

FRIENDS OF THE
NATIONAL LIBRARY
OF AUSTRALIA INC.

SPRING 2018

Friends

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends

Welcome to our spring 2018 newsletter.

The celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the National Library's building have made for an exciting winter and the Friends have been pleased to play their part.

At the Library Open Day on 12 August, the Friends opened their lounge for refreshments, readings and other activities. We served 500 hot drinks and welcomed thousands to the Friends Lounge.

The Friends White Gloves event, 50 Favourite Things, was held on 24 May. We were all hugely impressed by the wonderful items selected for display by Library volunteers.

Our annual joint lecture with the Australian Garden History Society was held on 14 June. Lisa Clausen spoke about her book *Cruden Farm Garden Diaries* which, accompanied by a visual presentation of magnificent photographs of the garden, transported us from Canberra's cold winter to the beautiful gardens so beloved by their founder, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch.

We have worked hard to grow the Friends by making our membership offers and activities as enticing as possible. Our membership now exceeds 2,000, and we are hoping it will continue to increase.

A new Friends promotional poster is being sent to local and regional libraries around New South Wales and beyond as part of our membership growth strategy.

We would love to hear what you want from the Friends. Committee members attend all major National Library functions and welcome the opportunity to discuss any ideas you might have.

We are always looking for new members to join the Friends Committee. Nominations for the 2019 committee will open shortly. We encourage you to think about joining as a very positive way to support the National Library we all love so much.

Best wishes

Gary Kent
Chair

COOK AND THE PACIFIC



William Hodges (1744–1997), *View from Point Venus, Island of Otaheite, c.1744*, nla.cat-vn347578

Open from 22 September 2018 to 10 February 2019, *Cook and the Pacific* is a major exhibition about the Pacific voyages of Captain James Cook between 1768 and 1780. The exhibition looks at the voyages as meetings of peoples and knowledge systems. Highlights from the Library's own Cook collections will be supplemented by exciting loans from international and Australian collections. A wide range of unique objects will be displayed—oil paintings, manuscript journals, scientific instruments, watercolours, cultural objects, ephemera, and political and artistic responses to Cook. There will be a special viewing for Friends on Tuesday 25 September.

Dr Susannah Helman and Dr Martin Woods
Co-curators, *Cook and the Pacific*

BACK TO THE LIBRARY

On 21 July, the Library continued its 50th anniversary festivities with an exceptional celebration for those who have worked at the Library over the years.

Dr Marie-Louise Ayres opened the evening by acknowledging the ever-expanding collection, which enables the innovation that happens within the Library's walls. This was an apt introduction for two members of the Library family, Dr Diana Carroll and Mr Eddie Smidmore who, like many in the Library community, have contributed extensively and enhanced its growth. Dr Carroll was a Library staff member for many years and is now a writer, Petherick Reader and Library Patron. Mr Smidmore joined the Library in 1951, retiring in 1999.



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Director General Dr Marie-Louise Ayres cutting the National Library cake with former director-general Jan Fullerton AO.



Dr Ruth Barraclough

There were many fond memories, rekindled friendships and, very importantly, a special Library cake.

Many guests chatted about the changes of the past and optimistic visions for the future. Former Library staff member, Friend and volunteer Margaret Nichols reminisced:

I joined the NLA staff in 1980 to work in the IT section.

The Library was about to launch its first online cataloguing and retrieval system, ABN—a fine system, which I worked with for many years.

After retirement in 2005, I was very pleased to return to the Library as a volunteer guide and front-of-house person and to watch with awe (and a little envy) as digitisation and the internet become the main tools of trade.

It was, and is, a great institution to work with, and I value the opportunity to introduce visitors to the Library and its amazing collections.

Melanie Olde

RED GLAMOUR: KOREA'S EARLY COMMUNIST WOMEN

The National Library is renowned for its Asian collections. Less well known is that the Library possesses one of the most extensive collections of North Korean materials outside east Asia, rivalling that found in Washington DC's Library of Congress.

In May, I gave a presentation titled *Red Glamour: Korea's Early Communist Women*, showcasing some of the extraordinary treasures to be found in the Library's Korean collection.

The history of Korea's early feminists takes us back to the 1920s and 1930s, when the peninsula was a colony of Japan. Female education in early twentieth-century Korea had its roots in the missionary movement. The 1920s was a vibrant time, when newly educated women began to take up anticolonial activities. Many flocked to feminist and socialist ideas and organisations. Following crackdowns by colonial police,

scores of women went into exile in Manchuria, China and the Soviet Union. There, they became caught up in some of the most momentous events of the twentieth century, such as Stalin's great purge of 1937–39.

At the close of the Second World War, when Japan surrendered its colonies, newly liberated Korea was subject to a hasty and temporary division. That temporary geographic divide hardened into an ideological one under the occupying armies of the Soviet Red Army in the north and the armed forces of the United States in the south.

By 1948, when separate regimes began to emerge, it became clear that feminism was an important part of the fledgling North Korean state. Boasting some of the most progressive legislation on women's political participation, female inheritance, divorce, maternity leave and equal pay, North Korea in the late 1940s led the world on gender equity. Not only that, its political offices and state organisations were overseen by some of the most eminent and glamorous women of the Korean Peninsula. The downfall of North Korea's early feminist elite is a tale of both tragedy and complicity with repressive state power.

The story of these women and their contribution to feminist political life in the colony, as well as in early North Korean society, remains largely unknown. Their stories were buried in both North and South Korea—alerting us to the fact that, during the Cold War, these two rival states were in full agreement on some things, such as a shared investment in conventional gender ideologies.

Today in South Korea, with a new feminist renaissance under way, there is fresh interest in the early communist women who were some of the first to name sexual violence, and to argue for the economic security and sexual autonomy of all women.

Illustrated by vintage photographs, studio portraits and North Korean-style paintings (*Chosŏnhwa*), this was an eye-opening journey into the lives of the journalists, nurses, factory workers and actresses who 'went North'.

Dr Ruth Barraclough

National Library of Australia Fellow 2018

FRIENDS NEWS

Annual General Meeting

The 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the National Library of Australia Inc. will be held on Thursday 22 November at 5.30pm. Nomination forms for the 2019 Friends Committee are included with your newsletter and are also available from the Friends office.

In addition to AGM business, recipients of the 2019 Friends Travelling Fellowship, 2019 Friends Creative Arts Fellowship and the 2018 Friends Medal will be announced.

Bookings are required for catering purposes on 02 6262 1698 or stickytickets.com.au/74148.

Thought about Joining the Friends Committee?

Would you like to contribute to the running of the Friends of the National Library? Why not consider joining the committee?

Meetings are held at 5.15pm on the third Tuesday of every second month, starting in December 2018. Meetings run for about an hour. You will have the chance to contribute to the Friends events program, newsletter and other initiatives run by the Friends. Committee members are assisted by two part-time staff (Friends Executive Officer and Administrative Assistant).

For liability insurance purposes, in addition to the nomination form, all nominees must complete a statutory declaration form stating that they have not been declared personally bankrupt or been associated with an organisation that has gone into insolvency.

We welcome nominations from members of all ages and backgrounds; previous committee experience is not a prerequisite. Simply complete and return the enclosed nomination form and statutory declaration by Monday 22 October 2018.

For further information, contact Melanie Olde, Friends Executive Officer, on 02 6262 1551 or email friends@nla.gov.au. We look forward to hearing from you.

RECENT FRIENDS EVENTS

Cruden Farm Garden Diaries

On 14 June 2018 the Friends of the National Library welcomed a large group of members of the Australian Garden History Society to a presentation by Melbourne journalist and author Lisa Clausen. Lisa is the co-author, with Michael Morrison, of *Cruden Farm Garden Diaries*. Michael was the head gardener at Cruden Farm for some 40 years; the book gives an account of his partnership with 'the boss', Dame Elisabeth Murdoch.

The property at Langwarrin, south-east of Melbourne, was given to Dame Elisabeth on her marriage to newspaper editor and publisher Sir Keith Murdoch in 1928. It was intended that the property would be developed as a holiday home, which it

was, but on Sir Keith's death in 1952 it soon became Dame Elisabeth's primary residence.

Dame Elisabeth's vision for the 133-acre site, matched with Michael Morrison's horticultural skills, produced one of the great gardens of Victoria. The work of developing and managing the property was documented by Morrison in handwritten detail over many years. Scribed in blue ink, the diaries chart the successes and failures of the plantings and the vagaries of the weather, and make observations about the nature and quality of the plantings. Michael Morrison was a man very much in touch with nature and took every opportunity to observe what was going on in the garden and to plan for the future.

In her presentation, Lisa Clausen commented on Morrison's commitment to communing with nature. She told a story about arranging to meet him for the first time—he asked her to meet him at the property at 3.30am. He apparently regularly started work at that hour to observe the dawn and how the drawing to a close of night, and the breaking of day, affected the plants.

The passing of time has taken its toll on the property's setting. Established in rural surroundings, suburbia is now closing in on Cruden Farm, with housing up to its fences.

Dame Elisabeth died peacefully in 2012 at the age of 103. Her legacy at Cruden Farm continues to delight people, as it is regularly open for public enjoyment.

Howard Murray

Coffee with the Curators: 1968



On Tuesday 24 July, about 20 Friends enjoyed a delightful tour of the 1968: *Changing Times* exhibition with curators Dr Guy Hansen and Dr Grace Blakeley-Carroll. As we celebrate our beautiful building's 50th birthday, the exhibition gives us pause to reflect on what was happening in the world, in Australia and in Canberra during this momentous year.

Dr Hansen provided a snapshot of some of his favourite items, stopping at the 'Sounds of the Sixties' exhibit, while music from that era played in the background. The year 1968 was a turning point in popular music; many of the guests had memories of those exciting times.

Dr Hansen discussed some of the important events that took place that year. Prime Minister Harold Holt disappeared in the surf at Cheviot Beach, presumed drowned, in December 1967, and a new prime minister, John Gorton, was sworn in in January 1968. Dr Hansen also talked about the murders of Martin Luther King Jr and Robert Kennedy, and the Prague Spring.

Dr Blakeley-Carroll then pointed out some of her favourite items, pausing at the 'A New Library' display, enthralled the Friends with the stories behind the displays. The Library, she said, was a favourite project of prime minister Robert Menzies, who opened the new building on 15 August 1968, two years after his retirement.

The original Library furniture, designed by Fred Ward, was displayed in a corner of the gallery. Menzies believed that good design should be accessible, composed of simple shapes and made from Australian materials. The craftsmanship, quality of design and materials have stood the test of 50 years, with the furniture still in use throughout the Library, including in the beautiful Council Room.

Dr Blakeley-Carroll also spoke of the Vietnam War, the implication of the ballot call-up system and the Save Our Sons movement.

The Friends and curators adjourned to the Friends Lounge for coffee and continued the conversation. Many thanks to Dr Hansen and Dr Blakeley-Carroll for their time and insights into a memorable exhibition.

Anne Davis

NATIONAL LIBRARY BOOKSHOP SPECIAL OFFER FOR FRIENDS

The Friends are pleased to announce a special offer for members who make a purchase using the National Library's online bookshop.

For purchases made by Friends between **1 September and 30 November 2018**—in addition to the usual 15% discount*—Friends will receive a free waratah jigsaw puzzle.

Please note that this special offer does not apply to orders collected in-store.

To claim your free waratah jigsaw puzzle, and your 15% discount* with eligible online purchases, use the promotional code **18SPREND** at the checkout. This code is valid between **1 September and 30 November 2018**.

* Discount does not apply to already reduced stock or sale items.



FRIENDS DISCOUNT CODE FOR NATIONAL LIBRARY EVENTS

To claim your 15 per cent discount on ticketed Library events, book online at nla.gov.au/bookings and enter the discount code **FRSPR18**. This code is valid from **1 September to 30 November 2018** and does not apply to Friends events (instead select the member's ticket option) or events that are free of charge.

FRIENDS EVENTS



Sample of Tapa Cloth ... Brought Back by Alexander Hood, Master's Mate, HMS Resolution, c.1779, nla.cat-vn580489

Friends Exhibition Viewing: *Cook and the Pacific*

Enjoy an exclusive lecture and viewing about *Cook and the Pacific* with curators Dr Susannah Helman and Dr Martin Woods.

Tuesday 25 September, 6pm

Theatre

\$20 Friends, \$25 non-members (includes refreshments)

Bookings: nla.gov.au/events or 02 6262 1698

Coffee with the Curator: *In Cook's Wake: Tapa Treasures from the Pacific*

Join Treasures Curator Nat Williams in the gallery for an exploration of rare tapa cloths. Continue the discussion over tea and scones in the Friends Lounge.

Friday 9 November, 10.30am

Treasures Gallery

\$25, Friends only (includes refreshments and catalogue)

Maximum 20 guests

Bookings: nla.gov.au/events or 02 6262 1698

OTHER EVENTS

Lake View Book Club

The Lake View Book Club meets in the Friends Lounge on the last Tuesday of each month from 6.15–7.45pm. Email kathryncole@grapevine.net.au for more information.

Feedback

To provide feedback on the Friends newsletter, email editor Ingrid Moses at friends@nla.gov.au



THE BEGINNING OF THE FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

PART 2

Following the launch of the Friends in April 1990, the interim Friends Committee steered the Friends through an establishment phase under the skilled management of Executive Officer Beatrice Brickhill. A number of events were held in 1990, including seminars on preserving your own collection and family history.

The first general meeting, held on 5 December 1990, elected the following committee members for 1991: Ian Castles, Peter Sekules, Vanessa Fanning, Marion Halligan, Bill Mandle and Frank Thompson, all of whom had served on the interim committee. Vanessa Fanning was elected chair. Warren Horton, the Library's Director-General, and Jan Fullerton, Assistant Director-General, Collections and Services, also joined the committee.

The new committee wasted no time in developing a full program of quality activities for Friends members. These included *Behind the Scenes: Manuscripts and Rare Books* (January 1991) and a talk on the Library's family history resources (February 1991).

From the beginning, the Friends were keen to make a practical contribution to the National Library, and to libraries further afield. In April 1991, the Friends launched an appeal to restock the war-depleted libraries of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. They were overwhelmed with donations. The first 40 cases, containing some 5,000 books, were dispatched through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in late August 1991.

A much-anticipated event in the Friends calendar was the annual celebration of people who had made important contributions to Australian publishing. This continued for 20 years. In 1991, publisher Lloyd O'Neil was the first to be celebrated; he was followed by Mem Fox, David Williamson and Geoffrey Serle. The informative and colourful booklets that accompanied these events are much treasured.

A temporary Friends room was established early in the life of the Friends on the Library's mezzanine level. This was replaced by a permanent Friends Lounge, which opened on the ground floor in early March 1992, adjoining the Rex Nan Kivell gallery. The new space featured a large lounge with kitchen facilities and an office for the executive officer. Professor Stuart Macintyre, a member of the National Library Council, cut the ribbon at its opening and accepted the Friends' first donation to the Library.

Writing in 1994, Anne Nugent recalled the pleasures of the new lounge:

As I sank into the deeply upholstered chairs in the Friends Lounge at the National Library, where Michelle Hetherington and Special Projects Officer Bruce Minerds were acquainting me with the finer points of the Friends organisation, I thought 'what a comfortable place to be'. The Friends Lounge, just off the Library's main vestibule, is a popular chat spot for members of the Friends. The large room—with its understated furniture, its extensive collection of up-to-date magazines and reference collection of books, and the Max Dupain photographs of familiar places hanging on its walls—gives the lounge a warm, 'at-home' feeling. A kitchenette equipped with fridge, microwave and fresh ground coffee completes the welcome. Books and people: that's the sort of companionship that draws together the Friends of the National Library.

The National Library celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Library building in 1993 and then, as now with the 50th anniversary, the Friends played their part. More than 500 people attended the Kenneth Myer Lecture 'The Feeling of Infinity', presented by Elizabeth Reid as part of the celebrations.

Other memorable Friends events held in 1993 were a Canberra Bloomsday reading, a lecture by Professor Sam Pickering of the University of Connecticut (the inspiration for Robin Williams' character in the movie *Dead Poets Society*) and a celebration of the publishing career of Alec Bolton.



Alec Bolton with Rosemary Dobson



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In those days, and for many years thereafter, the Library published a monthly *National Library of Australia News* journal, and all Friends received a complimentary copy in the mail. Friends also received other benefits, including discounts at the Library shop and other businesses, and reciprocal arrangements with a number of state libraries.

The Friends membership grew rapidly from a standing start. By 1994, the Friends had nearly 900 members. The renewal rate was a very gratifying 76 per cent. One third of members were from places other than Canberra, a considerably higher proportion than today.

In 1994, the Friends initiated its quarterly program calendar. There were no fewer than nine Friends events in the three months to April 1994, including guided tours, evenings with Friends (at which authors spoke about their work), a book launch, and a Henry Lawson literary weekend in Mudgee. The Food for Thought luncheon series was also introduced in 1994, with Gay Bilson, John Bell and Max Gillies speaking at early events.

Gary Kent

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opening our doors
creating the future

Stay tuned for 'History of the Friends: Part 3' in the summer edition of the Friends newsletter



Max Gillies at the National Library, 1994

Beautiful and Welcoming: Memories of the Library

The 50th anniversary of the National Library building is a great opportunity to celebrate the history of this magnificent building. Those of us who worked for the National Library, both before and after its doors opened to the public, cannot but feel proud of such a rich resource and the beautiful and welcoming place it has become.

When I applied for a position in the Australian Public Service at the end of 1965, I was asked where I would like to work and I simply said: the National Library.

My first job was in the basement of the then administrative building, where most of the collection was housed. There were four of us in the reference/loans area: Bob Paton, Ivan Page, Jessy Wilkie and me. Eddie Gent and his staff looked after the stacks. The stacks area would be flooded from time to time and there was a permanent problem with rats which, as Eddie would tell us, were on to him and his rat-poisoning antics and knew to avoid his offerings!

At the time, whole collections of diverse materials used for research and teaching were on more-or-less permanent loan to the ANU and some government departments, as we did not have the appropriate space or conditions to house those great, beautifully bound volumes.

After a few months at the administrative building, I was promoted to a position at the Library premises in Kingston, and I worked there until we moved to the brand new building, which was a great occasion.

I worked at the National Library building for 13-and-a-half years, at first in the reference/loans area behind the Main Reading Room. Later, I was in charge of the National Union Catalogue of Monographs (NUCOM). This was an interesting area because we had a number of people (mainly women) who were employed for their knowledge of other languages. We received books from countries in different languages, with Library of Congress cards for most of them, and before they could be catalogued the cards had to be translated. New entries for the catalogue were recorded on cards filed in alphabetical order. When requests came in, we searched the catalogue, found the book and made it ready to be sent on interlibrary loan.

I was working under the supervision of Marie Sexton, who talked me into studying for the degree in librarianship. I tried to argue that I would not be able to do this, as English was my second language and I was only surviving on my high-school English from Spain. But Marie was convinced that I could do it. I started on a long journey, working full time, studying part time and enjoying every minute of the difficult balancing act. I finally graduated as a librarian years later.

I have very fond memories of my work at the National Library and of the people who were behind the development of the services it provided. They are too many to mention here but they were the greatest asset the National Library had in those early years: dedicated professionals who were great mentors to the young officers starting their careers.

Carmen Castelo

Former Library Staff Member