

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends

Thank you to the many Friends who responded with sustained support to the sad news that June 2016 sees the final print issue of the *National Library of Australia Magazine*. Your decision to remain Friends is both heartening and encouraging. We continue to support the Library as it maintains its essential contribution to the vitality of Australian culture and heritage under increasingly tight fiscal constraints.

I was recently in the Treasures Gallery and fell into conversation with a gentleman who had travelled from Canada just to see items in the collection. He was more than excited to be there; although he uses Trove and other NLA digital records back in Nova Scotia, the opportunity to see the tangible historical documents was inspiring for him. Australians cherish their trips to foreign museums and galleries, and this conversation reminded me that we have much of inestimable cultural and historical value right here at the NLA. It was wonderful to see items in our Treasures Gallery through the eyes of an international visitor.

Our opportunity to look inside China's last imperial dynasty is now over. Many thousands of visitors took advantage of this chance to see rare items from the NLA's Chinese collection and from the National Library of China. Congratulations to curator Dr Nathan Woolley and Library staff, and thanks to the guides from the NLA and ANU who ran tours in English and Mandarin.

I hope you are enjoying our short series 'Meet the Volunteer'. NLA volunteers are a dedicated team who work with the public and behind the scenes in many areas of the Library. Now, the exhibition guides are preparing for *Australian Sketchbook: Colonial Life and the Art of S.T. Gill*. Do keep an eye out for Friends events linked to this exhibition, which opens on 29 June.

Check this newsletter for dates of Friends events and join us for as many as you can. I recommend the 'Coffee with the Curator' mornings, where a small group enjoys an exclusive tour of an exhibition with the curator, followed by morning tea in the Friends Lounge, when you are able to discuss the exhibition with the curator.

Again, the Friends Committee thanks you for your ongoing support of the Library through your membership of the Friends of the NLA.

Robyn Oates

Meet the Volunteer



Roger, how long have you been a volunteer at the Library?

I joined the Library as a volunteer 15 years ago, beginning when the blockbuster exhibition, *Treasures from the World's Great Libraries*, was launched.

Tell us about your career prior to joining the Library's Volunteer Program.

Part of my early career was spent in Tanzania, with the Australian Volunteers Abroad scheme. I taught economics and also assisted with adult education. When I moved to Canberra in 1970, I soon joined the newly created Department of Aboriginal Affairs. For much of the two decades that followed, I was a policy adviser in land and heritage matters, administering national legislation for the protection of sites and objects.

When I retired in 1994, I wanted to pursue new areas. Soon after joining the University of the Third Age (U3A), I found myself leading a weekly literature group. This gave me opportunities to explore not only traditional and new English language writing, but also to delve into the literature of societies in Africa, India, Japan and parts of the Americas.

What do you like about being a volunteer at the NLA?

I was attracted to the NLA Volunteer Program by its changing exhibitions program. I felt it offered me opportunities to learn about history, photography and art—which it certainly has. I love striking up conversations with visitors, and having them share their own knowledge and interest in the subject of the exhibition.

What I particularly enjoy is that as volunteers we can work closely with exhibition curators in developing notes for guided tours. Working alongside the curators provides stories and insights into items in an exhibition, and its central themes.

What have been highlights of your volunteer work here?

I have really enjoyed working in the gallery area and feel that one of the most satisfying exhibitions was *Mapping Our World*.

I have long had a fascination with the history of cartography, and was pleased not only to sharpen my understanding but also to bring out a clear narrative of this history as it affected Australia during each tour.

The display of the *Rothschild Prayer Book* was another example of the exhibition sparking my interest, this time in the production of manuscripts, the changes brought about by the introduction of printing and the way prestige items continued to be commissioned in spite of the printing press. I followed the *Prayer Book* to Melbourne, where it was exhibited alongside an impressive collection of other early manuscripts held by Kerry Stokes.

While working on a behind-the-scenes project cleaning rare books, I was fortunate to learn much more about the preservation unit at the Library, and to see some of the skilled staff work on the Library's collection items. What a great way for volunteers to gain insight into fascinating sections of a great library.

Jenny Oates, interviewer

FRIENDS NEWS

Theatrical Ephemera

On 14 April, 70 Friends enjoyed a White Gloves evening, viewing over 300 items from the Library's Prompt collection. This collection is part of a vast and varied accumulation of ephemeral material held by the Library. As the name suggests, the Prompt collection documents the world of Australian performing arts.

Introducing the event, Kathryn Cole, Deputy Chair of the Friends Committee, quoted the words of John Bell, founder of the Bell Shakespeare Company, on the ephemeral nature of theatre:

I think I'll be forgotten in 10 years' time ... theatre, acting are very transitory, very temporary things. The next generation of actors won't know who I was, what the Bell Shakespeare Co. was ... that's what time is all about.

This comment explains the nature and importance of the Library's collection of all forms of ephemera and of theatrical material in particular. The items on display—theatre and music programs, posters, tickets, cast lists and press releases—



were not meant to last. They could easily have been ignored as too trivial to form part of a formal Library collection. Yet, as this viewing demonstrated, they are worth preserving, as they bring to life fleeting but significant moments in Australia's cultural life, moments that would have been forgotten. The collection gives the lie to John Bell's gloomy words; it records events that time would otherwise have erased.

On show was material illustrating the careers of giants of the Australian performing arts. These included Sir Robert Helpmann, Dame Joan Sutherland, Richard Bonyng, Dame Nellie Melba, Barry Humphries, Dame Judith Anderson, Kylie Minogue, Cate Blanchett and Nick Cave. In addition, the items record the performance history of companies—such as the Bangarra Dance Theatre, the Tivoli Circuit, the Australian Ballet and Ashton's Circus—and provide information on individual musicals and plays that toured Australia. There are also programs from overseas performances. It is not only the performers (actors, dancers and singers) who are remembered, but also composers, choreographers, directors, theatrical entrepreneurs, playwrights, and set and costume designers.

Kathryn acknowledged the hard work of Catherine Aldersey (Ephemera Officer) and her colleagues, who selected the varied items and prepared the exhibition. She also thanked the volunteers who had assisted by making themselves available to explain the material and answer questions.

Catherine Aldersey then spoke, emphasising that the Prompt collection is just one of the Library's ephemera collections. Their aim is to document the social, cultural, political and commercial life of Australia. Yet the Prompt material is far from an insignificant part of these collections: it now occupies over 300 shelf metres and is still growing! The material comes from many sources. Some items have been purchased at auction, some from antiquarian book dealers, some have been donated by members of the public or friends and family of staff members, and some supplied by the companies upon request. A number of the items are fragile, with several over a hundred years old.

Catherine concluded by thanking the team of volunteers who had assisted her in planning the viewing and making it happen: Sheena Ashwell, Yole Daniels, Margaret Goode, Alan Kerr, Anthony Ketley, Margaret Pender, Jennifer Philips, Margaret Thompson and Janet Wilson.

John Seymour

A Garden for Empire and Nation

Over 100 Friends of the National Library and the Australian Garden History Society attended Dr Stephen Whiteman's lecture, *A Garden for Empire and Nation: The Qing Imperial Mountain Estate in Chengde*, on Friday evening 13 May.

Dr Stephen Whiteman, lecturer in Asian Art at the University of Sydney, presented a most stimulating talk that took us on a journey from Emperor Kangxi's original plans for the Imperial Gardens complex—known as *Bishu shanzhuang* or 'Mountain Estate to Escape the Summer Heat'—through the major changes made by successive Qing emperors to the present day.

Initially the emperor conceived the gardens as a travelling palace to which he might retreat from the heat of the Beijing summer. The site he chose was located 175 kilometers northeast of the capital Beijing and covered an area of 1,400 acres, an area equivalent to four times that occupied by the ANU campus here in Canberra. The actual construction of the imperial park-palace was of an unprecedented scale and complexity and took ten years to complete.

In December 1702, the emperor issued an edict in which he outlined the motivations for his summer palace:

Our dynasty has secured the Mandate of Heaven and initiated a new epoch ... Raising Our head, We commit to Heaven's will. Rain and sun each come in due course, the farmer's labours sprout bountifully, the common people live in peace, and all regions are in harmony ... There is already a twenty-year history of martial training in Mulan [the Qing imperial hunting grounds], and while cherishing those from afar and nurturing [all] peoples is that which occupies Our thoughts and memories, there is still no place [in this region] where [we] may comfortably pass the night. At present, following the request of ministers and officials, it is appropriate to begin the foundations for a traveling palace in Rehe, so that pacification of the northern borders may be achieved ... It is ordered that the Board of Works and the Imperial Household Department should study famous gardens of the North and South closely, provide draft plans, construct models and submit them for imperial review.

Dr Whiteman argued that this edict and the resulting gardens embodied the aspirations of the new Qing dynasty to create a nation where different ethnic groups with different languages and religious beliefs could live together in harmony under the rule of the Qing emperor as a united whole—effectively a new nation.

To achieve this ideal, the Qing had to establish their legitimacy with the masses, to integrate the different ethnic groups and bring together the different religious rites and practices of Confucian thought, Daoism and Buddhism. It was through the realisation of the garden palace with its royal buildings, temples, sculptures and garden vistas that the emperor could present a model in microcosm of what the dynasty represented.

Dr Whiteman also elaborated on the specific design principles and individual elements of the original gardens that drew on traditional historical designs for the use of water features and landscape views and the ways these were also altered to show the virtues of the Qing.

He quoted Leng Mei's *Thirty-Six Views of Bishu Shanzhuang*, which contains paintings of the gardens, imperial essays, poems and stele inscriptions of the emperor's response to the gardens.

Dr Whiteman then described the many changes and permutations that the imperial gardens underwent over the successive reigns of later Qing emperors, until they fell into decline at the end of the imperial dynasties in the early twentieth century.

Fortunately, more recently, with the help of UNESCO, the gardens have been reinstated and recreated for the enjoyment of the Chinese people and visitors alike.

Dr Whiteman argued that the aspirations of Emperor Kangxi effectively established the power and authority of the Qing dynasty. The gardens are an enduring testament to the achievements of the last Chinese imperial dynasty.

Jenny Oates

Collecting Federal Election Ephemera

The National Library collects and preserves printed election campaign materials to ensure a permanent record of Australia's federal political history is kept, and we would be very grateful if you could help us collect it. **Please keep any federal election campaign material you come across in the lead-up to 2 July and post it to us!**

We're interested in copies of any original printed leaflets, letters to constituents, how-to-vote cards and anything related to election issues. We aim to collect as comprehensively as possible, to preserve material for every candidate, party and lobby group, and we try to gather material from every electorate across Australia.

We also share any surplus copies of this important material with our colleagues in other Australian libraries and collecting institutions.

Please send original campaign material (published, not photocopies or digital files) for inclusion in the national collection to:

Ephemera Officer
Printed Australiana
National Library of Australia
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Material may also be personally delivered to the Library—please phone ahead to the Ephemera Officer on 02 6262 1180.

There's more information on the Library's website: nla.gov.au/ephemera/federal-election-campaigns.

Lake View Book Club

The Lake View Book Club meets in the Friends Lounge on the last Tuesday of each month, from 6.15 pm to around 7.45 pm.

Members of the Friends are welcome to join our friendly group. Books for the winter period are:

- 28 June: *All the Light We Cannot See*, Anthony Doerr
- 26 July: *A Man Called Ove*, Fredrik Backman
- 30 August: *The Danish Girl*, David Ebershoff

If you have any questions, please contact Kathryn Cole at kathryncole@grapevine.net.au.

BUILDING YOU A BETTER BOOKPLATE

From Monday 23 May, Bookplate cafe at the Library will be temporarily closed for refurbishment and will reopen on Monday 27 June. Paperplate cafe on LG1 will remain open during this time.

FRIENDS EVENTS

Coffee with the Curator: *And the Band Played on*

Enjoy an intimate guided tour of the new Treasures Gallery display, *And the Band Played on*. Before the advent of radio, stereos and television, families provided much of their own amusement; anyone who could play an instrument, or had a passable voice, was cherished, as well as expected to entertain. These talents were even more prized in the trenches of Gallipoli and Europe. *And the Band Played on* is a tribute to the abiding value, and morale-boosting power, of music and song to Anzac forces, as revealed in the Library's outstanding collection of vintage sheet music.

Friday 17 June, 10.30 am

Treasures Gallery and Friends Lounge

\$15 Friends (includes light refreshments)

Bookings: nla.gov.au/bookings/friends or 02 6262 1698

Friends Viewing of *Australian Sketchbook: Colonial Life and the Art of S.T. Gill*

Emeritus Professor Sasha Grishin AM, FAHA, will introduce the exhibition, *Australian Sketchbook*, which showcases a lifetime of work by Australia's most popular colonial artist, S.T. Gill. Gill's images span more than four decades and define the way we were, from his juvenile work in England to his arrival in the newly established colony of South Australia, and his subsequent work in Victoria and New South Wales.

The exhibition space will be open after the lecture, with Professor Grishin on hand to answer any questions you may have.

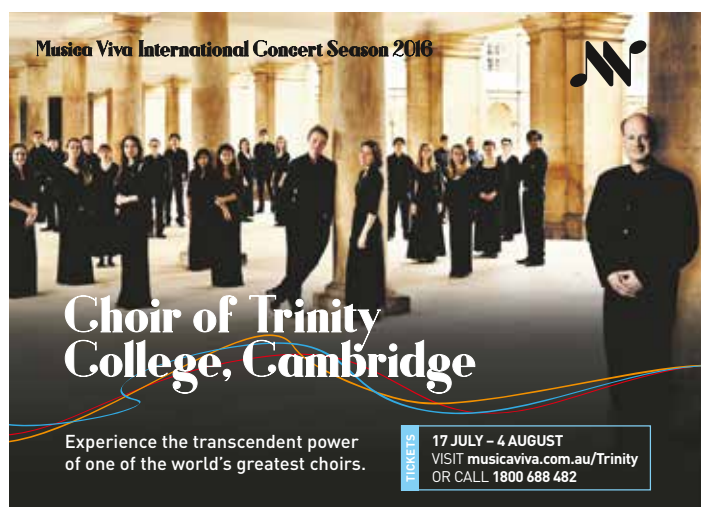
Friday 8 July, 6 pm

Theatre

\$25 Friends, \$30 Friends guests

(includes light refreshments)

Bookings: nla.gov.au/bookings/friends or 02 6262 1698



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Friends Discount Code for National Library Events

To claim your 15 per cent discount on ticketed National Library events, bookings must be made online at nla.gov.au/bookings, and the discount code FRWINT16 entered when booking. This code is valid from 1 June to 31 August 2016 and does not apply to Friends events.

TFE HOTELS

The Friends have recently secured a partnership with TFE Hotels, allowing Friends members a 10 per cent discount on TFE Hotels best-available rates throughout Australia, subject to availability. The discount code to use when booking online is TH8207166.



NATIONAL LIBRARY BOOKSHOP SPECIAL OFFER FOR FRIENDS

In conjunction with the National Library Bookshop, the Friends are pleased to announce a special offer for members who make a purchase via the online Bookshop.

For any purchase made between 1 June and 31 August 2016, Friends will receive a free copy of *Little Book of Dogs*. This offer is in addition to the usual Friends discount and any other offers advertised on the Library Bookshop website.

To claim your free copy of *Little Book of Dogs*, and your 15 per cent discount with all online purchases, use the promotional code FR15JUN16 at checkout. This code is valid from 1 June to 31 August 2016.

