

White Gloves July 2009

The Friends' White Gloves evenings are traditionally one of the highlights of the Friends calendar and the Birds, Beasts and Botany exhibition on 31 July 2009 was no exception.

The National Library's Curator of Pictures, Linda Groom, and her team put together a magnificent exhibition of art works and photographs depicting Australian plants and animals.

The list of marvellous treasures on display is too long to repeat here in full but some of the highlights included John Gould's *Birds of Australia*, Elizabeth Gould bird prints, and cockatoo paintings by William Thomas Cooper.

Other early works on display include a watercolour by Charles-Alexandre Lesueur featuring two quolls on King Island in 1802 and several Ferdinand Bauer lithographs of native wildlife.

Linda and her conservators selected two beautiful albums for the exhibition. The first was Fanny Charsley's beautiful book, "The wild flowers around Melbourne (1867)", bound with the published lithographs and the original watercolours. The second was Marriannne Collinson Campbell's "Wild flowers, fruit and butterflies of Australia". Works by the increasingly popular Marian Ellis Rowan were also featured.



Pictures acquisitions officer, Michelle Bond, with one of the works on display.



Two engrossed White Gloves visitors

Linda told the assembled attendees that the exhibition quite unashamedly included some items simply because she and her team liked them! These included a Frank Hurley photograph of the husky Lupoid on the Shackleton expedition, one of Hardy Wilson's crayon drawings of a rooster, and a selection of animals as seen through the eyes of children's illustrators such as May Gibbs, Ida Rentoul Outhwaite and Dr Seuss.

Those who attended the White Gloves evening thoroughly enjoyed viewing and handling the carefully selected items on display and some even attempted the "Guess the Species" and "Guess the famous person with their pet" competitions. We are very grateful to Linda and her staff for the many hours spent in arranging

this event, which once again demonstrates another aspect of the rich Australiana holdings of the National Library.