

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends

Welcome to the Spring 2016 edition of the Friends Newsletter. You may have noticed that we are slowly moving towards a more comprehensive digital form of communication. In doing this, we are in step with most other organisations. You may have already received the weekly Friends update email, including the quarterly NLA Bookshop catalogue. This catalogue used to accompany the NLA Magazine and the Friends Newsletter by 'snail mail' to your letterbox. If you do not receive this regular email, and would like to, please contact Kelli Turner or Belinda Jessup in the Friends Office. Also, as our digital transition progresses, please let the office know if you are experiencing any difficulties accessing our communications.

Have you ever thought about joining the Friends Committee? We welcome nominations from members of all ages and backgrounds; previous committee experience is not a prerequisite. If you would like to talk about joining the committee in 2017, contact Kelli on 02 6262 1551 or email friends@nla.gov.au. Nomination forms are included with this newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you!

The annual Friends Travelling Fellowship enables a Library staff member to travel overseas for professional development. In 2016, Monika Szunejko has travelled to the British Library and the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris to investigate linked data, metadata and BLOD (British Library on Demand). Do read her report in this newsletter. It is all about exciting new territory. Your annual membership fees enable such fellowships to exist and the immense value to the Library is ongoing.

Our Friends winter event, which focused on *Australian Sketchbook: Colonial Life and the Art of S.T. Gill*, was a lecture by curator Emeritus Professor Sasha Grishin and a private viewing of the exhibition. It was a very successful evening and it took us back to a time in our history long before digital communication. I wonder what S.T. Gill would have thought of the electronic media? Perhaps, based on his evident sense of humour and his eye for character details, he would have enjoyed it very much.

Meanwhile, whether it be on digital or 'Gutenberg technology', happy reading.

Robyn Oates, Chair

Meet the Volunteer: Shirley Gollings

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

I joined the new National Library Volunteer Program in 1998 when it was first introduced. It sounded an exciting program to become involved with and, 18 years later, I still feel the same excitement. At that time, being an NLA guide fitted well with my other community involvement activities, as well as travelling and family commitments.



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

I enjoyed a very rewarding 40-year career in early childhood education, both in teaching and administrative roles, in many programs catering for children 0–8 years.

Early in my career, I taught in the Lady Gowrie Child Centres in Tasmania and Western Australia. At these centres, I began a career-long interest in working with disadvantaged and special needs children and had the opportunity to initiate programs to meet their particular requirements.

I also worked in a variety of early childhood programs in several Australian states and overseas as a result of the moves required by my husband's career, including working as a member of a multi-disciplinary team. In Papua New Guinea, I enjoyed being in a multicultural teaching environment.

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

I am a volunteer for all front-of-house tours—Treasures Gallery, temporary exhibitions, Behind-the-Scenes and Discovery tours. I particularly enjoy meeting people, helping Australians to discover their great national library and introducing visitors from overseas to one of Australia's great cultural institutions.

During my time at the NLA, I've had many opportunities to expand my knowledge in a large range of subjects with which I had little previous experience, for example photography, birds and flora.

What have been highlights of your volunteer work here?

One memorable exhibition opening was the *Birds!* exhibition with the amazing cockatoo entertaining everyone. One of my

favourite exhibitions was the first exhibition I guided, *Paradise Possessed*. It introduced me to the fascinating world of Rex Nan Kivell and his vast collection housed in the National Library.

In 1996, Shirley was recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia for her contribution to early childhood education, particularly through voluntary work with Early Childhood Australia at state, territory and national levels. Her ongoing contribution to the Volunteer Program is much appreciated by all at the Library.

Interviewed by Jenny Oates

FRIENDS NEWS



Monika Szunejko

A tale of two cities

With the generous support of a Travelling Fellowship provided by the Friends of the National Library of Australia, I travelled to London and Paris to visit the British Library, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), British Museum and Agence Bibliographique de l'Enseignement Supérieur (ABES) in June this year.

Our National Library of Australia is considering the best ways to make information about Australian collections linked via the web and the main purpose of my research trip was to learn about the implementation of linked data.

My focus was to examine the business drivers and development of large-scale data management by national cultural institutions. I learnt about the technical, staffing, organisational and business aspects of implementing linked data.

My Travelling Fellowship offered opportunities to exchange information outside of a formal setting, and I was fortunate to be able to establish collegial relationships with colleagues at other national libraries and develop a network of shared information exchange.

During my trip, I wrote a blog about my adventures titled 'Bibliografika: Tales of Bibliographic Metadata'. Writing the blog helped me to reflect on my discussions with colleagues, process the information I was learning and also share my experiences and some photos with readers. Some of the most enjoyable experiences involved sharing professional conversations with colleagues and realising that libraries speak a common language and hold common values, and want to share their collections with the world. In two weeks, I met with 38 colleagues in Great Britain and France who generously and freely offered their time and knowledge to meet with me and share their metadata strategies. Every single meeting was filled with enthusiasm, good humour and laughter.

Thank you to the Friends for this wonderful opportunity to explore professional ideas, connect with colleagues and learn about the invisible underpinnings of library collections, and my heartfelt thanks for the encouragement of Friends during my Travelling Fellowship.

Monika Szunejko

Read Monika's blog at bibliografika.wordpress.com.

NAIDOC Week 2016 Celebrations at the Library

On Tuesday 5 July, three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members gave talks on items from the Library's collections that have special meaning for each of them, to an audience of about 80 people.



John, Nicolette and Shannon, NAIDOC Week 2016

Nicolette Suttor enthralled the audience with the story of her personal journey to discover more about her family history through the Library's collections.

Nicolette spoke about the beautiful book, *Yan-nhanju Atlas and Illustrated Dictionary of the Crocodile Islands*, by Laurie Baymarrwangga (the last fluent speaker of the Yan-nhangu language) and Dr Bentley James (an anthropologist and linguist).

Nicolette described the book as a storehouse for her people of the history, culture and languages spoken on her country. She said, 'This lovely work goes into detail about everything you could ask for, from the family networks to the local geography and the reasons for travel, and to the history of the Crocodile Islands'.

'This work is amazing, and I would love to see more Indigenous language material, and Indigenous cultural knowledge, come through the National Library. But having this? This makes me happy.'

Shannon Sutton gave an entertaining narrative on his own search to find out more about his family. A mysterious photo of a relative, 'Kitty', started Shannon on his journey and led him to the item he shared with us: *You Are What You Make Yourself to Be: The Story of a Victorian Aboriginal Family, 1842–1980* by Phillip Pepper with Tess De Araugo. Shannon read an extract from the book to the delight of the audience.

Shannon said he was 'incredibly grateful to have been the Library's 2014 Indigenous graduate and pleased to have been able to create a research guide to increase the visibility and accessibility of the Library's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language collections to community'.

John Morseu related the 'shock' he felt when he came across the letters of Elma Mosby, which are part of the Torres Strait Islands Mission Related Correspondence and Photographs, 1907–1933 collection.

These letters have particular meaning for John as they are the first letters written in English about his people, and they record among many things the acceptance of Christianity.

The collection comprises letters written between Edith Wylie and Elma Mosby and an album of captioned photographs taken in 1921–1922 by Grace Wylie, sister to Reverend William MacFarlane. The photographs show daily life on Thursday Island, Murray Island, Yorke Island and Dauan Island, recording crafts, dance, church, landscape and traditional activities, as well as several portraits.

John expressed his appreciation at the richness of the NLA Indigenous collection.

Congratulations and thanks to Nicolette, Shannon and John for sharing their stories and collection items.

Anne Davis

An audio recording of this presentation is available at nla.gov.au/news/recent-audio.

Exhibition floor talk—Treasures Gallery

Treasures Curator Nat Williams was joined in the Treasures Gallery by an appreciative audience, keenly interested in hearing early settlement stories and the significance of selected items from the Indigenous Collection depicting Aboriginal life. Nat's talk focused on a small selection of items relevant to NAIDOC Week, including Governor Arthur's proclamation board, images of *Collins Street, Town of Melbourne* from 1839 and 1840, and portraits of Nannultera and Samuel Kandwillan. In addition, Nat talked about the recently acquired *Lucas Sketchbook*, created by the extraordinary draftsman and recorder of Aboriginal life and culture, Tommy McRae.

An audio recording of this presentation is available at nla.gov.au/news/recent-audio.



Tommy McRae (c. 1836–1901), *Aboriginal Tribe and Their Leader in Confrontation with Warrior, Wahgunyah Region, Victoria* (detail) 1881 nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6295516

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

On Friday 8 July, Robyn Oates, Chair of the Friends of the National Library of Australia, warmly welcomed Friends and guests to a special viewing of *Colonial Life and the Art of S.T. Gill*. Robyn introduced Emeritus Professor Sasha Grishin AM, FAHA, exhibition curator and author of *S.T. Gill and His Audiences*, a beautiful exhibition companion book.

Sasha Grishin established the academic discipline of Art History at the Australian National University and was the Sir William Dobell Professor of Art History and Head of Art History and Curatorship until 2013. He works internationally as an art historian, art critic and curator, and has published more than 25 books.



Title page from S.T. Gill's *The Australian Sketchbook*, Melbourne: Hamel & Ferguson, 1864, nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1445743

In his opening remarks, Professor Grishin commented that the retrospective of S.T. Gill's work was the first and possibly the last. He posed the question: how many of you know S.T. Gill, although you may remember having seen his sketches from school days and even since?

So why has this important artist been overlooked? How could Gill drop dead on the steps of the Melbourne GPO and be buried in a pauper's grave?

In collaboration with State Library Victoria, the exhibition, *Australian Sketchbook: Colonial Life and the Art of S.T. Gill*, features more than 200 works on loan from collections all over Australia.

From 1839 to 1880, Samuel Thomas Gill created some of the most memorable images of urban and rural life in colonial Australia. But according to Professor Grishin, Gill did much more than simply paint what he saw: 'In many ways, Gill was our colonial conscience of the time'.

'Born in Perriton, a small village in Somerset, England, Gill and his family migrated to the new colony of South Australia in 1839, and, at age 21, immediately on arrival, he launched himself as an artist. Gill captured more than just early Australian life. From painting what was probably the earliest depiction of shearing in Australian art, to showing the dark side of the Victorian gold rush, he showed us as we really were.'

Professor Grishin said Gill's lithographs, for example, recorded the unfolding environmental catastrophe on the goldfields, where the trees were felled, streams clogged and the human anthill eroded the surface of the land.

'Gill also grew increasingly critical of some of the mother country's attitudes, choosing instead to champion the new growing breed of Aussie diggers. He also stood firm against the hysteria whipped up by some politicians accusing the boat people from Asia of stealing gold and jobs.'

The Friends were privileged to hear Professor Grishin's introductory talk and his views on the life and art of S.T. Gill, followed by a special evening viewing of the exhibition.

Refreshments were served in the Library foyer where Professor Grishin signed copies of his beautiful companion book.

Catch a glimpse of everyday life on the goldfields and in the bush, cities and towns of 19th-century Australia in *Colonial Life and the Art of S.T. Gill*. The first-ever retrospective to focus on the life and work of Gill, the exhibition showcases more than 200 paintings, drawings, watercolours and prints. Entry is free and the gallery is open daily from 10 am to 5 pm. The exhibition will run until 16 October 2016.

Anne Davis

Free guided tours leave from the Library foyer at 10.30 am, Tuesdays, Thursdays and weekends. Bookings not required.

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. Friends are welcome to join our sociable group. Books for the rest of the year are:

- Tuesday 27 September: *Stoner* by John Williams
- Tuesday 25 October: *Everywhere I Look* by Helen Garner
- Tuesday 29 November: *Australia Felix* by Henry Handel Richardson (This is the first book in the trilogy, *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. Feel free to read the second and third parts of the trilogy.)

Annual General Meeting

The 2016 Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the National Library of Australia Inc. will be held on Monday 14 November at 5.30 pm in the Conference Room. Nomination forms for the 2017 Friends Committee are included in this month's Friends mail-out and are also available from the Friends office.

Bookings required for catering purposes:
nla.gov.au/bookings/friends or 02 6262 1698

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 **FRSPR16** entered when booking. This code is valid from 1 September to 30 November 2016 and does not need to be entered for Friends events or events that are free of charge.

FRIENDS EVENTS

Di Morrissey Reflects



Di Morrissey

Enjoy a Sunday afternoon with one of Australia's finest authors, Di Morrissey, as she looks back on her years in the Australian media and publishing worlds and speculates on the future. Di has worked around the world as a journalist in newspapers and radio, and on television. Since publishing her first novel in 1991, Di has written 24 bestsellers, four children's books and also publishes a community newspaper, *The Manning Community News*. Di is known for her environmental activism and has also established a school in Myanmar.

Sunday 30 October, 2 pm

Theatre, \$20 Friends, \$30 non-members
(includes afternoon tea)

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

Friends viewing of *The Sell: Australian Advertising, 1790s to 1990s*

Opening in November, this exhibition showcases material from Library collections and surveys the history of Australian advertising from the 1790s to the 1990s. Take delight in an evening out with the Friends as Curator Dr Susannah Helman explains how Australian advertising has changed over time and has reflected a changing Australian society and self-image.

The exhibition space will be open after the lecture, with Susannah on hand to answer questions.

Friday 25 November, 6 pm

Theatre, \$25 Friends, \$30 Friends guests
(includes light refreshments)

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

NATIONAL LIBRARY BOOKSHOP SPECIAL OFFER FOR FRIENDS

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

For any purchase made between 1 September 2016 and 30 November 2016, Friends will receive a free copy of *Follow the Sun Travel Diary*. 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 *Follow the Sun Travel Diary* and your 15 per cent discount with all online purchases, use the promotional code **FR16SEPT16** at checkout. This code is valid from 1 September 2016 to 30 November 2016.

