

DECEMBER 2015

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AND MUCH MORE

# 大清世相

## CELESTIAL EMPIRE

Life in China · 1644–1911



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*Shengpingshu lianpu* (detail) 19th century, National Library of China, Beijing

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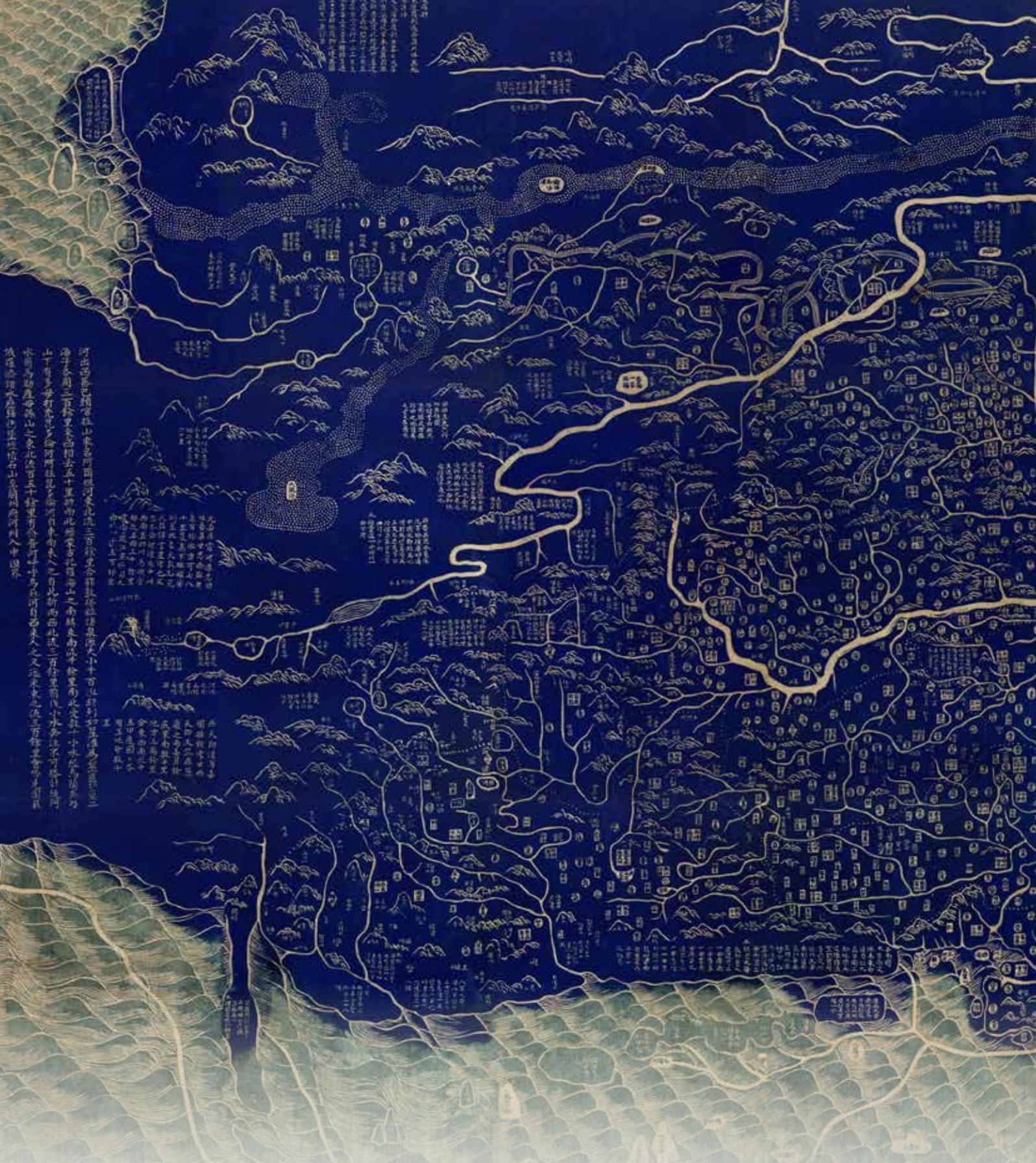
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# CELESTIAL EMPIRE

## Life in China, 1644–1911

# 大清萬年一統地理全圖



## NATHAN WOOLLEY INTRODUCES THE LIBRARY'S LATEST EXHIBITION

**T**HE *COMPLETE MAP OF THE EVERLASTING UNITY OF THE GREAT QING* DEPICTS THE EXPANSE of the Qing dynasty spread across eight scrolls hung vertically. The land of China proper is dominated by administrative units extending from the capital and provincial seats down to the level of county, each identified by name in a square or circle depending on its level within the hierarchy of the state. Beyond the Great Wall, Qing territories in Mongolia and Manchuria are divided among the so-called leagues and banners that managed the ethnic groups of Inner

After Huang Qianren (1694–1771)  
*The Complete Map of the Everlasting Unity of the Great Qing (Da Qing wannian yitong dili quantu)* between 1796 and 1820  
ink rubbing on paper; 135 x 236 cm  
National Library of China

BELOW  
*Plan of the Route from the  
Gate of the Great Qing to the  
Palace of Earthly Tranquillity  
(Da Qing men zhi Kunning  
gong zhong yi lu liyang caodi)*  
(detail) between 1875  
and 1908  
ink and pigment on paper  
600 x 60 cm  
Yangshi Lei Archives  
National Library of China

Asia. These details highlight the rigour of the Qing bureaucracy. The map's initial design came at the conclusion of successful military campaigns that pushed the boundaries of the Qing far to the west; it expresses the confidence of the time. Then just over a century old, the Qing had succeeded in reinvigorating its rule and was a contender for the position of greatest state in the world.

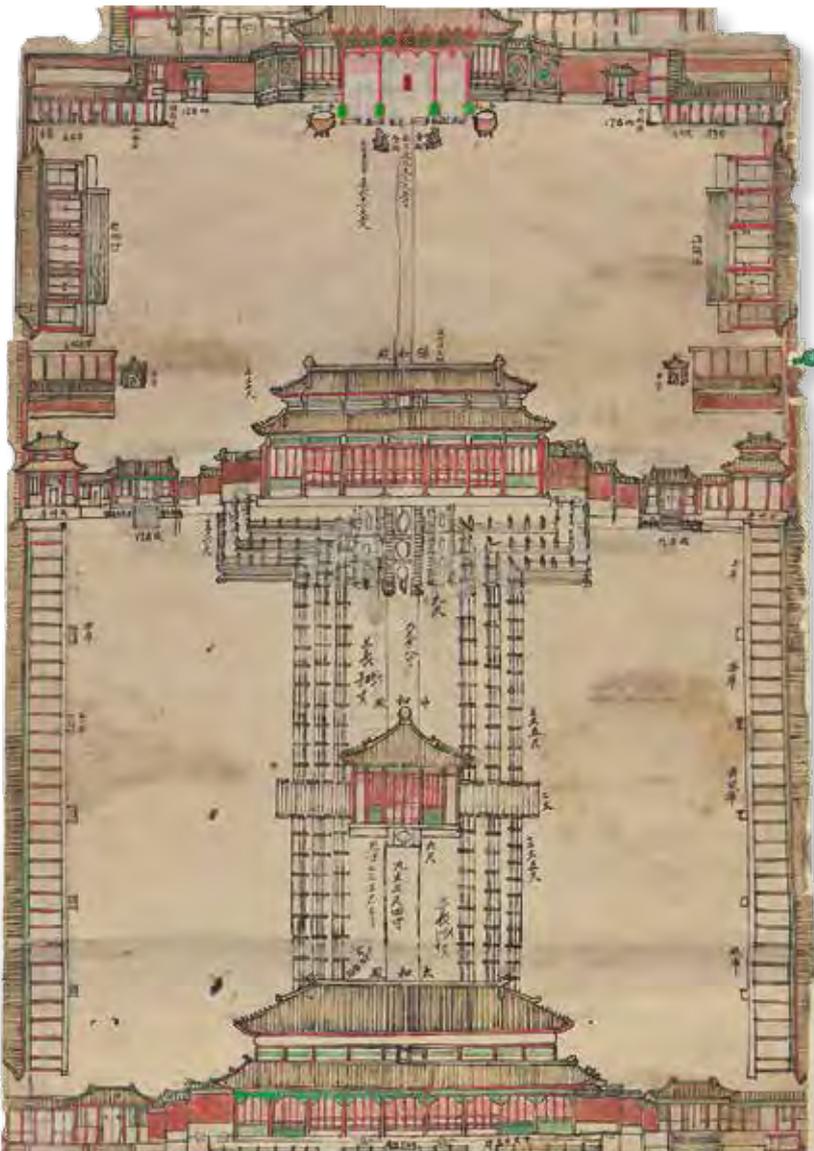
This map is featured in *Celestial Empire: Life in China, 1644–1911*, an exhibition bringing together material from the collections of the National Library of Australia and the National Library of China. In presenting material from different levels of Qing society, this exhibition will be the first of its kind in Australia and one of the largest that the National Library of China has mounted overseas.

The exhibition will provide a window onto the diversity of life under the Qing, China's last imperial dynasty. Its rulers, the Manchus, rode out of Manchuria in 1644 to conquer the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), then beset by political dysfunction, social unrest and natural disaster. In establishing their rule, the Manchus drew on their identity as hardy warriors from beyond China's cultural borders as well as the foundations of Chinese tradition in order to prove themselves the rightful heirs to dynastic rule.

Notable among the rich collections of the National Library of China are the archives of

the Lei family, whose members served as architects for the imperial court of the Qing dynasty for seven generations. They designed many iconic sites, notably the garden palaces and the imperial tombs. Their archive consists of thousands of documents, including architectural plans, reports and work diaries. It was acquired from the Lei family by the National Beiping Library, forerunner of the National Library of China, in 1930. Due to its historical and cultural significance, it entered into UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2007. One of its most striking objects is a plan of the central axis of the Forbidden City, detailing preparations for a celebration in the late nineteenth century. The plan stretches from the Great Qing Gate in the south (now the site of the Mao Mausoleum) through the Gate of Heavenly Peace, the Meridian Gate and various audience halls before reaching the Palace of Heavenly Purity at the rear of the complex. All the buildings are oriented towards the position of a viewer proceeding along the central path. Numerous notes on the scroll give the distances between different locations and the planned sites of temporary structures.

Synonymous with Qing rule are the garden palaces, located to the north-west of Beijing and preferred as a place of work by many Qing emperors. These gardens



## This exhibition will be the first of its kind in Australia



held a vast array of imperial residences and administrative offices. They also housed religious structures as demonstrations of imperial devotion. On Longevity Hill in the Garden of Clear Rippling Waters (now better known in English as the Summer Palace), the Qianlong emperor (who reigned between 1735 and 1795) ordered the construction of a Buddhist temple in honour of his mother. In part of this complex was a hall with engravings of 500 arhats in a numinous mountain landscape dating to 1757. Arhats are beings who have achieved enlightenment through their understanding of the Buddha's

word; they were revered as models for emulation and often depicted in groups of 16, 18 or 500. These engravings were used to produce a rubbing on a scroll 18 metres long. The images are interspersed with the Qianlong emperor's observations; he asserts that the identity of each arhat can be determined from his posture and action.

The centrality of religious practice in the everyday life of the wider populace is visible in regional maps. A collection of ten maps of the counties of Luoyang documents the geography around the seats of local government in Henan prefecture. The landscape is dominated by towns, mountains and rivers, but appearing among them are numerous temples and shrines. Within the walls of Luoyang are temples to the city god and Confucius. On either side of the city are rows of shrines, many honouring historical figures. The map itself, painted on silk, lightly adopts some of the features of Chinese painting, notably the blue-green mountains.

The religious life of Qing subjects is also reflected in popular texts that survive in the collection of the London Missionary Society, collected in the nineteenth century and acquired by the National Library of Australia in 1961. The workings of the world of spirits were a concern of morality texts produced in great numbers. These explained the otherworldly rewards and retribution which would result from different actions in the mortal realm. Members of the scholarly elite often endorsed such works as a way to educate others. People could sponsor print runs as a means of expressing gratitude for recovery from illness, the birth of a child, or escape from danger. These texts often included accounts of their efficacy, recommending their reproduction and thus promoting their circulation. While not considered worthy of consideration by the serious Chinese bibliophile at the time, this

LEFT  
*Maps of the Ten Counties of Henan Prefecture (Henanfu shiyi tu)* between 1796 and 1820  
ink and pigment on silk  
56 x 63.5 cm  
National Library of China

BELOW LEFT  
Pages 7b–8a of *Images from a Floating Raft (Fan cha tu)*, Volume 1, by Zhang Bao (Guangzhou: Shanggu zhai, 1822)  
National Library of China





ABOVE  
*Map of the Sacred Sites of Mt Wutai (Wutaishan shengjing tu)* (detail) between 1875 and 1908  
 ink and pigment on paper  
 93 x 168 cm  
 National Library of China

RIGHT  
 Wang Fangyue (active 1751–1757) and Qianlong emperor (1711–1799)  
*500 Arhats (Wubai luohan tu)* (detail) engraved 1757  
 ink rubbing on paper; 39 x 1,820 cm  
 National Library of China

#### IN A PREVIOUS ISSUE

*Religion and Rebellion in China: The London Missionary Society Collection*

Andrew Gosling highlights a key holding from the Library's Asian Collections

★ July 1998

<http://goo.gl/Rd8DGD>

material was collected by missionaries in order to better understand the lives of the broader populace—essential to their efforts of conversion.

The diversity of life under the Qing is captured in the so-called Miao albums. An early emperor once asked for reports on the traditions and customs of ethnic groups in the regions of Guizhou and Yunnan, which had never been firmly under administrative control. The Qing court, like the Ming dynasty before it, sought to rule in the less accessible parts of these provinces through a combination of alliances and coercion. To do so, it required accurate information on the nature of society in these regions. The resulting reports are likely the source for what became known as Miao albums, collections of images depicting the lives of the ethnic groups collectively known as the Miao. One set of over 100 images mounted in four volumes enclosed in wooden covers presents observations on their lifestyle, including hunting, farming, religion and social customs. Each has a small caption explaining the particular subgroup of the Miao under consideration and an explanation of the subject of the image. Such works became popular collectors' items in the nineteenth century.

For the more refined, privately printed books were a way of communicating with friends. This was often the case for accounts of travel around Qing territory, commonly as part of duties in the civil service. A

collection of reflections on one's peregrinations was a means of engaging with the Chinese past and expressing one's views and good taste. One example is *Images from a Floating Raft*, by the official Zhang Bao (1763–1832). The first volume details a journey from Nanjing to the capital in the early nineteenth century, providing images of many significant sites along the route. Chinese woodblock printing was capable of great complexity and detail; the delicate images in this volume adopt many techniques from Chinese painting.

These are just some examples of the material documenting lived experience under the Qing dynasty that survives today in two of the world's great libraries and that will appear in *Celestial Empire*. The Qing dynasty ruled China for nearly 300 years. The social and cultural changes of this period are fundamental to the nature of modern China. A timely look back will help us understand the nation's position in the world today.

NATHAN WOOLLEY is the curator of *Celestial Empire: Life in China, 1644–1911*. The exhibition will be on show at the Library from 2 January to 22 May 2016



# Medieval Melodies

BY KAREN JOHNSON

Through the generous support of donors, the Library's 2014 Tax Time Appeal is funding a special project to enhance access to our medieval manuscripts. The program of preservation, digitisation and description is making these intriguing items available online for the first time, inviting new interpretations from medieval 'detectives' around the world.

Fragments of medieval music manuscripts in the Library's Rex Nan Kivell calligraphy collection provide intriguing insights into the development of early forms of Western musical notation. The fragments cover a period of 300 years, from the late eleventh to the late fourteenth centuries. In what may be seen as either an act of vandalism or an example of early recycling, they have survived only because they were used as bindings in later publications.

A fragment from a breviary from the late eleventh to early twelfth centuries (below left) provides an example of early musical representation in the form of neumatic notation. Developed in the monasteries by the middle of the ninth century, the notation consisted of neumes, or marks, placed above words or syllables, providing a symbolic representation of the melody to be sung. Neumes did not give guidance as to exact pitch, rhythm or intervals between tones but, rather, outlined the course of the melody by indicating the rise and fall of the music. Because of this, it is thought that they acted as an aide-mémoire for a melody that had been learned through oral traditions.

Over the following decades, an increase in the composition of new musical works led to the desire for more consistency and precision in performance which, in turn, resulted in the evolution of more sophisticated forms of musical notation. By the twelfth century, a four-line staff had been introduced; neumes were arranged on the lines, and spaces enabled a more accurate representation of pitch. While directions as to speed, dynamics or vocal quality were often included, this form still lacked any kind of rhythmic marking. This is illustrated in a fragment from an antiphonal from the thirteenth century (below right).

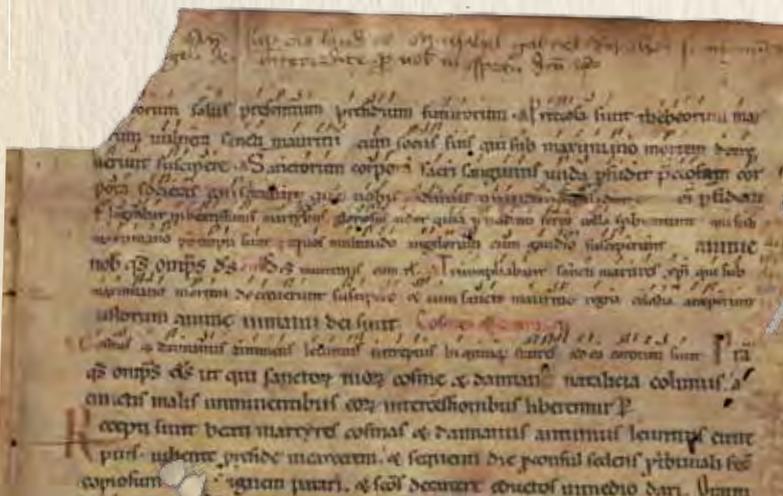
The thirteenth century saw the rise of the five-line staff and the introduction of elements of notation that can be

seen in modern music. Notations that provided specific guidance as to key, tempo and dynamics were added over time. This made it possible for singers to learn a melody from the music, rather than by rote, and for its performance to be standardised. One of the Library's most significant fragments, from the late fourteenth century, illustrates the five-line staff (background). It is thought to be part of a dismembered choir book that belonged to Henry VI's Chapel Royal at Windsor Castle.

The term 'fragment' conjures up an image of something insignificant or ephemeral. Yet, as is the case with these fascinating remnants of medieval musical notation, they have great scholarly interest—indeed, they are often the only pieces of evidence to have survived that can allow a glimpse of a long-forgotten time. ●

*Medieval Manuscripts and Documents from the Nan Kivell Calligraphy Collection c. 1000–1819*  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1238746](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1238746)

BELOW FROM LEFT:  
*Breviary* between late eleventh and early twelfth centuries  
*Antiphonal* thirteenth century  
 BACKGROUND: *Choir Book* late fourteenth century





# THE BEACH

AN AUSTRALIAN PASSION

AS AUSTRALIANS CRACK OUT THE 30+, ROBERT DREWE MUSES ON OUR OBSESSION WITH THE BEACH

WHAT IS IT WITH AUSTRALIANS AND the beach? Is there another nation so in love with its shoreline? To me, and I'm sure I'm not alone, that mysterious, sensuous zone where the bush meets the sea is the real Australia.

Of course locating the real Australia in a particular part of the country is a myth. You might just as easily find it in the outback; some traditionalists still think the bush is the centre of our culture. And what about the suburbs? After all, they're where most people live.

These are reasonable alternatives. But consider basic questions like: When do you feel most Australian? What does that mean anyway? Perhaps for most of us it means feeling secure, contented, in harmony, at peace—maybe even happy. In this country, this is where the beach comes into its own.

I feel most Australian when I turn a corner on a bush track on the north coast of New South Wales and spot a patch of ocean framed in the branches of a eucalypt. Or face a wild surf breaking against the cliff face on Victoria's Great Ocean Road. Or, on an early morning bike ride, catch my first glimpse of Little Parakeet Bay on Rottnest Island, Western Australia.

Ah, the beach. To go a step further, as well as the beach being the real Australia, for many of us, this real Australia has no other season but summer. The first hint of summer breeze and the sweet scent of 30+ sunscreen can arouse certain feelings—and a theory about beaches that will surprise no one raised in this country in the last century.

How shall I put this delicately? There's an overwhelming reason why a great many adult Australians regard the beach in a sensual and nostalgic light. It's because it was the place where they first made love.

For the rest of their lives, therefore, the beach, the coast, are not only a regular pleasure and inspiration but an *idée fixe*, one that resurfaces at each of the four or five critical physical and emotional stages in our lives: as new lovers, as honeymooners, as holiday-makers, and as the retired elderly.



OPPOSITE PAGE  
Aristocrats-hat  
Beach Rock 2009  
colour photograph  
Flickr  
[www.flickr.com/  
photos/36821100@  
N04/3555544234/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/36821100@N04/3555544234/)

LEFT  
Frank Hurley (1885–1962)  
*Sailboats on Sydney Harbour, New South Wales* between 1910 and 1962  
plastic stereograph  
2.3 x 2.9 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1533553](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1533553)

After all that teenage canoodling in the sand dunes or beach shacks, on the offshore islands and in the camping areas, most contemporary Australians invariably honeymoon at the beach, preferably an island one. (When did you last hear of someone honeymooning at Meekatharra? Moree?)

Later, as parents, our ordinary Australian couples take their families on regular holidays to the beach—often to the same beach where those earlier events occurred. (Interestingly, these beach holidays give parents and children the opportunity to engage in a role reversal: the adults shed their ponderous grown-up habits, play games and 'act the goat', while the children are permitted to stay up late,

BELOW  
Graham S. Burstow (b. 1927)  
*What a Way to Go* 1972  
b&w photograph; 32.5 x 43 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn3279535](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn3279535)

IT WAS THE PLACE WHERE THEY FIRST MADE LOVE



# Life in a Travel Book

It was the final day of the school holidays, the sort of warm spring morning that the rest of the world believes Australia experiences all the time. A balmy breeze riffled the casually dishevelled native flora, while the fauna, relishing the sunshine, looked appropriately cuddly or dangerous as the occasion demanded.

I'd dropped off my teenage son and his three friends at The Pass. Two boys and two girls, they'd taken a lot of rousing after a sleepover: the usual night of playing loud music, abusing Australian Idol judges, eating junk food, masking lust and, every few minutes, cryptic calls on their mobiles. Since 7 am I'd been willing them to wake up and leave the house so I could work.

Of course they woke at staggered intervals. The first boy tottered into the kitchen at 9, the last girl exited the bathroom at 11.30. After 16 pieces of toast, a tin of Milo, two bottles of milk and two cartons of fruit juice, they emerged, holding their surfboards and blinking like possums in the sunlight. Before they knew what had hit them, urging them to 'make the most of your last day', I'd deposited them at the beach and was heading back to the desk.

An hour later I heard a local newflash on the radio: a great white shark was attacking surfers at The Pass. It had already shaken a woman out of her kayak, which it had chewed up; she'd escaped but the shark was still patrolling the area. She described the huge head looming out of the ocean, straight out of *Jaws*, and looking at her: 'I saw that look in its eye'.

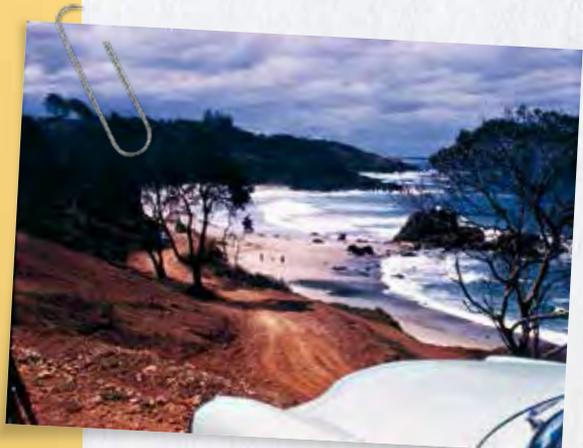
It was a strange sensation driving back there so soon, and so much faster. The roads into Byron Bay have a 50 kilometre-per-hour speed limit and, despite the holiday double-demerit points, I broke it by quite a margin. I had that feeling of hyperawareness you get at crucial emotional stages: simultaneously participating in the event and observing yourself experiencing it. As if the brain is registering a realisation so important that it needs to stand back and study the moment from all angles.

Hovering over this unpleasantly heightened awareness was the most frightening word in my personal slice of the collective unconscious. Shark. For good measure, the most frightening type of shark, and at our favourite beach. I visualised my son and his friends out there on their boards, their legs dangling down in the water. I saw the boys competing for waves in front of the girls, oblivious to the dark shape beneath them. Anyway, you didn't see a shark until it hit you like a freight train.

When I arrived at The Pass the sea was remarkably calm. It didn't look at all ominous; it looked serene and empty (but so did the beaches in *Jaws*). I couldn't see my son and his friends in the water, or on the beach, but I recognised their towels on the sand.

Seconds later I heard my son's voice: 'What are you doing here?'. The boys were reclining in the shade, sipping milkshakes and eating hot chips. The girls were combing the boys' hair. 'I came to warn you to get out of the water', I said. 'Why would we be in the water?' he asked, obviously dealing with an idiot. 'There's a great white out there.'

On the way home I ran over a yellow tree snake. They're harmless and I usually swerve to avoid them. This time I didn't. I was in a bit of a daze and I forgot that I'm greenish about wildlife. Some days I feel like I'm living in a travel book by Bill Bryson and that Australia really is the cliché the rest of the world insists on.



Frank Hurley (1885–1962)

*View Down to a Beach, a Car Bonnet in the Foreground* between 1910 and 1962  
coloured stereograph; 2.2 x 3 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1737229](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1737229)

experiment with alcohol, eat junk food, and perform adult tasks with outboard motors.)

And, finally, in increasingly large numbers, Australians retire to the particular stretch of coastline befitting their class and superannuation.

Incidentally, those people who haven't moved voluntarily to the coast might find themselves there anyway, deposited by their children in one of the old people's homes which line the Esplanades and Ocean View Parades of venerable beach suburbs from Cottesloe, to St Kilda, to Manly.

And it is from the verandahs and sunrooms of Sunset and Eventide, facing mock-optimistically out to sea, the southerly wind hissing through the ubiquitous Norfolk Island pines, that Australians finally pass into that infinity beyond the horizon—more or less in the direction of New Zealand.

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ROBERT DREWE is the author of many works of fiction and non-fiction, including the Australian classic *The Bodysurfers*. His latest book is *The Beach: An Australian Passion*, produced by NLA Publishing



## AUSTRALIANS RETIRE TO THE PARTICULAR STRETCH OF COASTLINE BEFITTING THEIR CLASS AND SUPERANNUATION

ABOVE  
Aaron Bunch  
*Middleton Beach, Albany, 1995*  
b&w photograph; 16.5 x 21.5 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn727131](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn727131)

BELOW  
Maggie Diaz (b. 1925)  
*Beach Father and Son, St Kilda, Melbourne c. 1965*  
b&w photograph; 29.7 x 29 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6001066](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6001066)





# OUT OF THE

BY NAT WILLIAMS

THE JAMES AND BETTISON TREASURES CURATOR

Having successfully exhibited a miniature, *Portrait of a Lady*, at the Royal Academy in London in 1835, Martha Berkeley (née Chauncy) may have wondered what she was doing in the South Australian wilderness only two years later. Martha and her sister Theresa (1807–1876) were both professional artists who left stylish, Regency London to find themselves living in a tent in Adelaide, just six weeks after the state's proclamation. They arrived in the heat of summer, with its dust and flies, in February 1837.

Both women went on to become successful portraitists. They deserve wider recognition as being among the earliest and most talented female colonial artists. Martha was only the second professional female painter to work in Australia; her sister was the first professional female sculptor.

Until 1993, Martha was known only as a watercolourist. However, in a surprise windfall that year from a hidden cache in Ballarat, the Art Gallery of South Australia acquired 40 works by her; within the group was a series of five oil portraits. The gallery's curator, Jane Hylton, prepared a memorable exhibition and associated catalogue in 1994 which celebrated the skill of these colonial sisters and the beauty of their work. The sisters, Martha Berkeley and Theresa Walker, finally came into prominence after nearly 150 years of neglect.

While looking through the Rex Nan Kivell Collection online late last year, I found an attractive oil painting which intrigued me. It had been titled *Aboriginal Mission Station* by a cataloguer and had a loose date of 1860. Going to visit it, I found that it was better in the flesh and, curiously, was painted on a metal sheet. Something about it rang a bell.

The work displayed a miniaturist's interest in a new landscape. I first explored the supposition that it depicted an Aboriginal mission, as a number of Indigenous people are in the scene and there is a distinctive church in the background. I thought it might be the Native Training Institution at Poonindie on the Eyre Peninsula, and that it could relate to two portraits of Indigenous Poonindie residents, Samuel Kandwillan ([nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1819805](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1819805)) and Nannultera ([nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn297433](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn297433)), painted in 1853 by another Adelaide artist, J.M. Crossland (1800–1858). Both memorable portraits are highlights of Nan Kivell's colonial collection.

# WILDERNESS

An article I found by historian John Tregenza about Crossland's portraits was illustrated with an Anglican church drawn around 1845 by S.T. Gill (also in the Rex Nan Kivell Collection). It was titled *St John's Church, East Terrace* ([nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1979708](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1979708)). The church opened for worship in October 1841 and was known as 'St John's in the Wilderness' because of its seemingly remote location in the earliest days of Adelaide's settlement. The church was identical to the one pictured, in front of the Mount Lofty Ranges, in this oil painting. This was a breakthrough.

Who could have painted this lovely, small oil painting? It featured the distinctive 'crossed' trees which I had seen in Martha Berkeley's works in the exhibition when I worked at the Art Gallery of South Australia 20 years earlier, and it was painted on sheet metal, as she had. I contacted Jane Hylton, who was intrigued to hear of the work and promised to visit it soon.

We inspected the painting some months later and, as she examined it, Jane became excited. One problem, though, was that there was no oil landscape by Martha with which to compare our painting. We looked at her watercolours instead, a couple of which are similar views from the eastern side of Adelaide looking to the hills. The distinctive crossed trees, the depiction of the local Indigenous people, the dirt tracks leading into the composition, the horse-drawn cart in the middle ground, the flattened tree in the foreground—it all started to add up. Moreover, Martha had lived on South Terrace in Adelaide near St John's Church, making it her probable place of worship. Could this be the only known landscape oil painting by Martha Berkeley, perhaps Australia's most overlooked colonial painter? Yes, was the conclusion we came to. Hidden for over 60 years in Nan Kivell's remarkable collection was yet another gem that he must have snapped up in London. How the painting made its way there, we cannot yet tell.

The painting, now retitled *St John's Church, East Adelaide*, is currently on display in the Treasures Gallery, alongside a wax medallion sculpture of Bishop Broughton by Martha's sister Theresa, together with Crossland's portrait of Samuel Kandwillan, and the S.T. Gill drawing of St John's Church. ●

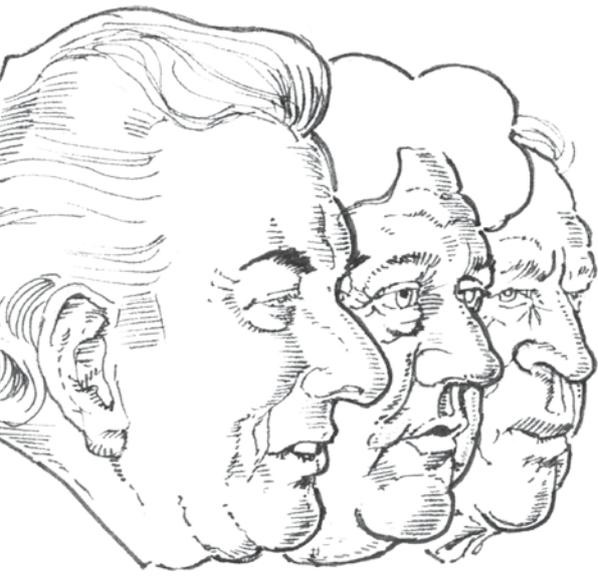
Martha Berkeley (1813–1899)

*St John's Church, East Adelaide* c. 1842

oil on metal; 28 x 38 cm

Rex Nan Kivell Collection; [nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn313223](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn313223)





# The Dismissal of the Whitlam Government

FROM THE SHADOWS OF HISTORY

ONE OF THE MOST STUDIED AND ANALYSED EPISODES IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY CONTINUES TO OFFER UP SURPRISES, SAYS JENNY HOCKING

ABOVE  
Geoff Pryor (b. 1944)  
*Gough Whitlam, Sir John Kerr and Sir Garfield Barwick* 1983  
pen, ink and wash  
25.3 x 37.4 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1269063](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1269063)

BELOW  
Lee Pearce (b. 1940)  
*Demonstrators Protesting at the Dismissal of the Whitlam Government, outside the Sunday Telegraph Building, Sydney* 1975  
(reproduced 2006)  
digital reproduction of b&w negative; 35 mm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn3774641](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn3774641)

IT WAS UNFOLDING LIKE A GREEK TRAGEDY ... I said that the decision was bound to be controversial.'

These lines recall the emotion and profound political ramifications of the governor-general Sir John Kerr's dismissal of Labor prime minister Gough Whitlam on 11 November 1975. They are taken from a remarkable document written by Sir Anthony Mason, former chief justice of the High Court of Australia, and presented to the National Library in 2012.

In it, Mason details his secret meetings and conversations with the governor-general over several months prior to the dismissal, during which he provided counsel to his long-time friend to, in Kerr's words, 'fortify myself for the action I was to take'. That action, the

dismissal of the prime minister and his entire government from office, was taken shortly after 1 pm in the governor-general's study at Yarralumla, four decades ago this year. Whitlam had arrived for a meeting with Sir John Kerr in order to finalise arrangements for the half-Senate election that he was due to announce in the House of Representatives later that afternoon. Instead, without warning, the governor-general handed Whitlam a signed letter dismissing him and his entire ministry. Kerr then appointed the leader of the Opposition, Liberal Party leader Malcolm Fraser, as prime minister.

Gough Whitlam had come to office following the election of 2 December 1972, which had brought the Australian Labor Party to power for the first time in 23 years. The Whitlam government had been re-elected at the 1974 double dissolution of 18 May. The historic joint sitting of both the Senate and House of Representatives which followed, and which voted on the six 'trigger' bills that had precipitated the double dissolution, was the first official occasion presided over by the newly appointed governor-general, Sir John Kerr. In his important statement describing his dealings with Kerr, which took place while Mason was a justice of the High Court, Sir Anthony Mason reveals that he had strongly urged him not to take the unprecedented step of dismissal without first warning Whitlam: 'I told him that, if he did not warn the prime minister, he would run the risk that people



would accuse him of being deceptive'. Mason said to Kerr, with restrained understatement, that dismissing Whitlam without warning was 'bound to attract strong criticism'.

This revelation is particularly significant because it was the first time that Sir Anthony Mason had acknowledged his part in the dismissal. Although his role had been the subject of speculation for some time, it had taken 37 years to uncover the full story of the man whom Kerr had described as being 'in the shadows of history'. Mason had released his statement to the press in 2012 in response to the publication of Kerr's own version of their interactions, which appeared in the second volume of my biography of Whitlam, *Gough Whitlam: His Time*, and which I had located in the private papers of Sir John Kerr. These important new materials—Kerr's record of their interactions augmented by Mason's statement—have added greatly to our knowledge and understanding of the events and personalities involved in the dismissal, decades later.

That a role as significant as Sir Anthony Mason's had been hidden for so long is a stark reminder of the secrets that all histories harbour. The eponymous episode we know simply as 'the Dismissal' has spawned numerous books, a miniseries, countless interviews, anniversary specials, press lift-outs,

and radio and television documentaries. It has left an exceptional research legacy and for a time it seemed that there was nothing more to add, that the history was now established and its fundamental elements accepted. Yet, as the decades passed, and as new material continued to emerge, the history of the dismissal changed dramatically as every unexpected revelation demanded a reconsideration of our understanding and interpretation of this still-unfolding story.

Even today, the dismissal continues to give up its secrets. They can be found through a quiet and unremarkable process of simple exploration of the minutiae of existing holdings in the National Library's extensive and important Oral History Collection, among the interviews with political figures of all persuasions from that time. These include the long discursive 'reminiscential conversations' conducted by former Whitlam minister Clyde Cameron with his colleague former senator Justin O'Byrne and Liberal Party luminaries including Malcolm Fraser, Sir John Gorton and Sir Garfield Barwick; and the many interviews with former politicians, staffers, public servants and political journalists undertaken as part of the Library's Old Parliament House Political and Parliamentary Oral History Project.

BELOW  
Australian Information Service  
*Gough Whitlam Speaks on the  
Steps of Parliament House,  
Canberra, 11 November 1975*  
b&w photograph  
16.4 x 21.5 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn2200376](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn2200376)



BELOW  
Australian Information Service  
*Mr Fraser Leaves Parliament  
House, Canberra, after His  
Appointment as Caretaker  
Prime Minister 1975*  
b&w photograph  
16.4 x 21.5 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn677697](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn677697)

Take the telling interview with the former senator Albert (Pat) Field, elevated to the Senate in 1975 following the death of the Australian Labor Party's Queensland senator Bert Milliner. Field's appointment as an independent senator by the Country Party premier of Queensland, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, went against the longstanding convention that replacement senators come from the same party as those they were replacing, thereby crucially reducing the Labor party's Senate numbers by one. In this poignant reflection, Field acknowledges that he had accepted the controversial appointment with the sole intention of destroying the Whitlam government. His pained recollections show a man troubled and disturbed by the events in which he had unexpectedly played a critical role. Tragically, Field was later to take his own life. His story of a simple man, out of place and strangely naive, gives a rare glimpse of the personal toll taken by such politically charged episodes.

In an enthralling interview, the former Liberal senator Neville Bonner describes the 'stresses and pressures' that were on the Coalition senators at that time as 'absolutely traumatic', revealing the political unease

and personal anguish he felt over the political strategy to block supply. The equally fascinating story told by the former Liberal prime minister Sir John Gorton carries a different tone altogether. Feisty, combative and angry, Gorton details his dramatic resignation from the Liberal Party over its strategy to defer consideration in the Senate of the Whitlam government's budget bills, and his decision to run as an independent Senate candidate for the Australian Capital Territory at the 1975 election, ultimately unsuccessfully.

Other interviews in the Library's Oral History Collection provide snippets of crucial new information of a different kind. Sir Magnus Cormack, former Liberal senator for Victoria, for instance, makes the startling observation that he had known 'for a long time' before 11 November 1975 that the Whitlam government was to be dismissed. This gives fuel to the arguments of those who consider the dismissal to be a planned collusion of long standing, rather than a response to an immediate political crisis.

Meandering through the vast manuscript collections held on individuals and organisations can be equally revelatory, often in quite unexpected ways. The papers of Sir





Dismissing Whitlam without warning was ‘bound to attract strong criticism’



Robert Menzies’ would-be biographer, Lady Frances McNicoll, for instance, were one such unanticipated holding. They contain notes of her research interviews with Menzies and Sir Garfield Barwick, both of whom reflected, with unusual candour, on Gough Whitlam and the events leading up to the dismissal.

In the Library’s Records of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party (Caucus) can be found the party’s support for the government’s political strategy in October and November 1975 in response to the Opposition’s refusal to bring forward a vote on the government’s budget bills then before the Senate. We see the Labor party’s short-lived euphoria following Whitlam’s second election victory at the 1974 double dissolution election, and its planning for the historic joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament which followed, at which several key pieces of legislation were passed—including the bills enabling Medibank, and electoral reform to ensure ‘one vote, one value’.

The manuscripts of Freda Whitlam, Gough’s sister, a small collection of family letters, give us the greatest insight into Whitlam’s personal development—his background, family life, experience of wartime service and the formation of his political ideas and commitments. They consist of Whitlam’s weekly letters home to his parents and Freda in Canberra, most of them written from St Paul’s College where Whitlam was a resident while studying Arts, and then Law, at the University of Sydney. Here we find that Gough Whitlam’s first appearance as prime minister was in 1940, when he played British prime minister Neville Chamberlain in the St Paul’s College revue. With characteristic modesty Whitlam writes, ‘I was really a big

success as Chamberlain, although he was out of office between the dress rehearsal and the opening night’. That Whitlam played Chamberlain at the time of the British prime minister’s forced resignation that same month reads now as an extraordinary portent of things to come.

Each of these holdings has, in different ways, brought forward previously unknown details of the events, circumstances and personalities involved in the dismissal of the Whitlam government. It is a story that continues to fascinate, animate and polarise both historians and the public. With the death of Gough Whitlam on 21 October 2014, followed by that of Malcolm Fraser just five months later, we might have expected to draw the curtain at last on this heated history. Yet these records from the National Library show how much is still to be uncovered, and how personal testimonies and private papers are contributing to the evolution of a dynamic history. It is 40 years since that extraordinary moment in the governor-general’s office, and the history of the dismissal is not over yet.

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 PROFESSOR JENNY HOCKING, Monash University, is the author of the two-volume biography of Gough Whitlam, *Gough Whitlam: A Moment in History* (MUP 2008) and *Gough Whitlam: His Time* (MUP 2012). Her latest book, *The Dismissal Dossier*, was published in November 2015

ABOVE LEFT  
 David Reid  
*Demonstrators Gather in front of Parliament House, Supporting the Labor Party after the Dismissal of Prime Minister Mr Gough Whitlam, Canberra, 12 November 1975*  
 b&w negative; 3.5 x 3.5 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn4967495](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn4967495)

ABOVE  
 Andrew Lachlan Chapman (b. 1954)  
*Rioting near the Liberal Party State Headquarters following Gough Whitlam’s Dismissal, South Melbourne, Victoria, 1975*  
 b&w photograph  
 43.3 x 68.5 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn4201184](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn4201184)

IN A PREVIOUS ISSUE  
*Politically Speaking: Interviews with Parliamentarians*  
 Barry York discovers how oral histories can capture the realities and nuances of political life  
 ✪ September 2014  
[nla.gov.au/magazine/september-2014-issue](http://nla.gov.au/magazine/september-2014-issue)

# 'Like a Gippsland Bushfire'

PETER STANLEY TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT IMAGES FROM THE LIBRARY'S COLLECTION REFLECTING LIFE DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR



John Flynn (1880–1951)  
*A Bush Fire, Victoria, Australia* between 1912 and 1914  
hand coloured lantern slide; 8.2 x 8.2 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn2373239](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn2373239)

John Flynn, founder of what became the Royal Flying Doctor Service, used this tinted slide of a Victorian bushfire in the lectures he delivered tirelessly to city people to bring the needs of country dwellers to their attention.

During the Great War, Flynn continued his ministry to the people of the inland. His slide offers a reminder of the lives of Australians living in the bush around this time; many experienced danger and hardship even if they did not go to war. (Despite its prominence in official commemorations, only 1 per cent of Australia's people actually served on Gallipoli.)

Rural people, then as now, faced the threat of bushfire every summer—and beyond. In 1915, local newspapers in Victoria were reporting fires as late as May, a result of the prolonged drought that broke as the Gallipoli campaign intruded into Australians' consciousness.

Bushfires remained a characteristic, perhaps unique, measure of peril and a test of Australian soldiers'

capacity. Charles Bean, the official war correspondent, wrote of his conviction that, in facing bushfires, rural Australians demonstrated that they could 'compass the work of several Germans', a capacity they carried over into the 'extreme danger' of war. (How many Germans he had seen fighting fire, Bean did not record.) Later in the war, Bean described the barrage at Polygon Wood as roaring 'like a Gippsland bushfire'. Bushfire became a powerful metaphor for the war itself in a notorious recruiting poster which asked: 'Would you stand by while a bushfire raged?'

Looking on the war after a century, we can see John Flynn's lantern slide as both a literal depiction of the fires that continued to threaten the bush and its people during the Great War and as a metaphor for a war that, like the fire front approaching the camera, would soon overwhelm Australia and its people. ●



# A MOSCOW MEMOIR

AN UNPUBLISHED BOOK IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY'S COLLECTION PROVIDES A VALUABLE INSIGHT INTO EVERYDAY LIFE IN STALINIST RUSSIA, SAYS STEPHEN HOLT

BELOW  
'Shorts and Shingles  
board the "Gullmarn"  
*Table Talk*, 17 March  
1932, p. 3  
[nla.gov.au/nla.news-  
page17695584](http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page17695584)

THE SOVIET UNION, LONG THE SOURCE OF fear and hope across the world, went through a deep crisis in the 1980s and was formally dissolved in 1991. Its remaining foreign supporters and sympathisers mourned its disintegration. One was a former teacher from Sydney named Irene Rush. As a younger woman, she had settled in Moscow in 1933 and, after returning to Australia in 1945, never lost her fascination with the USSR.

Born in 1902, Irene Rush (née Saxby) lived to the age of 101, which meant that her life encompassed both the birth (in 1917) and death of communist rule in Russia. A foreboding, in 1982, that the Soviet phase of Russian history might indeed soon be brought to an end was the catalyst that led her to decide to record her still-vivid impressions of the time when she had lived as an ordinary Muscovite. The resulting memoir was never published, but the surviving typescript can still be consulted in the Manuscripts Collection of the National Library

of Australia. It provides a valuable account of everyday life in Moscow during the rugged dictatorship of Joseph Stalin.

Irene Rush was the daughter of George Saxby, a schoolmaster who became principal of Sydney High School in 1925. Following in her father's footsteps, Irene became a high school languages teacher on graduating from the University of Sydney. After a while, the young woman concluded that life as a teacher in the New South Wales state school system was not to her liking and she quit. Jobless during the Great Depression, she took part in a highly publicised expedition up the east coast of Australia in a tiny cutter accompanied by five other crew members, including Joyce Metcalf and Dora Birtles, two of her university friends.

After the sea adventure ended, Saxby went to London. It was there, in August 1933, that she accepted an offer to teach English in the Soviet Union. Her decision to go to Moscow did not mean that she was a communist. Pacifism was more Saxby's creed, as has been established by the historian Roslyn Pesman, who interviewed her in a retirement village in 1994 when she was still active as an anti-nuclear war campaigner. Saxby hated war, as befitted someone who was a strong Quaker sympathiser. Indeed, it was Quaker contacts, Pesman reveals, who suggested that she should go to Moscow. In 1933, the Soviet Union was





positioning itself as the leading opponent of war and militarism in the world. It was natural for a pacifist to gravitate towards it.

What happened to Saxby after she arrived in Moscow is dealt with in her unpublished memoir. She earned her living by teaching English at the Moscow Technicum of Foreign Languages. Her accommodation, initially, was in a comfortable flat, albeit in a shared room. The extended family she lodged with did useful work; the father was a medical specialist and his wife was a dentist.

Throughout Moscow, things were on the mend after years of turmoil. Rationing and shortages were a daily reality, but there was no unemployment. The provision of paid sick leave for workers and free medical treatment were further achievements, to which Saxby could readily attest after she succumbed to a bout of diarrhoea. She was less impressed by efforts to impose communist ideology on the teaching curriculum.

Saxby had originally intended to remain for only a year in Moscow but, in the event, she stayed on, despite the evident fanaticism that accompanied Stalin's ever-greater prominence as sole Soviet leader. She was back with her family in Sydney in 1936, but the following year saw her return to Moscow. The 'Soviet Union and its people', she recalled in her memoir, 'had too firm a hold on my heart'.

In 1937, Stalin unleashed his mass purges of perceived enemies. Fear of unknown malign forces swept Moscow. The Technicum of Foreign Languages was disbanded. Foreigners were objects of suspicion. Saxby sensed her isolation. Moscow seemed, she recalled, 'like a plague-stricken city'.

Saxby survived by blending in. Soon, she was indistinguishable from any other Muscovite. Now known familiarly as Irina Giorgevna ('George's daughter') she got a new teaching job—with the Correspondence Institute of Foreign Languages—but her living conditions had drastically declined. She was now one of 23 people living in a six-room apartment. Her daily life comprised cramped accommodation, overcrowded public transport and endless queuing for poor-quality consumer goods.

Despite the grinding pressure, the populace seemed ready to accept the official party line on political developments. Stalin's fearful purges were seen as necessary to strengthen the country as the threat posed by Nazi Germany mounted.

Saxby continued to note progress amid the gloom. She was especially impressed by

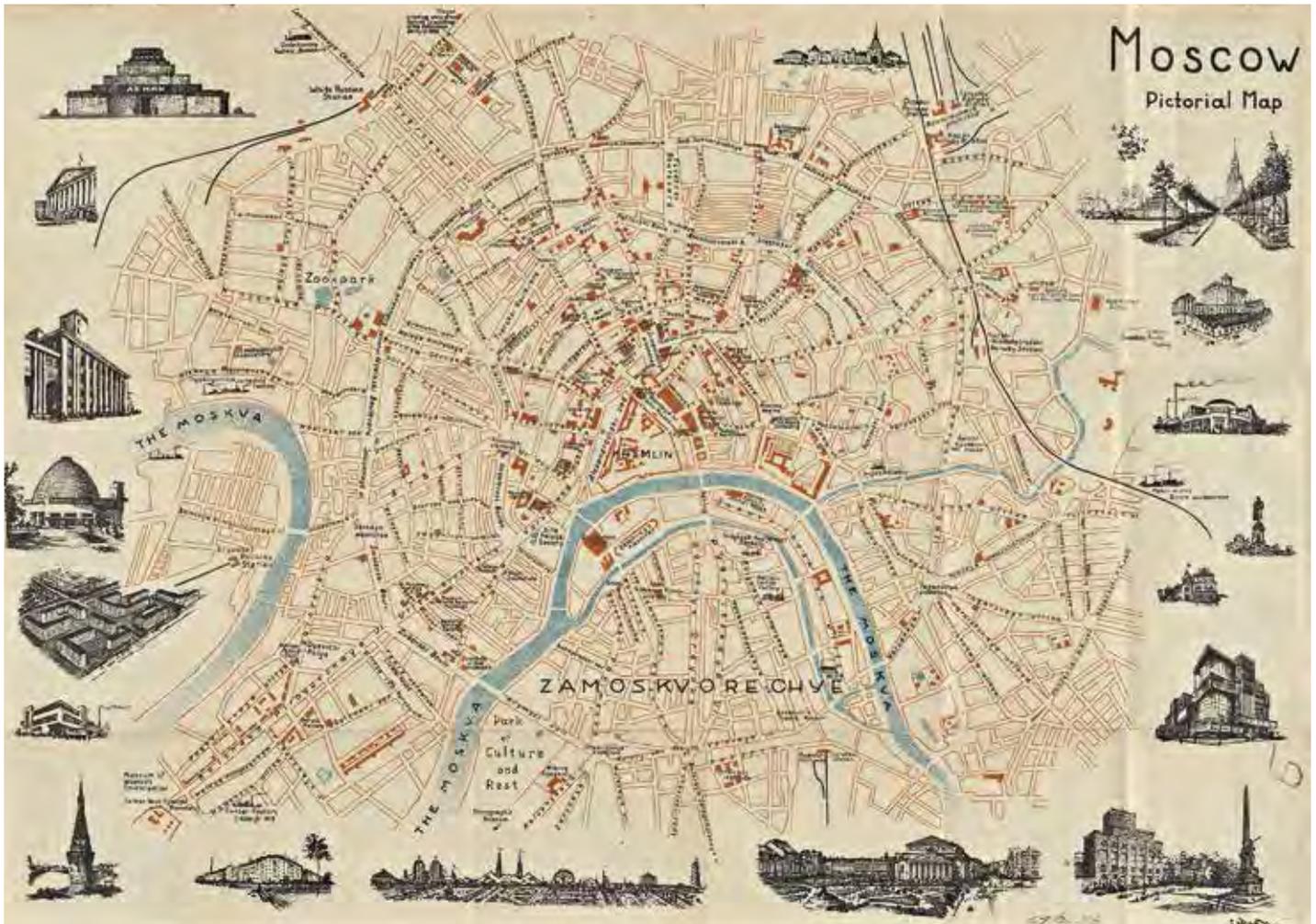
CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT Branson DeCou (1892–1941) coloured lantern slides University of California Santa Cruz Courtesy Special Collections, University Library, University of California Santa Cruz, Branson DeCou archive

*Moscow: Street Scene, Workers Celebrating Meeting the 5-Year Plan Goals* c. 1931 [digitalcollections.ucsc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p265101coll30/id/3968](https://digitalcollections.ucsc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p265101coll30/id/3968)

*Moscow: Street Scene, with Patrons at a Soyuzpechat Newsstand* c. 1931 [digitalcollections.ucsc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p265101coll30/id/3941](https://digitalcollections.ucsc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p265101coll30/id/3941)

*Moscow: Street Scene, with Crowds of People and Very Few Cars* c. 1931 [digitalcollections.ucsc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p265101coll30/id/3855](https://digitalcollections.ucsc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p265101coll30/id/3855)





ABOVE  
 Moscow Pictorial Map  
 (Moscow: Inturist, 1900s)  
 map; 35 x 50 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1444080](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1444080)

conditions for women in the Soviet Union. There was equal pay and paid maternity leave, though women still had to do all the shopping and housework. Practically every woman in Moscow had some trade, craft or profession. Saxby was thrilled by ‘the absence of that patronising, belittling attitude on the part of men that I was accustomed to at home’.

The highlight of the memoir is its account of conditions in Moscow following the German invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941. Saxby witnessed her first air raid on 22 July. For the next few months, as the Germans continued to advance, life in Moscow ‘was one long harassed rush, consisting of queues, work and air-raid duty’. Always petite, Saxby became terribly thin.

In the face of the German advance, the official portrayal of Stalin as an all-knowing father figure was revealed as a myth. Nobody seemed to know what would happen next. Without guidance from above, Muscovites were forced to decide between fleeing for safety or staying on in an imperilled

city. Each person or family had to fend for themselves.

Saxby chose to stay, and shared in the relief and joy when Hitler’s advance on Moscow was halted in December. The ensuing winter of 1941–1942 was memorably grim, with no heating, electricity or gas, and with a shortage of food and warm clothing, but the burden could be borne given that the capital had been spared.

Saxby re-engaged with Australia when, in 1942, she joined the staff of the newly established Australian diplomatic legation to the USSR as an archivist. She noted her appointment when writing her memoir, but provided no account of what she did in the legation or how she got on with her colleagues. She was silent about her time there because she did not, it seems, wish to dwell on a sometimes unpleasant experience. The patronising male attitudes that she loathed were all too evident among her colleagues, as can be gleaned from misogynistic comments in various firsthand accounts of life in the wartime legation. One male colleague labelled

her 'a warped spinster'. Another referred to her as 'Old Misery'.

Saxby's life in Russia ended just before the Germans surrendered in 1945. She had to come back to her family in Sydney to nurse a dying sister. While ever hopeful of a return visit, she never saw Russia again. In her memoir, she signed off on her Moscow years: 'So ended the most meaningful and adventurous part of my life'.

Political hostility dogged Saxby after she returned to Sydney once the Cold War set in. Intelligence officers regarded her as a potential threat to national security because of her long connection with the Soviet Union. They opened up a security file on Saxby which included the occasional favourable public comment from her on life in Russia.

This unwanted attention seems to have embarrassed Saxby's family. It was not comfortable for her to be at home. Relief came in 1948 when she married Charles Rush, a widowed Church of Christ minister. Security officers maintained their file on her but increasingly, as the years passed, there was nothing new to report.

Irene Rush was widowed in 1971. Her long silence on things Russian lasted until 1981 when Ronald Reagan became president of the United States. Reagan adopted an aggressive anti-Soviet stance. In 1983, he denounced

Russia as the 'Evil Empire'. The Reaganite determination to stand up to the Soviet Union alarmed Rush. She feared a possible nuclear catastrophe and was keen to do her bit to resist the demonisation of Russia—hence her desire to preserve, and even share, her memories of her time in Moscow.

The result was an honest memoir which described what happened when an anti-war idealist journeyed to Stalin's Russia. The same pacifist faith lasting over half a century inspired both the Reagan-era memoir and the original act of migration itself. Behind the changing names—Irene Rush née Saxby aka Irina Giorgjevna—there was an enduring core of belief and determination.

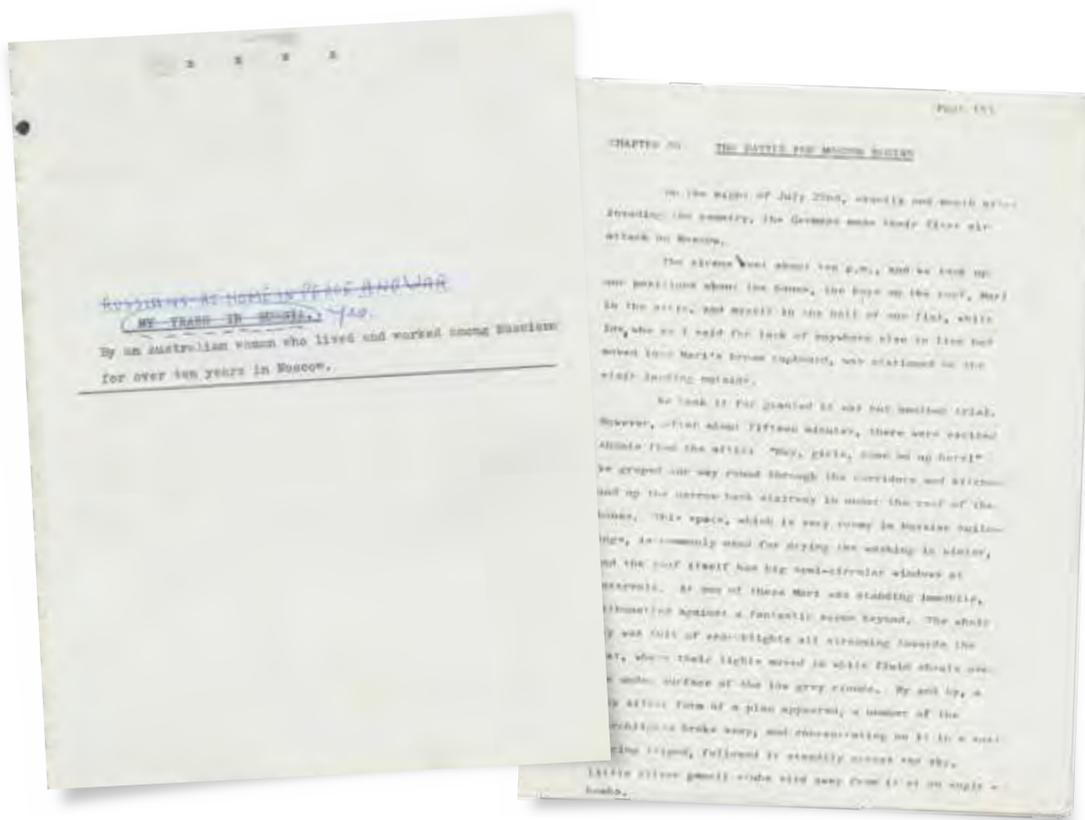
STEPHEN HOLT is a freelance Canberra writer



ABOVE  
'From Russia'  
*The Sydney Morning Herald*,  
25 September 1936, p. 5  
[nla.gov.au/nla.news-article17282434](http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article17282434)

FAR LEFT  
Title page of *My Years in Russia, 1933–1945* by Irene Rush  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn56017](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn56017)

LEFT  
'The Battle for Moscow Begins'  
page 153 of *My Years in Russia, 1933–1945* by Irene Rush  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn56017](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn56017)



# FAREWELL

WILLIAM THOMAS COOPER (1934–2015)

PENNY OLSEN REFLECTS ON THE LIFE,  
COLLABORATIONS AND EXTRAORDINARY  
LEGACY OF A TALENTED NATURE ARTIST

WHEN WE THINK OF A LIBRARY WE often think of books, including illustrated books, and perhaps manuscripts. Yet our major libraries hold illustrations too. Many of them are historical, while others are collected because of their significance to the state or nation. Many hundreds of paintings and working sketches of parrots by Australian artist William (Bill) Thomas Cooper are in the collections of the National Library, and over a thousand of his illustrations of rainforest fruits are held by the State Library of New South Wales. They represent a fraction of his output.

Bill was born in Adamstown, New South Wales, at the end of the Great Depression. He grew up in a shantytown on the edge of Newcastle in a house built by his father from scrap. The surrounding bush was his escape and his playground. His father taught him to respect nature and his mother encouraged his love of

books and drawing. He began well at school, but walked out before he'd finished. Bill began his professional artistic life as a landscape painter, first part time, then full time. He never had any formal training as an artist, simply soaking up techniques from friends, including William Dobell.

Bill's first bird book was *A Portfolio of Australian Birds*, with Keith Hindwood, a luminary in



the Sydney ornithological community—just 25 select species and one of the first of the heavily illustrated books on the nation's birds. The year it came out, 1968, Bill met Joseph (Joe) Forshaw, who was embarking on an ambitious publishing project: the first modern tome to capture all that was known about the world's parrots, some in dire need of conservation action.

Joe sought out Bill at an exhibition of paintings attached to the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union Congress, held in Canberra. Bill had contributed two gouaches—one was of Crested Pigeons. Joe was viewing the show with his boss, Harry Frith, Chief of CSIRO's Division of Wildlife Research, who was writing a book based on his research on Australia's pigeons. Bill's painting stopped Frith in his tracks. 'Who the hell is this William Cooper!' he exclaimed.

Joe, too, was impressed, and arranged to visit the artist at his home at Bungwahl, on the mid-New South Wales coast. There, he asked Bill whether he would be interested in illustrating a book on the world's parrots, suggesting that Bill might like to deal with the African and Australian species. Joe intended to find another artist for the remaining regions. With great confidence, Bill volunteered: 'Why don't I do the lot?'. 'The lot?' replied a startled Joe. The 'lot' was over 320 parrot species—with additional figures when there were variations between the sexes, or subspecies—most of which neither illustrator nor author had ever seen. They often laughed about Bill's cockiness, not least because he was a landscape artist. As it turned out, the parrot project transitioned Bill to more-or-less full-time bird portraiture. It was also the beginning of a lifetime's collaboration with Joe in the preparation of beautifully illustrated bird books.

In April 1970, Bill accompanied Joe to Papua New Guinea to see some of the region's more unusual parrots firsthand. The trip was Bill's first out of Australia and would prove to be one of four visits to the country, so smitten was he by the tropical birds and the sense of adventure and discovery the country provided. As the pair flew into Port Moresby's Jacksons Airport, they were spellbound by the majestic views of the steeply mountainous, forested hinterland, cloaked in layers of cloud. Even the shock of the thick humidity that hit them on disembarking could not dampen their enthusiasm.

Joe had arranged to visit places where they were likely to see the parrots of interest, and along the way they met almost the entire ornithological fraternity. Bill was expecting New Guinea to be unspoilt and sparsely populated, just the way he liked it. His field notebook reveals the adjustments he had to make. There were groups of people everywhere; birds were also in abundance, but 'darned hard to see', a frustrated Bill jotted in his notebook. The conditions were often tough. At the end of April, packed and ready to fly to the highlands of Mount Hagen, Bill struck another of the island's challenges and recorded his fears: 'I am not really happy after a commercial plane crashed yesterday killing five and all others critically injured in Goroka Hospital'.

Early in the trip, on the Sogeri Plateau, as they walked through the rainforest an adult male Raggiana Bird-of-paradise flew low across the path ahead, leaving Bill with the impression of 'a cross between a comet and a powderpuff'. It was his first wild bird-of-paradise—'just magic!'. From that moment, even though the parrots were exciting, Bill



OPPOSITE PAGE  
MAIN IMAGE  
*Cooper in His Studio in 2008, Working on a Commissioned Painting of Oriental Pied Hornbills*  
page 222 of *An Eye for Nature: The Life and Art of William T. Cooper* by Penny Olsen (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2014)  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6290417](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6290417)

THIS PAGE  
BELOW  
*William T. Cooper (1934–2015) Papuan Lorikeets (Charmosyna papou) 1970*  
watercolour; 54.2 x 41.5 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn289574](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn289574)



ABOVE  
William T. Cooper (1934–2015)  
*Stephanie's Astrapias (Astrapia stephaniae)* 2005  
pages 52–53 of *An Eye for Nature: The Life and Art of William T. Cooper*  
by Penny Olsen  
(Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2014)  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6290417](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6290417)  
Courtesy Michael Martin

BELOW  
William T. Cooper (1934–2015)  
*Topknot Pigeons (Lopholaimus antarcticus)* 2005  
page 232 of *An Eye for Nature: The Life and Art of William T. Cooper*  
by Penny Olsen  
(Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2014)  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6290417](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6290417)

often found himself distracted by the more extravagantly plumed birds.

In the Western Highlands he and Joe hoped to see some of the high-country parrots, particularly the red-billed, streamer-tailed subspecies of Papuan Lorikeet (also known as Stella's Lorikeet). In early May, while the usually composed Joe went bounding excitedly through the forest at the possibility of sighting the parrot, Bill stayed put. A piece of bark fell near his foot and he picked it up. Looking skywards, he was delighted to see a male Ribbon-tailed Bird-of-paradise perched

directly above him, tearing away rotten wood and bark.

The artist and the author camped at Baiyer River Sanctuary and one day travelled up to Tomba, on the southern slopes of Mount Hagen, where they at last found the brilliantly coloured Papuan Lorikeet feeding on the fruits of a *Schefflera*. Bill picked a branch to take back to camp to sketch, later throwing it in the rubbish bin. Later still, there was a commotion around the bin and he and Joe went to investigate. The locals had pulled the branch out and were avidly discussing it. Bill was impressed that they knew the plants in their area so well that they recognised this one as different. He was equally intrigued that they immediately lost interest when told it came from Tomba. Back home in Australia, Bill painted the lorikeet preening itself on a branch of the fruiting plant alongside two regional colour variants.

As a bird-mad boy, Bill's favourite painting had been of a bird-of-paradise, and he associated the exotically plumed birds with misty mountains. New Guinea did not disappoint on either count. Before he left the island he was already planning his return. He had decided to mount an expedition to gather material for a book on birds-of-paradise and bowerbirds. At the time, the two groups of birds were thought to be closely related, and they are still often linked because of their unusual behaviours and colourful courtship



'accessories': the birds-of-paradise their exotic plumes and the bowerbirds their bowers.

Bill's first task, though, was to paint the world's parrots. Joe took up the 1971 Churchill Fellowship that he was awarded to observe parrots in South America. He travelled on the SS *Monterey* so that he could stop at New Caledonia, Western Samoa and Hawaii to view Pacific Island parrots. He scoured the museums of the Americas and, later, the rest of the world, in part to identify parrot specimens for Bill to paint. The institutions were generous, even sending precious specimens of the extinct Carolina Parakeet and Glaucous Macaw across the world to Bill at Bungwahl.

On returning to Bungwahl from New Guinea, Bill wrote breathlessly to Hindwood, 'Boy! what a place', continuing:

*Joe Forshaw came with me and we covered a lot of ground and got to see plenty of birds as he had contacts to meet us wherever we went and show us the right spots to see the particular species in which we were interested. I collected plant specimens and did background drawings, as well as got an appreciation of the parrots in their natural surroundings.*

They may have gone in search of parrots, but it was clear that Bill had been seduced by the birds-of-paradise. As he told Hindwood:

*I was lucky that I was able to observe (in the wild) ten species of the Birds of Paradise. One morning in particular I watched three fully plumaged males of the Lesser B. of P. in full display ... There is so much to tell that I won't attempt to write it all down, but look forward to bashing your ear when I see you next.*

When they were finished with parrots, Bill and Joe did indeed turn their attention to the birds-of-paradise and bowerbirds. While *Parrots of the World* (1973) surprised ornithological audiences unused to such substantial contributions from Australia, *Birds of Paradise and Bower Birds* (1977) put Bill on the map internationally as an ornithological illustrator of prodigious talent.

There were further monographs with Joe—another 12 large, lavishly illustrated volumes and portfolios—the most recent on Australia's pigeons and doves. In between books, Bill

Painted commissions, travelled the world with his wife, Wendy, in search of his subjects, and collaborated with her on several groundbreaking books on fruits of the Australian tropical rainforest.

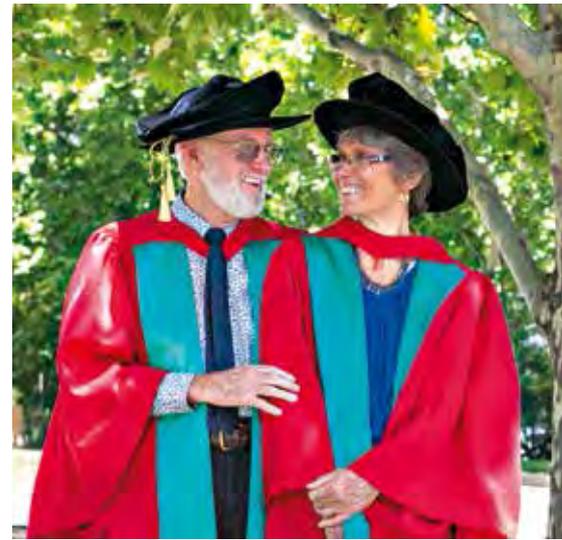
In 1994, Bill was made an Officer of the Order of Australia, for his 'service to art and to ornithology as a natural history artist'. In December 2014, his extraordinary contributions to science were recognised with the award of an honorary doctorate from the Australian National University. At the same time, Wendy was awarded a doctorate for her botanical research. They were the first couple to be so honoured. The boy from Newcastle had come a long way.

Bill died at his and Wendy's home on the Atherton Tablelands, Queensland, on 10 May 2015. To me, he was a gentle, gentlemanly, generous friend. To David Attenborough, a long-term friend and documenter of Bill's work:

*Bill's loss leaves a huge gap. He understood birds and brought them to life with paint in an almost magical way. No one did it better. Perhaps no one ever will.*

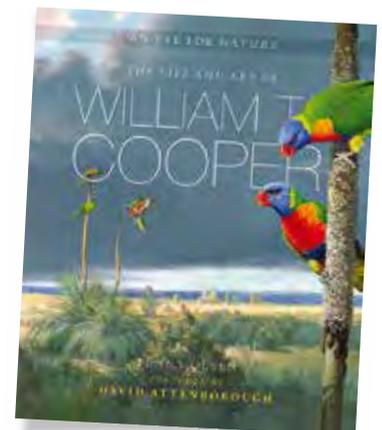
Attenborough dubbed Bill the 'Portrait Painter to the Birds', a nod both to his artistry and place in the history of ornithological portraiture. Bill's botanical illustration was just as accomplished. As a painter of nature, he has few equals.

PENNY OLSEN is a natural history writer and research scientist based at the Australian National University. This article was adapted from her book *An Eye for Nature: The Life and Art of William T. Cooper*, published by NLA Publishing in 2014



ABOVE  
William T. Cooper and His Wife, Wendy, after Receiving Their Honorary Doctorates in Science from the Australian National University in December 2014  
colour photograph  
Courtesy David Parer and Elizabeth Parer-Cook

BELOW  
Cover of *An Eye for Nature: The Life and Art of William T. Cooper* by Penny Olsen (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2014)  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6290417](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6290417)





# THE DARK AND LIGHT OF AUSTRALIA

Darren Clark's Photography

THE WORK OF DARREN CLARK VENTURES INTO  
THE MURKY PLACES IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY,  
WRITES LINDA GROOM

ABOVE  
*A Youth 'Chroming', North  
Fitzroy, Victoria, 2004*  
colour photograph  
28.8 x 19.1 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn3550323](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn3550323)

OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM  
TOP LEFT  
*Ballet Dancer Charlotte Lucy  
Price at Terri Charlesworth  
Ballet Centre, North Perth,  
Western Australia, 2007*  
colour photograph  
35.5 x 26.6 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn4230812](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn4230812)

*A Ballet Dancer Injects  
Cortisone to Relieve the Pain of  
Her Ankle Injury, North Perth,  
Western Australia, 2007*  
colour photograph  
26.7 x 39.3 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn4230799](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn4230799)

*Knocked Out in the Roy Bell  
Boxing Tent at the Noonamah  
Rodeo, Northern Territory,  
September 2012*  
colour photograph  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6222102](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6222102)

*Win Thomas and Derice Parry  
at St Michael's Primary School,  
Wudikapildiyerr Outstation,  
Daly River, Northern Territory  
2010*  
colour photograph  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn5179108](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn5179108)

DARREN CLARK KEEPS HIS CAMERA close. During any conversation, his hand strays to it. You can tell he is thinking of taking a shot, to make the moments of the conversation real. He sells some of his work, but gives more of it away to the people he photographs, as a gesture, a thank you, for their willingness to be recorded by his camera. It's a precarious business model but, over his 20-year career, it has produced an astounding body of work.

Clark is not one of those quiet photographers who blend into the background. He's a good talker: 'I don't have any fear of people; after the accident, I lost my inhibitions'. Clark is referring to a devastating car crash in Geelong in 1987, when he was 20. Though he was in the back seat, his injuries were severe. One side of his skull was injured and his back was fractured. The slow process of physical and mental rehabilitation took a leap forward in 1993, when he was travelling with his sister in Nepal. Someone put a camera into his hand and he took a photo of a young girl carrying a baby on her back. 'She was beaming. It moved me beyond words—such a beautiful thing.' He was hooked.

Clark abandoned the career that his father had planned for him in the family automotive

business and enrolled at Melbourne's Photography Studies College. During college hours, he perfected the technical side of his photography. After hours, he developed the people skills that would later open doors for him as a photographer. His walking route between the college and his home in Fitzroy North passed Flinders Street Station:

*I got to know the Indigenous people that hung around the station, and the gang members. I talked to them, sat down and listened, took their photos and gave them copies.*

After graduating with honours, Clark found some work with a stock image library and a community newspaper. His first significant public recognition, however, did not come until 2001 when the State Library of Victoria bought 12 of his photographs. The National Library made several purchases over the following years, and most of the state and territory libraries have now bought his work. Clark is overawed by the recognition: 'To be in public collections, free for everyone to look at for the rest of time, it blows my mind'.

Why do libraries feel so compelled to buy his work? Libraries acquire original

photographs for many reasons; one of those is to supplement the 'published view' of Australia. In Clark's work, you find images that show an unexpected, sometimes confronting, representation of Australian life—one that has been edited out of most published sources.

Dance photographs, for instance, are much loved by publishers. With their grace, perfection of form and potential for dramatic lighting effects, they sit well on a page or screen. Clark can create that style of photograph, as is evident from his lyrical image of Charlotte Lucy Price at the Terri Charlesworth Ballet Centre in North Perth. Yet he also moves backstage to photograph a ballet student injecting cortisone into her ankle to relieve the pain. It's not the kind of image that many people have seen before, and it can be easy to assume that the published body of dance images is the complete truth. Surely, the viewer thinks in disbelief, such injections must be rare. Surely.

Boxing photographs are another example. We have all seen such images in newspapers and other publications—shots of the referee raising the victor's hand, of key moments in the action, with the light, perhaps, catching the boxers' sweat. Clark moves away from elite boxing and into the boxing tents that tour local shows and rodeos. There, his focus shifts downwards, to an unconscious boxer lying on the floor, surrounded by feet. To get the shot, Clark must not only have had the organisers' trust, but would have had to elbow his way through the crowd and down to floor level. Again, it's not the view of boxing we are used to seeing in the published record, and it's hard to believe. Surely, we find ourselves thinking, this does not happen often in Australia. They must be about to put the unconscious man on a bed or a stretcher. Surely.

Clark's street skills have brought him into extended contact with drug-dependent Australians, enough to know, for instance, that the process of spraying a can of silver paint into a plastic bag and inhaling the fumes is sufficiently common to have a name: 'chroming'. His powerful portrait of Jonathan, chroming in Fitzroy North, is in the National Library's Pictures Collection; most publishers would quietly choose to protect their readers from Jonathan's piercing stare.

Clark is also supremely alive to the moments of joy that he encounters. At the primary



'I talked to them,  
sat down and listened'





ABOVE  
Graham Chungaloo and  
Marshall Wallace in the Corella  
Creek Contractors Stock Camp,  
Barkly Tableland, Northern  
Territory, April 2013  
colour photograph  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6386865](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6386865)

ABOVE RIGHT  
The Darwin Festival, Civic Park  
Square, Darwin, 14 August 2010  
colour photograph  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn5177799](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn5177799)

school of Wudikapildiyerr Outstation near Daly River in the Northern Territory, he photographed Indigenous boy Derice Parry beaming at his teacher in a bright classroom. At Corella Creek on the Barkly Tableland, he caught a smiling Graham Chungaloo with his hand on the shoulder of his good mate. Sometimes, Clark simply indulges himself as a photographer, solving, for example, the difficult lighting problems presented by the Darwin Festival at dusk to capture a scene that looks like a fairyland.

In addition to the esteem of librarians, Clark has the respect of his peers. In the 1980s, he came across the work of renowned Australian photographer Andrew Chapman; Clark's admiration for Chapman's photography helped propel him towards enrolment in formal study at the Photography Studies College. The admiration is now mutual. 'Darren's an enthusiast', says Chapman. 'Always embracing photography and life.' He remembers meeting Clark at the Monash Gallery of Art when Clark was a young photographer, and advising him to explore Australia's 'inner circle', away from the cities and coast. Chapman thinks Australia needs more photographers who travel, in the tradition of the late Jeff Carter, and admires the photographic book *Drover*, which Clark produced in collaboration with bushman Bruce Simpson in 2014.

At the time of writing this article, I caught up with Clark by phone. He was in North Queensland, living with the Harrigan, Walker and Ball families at the Wujal Wujal settlement, Cape Tribulation. He has formed a special connection with spiritual leader Ronnie Harrigan, whom Clark nursed through his fight with cancer. Clark told me that his

time in North Queensland was going amazingly well and that he had been welcomed with open arms. There will be photographs, of course, magnificent photographs, though there is no certain market for them. On the cards for a future project is a visit to Papua New Guinea to photograph the local rugby scene, through a connection of his sister's husband's mate. It's a worrying thought—a tall, slim, ginger-haired man with an expensive camera around his neck, getting to know the subcultures of Port Moresby. On the other hand, if anyone can do it, he can. I can't help thinking that time spent among tinkling wine glasses at exhibition galleries in Australian capital cities might do more for his bank balance, but that's not what drives him. 'I'm a nomad', says Clark. 'Photography for me is a way of expressing myself and belonging.'

Clark's photographs are not the only ones in the National Library's Pictures Collection that capture hidden aspects of Australian society. Others include Satoshi Kinoshita's images taken inside Sydney's Hellfire Club, and Roslyn Sharp's images of drug users at Kings Cross. Still, it is rare for an Australian photographer to produce these types of images consistently over three decades, in all parts of Australia and in so many strata of society. In more ways than one, Clark has captured both the dark and the light of Australia. The librarians of Australia who are charged with keeping a pictorial record of Australian life hope he will continue to do so for many years yet.

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LINDA GROOM is the National Library's retired curator of pictures

IN A PREVIOUS ISSUE  
A Poster Born in Flames  
Linda Groom examines a  
piece of gold-rush history  
✧ December 2013  
<http://goo.gl/UabZIU>



# Friends

of the National Library of Australia

BOOKINGS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL EVENTS, EXCEPT FILMS: 02 6262 1698, friends@nla.gov.au or nla.gov.au/bookings/friends

With Christmas fast approaching, do you have one of those difficult-to-buy-for family members still on your gift list? If so, have you considered purchasing a gift membership to the Friends of the National Library? This is a gift that will keep on giving throughout the year, with copies of *The National Library of Australia Magazine* and the Friends newsletter posted out each quarter, and discounts at a large range of businesses.

This year, the Friends of the National Library Committee has been busy negotiating new and better benefits for our members. A full list of businesses is available at [nla.gov.au/friends](http://nla.gov.au/friends) and includes cultural institutions, hotels, booksellers, performing arts organisations and many others. There is also a new discount at the National Library—15 per cent off all ticketed Library events booked online. For regular attendees of events at the Library, the savings will quickly add up.

If you would like to arrange a gift membership, please contact the Friends office directly on 02 6262 1698 before Friday 18 December.

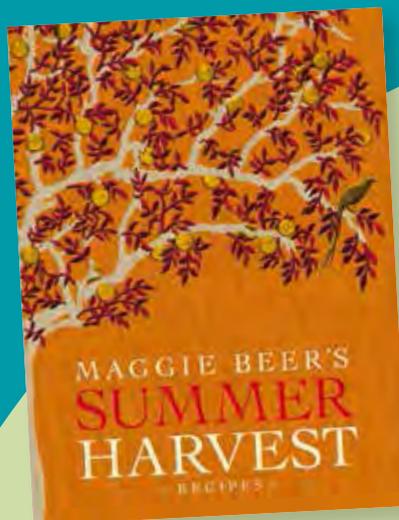
SHARYN O'BRIEN  
Executive Officer

## FORTHCOMING FRIENDS EVENTS

### Friends Viewing of *Celestial Empire: Life in China, 1644–1911*

Join the Friends for an exclusive, after-hours viewing of *Celestial Empire*, and a talk by exhibition curator Nathan Woolley. Includes light refreshments.

FRIDAY 22 JANUARY, 6 PM  
• EXHIBITION GALLERY  
• \$30 FRIENDS AND THEIR GUESTS ONLY (NUMBERS STRICTLY LIMITED)



## NATIONAL LIBRARY BOOKSHOP SPECIAL OFFER

*Maggie Beer's Summer Harvest Recipes* brings together all of Maggie's signature recipes from her summer chapter of *Maggie's Harvest*, including detailed descriptions of seasonal ingredients and inspiring accounts of memorable meals with family and friends.

The recipes highlight Maggie's philosophy of using the freshest and best seasonal produce available in the Barossa Valley, South Australia, and treating it simply, allowing the natural flavours to speak for themselves. Featuring recipes such as Roast Chicken with Fig, Grape, Walnut and Bread Salad; Stuffed Eggplant with Verjuice, Rocket and Preserved Lemon Sauce; Tart of Quail with Sage, Bacon and Grapes; and Passionfruit and Banana Pavlova.



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## SUPPORT US

### CHINESE PITH PAINTINGS FROM THE NATIONAL LIBRARY COLLECTION

It is through the generosity of our friends and supporters that the Library is able to host wonderful events and carry out projects that make our collections more accessible to all Australians. It comes in many ways—from our Volunteers and Friends, donations, sponsorships and bequests. People provide us with their time, their advocacy and also with financial support.

The Library holds two appeals each year to raise funds to support projects that wouldn't otherwise be undertaken. Over the past year, our appeals have included preserving and digitising the Library's small but significant collection of currency, including convict-era promissory notes and the first banknotes produced after Federation, and maintaining and developing Trove (your assistance has enabled us to make recent improvements to Trove's interface). Our appeals are important as they align with the Library's priority collection projects, but we do welcome your support at any time.

The 2015 end-of-year appeal is raising funds for the Library's collection of 400 Chinese paintings on pith paper. These pith paintings come from a variety of sources and are in a number of formats, from albums to individual paintings, and are rendered in ink and watercolour. Subjects include the emperor; senior officials and their families; traditional forms of punishment; people engaged in silk production and embroidery; and Chinese junks and other boats.

These examples of trade art were produced by Chinese artisans in workshops in and around Canton in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for sale to foreign visitors. Light and easy to transport, they made convenient souvenirs or gifts. Since the images were for Western



*A Theatrical Play (Wu tai ju)* 1870  
watercolour; 22 x 30 cm  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6437829](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn6437829)

consumption, they do not represent traditional Chinese aesthetics. Many of the images play to Western preconceptions of China. Albums of these images, including those held by the Library, are collected by a small number of Western institutions, but they are almost unknown in China.

A selection of these pith paintings will be on display during the Library's major exhibition *Celestial Empire: Life in China, 1644–1911*. A great number of the paintings are delicate and fragile, often featuring embroidered ribbon borders. Many require preservation treatment to stabilise them, and rehousing to ensure their longevity. Expert assessment is required to improve access to, and understanding of, the collection.

*For more information about supporting the Library through the end-of-year appeal, please contact the Development Office on 02 6262 1336 or [development@nla.gov.au](mailto:development@nla.gov.au) or visit [nla.gov.au/support-us](http://nla.gov.au/support-us). You can also pick up an appeal brochure from the Library's Foyer Information Desk.*

### HONOURING CATHY SANTAMARIA (1943–2012)

The late Cathy Santamaria was a great friend, colleague and supporter of many people in the library, arts and humanities communities in Canberra and around Australia. Cathy loved music and, during her time as head of Australian Collections at the Library, she met with composer Miriam Hyde several times to discuss the donation of her archive to the Library.

A year ago, Cathy's family and friends undertook to support an appeal in her honour with the aim of digitising Miriam Hyde's extensive archive of personal papers held by the Library. We are delighted that the appeal exceeded its target and that this extraordinary achievement will be celebrated by supporters. Not only will the digitisation of Hyde's papers provide ongoing public access to the archive of an Australian artist who Cathy admired, but it will be a fitting memorial to Cathy's work, exemplifying her belief in scholarship, writing and publishing.

We thank Cathy's family, friends and supporters who have made this special project possible.

AVAILABLE NOW



**FAIR DINKUM! AUSSIE SLANG**

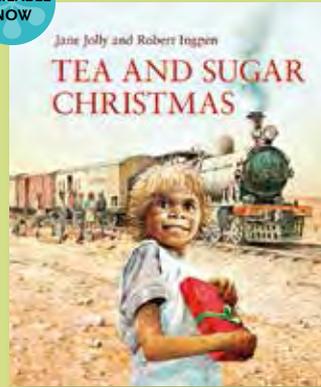
By H.G. Nelson

Australian slang unites the true blue and the dinky-di and separates the cheeky little possums from the happy little Vegemites. When we use slang, we're connecting with the diggers in the villages of France ordering

a vin blanc ('plonk') and the Indigenous Dharug-speakers of Sydney locating one another with a familiar cry ('within cooee'). In this attractive and educational new pictorial guide, readers will be ably led through the world of Aussie slang by the great H.G. 'battered sav' Nelson.

ISBN 978-0-642-27879-1 | 2015, pb, 170 x 170 mm, 124 pp  
RRP \$19.99

AVAILABLE NOW



**TEA AND SUGAR CHRISTMAS**

By Jane Jolly | Illustrated by Robert Ingpen

Join Kathleen in the outback as she eagerly awaits the Christmas Tea and Sugar train. Will she meet Father Christmas? Will she receive a Christmas gift from him? A delightful, heart-warming story that will intrigue, captivate and introduce

readers to a slice of the past. Wonderful sensitive illustrations, including a beautiful double fold-out image showing the shops inside all the carriages.

ISBN 978-0-642-27863-0 | 2014, hb, 270 x 225 mm, 36 pp  
RRP \$24.99

AVAILABLE NOW



**THE BEACH: AN AUSTRALIAN PASSION**

By Robert Drewe

Robert Drewe, internationally acclaimed author, writes here about the quintessential Australian experience. Here he presents beaches in a new way: a mix of history, reminiscence and description. From the

sunny, salty sexiness of the beach that first enticed the crusading Mr William Gocher into the ocean at Manly in 1903, defying authorities in his neck-to-knee bathing costume, to a place where sharks attack prone surfers and prime ministers disappear, Drewe's lyrical examination of Australian beach culture combines with imagery from some of Australia's most celebrated photographers.

ISBN 978-0-642-27880-7 | 2015, hb, 280 x 250 mm, 244 pp  
RRP \$39.99

AVAILABLE JANUARY 2016



**CELESTIAL EMPIRE: LIFE IN CHINA 1644-1911**

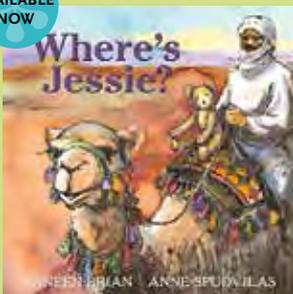
By Nathan Woolley

Ideal as an accompaniment to the Library's latest exhibition or for enjoying at home, *Celestial Empire* is illustrated with stunning images, from woodblock printed books to colourful

maps, making accessible a wealth of culture from China's last imperial dynasty. Examples include painted scrolls of scenic and sacred sites, maps detailing a variety of landscapes, woodblock illustrations demonstrating extraordinary skill and artistic vision and delightful folk art used on festive occasions. The book also includes architectural drawings produced for the imperial court of iconic locations such as the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace.

ISBN 978-0-642-27876-0 | 2016, pb, 250 x 220 mm, 224 pp  
RRP \$49.99

AVAILABLE NOW



**WHERE'S JESSIE?**

By Janeen Brian | Illustrated by Anne Spudvilas

Bertie Bear's going on a long journey. He doesn't realise it will be on a camel! And he never imagines he'll be having adventures on his own, far away from his owner, Jessie.

When he gets lost, he meets many desert animals before he is swept along in a flash flood, taken high in an eagle's talons, and finally falls to the ground, all alone. Luckily, a young Indigenous boy finds him and returns him to Jessie: a happy ending!

ISBN 978-0-642-27875-3 | 2015, hb, 240 x 240 mm, 40 pp  
RRP \$24.99

To purchase or pre-order:

<http://bookshop.nla.gov.au> or 1800 800 100 (freecall)  
Also available from the National Library Bookshop and bookshops nationally

Enquiries: [nlasales@nla.gov.au](mailto:nlasales@nla.gov.au) | ABN 28 346 858 075



## ON THE COVER



Wang Fangyue (active 1751–1757)  
and Qianlong emperor (1711–1799)  
*500 Arhats (Wubai luohan tu)* (detail)  
engraved 1757  
ink rubbing on paper  
39 x 1,820cm  
National Library of China

Over 18 metres long, this ink rubbing was produced from engravings in a Buddhist temple constructed by the Qianlong emperor in the eighteenth century. The engravings depict 500 arhats—beings who have achieved enlightenment through their understanding of the Buddha's word. The images are interspersed with the emperor's commentary; he asserts that the identity of each arhat can be determined by his posture and action.

This and other beautiful artefacts from the Qing dynasty can be seen in the Library's latest exhibition, *Celestial Empire: Life in China, 1644–1911*, from 2 January 2016.

Find out more on page 2.