

December 2007

Friends AGM & Christmas Party Reminder

The Friends Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 10 December, from 5.30pm in the LG1 Theatre. The Friends Christmas Party will follow from 6pm in the Foyer. The 2007 Friends Medal will be awarded during the party. Make sure you don't miss this opportunity to enjoy the festive season with other Friends and library staff. Refreshments will be served by Bookplate and Michael Azzopardi will entertain the gathering on piano.

The NLA Bookshop will be open during the party too, offering Friends a 20% discount on all purchases - a timely opportunity to do some Christmas shopping. And there will be several lucky door prizes on offer, including tickets to opening night for several 2008 productions at the Canberra Theatre.

Although the Friends Committee will continue to subsidise the cost of the Christmas Party, this year we have introduced a small attendance charge of \$10 to cover a portion of the cost. Bookings are essential so please contact the Friends Office on (02) 6262 1698 or friends@nla.gov.au

Friends Book Club

The Friends Book Club is held on the last Tuesday of each month, from 7-8.30pm in the Friends Lounge at the National Library. There will be no December meeting but the book club will resume again on 29 January, when the book for discussion will be *The Broken Shore* by Peter Temple. Just to whet your appetite, here is an excerpt from a review of this book from Publisher's Weekly:

In Temple's beautifully written eighth crime novel, Joe Cashin, a city homicide cop recovering from an injury, returns to the quiet coastal area of South Australia where he grew up. There he investigates the beating death of elderly millionaire Charles Bourgoyne...His unauthorized inquiry, which takes him both back in time and sideways into a netherworld of child pornography and sexual abuse, leads to a shocking conclusion. Temple...examines Australian political and social divisions underlying the deceptively simple murder case. Many characters, especially the police, exhibit the vicious racism that still pervades the country's white society. Byzantine plot twists and incisively drawn characters combine with stunning descriptions of the wild, lush, menacing Australian landscape to make this an unforgettable read.



If you would like to participate in the January Friends Book Club, please RSVP to Sharyn in the Friends Office on (02) 6262 1551 or sobrien@nla.gov.au

Love archives, will travel

(By Dr Marie Louise-Ayres, NLA Curator of Manuscripts)

The National Library's Manuscripts collection - for which I am proud to be responsible - is very large, diverse and, of course, mostly unique. Our mission is to build the collection, to manage it effectively and to make it as easy as possible for Australians and overseas researchers to discover and use its riches. There are many steps in what I call 'end to end' collection management to make this happen. The process starts with an acquisition opportunity and ends when a researcher is able to find and get the material they need to support their research.



Marie-Louise Ayres

In most parts of the Library, many of these processes are supported by tried and tested library management and other software systems. In Manuscripts, most of these processes have historically been supported by various paper files and registers.

Our processes are not therefore as efficient as they could be; we have to create information repeatedly and our resources are not always easy to find. We really need to improve this situation if we are to support efficient use of our collections by researchers.

The first step along this road is to document current processes and identify new needs. The Manuscripts Branch started this process last year, and presented a number of documents to our Collection Management Development Committee in April 2007, recommending a number of projects to improve collection control and access.

My three week trip overseas in June - generously funded by the Friends Travelling Fellowship - therefore came at exactly the right time. This is an area where Australia is well behind similar jurisdictions, and I knew that I needed to meet colleagues in the United States and Canada where there has been significant investment in these areas in the last few years.

I travelled to six cities in two countries over the three weeks. My first stop - at the Huntington Library, Gardens and Galleries near Pasadena in California - was really to allow me to visit one of the world's great libraries. As it turned out, I started my travels with severe sinusitis, bronchitis and asthma and although I did manage to visit the Huntington and had a wonderful time, I also spent a lot of time sipping soup and orange juice, blowing my nose, coughing and wheezing!

The real work started at the University of California at San Diego, where I had intensive meetings with the developers of the Archivists' Toolkit (more anon). I then travelled to RLG (formerly the Research Libraries Group) outside San Francisco to discuss federated discovery services for archives. From there I hopped right across the US to Boston, where I had very fruitful meetings with librarians and archivists about a successful project to convert textual finding aids to the international Encoded Archival Standard (EAD).

Changing countries, I attended the Association of Canadian Archivists' Conference in the gorgeous small city of Kingston in Ontario, Canada. This was a real change of pace and an opportunity to experience a different national archival community. My last work stop was several days meeting with many staff at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa, with a special focus on managing original materials. With one final rest day in San Francisco (during which I really did 'sit by the dock of the Bay' and waste time), I flew back from sunshine and summer to the depths of a Canberra winter.

During my three week Fellowship trip, I had intensive and detailed discussion about two possible approaches to end to end archival management. The Archivists Toolkit - an open source software suite being developed by five universities in America with the assistance of close to US\$2 million from the Mellon Foundation - is in early stages but has great promise, and almost everything that is on my 'collection management shopping list' was catered for.



The Huntington Library, California

Library and Archives Canada's Amican system - an integrated 'end to end' system for all library and archival material - has full support for specialised archival functions. This system brings together an existing library catalogue with more than 140 separate archival databases. The full package will cost around C\$35 million, the vast majority of which has come directly from the Canadian federal government.

While both of these systems were very impressive, they are also rather more 'monolithic' than the Library's preferred approach of 'components' which can be seamlessly slotted in and out of a flexible information architecture. We hope to learn from these systems, rather than implement something similarly 'stand-alone'. Over the 2007-2008 financial year, we are systematically documenting requirements for 'end to end' collection management, as part of the Library's Business Integration Taskforce work. We then hope to prioritise development work to maximise both management efficiency and ease of use for researchers.

I enjoyed discussing ArchiveGrid, which RLG released in 2006 as a commercial (i.e. not free) federated discovery service to archival collections in mostly US institutions. In many ways this is like our own Register of Australian Archives and Manuscripts (RAAM) - which is the subject of a radical rethink and redevelopment this year. There is, however, a critical difference. The Library's current catalogue, Libraries Australia, and RAAM provide access *only* to what we call collection level records, not to the contents of collections described in finding aids (to archival technocrats like me, 'component level metadata'). ArchiveGrid provides access to both in a seamless search interface. It is very powerful and really exposes the rich contents of collections.

These three systems - for collection management, and for access - cover all levels of archival description - from the collection level right down to the item level. By contrast, our existing management and access systems cover only collection level

description - we use other, non-connected processes to describe the contents of collections, and to let others know about them. We want to bring these together to make discovery of archival collections and their contents seamless for the researcher.

This made my discussions about a successful five-year Harvard project to convert 1,500 hard copy finding aids to the international standard (EAD) and to load these to a fully searchable database even more important. The NLA has around 900 hard copy finding aids and a further 1,300 or so which are available in electronic text, but not in the international standard. We know that we need to convert our finding aids to EAD, but were not sure about the most effective way to do this, or how long it would take, or how much it would cost. Thanks to my visit, I now know all of these things, and the Library is better placed to plan this important activity. We hope to commence work on conversion in the near future and look forward to making the contents of our wonderful collections much easier to find and use.

The immediate outcomes of my trip were my conference report, blog (<http://manuscriptscurator.wordpress.com/>) and five technical reports which I wrote on the road and presented to the Library's Corporate Management Group and shared with my counterparts in State Libraries and other similar institutions on my return. And of course I made many excellent contacts and acquired a depth of information on reading room services, development of the archival profession, projects, staffing and finances that would have been nearly impossible without undertaking the trip. In the medium term, work is proceeding apace to move the Library closer to that ideal of making our wonderful manuscripts collections just as easy to discover as our books, journals, pictures, oral histories, maps and music.

The trip was everything I could have wished it to be from a professional point of view. I felt that I was able to contribute at least as much as I learned from the people I spoke to. In many areas of library services, the NLA is so far ahead of the international field that, even though we are behind others in systems to support management of our original materials, I could still offer much of interest.

I also thoroughly enjoyed myself from a personal point of view. I saw new cities, walked, walked and walked, ignored my sinusitis and asthma as much as possible, talked to lots of new people and came back feeling quite exhilarated - even after seven stops in three weeks.

I really do feel that your money was well spent and encourage you to think about supporting other staff members to undertake this kind of fact-finding tour. The Library now has so many international responsibilities - on technical working and standards groups - that it can be difficult to fund other overseas travel from the Library's own coffers. The Friends Travelling Fellowship gives Library staff a wonderful opportunity to overcome the tyranny of distance and to refresh and renew core professional knowledge and energy. I am very grateful for this opportunity and hope that you will see the results of the trip unfolding in wonderful ways over the next few years.

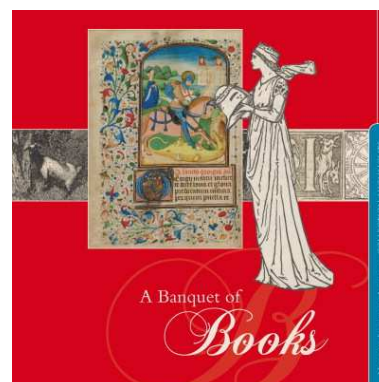
Books on Books

Whenever I visit the National Library my first port of call is usually the Library's bookshop, where I always enjoy looking out for new arrivals that might be of interest.



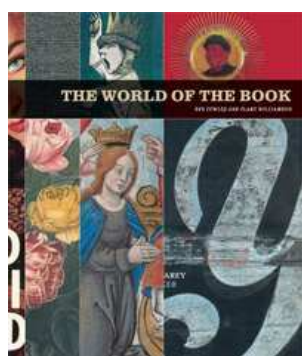
I was pleased to spy on sale recently two delightful books that would make marvellous delightful additions to the library of any booklover.

The first, appropriately titled *A Banquet of Books*, is published by the NLA and highlights thirty-five diverse and fascinating items in the Library's collection. The decisions as to which books were chosen were "informed by the books themselves - by their rarity, beauty or historical significance - to include a representative sample of the Library's rich collection." Although only a little book of less than one hundred pages, it is packed full of lovely photo illustrations and samples of text taken directly from the books themselves. It is a browser's delight.



Some of the treasures recorded in *A Banquet of Books* that most appealed to me included a leaf from the Gutenberg Bible (c 1455), John Gould's *The Birds of Australia* (1840-1848), *Captain Cook's Florilegium* (1973), Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English language* (1755) and *Baker's Australian County Atlas* (1843-1846). The last of these is described as "the first effort to compile an atlas of settled areas in Australia".

The book includes the oldest complete book in the Library's collection, *Legenda Aurea* by Jacobus Voragine, published in 1492. Also featured is the *Astronomia: Teutsch Astronomei*, published by Cyriaco Jacob zum Barth in 1545, which is believed featured the first appearance of the word 'Australia' in print on a map.



The World of the Book, also on sale in the NLA Bookshop, is another sumptuous treat for the book-lover. It is published jointly by the State Library of Victoria and the highly-regarded Miegunyah Press. Its stated objective is to celebrate the unique place of books in our lives, by providing "a window into the history of book production, authorship and illustration, dating from the earliest developments of the written word through to contemporary graphic design".

Written by Des Cowley and Clare Williamson, *The World of the Book* is a wonderful 250 page tribute to the book and explains why these little objects mean so much to us. Here are some of the twenty-five chapter titles to tickle your fancy: 'the illuminated manuscript', 'the modernist experiment - Joyce and his circle', 'Terra Australis, 'Exploring the World', 'The Book in Edo Japan' and 'William Morris and the private press movement'.

The World of the Book is printed on matt art paper and illustrated in full colour, with rich and vivid reproductions from the books under discussion appearing on every page. It is a book that may be dipped into profitably again and again or to be enjoyed from start to finish as a potted but comprehensive history of the book. An added bonus is a detailed bibliography at the end for further reading.

These books would make wonderful Christmas gifts for that special bibliophile friend or relative.

Gary Kent

The Friends Celebrate Margaret Fulton

The three hundred or so friends who attended the Margaret Fulton celebration at the National Library on 18 November departed with an even greater admiration and respect for the woman who has for so long been regarded as the doyenne of Australian cooking. It really was a magical afternoon and I for one left with a new appreciation of the woman who has been part of my consciousness since the 1960s, when I occasionally browsed my mother's copies of *Woman's Day*.

Sydney food writer John Newton commenced proceedings with a sparkling potted history of Margaret's career, outlining the pivotal role she has played in the diversification of the national diet.

Margaret followed, with a captivating and humorous account of her life and times in the food industry. She revealed that she had never consciously dreamt at a young age of pursuing a career as a cookery writer; indeed she had originally wanted to be a member of the Bluebell Girls (a long-legged dance troupe formed in the early 1930s especially known for their performances at the Folies Bergere) and to marry a Duke. She soon realised that this was not for her, partly because the dukes had a habit of trading in their wives for younger versions and because of her short Scottish legs. (I learned subsequently that the average Blue Bell girl was five feet eleven inches tall, something that Margaret was definitely not!)



*Margaret Fulton with Friends
Chairman Terry Birtles*

Paris's loss however was Australia's gain and having turned down an opportunity to be a nutritionist, Margaret embarked on the career for which she is so well-known today. Those interested in learning more about Margaret can do no better than consult the copy of *Margaret Fulton: A Celebration* that was recently mailed to all Friends. Further copies are available at the National Library Bookshop. The book includes some delightful Margaret Fulton recipes, including one for "Shoulder of lamb with two heads of garlic" which "embraces all the things I know about cooking lamb".

Margaret happily fielded questions from the audience. We all waited with bated breath for her response to the question from Friends Chair Terry Birtles as to her all time favourite recipe. The answer: the last dish she had eaten was always her favourite, which in this case was the delicious lemon curd tart she had enjoyed at lunch, prepared according to the recipe of the chef's great grandmother!

Following the conclusion of the official part of the proceedings, the audience and special guests adjourned to the National Library foyer. As a special treat, the offerings were prepared by Bookplate according to recipes in Margaret Fulton's first cookbook, published in 1968. I enjoyed a chocolate and cream fairy cake which in taste and appearance was suspiciously like those my mother used to cook, no doubt

based on the recipe from that well-thumbed early edition of Margaret's cookbook I remember so well in Mum's kitchen.

Margaret signed autographs for scores of those who had brought their much-loved cook books from home especially for this purpose or who had purchased the latest editions of Margaret's books from the Bookshop. Friends streamed away at the conclusion of the event thoroughly pleased that they had participated in this very special Celebration of someone who had been part of their lives and those of their families for so long.



Margaret Fulton with the special afternoon tea

Gary Kent

Proposed Canberra Branch of The Dickens Fellowship

The Dickens Fellowship was founded in London in 1902 and its Headquarters are based in The Charles Dickens Museum, in that city. There are branches of the Fellowship in the UK, Australia (Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney), Canada, Denmark, France, India, Japan, The Netherlands, New Zealand and USA. The Fellowship comprises like minded people who meet on a monthly basis to discuss essentially all manner of topics associated with Charles Dickens, but often extends to other authors of around Dickens' time. Each year, the Fellowship undertakes a specific Dickens' novel for closer examination and reading throughout that year. The Fellowship also publishes a monthly Dickens Newsletter which presents a forum for members to contribute items of common interest.



I have been a corresponding member of the Melbourne Dickens Fellowship for several years and have decided after consulting with Dr Alan Dilnot, who until recently was President of the Melbourne Dickens Fellowship, to ascertain whether sufficient interest exists in Canberra to form a fourth Australian Branch. Dr Dilnot has kindly undertaken to offer the assistance of the Melbourne Branch during the formative stages if I receive sufficient expressions of interest. Also, the Friends of the National Library have kindly offered the use of the Friends Lounge for meetings, should the proposal take off.

If **anyone** reading this piece is interested in forming a Canberra branch of the Dickens Fellowship, or requires further information, please don't hesitate to contact me, Malcolm Thurston, on 62556212. I look forward to hearing from you.

SPECIAL OFFERS

The Song Company in Canberra in 2008!

Internationally acclaimed vocal ensemble, The Song Company, comes to Canberra for the first time in 2008. In a fascinating artistic collaboration with Australia's three leading cultural institutions, The Song Company will present three ground-breaking programs based on aspects of the collections at The National Gallery on 9 May, The National Film and Sound Archive on 11 July and The National Library on 19 September.

Each concert will be preceded by a talk on the connections between the music and the collection given by Roland Peelman, The Song Company's Artistic Director, leading conductor and cultural commentator.

As a special offer to Friends of the National Library, the Song Company are offering a FREE copy of their acclaimed CD *As a Lily* to all members that subscribe to The Song Company series by 15 December 2007. Please identify yourself as a Friend of the National Library when booking.

For a copy of The Song Company 2008 brochure or to book tickets, phone (02) 8272 9500, or visit www.songcompany.com.au to view concert details and download a booking form.

Coming Events

The full programme of events can be consulted in the 'What's On' section of the National Library's website at <http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/events/>

Friends Events

Friends AGM and Christmas Party Monday, 10 December 5:30pm - AGM 6:00pm - Christmas Party	All Friends of the National Library are invited to join us for the AGM in the theatre followed by the Friends Christmas Party in the foyer. \$10 entry fee for the Christmas Party. Bookings essential on (02) 6262 1698 or friends@nla.gov.au
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NLA talks and events

Floortalk - Pioneers of the Inland: Australia's Muslim Cameleers 1860's - 1930's Wednesday 12 December 12:30 - 1:30 pm Exhibition Gallery	Join Philip Jones, Curator of <i>Pioneers of the Inland</i> , for a walk and talk around this fabulous exhibition. Free event, bookings not required.
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<p>The Irishness of Daisy Bates Thursday 13 December 6:00 - 7:00 pm Conference Room</p>	<p>Daisy Bates liked to be mistaken as English and then to tell people: 'I'm Irish, doncherknow?' Inventing a bogus Protestant gentry persona to conceal her poor rural Catholic background, she was still able to articulate the genuine cultural affinity she felt with Aboriginal people. Responding to the dramatic events in Ireland from 1916 until 1922, she also demonstrated a fierce sectarianism of which perhaps only an ex-Irish Catholic could be capable. Join Bob Reece to hear all about this remarkable woman.</p> <p>Free event, bookings not required.</p>
<p>Reader Education - Build your library skills Thursday 13 December 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm IT Training Rooms 1 & 2, 4th floor</p>	<p>Having trouble finding the information you need? Come along to this drop-in session and get advice from a professional librarian on how to get the most from the National Library's collection. Bring along your research topic or question and get some individual assistance to unearth the Library's hidden treasures.</p> <p>Free event, bookings not required.</p>

NLA exhibitions

<p>Pioneers of the Inland: Australia's Muslim Cameleers 1860's - 1930's Opens Wednesday 12 December Exhibition Gallery</p>	<p>This exhibition reveals the remarkable contribution which Australia's first Muslim community made to the exploration and settlement of Australia's arid interior. The stories of Muslim explorers and pioneers provide an intriguing counterbalance to dominant white explorer legends of Central Australia.</p> <p>Muslims have been part of Australian society since the Burke and Wills expedition (1860) and have contributed significantly to Australia's economic and cultural development. Muslim cameleers were brought to Australia to enable exploration of the uncharted interior, and assisted all major expeditions of the late 19th century. Subsequently these Muslim pioneers provided lifeblood for many inland settlements, isolated stations and mines, and forged communication routes through remote Australia. The exhibition tells this compelling story, using new research and previously unseen objects and images, drawing upon diverse collection sources. The exhibition also investigates this story's continuing resonance with descendants, involving new collaborations with Australia's Muslim communities.</p>
<p>The System of Nature: Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) Opens Wednesday 12 December Visitor Centre</p>	<p>Carl Linnaeus is often referred to as 'the father of taxonomy', that particular branch of science concerned with the systematic classification of living organisms. He was arguably the most influential natural scientist of the 18th century and two of his 'disciples' were prominent in the early documentation of the flora and fauna of Australia - Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander who were on board the <i>Endeavour</i> with James Cook when it arrived in Botany Bay in 1770. This display will reveal a selection of the little-known treasures in the Library's collections.</p>