioning the authority of the printed text. Works in the exhibition reveal new and unexpected layers of meaning that go beyond the book as a source of information and offer a fresh look at its place in an increasingly digitally oriented world. They highlight the paradox of books as means of both private reflection and broad consumption. A personal thread runs through many of the works, exploring experience and memory as well as political commentary.

The works draw on subjects as diverse as taxonomy, migration, history, science, politics, colonisation, the environment and art itself. For some artists, the contents of the book are irrelevant but for others, the choice of book provides a conceptual layer that adds meaning to the work. The works are united in treating the humble book as a raw material to be transformed.

On the surface, the act of modifying books may appear like malicious damage, but the artists' manipulation of these books ironically highlights their social and cultural value. By giving a new life to books, the artists both reflect nostalgically upon them and give them a new context and use in a digital world.

**Louise Tegart is the Library's Manager of Exhibitions.**

***Recycled Library* will be on show at the State Library of New South Wales from 2 to 22 June 2012.**

***Recycled Library: Altered Books* is a national travelling exhibition curated by Michael Wardell for Artspace Mackay and toured by Museum & Gallery Services Queensland. The exhibition tour is supported by the Contemporary Touring Initiative through Visions of Australia, an Australian Government program, and the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian Government and state and territory governments.**

**The Artist Book 3.0 forum is for artists, curators, librarians, students and researchers interested in artists' books and the book arts:**  
<http://artistbooks.ning.com/>



OPPOSITE: *LIFE AND ALL ITS MARVELS*, 2007, DAVID SEQUEIRA, BOOK, DIGITAL PRINTS, COLLAGE, ARTSPACE MACKAY COLLECTION

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: *BUFF-TAILED THORNBILL*, 2005, KYLIE STILLMAN, ARTSPACE MACKAY, MACKAY COLLECTION  
*LEARNING TO READ AGAIN #10*, 2004, YVONNE KENDALL, BOOK, CREPE PAPER, NEWSPAPER, ARTSPACE MACKAY, MACKAY COLLECTION

*MALTHEISM*, 2007, ARCHIE MOORE, FOLDED PAGES OF BIBLE, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

*I'M COMING BACK FOR MY WINGS I* (DETAIL), 2009, GLEN SKIEN, BOOK AND COLLAGE, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST





\* WORDS Daniel Parsa

# Rare BIRDS

## PROVENANCE

Mystery surrounds the Library's copy of the world's most expensive book, Audubon's *Birds of America*.

John James Audubon's *Birds of America*, completed in 1838, is considered by many to be the finest work on the natural history of America and its birds. Of 120 known copies in the world today, only 12 are in the hands of private individuals. When a copy sold for \$11.5 million in 2010, it was the highest amount ever paid for a book. Five of the 10 most expensive individual books sold at auction have been copies of *Birds of America*.

A four-volume set of *Birds of America* was purchased by the Public Library of NSW in 1885 after the Australian Museum passed up an opportunity to buy the expensive item. In 1973, having held the renowned book for almost a century, the Library was surprised when a survey published that year, *The Double Elephant Folio: The Story of Audubon's Birds of America* by Waldemar H Fries, did not include our copy in its 'complete' list of subscribers and owners.

Special Collections Librarian, Rose Smith, wrote directly to Fries:

The project you undertook was a valuable one for librarians, researchers, and ornithologists, and I was particularly interested in the Census and Survey of Extant Complete Sets. My disappointment was great, however, in finding that one set only (that in the State Library of Victoria) is listed under Australian holdings in the Census.

I would be interested to know whether you are contemplating an addendum to the census of the copies of Audubon's *Birds*. Would you be kind enough to let me know your plans in this matter.

[Excerpt from letter dated November 1974]

In December 1974 Rose Smith received a handwritten reply from Fries:

I am deeply grieved that in the Audubon Census the set of the folio located at the Library of New South Wales never came to my attention.



It seems most strange that with the large amount of correspondence which took place between us and the knowledge which he [Australian philanthropist and zoology enthusiast, Sir Edward Hallstrom] had of my research project, that of tracking down the extant sets of *The Double Elephant Folio of Audubon's Birds of America* he [Sir Hallstrom] would not have mentioned the Audubon folio at the Library of New South Wales — perhaps it has been carefully hidden away all these years.

Fries assured her he would write to ornithological journals asking them to mention the State Library copy in their review of his book. He must have wondered where the Library's copy came from. In his definitive book of more than 500 pages, which took him 16 years to research and write, he meticulously traces the story of the *Birds of America*. As much as he could, Fries documents the fate of each plate, some of which had more complicated stories than others. Some sets were incomplete, due to wavering subscription commitment. Some were broken up and sold as individual plates. Others were destroyed in fire, or flood, or in wars. And the location of a few sets was unknown.

OPPOSITE: DANIEL PARSA WITH *BIRDS OF AMERICA*, VOL.1, WILD TURKEY, PLATE 1 PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK ABOVE: RED-SHOULDERED HAWK, PLATE 56



The correspondence between Rose Smith and Fries changed course as they both became interested in who owned the set before it landed in the hands of the London book dealer Henry Sotheran. The most obvious place to go to was the Sotherans, who wrote in reply to Rose Smith's letter:

... I regret very much that I have to report the fact, we cannot be of help in any way at all.

Firstly two wars and many moves have left us with hardly any records, a very brief history is all, that has been compiled only recording particular important events, we have no files or copies of letters that could provide the provenance, for your copy of Audubon.

Fries was now very curious to know the origin of the copy.

Original subscribers to *Birds of America* received plates — a large bird followed by three small birds — almost every month. The cost of the complete set of 435 plates, received over 87 deliveries between 1827 and 1838, came to \$870. The text was produced separately to avoid having to deposit copies with eight British libraries, and brought the cost up to \$1000, the equivalent of a year's salary for a well-paid artist at the time.

Some of the original subscribers were:

- His Most Gracious Majesty George IV
- Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Clarence
- His Grace the Duke of Rutland
- BG Cuvier
- Le Prince Massena
- Baron Kruder Env. Extr. from Russia
- The Library of Congress of the United States of America
- Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences
- University of Edinburgh
- La Bibliothèque de L'Institut Royal de France.

Fries advised Smith to check the volumes for a name or initial, but none could be found.

Early in 1975, Fries learned that his niece, Miss Cook, was off to Australia for a holiday. He asked her to visit the State Library to examine its copy of *Birds of America*, and Rose Smith was more than happy to show her the set. Miss Cook's findings helped convince Fries that the set was originally in loose prints and was bound by Sotherans.

There is no record of any correspondence for the next three years. Then, in a letter dated 12 June 1978, Fries wrote to Smith in response to an avenue of enquiry she was pursuing:

Audubon in his Journals or letters to his wife mentioned that he had arranged with both the French artist Redouté and the Englishman Gould to exchange prints.

British ornithologist John Gould (1804–1881) is well known in Australia for his seven-volume *Birds of Australia*. He is considered the 'father of bird study in Australia' and inspired the Gould League of Bird Lovers. Although Audubon (1785–1851) died some 30 years before Gould, their paths had crossed. Audubon's work broke all the conventions in size, style and technique and set a new standard. Yet when Audubon was struggling to get *Birds of America* engraved and printed, Gould was enjoying a high level of success both financially and professionally. When the Audubons lived on London's Wimpole Street the Goulds called on them, and Gould loaned Audubon specimens which were used in two drawings.



Rose Smith had discovered that Gould's books were offered for sale by Sotherans at the same time as *Birds of America*, with bindings in the same style. Yet Audubon's remarkable work was not on the inventory of an estimated 30 tonnes of material removed from Gould's house when he died. Was it possible that *Birds of America* was among Gould's possessions when Sotherans took over the estate? If so, the Library's copy could have been exchanged by Audubon for copies of Gould's books.

The origin of the State Library copy of *Birds of America* remains a mystery. If the theory posed by Rose Smith in the 1970s is ever proven, the most expensive item in the Library's collection would rise in value. It may become priceless.

**Daniel Parsa is part of the Library's rare books team.**

OPPOSITE: JOURNALIST AMANDA HOOTON AND PHOTOGRAPHER JAMES BRICKWOOD EXAMINE *BIRDS OF AMERICA* FOR AN ARTICLE IN THE GOOD WEEKEND MAGAZINE OF 21 APRIL 2012, WITH ASSISTANT CONSERVATOR SILVANA VOLPATO AND DANIEL PARSA  
ABOVE: CAROLINA PARROT, PLATE 26



A leaflet signalled hope for the troubled author who had risen to fame with *The Great Escape*.



ABANDONED—IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE. HE WENT THERE FOR PEACE—BUT HAD TOO MANY CALLERS.

# Paul Brickhill's **WAR** of nerves



\* WORDS Craig Wilcox

‘Where are you heading?’ asks a vivid red leaflet in the Mitchell Library’s collection. Toward pain and loneliness via the trials and tribulations of this ruined world? Distributed on Sydney’s northern beaches in the autumn of 1960, the leaflet offered a way out for sufferers. ‘The Church Army is coming to Pittwater’, it announced, ‘because we believe God has provided an answer to all our problems.’ An Anglican imitation of the uniformed Salvation Army, the Church Army presented itself as a straight-talking friend of the desperate, the downcast and the downtrodden. Strange, then, that one of Australia’s most successful authors responded to their call.

Born in Melbourne and a veteran of the Second World War, Paul Brickhill had published bestselling books and lived in London, New York and Florence before settling in Clareville near Avalon. To all appearances the author of *The Great Escape*, *The Dam Busters* and *Reach for the Sky* was a jaunty companion, a nimble writer and a brave former fighter pilot, graced with a glamorous wife and two charming children. Inside the man it was a different story. He was struggling to write a novel, struggling to keep his marriage together, and sometimes struggling against despair. He had tried several paths out of the abyss, from travel to psychiatric treatment. Suddenly there seemed a better way out.

Perhaps there was a God-sized gap in Brickhill’s heart. He had attended church as a boy, and if the maelstrom of his war years made him an agnostic, he was far from being an atheist. ‘I am no churchman, being unable to imagine God as the rigid Victorian patriarch that some dogmas suggest’, he wrote toward the end of *Reach for the Sky*, his biography

of the disabled English air force pilot Douglas Bader, ‘but sometimes a vagrant thought intrudes that some hand not of this world may be using Bader as a vessel bearing another lesson for Man in his struggle.’

Now, amid his own struggle, Brickhill turned to the Church Army. Perhaps he saw its truck one day, with its slogan ‘God is Love’ painted on the cabin. More likely he read the red leaflet advertising the Army’s imminent arrival at St Mark’s Church in Avalon. Captain Batley was to host a ‘Men’s Tea’ there, it announced, and on the following Saturday there would be a ‘Community Hymn Singing and Answers to Questions’. No prayer books would be needed, and ‘clear, straight-forward addresses’ would take the place of sermons. So Brickhill found himself on the pews of St Mark’s amid a congregation that hoped to be counted, their church magazine said, ‘among God’s prayer warriors’.

He ‘derived great benefit and insight’ from the experience, he later wrote — but not enough to keep him from drinking too much, from clashing bitterly with his wife, and from a paralysing fear that his talent and his marriage were both evaporating. His novel, aptly titled *War of Nerves* in its American edition, proved a disappointment when it appeared in 1962, and Brickhill spent the rest of his life largely forgotten by his readers. But the Church Army leaflet reminds us of the bestselling author’s struggle, and also of the countless items in the Mitchell Library that might appear quaint or sometimes even ridiculous today but once spoke arrestingly of the pain of human existence.

**Craig Wilcox is a military historian. He is writing the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry on Paul Brickhill.**

PAUL BRICKHILL  
FROM *PEOPLE* (SYDNEY),  
20 MAY 1953, P. 20  
CHURCH ARMY LEAFLET  
‘WHERE ARE YOU HEADING?’,  
DONATED 1964, 267.183/1A1



# new acquisitions

## Vantage point

A recent donation of photographs and negatives taken by Donald Maclurcan in 1938 contained a surprising image.

Maclurcan is best known as the architect of many of the bridges around Sydney, including the Captain Cook, Nepean, Bargo and Hawkesbury bridges. In 1938, though, he was a 19-year-old draftsman with the architectural firm of Hennessy's in Martin Place. As Sydney's sesquicentenary parade passed below, he photographed the throng from the windows of his office and later from among the crowd in George Street.

A crowd estimated at 750,000 had lined the pageant route in the city. It was a hot day and ambulance officers attended 5346 collapses among the record crowd. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 27 January 1938:

At many points in the city thousands were wedged together in one solid mass. Martin Place, between Pitt and George Streets, was blocked, the crowd being 40 deep in places. From there along George Street to Bathurst Street 600 men and women collapsed. Of these, about 250 became unconscious in Martin Place, and they would have fallen and probably been trampled on had not police and ambulance men and nurses pressed forward to rescue them.



Desperate sightseers crammed onto the trams, seeking a vantage point, even clambering onto the roof. This extraordinary spectacle would not be believed today, were it not for a young architectural draftsman and his camera.

Incredibly, despite the melee, few people required treatment at hospital. One man was hit by a tram, a youth trying to get a better view fell through a skylight, and an elderly woman had to be rescued from the harbour at Circular Quay.

—  
**ALAN DAVIES**  
Curator of Photographs

## Art of politics

Lloyd Rees (1895–1988) is one of Australia's most highly regarded artists, best known for his Australian and European landscapes. Two drawings recently acquired by the Library show another side to his work. Created after the dismissal of the Whitlam Labor government by the Governor-General Sir John Kerr, *The Dismissal* (1976) and *Hope under Labor we march forward* (1977) — a large pastel drawing depicting a couple striding towards a distant city — are rare examples of his political works.

In his autobiography *Peaks & Valleys* (1985), Rees mentions two drawings with political meaning. One was a pen illustration drawn in the 1920s at the time of the Bruce government; the other, *The Dismissal*, he describes as a 'vicious affair — an anti-Kerr, large watercolour drawing for a pro-Whitlam exhibition at the Hogarth Gallery, Paddington, during the election campaign following Mr Whitlam's dismissal'. The church in the drawing is St Stephen's in Macquarie Street, opposite the

NSW Parliament. Rees equates anti-Kerr graffiti on the church with Kerr's 'defacement' of the country in 1975, which 'gouged a scar across the face of Australia that may never be removed'. The drawing was purchased and taken to Canada.

A Labor supporter for most of his life, Rees describes how his 'deepest political beliefs were profoundly hurt by the action of the Governor-General'. Apart from these exceptions, he writes that he never had any desire to express his political bias in his art.

—  
**MEGAN ATKINS**  
Original Materials

**For more purchases and donations see our new acquisitions blog on the State Library of NSW website.**





# discover/collections

## New online story reveals history of rural Australia

The daily challenges faced by rural communities are brought to life by the newly launched *Discover Collections: Australian Agricultural and Rural Life*, which aims to cultivate an understanding of life on the land. The State Library's collections relating to agricultural and regional life reflect the many facets of Australia's history with deep roots in the development of primary industry.

With the generous support of the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, a longstanding Library supporter, this online collection will provide students, researchers, genealogical societies and local historians with a historical context for agriculture and environmental management.

With the move towards a national curriculum, it is important for state libraries to offer schools access to primary resources. Regardless of their location, Australian students will be able to access this extensive collection of original material.

The Library holds early maps and subdivision plans which reveal names of leaseholders and property boundaries, land use and stock route maps, squatting maps and town plans. Our collection is rich in rare ephemera – trade catalogues, sheet music and seed catalogues – and includes souvenir publications produced for regional town celebrations as well as agricultural and pest management handbooks. There are also periodicals such as *The Sydney Stock & Station Journal* (1888–1924), *The Land* (1911–2010) and



*Town & Country Journal* (1870–1911). A curious agricultural highlight is a collection of 163 custom-designed trademarks, designed to be screen-printed onto flour bags for export to Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, Bangkok and Glasgow.

The diaries and papers of significant pastoral families, such as the Macarthur, Wyndham and Berry families, will also be brought together in the online collection. Little-known manuscripts will include the beautifully illustrated scrapbook by William Gardner, *Productions and Resources of the Northern Districts of New South Wales* (c. 1842–1854), which lists the names of settlers, information on sheep farming and cattle grazing, statistics on the state of the colony, as well as sketches and maps.



SHEEP AT THE SHOWGROUND, 1930s?, BY SAM HOOD, HOME AND AWAY - 6742  
BUTTER PACKING, LISMORE, NORCO, 1949, FROM WALKABOUT MAGAZINE PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, PXA 907 BOX 28/19





[http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover\\_collections/history\\_nation/agriculture/](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/history_nation/agriculture/)

The changing face of Australia's rural landscape emerges through oil and watercolour paintings of early colonial pastoral holdings along with photographs of people and places in regional Australia.

Living and working on the land have been part of our national identity since the earliest days of settlement. Drought, floods, pests and poor soils have always impacted the lives of farmers and rural communities. Diaries, station records and photographs of pioneer farming families are a rich source of information about the harsh conditions of life on the land. This is illustrated by a collection of photographs and a personal manuscript account of the 1890 floods in Bourke by Mrs Helen Dash.

Community occasions, a mainstay of country life, help rural families overcome their potential isolation. Fetes, social and sporting events and agricultural shows (such as the Royal Easter Show) as well as local institutions such as schools or church groups,

help to foster close-knit communities and punctuate a hardworking year with much-needed social interaction. Organisations such as the Country Women's Association continue to work for the welfare of women and their families.

Australia is famous for its agricultural produce — from fine wool to fine wine. Much of the food we eat and raw materials for the clothes we wear have traditionally been produced on the land. Photographs of farming practices, market gardens and market stalls, and materials as diverse as breeding registers, produce pamphlets and advertising campaigns tell the story of how these essential items are grown and marketed.

The online collection is now live, but will keep growing over the next 18 months. The State Library will promote *Australian Agricultural and Rural Life* to the NSW public library network of almost 400 libraries.

**CONTACT THE STATE LIBRARY OF NSW FOUNDATION:**

**Susan Hunt, Executive Director**

**Phone: (02) 9273 1529**

**Kay Payne, Partnership Manager**

**Phone: (02) 9273 1517**

**[www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/support](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/support)**

## Family ties

In Nino Culotta's *They're a Weird Mob* — first published in 1957 and recently reissued by Text Publishing — the narrator admits his name isn't really 'Culotta'. The book is fiction, he stresses, but he *is* writing about Australians and the way they behave. 'If they knew who wrote it,' he says, 'some of them might throw bricks through my windows.'

They soon found out that the author's name was John O'Grady, an Australian pharmacist whose brother, novelist Frank O'Grady, had bet him 10 pounds he 'couldn't write any sort of book'.

John wrote the book in a six-week break between pharmacy jobs while he was helping a friend build a house at Punchbowl. The language of workers on the building site provided rich material for a satire of Australian culture. Tossing the handwritten manuscript in a draw, he left the country to take up a position as government pharmacist in Samoa. But his son, John jnr, sent it out to publishers. After a rejection from Angus & Robertson, the book was picked up by publisher Sam Ure Smith — whose assistant, Janet Venn-Brown, had taken the manuscript to read while having her hair done and recommended it to her boss. It sold 130,000 copies in its first year, the publisher's greatest success.

According to Library volunteer Margaret O'Grady, who married Frank's son, 'John wrote 18 more books. Before he died in 1981 he collected 10 quid from my father-in-law, Frank.' In the intervening years, *They're A Weird Mob* became an Australian classic, selling almost one million copies. The book, and a film version starring Walter Chiari and Chips Rafferty, celebrated the local lingo that had previously been derided or taken for granted, and put 'Kings Bloody Cross' on the map.

While John was the larrikin of the O'Grady family, a raconteur who 'turned everything upside down', he was very serious about his poetry. 'We went round to his house one night, newly married (in our early 20s),' says Margaret. 'It was a big effort to listen to his poetry. When someone's a comedian, it's hard to take them seriously.'

Frank, by contrast, 'wasn't a talkative man'. Returning home from his work as town clerk at South Sydney Council, he would eat dinner at six o'clock then go up to his room to write. His historical sagas set in western NSW — among them *The Golden Valley* (1955), *Goonoo Goonoo* (1956) and *Hanging Rock* (1957) — sold respectably, but John jokingly

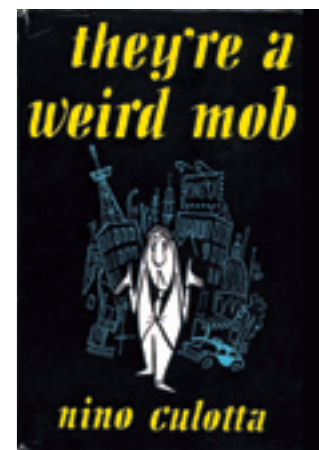


dismissed them as 'library novels'. Margaret says there was never serious rivalry between the brothers.

Besides the many editions of John and Frank's books in the stacks, Margaret has several points of connection to the Library. Like many of our volunteers, she remembers coming here as a child. Her mother would bring the six kids to visit the Library 'in the days when you could run across the Tasman Map'. 'I've always been attached to the Library,' she says. Her daughter Kate has worked at the State Library for 18 years, currently as a consultant to public libraries.

Kate has read her grandfather's evocative novels, as well as his brother's comic masterpiece, now a Text Classic with an introduction by Kate's cousin, newsreader and columnist Jacinta Tynan. Kate found *They're a Weird Mob* 'racist and sexist by our standards, but not malicious in any way'. Like Tynan, she was always aware of, and inspired by, the family legend of the 10-pound bet that made publishing history. As Tynan writes in her introduction, 'Every family has a claim to fame and ours is this: we're related to Nino Culotta.'

**Text Classics are available at the Library Shop.**



TOP: KATE AND MARGARET O'GRADY, PHOTO BY HAMILTON CHURTON

ABOVE: COVER OF NINO CULOTTA'S *THEY'RE A WEIRD MOB*, 1956, ILLUSTRATED BY 'WEP'

FROM *LOOKING BACK TO OUT BACK: RECOLLECTIONS OF BOURKE FLOOD, 1890*, MRS HELEN DASH, FORMERLY MRS WHITE, PXB 259



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### New cafe and bookshop

The foyer of the Macquarie Street building has had a facelift! It now has a casual lounge area, express internet terminals, and a new Library Shop and cafe. Don't forget your Friends membership card to get discounts on purchases.

### History Channel documentary

Cartoonist and author Warren Brown delved into the State Library's amazing collection to unearth some extraordinary stories for the History Channel documentary *Lost and Found*. You can now view the one-hour film on the Library's website through the 'Videos and podcasts' link.

### *Mr JW Lewin, Painter and Naturalist*

Author, illustrator, printmaker and natural historian, John William Lewin created the first illustrated book published in Australia, *Birds of New South Wales*, in 1813. Featuring more than 150 exquisite artworks, the book *Mr JW Lewin* takes a fascinating look at Lewin's life and work, his place in colonial Australian society and the natural history craze that swept the world at that time. Written by Richard Neville, Mitchell Librarian, this book is a visually stunning testament to Lewin's artistic legacy. Friends discount price: \$36



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01 THE AERIAL MAPS PERFORM IN THE GALLERIES, 17 JANUARY PHOTO BY HAMILTON CHURTON

02 SUE PIETERS-HAWKE TALKS ABOUT *HAZEL: MY MOTHER'S STORY*, 31 JANUARY PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK

03 PETER FITZSIMONS TALKS ABOUT ANTARCTIC EXPLORATION, 7 FEBRUARY PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK

04 MIRIAM MARGOYLES PLAYS WITH DICKENS, 6 FEBRUARY PHOTO BY HAMILTON CHURTON

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06/07 *LEWIN: WILD ART* LAUNCH, 13 MARCH PHOTOS BY BRUCE YORK

08 ALEX BYRNE, RICHARD NEVILLE, SALLY CROSSING AM, PETER CROSSING, GOVERNOR OF NSW PROFESSOR MARIE BASHIR AC, CVO, ROB THOMAS, AT THE *LEWIN: WILD ART* OPENING

09 ALAN JONES AO INTERVIEWS JOHN HOWARD OM, AC, SSI, 16 MARCH PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK

10 STATE LIBRARIAN ALEX BYRNE DEMONSTRATES PRINTMAKING, 21 MARCH PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK

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12 ANITA HEISS AND ROBYNNE QUIGGIN AT THE LAUNCH OF ANITA'S BOOK *AM I BLACK ENOUGH FOR YOU?*, 3 APRIL, PHOTO BY HAMILTON CHURTON

13 ARTIST IN RESIDENCE BEVERLY ALLEN AT THE *LEWIN: WILD ART* EXHIBITION, 12 APRIL PHOTO BY HAMILTON CHURTON

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# ‘Q&A

Fred Watson

A love of sharing his knowledge has taken astronomer Fred Watson to extraordinary places. He is guest speaker at the Library's Transit of Venus dinner on 1 June.

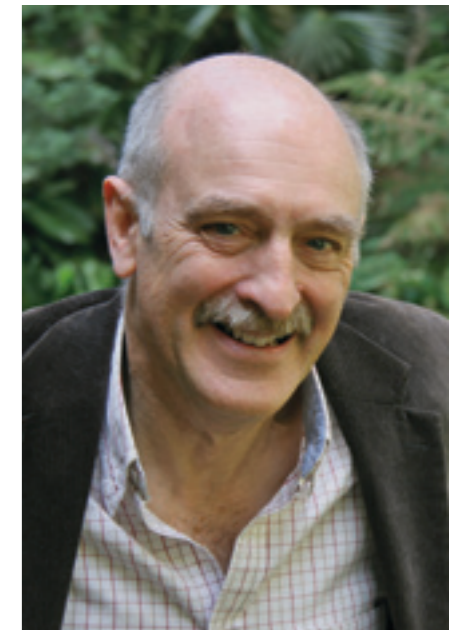


PHOTO BY PHILLIPA MALIN

#### WHY ARE YOU EXCITED ABOUT THE TRANSIT OF VENUS ON 6 JUNE?

It's a rare spectacle that won't be repeated for another 105 years. And it's of great historical importance — voyages such as Cook's in 1769 were all about showing Britain's prestige as a nation by demonstrating that it could fathom the solar system.

#### WHAT DREW YOU TO ASTRONOMY?

When I was growing up in the UK, science was in the ascendency. There was a great emphasis on science at school, along with popular TV shows like *The Sky at Night*. I was swept along with my peers. We all wanted to be astronauts and space scientists. The others went on to be doctors and engineers, but I never grew up.

#### WHAT DO YOU MOST ENJOY ABOUT YOUR JOB?

There's not much to compete with the satisfaction of doing what

you love. Astronomers share a curiosity about the unknown. The big questions we address answer deep and profound needs in human beings.

#### HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU TO EXPLAIN ASTRONOMY TO THE PUBLIC?

Astronomy is supported by the public purse, so people should be able to see what they're paying for. Talking to people about astronomy also helps me understand difficult concepts. It was a turning point in 1997 when I was fortunate to get a regular radio slot on the ABC.

#### WHAT ARE THE MAIN THINGS PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT ASTRONOMY?

People have an eclectic range of questions — from 'Why does the moon set where it does?' to 'Can we ever know everything?'. I put the best questions and answers from the radio show into a book called *Why is Uranus Upside Down?*

#### IS THERE AN ITEM IN THE STATE LIBRARY'S COLLECTION THAT PARTICULARLY APPEALS TO YOU?

Objects and manuscripts like the Library's Cook collection have wonderful significance for astronomers. I've always thought a good way to teach science is through its history.

#### YOU'RE ALSO A MUSICIAN ...

I was once a folkie, but now I combine music and astronomy. Recently I toured with the Griffyn Ensemble as they performed *Southern Sky* by Estonian composer and astronomer Urmas Sisask. Between the nine movements, I spoke to the audience about southern constellations.

#### WHERE HAS ASTRONOMY TAKEN YOU?

In the past few years I've led some wonderful tours — from the Kimberley coast to the northern lights in Norway. A highlight was visiting the ancient Chankillo observatory in northern Peru.

#### YOU HAVE AN ASTEROID NAMED AFTER YOU ...

Yes, when my sons were younger they said 'Dad, that's terrible, if it hits the Earth it will be your fault!' Fortunately, '5691 Fredwatson' is a main belt asteroid so it will stay up there.

**Professor Fred Watson AM is Astronomer in Charge of the Australian Astronomical Observatory at Coonabarabran.**



# World Press Photo 2012

30 June – 22 July

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