

Friends in June



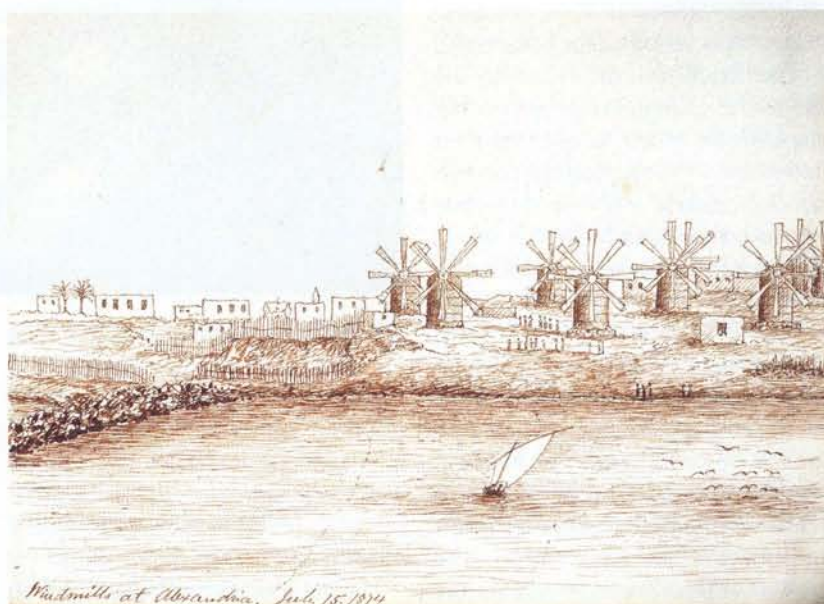
THE BIBLIOTHECA ALEXANDRINA

The Library of Alexandria was the most famous of all the ancient libraries. Not only was it the largest in all antiquity, it was the centre of scientific research, frequented by scholars from all over the Mediterranean. The Library promoted knowledge and openness, and for seven centuries was a beacon of learning and science. As the world's first university, it was attended by such luminaries as Euclid, Eratosthenes and Archimedes.

The ancient Library was the only truly universal library. Although there is no exact record, it held, at its peak, approximately 700 000 scrolls. Anticipating our modern libraries, it catalogued all the works it possessed, and enjoyed 'legal deposit rights', being entitled to make a copy of every book that entered the country.

The Library ceased to exist in the fifth century, more than two centuries before the Arab conquest of Egypt. Regardless of its disappearance over 1600 years ago, it lingers prominently in cultural memory.

Reviving the idea of the ancient Library, in 1990 UNESCO and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt set up a joint project to establish a new Library at Alexandria, to be a universal centre of culture, science and academic research. Generally known as the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, it aims to be a meeting place for the cultures of east and west, open to researchers from all over the world. An appeal for donations went out to governments, scholars and individuals, and the National Library of Australia made a generous contribution of material in 2000. The Governor-General of Australia, Dr Peter Hollingworth, attended the opening of the Bibliotheca in October 2002 on behalf of the Australian people.



Sir Whately Eliot (1841–1927)
Windmills at Alexandria
drawing: pen ; 12.7 x 17.4 cm
Pictures Collection, nla.pic-an3365571

On Thursday 12 June at 5.30 pm, Mr Lorenzo Montesini, Chairman of the Australian Friends of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, will present a lecture, *The Twin Histories of Alexandria and the Bibliotheca*, for the entertainment of Friends and guests. This is a very special occasion, with slides and music. It will be followed by a reception in the Library's foyer.

Register your interest early for this exciting Friends event. Admission is by booking only!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 2003

Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Lorenzo Montesini, Chair of the Australian Friends of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, will give an illustrated lecture.

Date: Thursday 12 June

Time: 5:30 pm

Venue: National Library Theatre, and afterwards in the Foyer

Admission: Friends \$15, others \$20.

Refreshments included.

Bookings essential, on (02) 6262 1698; or email: friends@nla.gov.au

For bookings, details of membership and subscriptions, contact:

Friends of the NLA

National Library of Australia

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Tel: (02) 6262 1698

Fax: (02) 6273 4493

Email: friends@nla.gov.au

Website: <http://www.nla.gov.au/friends>