

The Internet,

— AUCTIONS —

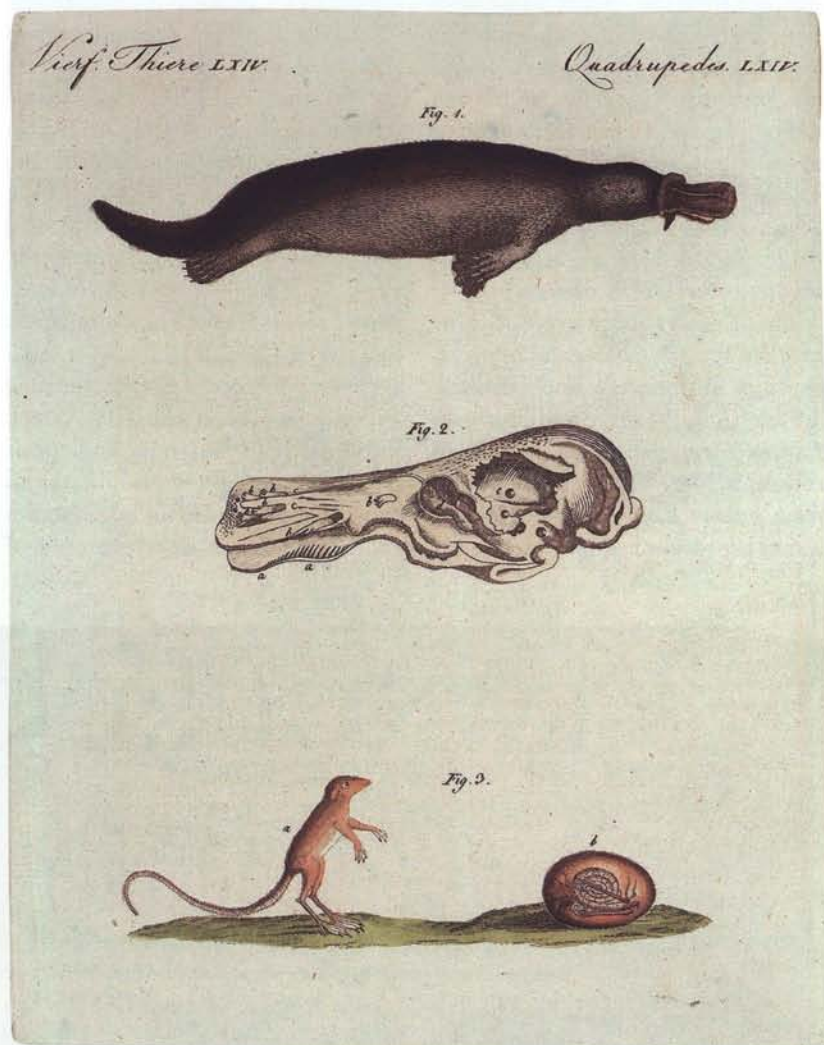
AND ANTIQUARIAN BOOK DEALERS

How does the Library acquire rare books, objects and ephemera relating to Australia? Rosalind McDonald reveals some of the methods

The National Library aims to preserve Australia's documentary heritage. One of the ways this is achieved is by collecting rare books, ephemera and occasionally objects relating to Australia. Known collectively as 'Australiana', these items reflect many aspects of Australian life and range from souvenirs of sporting events to early handbills and war memorabilia. How some of these items come into the Library's Collection provides an insight into the many ways we collect.

The vast resources of the Internet have had a major influence on collecting activities, with many items now being sourced via this medium. Friedrich Bertuch's *Bilderbuch für Kinder* (Weimar, 1798–1830), on display in *Future Memory*, was acquired in this manner. *Bilderbuch* is a children's encyclopaedia of essentially natural history, published in 237 parts over nearly 40 years in Germany. It contains approximately 60 references to Australian flora and fauna, including the earliest published description, illustration and classification of the platypus.

Auctions, both in Australia and overseas, are another regular source for collection material, providing access to both old and new items. The *Souvenir: Australian Tour 1908 & 1909* (Manchester, 1908) provides details of the Australian Kangaroos



rugby league tour to Britain. It is of particular interest because 1908 was the year that rugby league separated from rugby union. The program also includes photographs of the English, Welsh and Australian Wallabies rugby union teams. A more recent item of sporting ephemera to be purchased at auction is the program for the *Dinner in Honour of the Australian Cricket Team, the 1948 Invincibles: Celebrating the 50th Year Anniversary*

Illustration of the platypus
Reproduced from *Bilderbuch für Kinder: Enthaltend eine angenehme Sammlung von Thieren, Pflanzen, Blumen, Früchten ...* 12 vols
Weimar, Germany: im Verlage des Landes-Industrie-Comptoirs, 1798–1830
RBRS N 500.83 B595

of the 20th Australian XI Tour in Great Britain, 1948, Adelaide Oval Marquee, Thursday 16th April, 1998 (Adelaide, 1998). The program includes the

signatures of the 10 then surviving members of the touring team, one of whom was Sir Donald Bradman.

Recommendations from members of the public are often an excellent source of information about potential acquisitions. One such acquisition was the poster, *Cole Bros. Circus: The Great Con Colleano, World's Greatest Wire Artist Performing Forward and Backward Somersaults on the Wire* (United States, 1945). An outstanding poster of Con Colleano, an Aboriginal master of the highwire, this poster was acquired from the United States, after a member of the public, who also had specialist knowledge on circuses and this performer in particular, alerted the Library to its availability. One of the very successful Australian National Travel Association series of travel posters, Gert Sellheim's *Corroboree, Australia* (Melbourne, c.1945) was acquired in a similar manner.

The Library regularly obtains material from Australia and overseas, through antiquarian book dealers. Three such items on display in *Future Memory* were acquired in this way. *The Wonderful Kangaroo from Botany Bay* (London, 1794) is a rare broadside handbill incorrectly

proclaiming the display of the first live specimen of the kangaroo to be seen in Europe. It appears, however, to be the earliest recorded handbill advertising the public display of the kangaroo in Europe. *The Lamentation and Farewell of the Unhappy Convicts Who Were Sentenced to Transportation at the Summer Assizes, 1829, Now Lying in Newcastle Gaol* (Newcastle, 1829) is a broadside about the fate of seven prisoners in Newcastle Gaol awaiting transportation to Van Diemen's Land for their crimes. Bosch, Barthel & Company's *Catalogue. Optical Goods, Optician's Sundries, Instruments and Apparatus for Refraction* (Sydney, c.1900) is an interesting trade catalogue depicting equipment available to opticians at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Donations continue to be a valuable source for many acquisitions in the Australian Collection and, indeed, across the Library. These donations may come from individuals or from corporate sources. *I zoi en Australia* (Sydney, 1916) is the first Greek publication in Australia and, prior to being donated to the Library, no copies were recorded in any libraries in Australia. Another example of

a donation is the Sydney 2000 Olympic Torch (Sydney, 2000). This acquisition complements the Library's large collection of material relating to the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

While we are not always able to take what has been offered, the Library continues to receive many valuable donations to the Australian collection each year. And it is through donations, auctions, the Internet, recommendations and antiquarian book dealers that the National Library is able to acquire and preserve Australia's documentary heritage.

ROSALIND McDONALD is Manager, Australian Collection Development. If you have any items you are willing to donate, particularly issues of Australian journals, please contact Ros on telephone (02) 6262 1306

The Wonderful Kangaroo from Botany Bay
[London: 1794]
sheet; 13 x 22 cm
F/BROADSIDE N25

