

Magazine for members  
Autumn 2010

# SL



STATE LIBRARY™  
NEW SOUTH WALES

Markus Zusak,  
author of *The Book  
Thief*, is part of our  
living collection



# 2010

## AND BEYOND

# “Message” *Regina Sutton*



It's our big year, and it's a chance for our supporters to show their family and friends what they love about the Mitchell Library.

When the Mitchell Library was officially opened on 8 March 1910 the London *Times* reported: 'It is full of riches which are still unfathomed.' This is still the case today, and will be in another 100 years. The collection is more accessible than ever, but the greatest triumph is expressed in the words 'I didn't know we had *that*'.

The contributors to this centenary issue of *SL* magazine share not only their sense of wonder at the discoveries they've made in the Mitchell Library, but also the fun they've had in the process. As David Marr writes in the newly released *ONE hundred: A tribute to the Mitchell Library*, 'Research is pure pleasure'.

Senior Curator Paul Brunton offers an insight into the overwhelming task of choosing 100 items for our centenary exhibition from a collection of over five million. What would you have chosen? Visit *ONE hundred* between 9 March and 16 June to see who made the list.

Confessing a long-term addiction to 'the possibilities and unpredictability' of our collections, Mitchell Librarian Richard Neville tells the fascinating and amusing story of his own journey into the mysteries of the Library.

We're delighted that novelist Markus Zusak and historian Laila Ellmoos have opened up new perspectives on the collections. They convey the excitement, as Markus writes, when 'you come here looking for something specific and walk away with the unexpected'.

This is the year to celebrate the riches of the Mitchell Library and we look forward to seeing you!

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**REGINA SUTTON**

NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive



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Autumn 2010

## SL

THE MAGAZINE FOR  
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MARKUS ZUSAK  
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### BACK COVER

CLOSING THE GAP  
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### OPPOSITE

PHOTO BY DIEU TAN

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### CORRECTIONS

WE APOLOGISE FOR THE  
FOLLOWING ERRORS IN  
SL MAGAZINE SUMMER  
2009/10:

01. 'ON THIS DAY' (P. 8)  
INCLUDED THE  
STATEMENT THAT MAY  
GIBBS WAS BORN IN  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA. SHE  
WAS BORN IN ENGLAND.
02. IN THE SAME ARTICLE,  
SNUGGLE POT AND  
CUDDLE PIE SHOULD  
HAVE APPEARED AS  
SNUGGLEPOT AND  
CUDDLEPIE.
03. 'NEW RESEARCH  
PARTNERSHIP: HISTORY  
OF CLIMATE CHANGE'  
(P. 7) STATED THAT  
CLIMATE RECORDS  
HAVE ONLY BEEN KEPT  
OFFICIALLY IN  
AUSTRALIA FOR ABOUT  
100 YEARS. IN FACT,  
PRIOR TO FEDERATION  
IN 1901 THE COLONIES  
MAINTAINED SEPARATE  
METEOROLOGICAL  
SERVICES.

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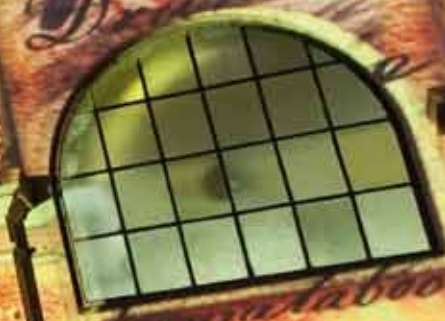


# AND BEYOND



Mitch  
Librar  
Cente  
1911

Mitchell Library  
Centenary 1910 - 2010



It is a  
feet in length  
Advice from 1910



## Check OUT the Library

Join us on Saturday 13 March from 9 am to 12 noon and discover what the Library is all about in our centenary year. With ABC 702 broadcasting from the Mitchell forecourt, information about our services, talented 3D chalk artists bringing our collection to life, musicians, street performers, Cairo Jim and the *ONE hundred* exhibition to visit, there's something for everyone.



## Inside OUT

This new one-hour backstage walk of discovery takes you to parts of the Library rarely seen by the public. To celebrate our centenary we're inviting you to visit the studios where highly skilled conservation work is carried out.

See the Mitchell Librarian's historic office, and venture into the vaults, among the kilometres of books, manuscripts, artworks and relics that have been added to the collection over the past 100 years.

Find out more or make a booking at [www.sl.nsw.gov.au/events](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/events)

## Crack the code

Visit the *ONE hundred* exhibition for a chance to win a \$100 Library Shop voucher. The exhibition captions contain a graphic code. Decipher the code and reveal a clue to the name of an artist whose work appears in the exhibition. Submit your entry by post or email. The winner will be drawn on Friday 18 June 2010.

See the *ONE hundred* website for more information.



## Moving images

At just 21, Todd Fuller has an impressive CV. Since winning his first art prize at the age of 15 and attending Sydney's National Art School, he has developed a keen interest in the moving image as an artistic medium and is represented in collections throughout the country.

You can see Todd's work in *ONE hundred*, bringing to life a letter by convict businesswoman Mary Reibey, the incredible colonial sketchbook by Edward Close, and the WWI photography of Frank Hurley.

Todd was fascinated by Hurley's composite images of the battlefields. As part of our display, *A Living Collection*, Todd selected a war photograph by Hurley taken between August 1917 and August 1918, and says: 'There's something magical about Hurley. He was "Photoshopping" before there were computers.'

ABOVE LEFT: TODD FULLER, PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK  
ABOVE RIGHT: FRANK HURLEY, *LOOKING OUT FROM THE ENTRANCE OF A CAPTURED PILL-BOX ON TO THE SHELL RAVAGED BATTLEFIELD*  
SEPIA-TONED PHOTOGRAPH, PXD 26/80

# NEWS

[www.onehundred.sl.nsw.gov.au](http://www.onehundred.sl.nsw.gov.au)

On 28 November 2009, 100 days before the March opening of the *ONE hundred* exhibition, we launched a website devoted to the centenary of the Mitchell Library.

We wanted to show our alphabet, created as part of the celebrations, and the website was the perfect way, releasing a new letter every second day. Each letter is made up of image fragments of maps, manuscripts and paintings housed in the Library, playfully combined into a unique creation.

Although this was the beginning of our site, it became a challenge to see what else we might showcase.

Of all the material we have shown on the web, my personal favourite is some of the 16 mm footage held below stairs — now digitised and more freely available. We have cut films with wonderful titles like *Surf Beach* or *The Drover* into bite-size clips to show some of the highlights.

Commonwealth Film Unit Productions made a number of these, but when I found *Surf Beach* I was transported back to the 1960s, sitting in front of the Steenbeck (one of the rare machines found in this city that play 16 mm).

All the things I had forgotten about a visit to the beach in those days came flooding back: hiring towels, paying to be sprayed with coconut oil, registering surfboards to ride the waves, the pageantry of the lifesavers and those fabulous towelling beach coats and sunglasses.

The Australian Wool Board production of *The Drover* is charming and immediately reveals the inspiration for so many poems, books and films. The Library's footage includes scenes such as a 1960s view of fabulous Sydney, long-forgotten landmarks and the Opera House being built.

The site also includes tours of the Library and interviews with curatorial staff who provide insights into their specialities. It really is worth a visit.

**ROBYN HOLT**

Project Director, 2010

BELOW: STILLS FROM *SURF BEACH*, 1965





## 8 March

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

An inspirational woman, Mary Reibey arrived in Sydney in 1792 aged 15, transported for horse stealing. Widowed with seven children at the age of 32, she took over her husband's business and within five years was said to be worth £20,000. In 1820, she visited England as a respected and wealthy woman. A letter by Mary Reibey features in the *ONE hundred* exhibition.

IMAGES: LETTER (SEE P. 13) AND WATERCOLOUR ON IVORY MINIATURE OF MARY REIBEY, MIN 76



## 9 March 1910

The Mitchell Library opens to the public. At the official opening the day before, the Minister of Public Instruction, JA Hogue, expressed 'the hope that access to the precious stores of knowledge reposing silently on the shelves of this beautiful building is not to be regarded as the peculiar privilege of the leisured class, the bookworm, or the literary trifle'.

IMAGE: MITCHELL LIBRARY OPENING CEREMONY, 8 MARCH 1910. SPF/SYDNEY - LIBRARIES - MITCHELL LIBRARY, 1910(1)



## 4 April

### EASTER SUNDAY

A Book of Hours, a prayer book for the laity, obtained its name from the series of devotions in honour of the Virgin Mary to be made during the eight canonical hours of the day. It was a highly desirable object for the 19th century book collector and this is one example of the collection assembled by David Scott Mitchell.

IMAGE: BOOK OF HOURS LATE 15TH CENTURY, SAFE 1/7D



*on this*

# DAY

*25 April*

## **ANZAC DAY**

The Library recently acquired the diary of Private Charles Hardy of the 19th Battalion, who served at Gallipoli and in France. It is a welcome addition to the Library's significant collection of World War I material, which includes maps, rare photographs from the trenches, and the diaries of more than 200 servicemen of varying rank (see p. 26).

IMAGE: LETTERS AND A SOLDIER'S MAGAZINE FROM PRIVATE CHARLES HARDY'S PAPERS, ML MSS 7931



*1 May*

## **MAY DAY**

An international agreement in the late 1880s declared 1 May, or May Day, the day of international labour.

IMAGE: EIGHT HOUR DAY DEMONSTRATION, 1915, V\*/EIGHT/7

# ONE HUNDRED

WORDS Paul Brunton, Senior Curator

What do Roni Levi, Joseph Banks, John Gould, Edward Close and Mary Reibey have in common? Together with 95 others, they form the exhibition *ONE hundred*. These 100 items are drawn from the original David Scott Mitchell bequest of 1907 and from the vast collections added to it since the Mitchell Library opened in 1910.

IMAGE: PERSPECTIVE VIEW  
OF SIR ASHTON LEVER'S  
MUSEUM, 30 MARCH 1785  
SARAH STONE  
WATERCOLOUR, ML 1230



This exhibition, though, is not 100 treasures of the Mitchell Library. As a celebration of the Mitchell's centenary, that would have been both too easy and too predictable. And, in any case, one point about a great research library is that every item which provides that 'eureka' moment for a researcher is *ipso facto* a treasure — whether it be the first depiction of the Southern Cross by Andrea Corsali in 1515 or the bogus election leaflet from a non-existent Islamic association distributed at the 2007 Federal election, both of which are included in the exhibition.

The 100 items were chosen because they each tell a remarkable story about an aspect of Australian or Pacific life and, together, show the range and depth of the Mitchell's internationally significant holdings. Familiar items will be seen in a new context and a number have never been shown before.

It was a daunting task to choose 100 items; though it was made much easier by the expert suggestions from my colleagues. There was considerable discussion about some items (blood on the floor); special pleadings; fine flights of rhetoric for the defence and ditto for the prosecution. But in the end there could be only 100 and there had to be winners and losers.

How do you circumscribe the Mitchell Library to just 100 items when the number of printed books alone is 600,000? I was inspired and guided by Lytton Strachey's memorable preface to his *Eminent Victorians* (1918).

Strachey, faced with the vast documentation of the Victorian era just as I was faced with the Mitchell's vast collection, wrote: 'The history of the Victorian Age will never be written: we know too much about it.' One could say the same thing about Australian history, thanks to the Mitchell Library's collection which enables and facilitates a continuing debate about our nation's, and region's, past and future.

Strachey's method, which became mine, was to:

... row out over that great ocean of material, and lower down into it, here and there, a little bucket, which will bring up to the light of day some characteristic specimen, from those far depths, to be examined with a careful curiosity [and to] shoot a sudden, revealing searchlight into obscure recesses, hitherto undivined.

Back to our initial quintet: Roni Levi, Joseph Banks, John Gould, Edward Close and Mary Reibey. These provide a foretaste of what the exhibition holds. With the exception of Gould, they are all recent acquisitions and have not been exhibited before.

The photographs of the shooting by police of Roni Levi on Bondi Beach on 28 June 1997, taken by Jean Pierre Bratanoff-Firgoff, became crucial evidence revealing the systematically flawed investigation of Levi's death. Bratanoff-Firgoff is a freelance photographer and, on this occasion, happened to be in the right place at the right time. His photographs contradicted claims that Levi, who was mentally ill and brandishing a knife, lunged at police. A result of this was the introduction of mandatory drug testing of New South Wales police involved in critical incidents.

In 2008, the Library was certainly in the right place at the right time when we were able to acquire from an American collector the first printed map, dated 1772, of Cook's discoveries on HMS *Endeavour*. No other copy exists in Australia and only one other in the world. The chart was engraved for Joseph Banks by John Bayly and is testament to Banks's burning ambition to undertake a second voyage to the Pacific following his botanical voyage of a lifetime on the *Endeavour*.



Surprisingly, though, Cook's major discovery that New Zealand is not part of a great southern landmass and the successful charting of the east coast of the Australian mainland are not the features on this chart but, instead, a largely empty Pacific Ocean. It appears that Banks, by visually demonstrating how much more there was to discover, bolstered his arguments for a second voyage.

The Admiralty did mount a second voyage, again under Cook. Banks could have gone if only he had not wanted to run the show – among other things requiring such extensive alterations to the ship that it almost toppled over. The Admiralty put its foot down and Banks went off in a huff.

John Gould is best known in Australia because of his monumental book *Birds of Australia*, published in London in 36 parts between 1840 and 1848 and containing 600 hand-coloured lithographs. Gould had travelled around Australia between 1838 and 1840 and every Australian species then known was illustrated, including 328 species new to science.



Our copy is unique; it is made up of the preliminary hand-coloured lithographs before the printed titles were added.

These were used as prototypes to guide the colourist and they include manuscript instructions. This copy was transferred to the Mitchell Library in 1947 from the Technological College in Sydney.

However, it is a mystery as to when it was acquired by the college and how such a significant item for the study of John Gould (who had died in London in 1881), ended up in the Antipodes.

OPPOSITE: DEATH OF RONI LEVI, BONDI BEACH 28 JUNE 1997, 2007  
JEAN PIERRE BRATANOFF-FIRGOFF  
PXA 1132

ABOVE LEFT: THE BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA, 1840-48  
JOHN GOULD  
SAFE X598.2/1-7

BELOW: JOURNAL KEPT ON BOARD HMS ENDEAVOUR 1768-71, JOSEPH BANKS  
S1/12-13





Edward Close's striking watercolour, *The costume of the Australasians*, painted in 1817, was retained by the family for almost 200 years until the Library purchased it at a sensational auction in Melbourne in mid-2009. 'Clothes maketh the man' was literally true in colonial New South Wales. Quality clothes could be worn by free men and convicts alike. This meant a convict could dress fashionably and respectably and completely deceive a free man about his true social status.

*The costume of the Australasians* gathered gentlemen, workers and convicts onto the one page, an assemblage — no matter how uncomfortable it made some people feel — that reflected the reality of colonial society. The gentlemen and officers, with their distinctive long coats and fine boots, mingle with workers and convicts in their short coats and coarser cut clothes. A gentleman carries a fashionable green umbrella, readily available in Sydney shops. Professional portrait painters rarely provided this level of information about their subjects — and they never would have painted convicts.

Mary Reibey's story is a spectacular Australian rags-to-riches tale which even after 200 years still enthral those who read it. At the age of 13, the orphaned Mary Haydock was sentenced to transportation for seven years for horse stealing. She arrived in Sydney, a convicted criminal and alone, in October 1792, aged 15, and immediately wrote a letter to her aunt Penelope Hope in Blackburn, Lancashire. In the letter, she exhibits that optimistic personality and perseverance which not only would help her cope with widowhood, and seven children, at the age of 32 (she had married the merchant, Thomas Reibey, in 1794) but also give her the strength to take over the running of his business interests. With such success did she pursue these that within five years she was reputed to be worth £20,000.

Eventually, she became a prosperous businesswoman in her own right with interests in trading ventures and property. The letter was purchased from a London bookseller in 1994 with assistance from the Reserve Bank of Australia which had honoured Reibey on a banknote.

Ranging in date from the late 1400s to the present day, *ONE hundred* includes manuscripts, pictures, maps, books, oral histories, and objects: a rollcall of the famous and the notorious; the quiet achievers and the noisy larrikins; the conventional and the rebels; the remembered and the unjustly forgotten, all with a fascinating story to tell. Who's in and who's out? Come and see.

**ONE hundred is open from 9 March to 16 June**

SUPPORTED BY



ABOVE: SKETCHBOOK, 1817  
EDWARD CHARLES CLOSE  
WATERCOLOUR, PXA 1187  
OPPOSITE: LETTER TO  
PENELOPE HOPE, 1792  
MARY REIBEY, ML MSS 5934

My Dear aunt  
Oct 8  
we arrived here on the 7<sup>th</sup> and I  
never better than we expected  
Board of ship but it looks  
Enough we shall but have  
and we shall have one for  
found of pork

gettable the  
The Governon  
Gives me very  
to each every  
But I will  
Oreford

F E A T U R E

*The*  
**LURE**  
*of the*  
**MITCHELL**



WORDS Richard Neville

**THE MITCHELL LIBRARY CAN OFFER**

**A THRILLING VOYAGE IN VAST,**

**UNCHARTED WATERS. MITCHELL LIBRARIAN**

**RICHARD NEVILLE RECALLS HOW**

**HE BECAME HOOKED BY THE LIBRARY.**

OPPOSITE: THE MITCHELL  
LIBRARIAN'S OFFICE IN THE  
ORIGINAL MITCHELL LIBRARY  
PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK







MALE AND FEMALE  
BLACK NATIVES,  
NEW SOUTH WALES, 1838  
JOHN CARMICHAEL  
ENGRAVING, FROM JAMES  
MACLEHOSE, *PICTURE OF  
SYDNEY AND STRANGER'S  
GUIDE TO NEW SOUTH  
WALES*, SYDNEY, 1838

The Mitchell Library has been part of my life since 1982. That was the year my Fine Arts lecturer at the University of Sydney, Joan Kerr, the late eminent scholar of Australian art, arranged for her students to visit the Library for an introduction to its facilities and collections as part of her course in colonial art.

Australia's bicentenary — 1988 — was looming. The records of Australian history were being strongly contested, particularly by Indigenous activists and their supporters. Joan loved the Library and was keen for her students to explore — albeit critically — its collections. She asked us to write an essay about an image made in Australia in 1838.

I chose to write about *Male and female black natives, New South Wales*, an etching by colonial engraver John Carmichael from the locally published 1838 guide book, *Picture of Sydney and Stranger's Guide to New South Wales*.

From the beginning I was hooked by the Library. The then Mitchell Library Reading Room (now the Friends Room) was cramped, busy, and oozed scholarly energy. I remember an imperious

Manning Clark striding into the reading room, surveying it briefly but deliberately, before departing. This seemed to me some kind of visceral connection to a great tradition of Australian history.

I enjoyed the forensic nature of my research tasks. There was not much known about John Carmichael except that he was possibly deaf. Census and emigration records revealed that he had arrived alone in Sydney from Edinburgh in 1825 as a 23-year-old. Bit by bit confirmation came that he was indeed deaf, and had trained in Edinburgh.

Soon I could claim to be a world expert — on the grounds of being the only one — on John Carmichael, an appealing notion to an undergraduate. My claim was short-lived: a deaf historian, Dr Breda Carty, soon took the mantle with a significant body of work on this courageous man.

In an era in which undergraduates talked semiotics, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, 'recovery work' — as archival research was dismissively known — was not fashionable. But I thought two things were important. Firstly, it was impossible to build a theoretical framework — which is important — without a broad knowledge of the evidence, much of it available in the Library's collections. Secondly, the colonial period was ripe — indeed still is — for more sophisticated analysis.

As with most projects begun in the Library's collections, it was difficult to contain it to the one

image. In moving out from *Male and female black natives* to contextualise the etching, it became clear that during the 1830s significantly large numbers of images, and texts, about Aboriginal people were published. This was in part a response to the new, very urban and essentially ‘tabloid’ markets created by the increase in free emigration to NSW during the 1830s.

Such compilations of images could only be pursued in the Mitchell’s collections. Its then card catalogues (although they can be uneven, the Mitchell’s were some of the best in the country) were consulted, newspapers scoured, magazines read, and hunches followed. This has always been the challenge: how to anticipate, through background knowledge and creative thinking, where relevant material might be. It has always been an advantage that the Mitchell is next door to the wonderful State Reference Library collections. These offered rich contextual support: being full of material which casts insights into what was happening in Australia.

My research moved from an Honours thesis on printed images of Aboriginal peoples in the 1830s, into a Masters on printmaking in Sydney before 1850. Most of this investigation took place in libraries and archives — not only the Mitchell and Dixson collections, but also in other great libraries such as the National Library and the State Library of Victoria. That libraries collect broadly for documentation and information rather than more narrowly for quality, as an art gallery might, creates a diversity and depth of record which expands our understanding of our cultural heritage and our history.

One night I was looking through my bank of black and white photographs of collection items (this was the decade before the internet changed everything!) when I realised that a full-length lithographic portrait of Bungaree, catalogued by this Library as being by



convict artist Charles Rodius, was in fact a copy of an oil portrait by Augustus Earle, and now held by the National Library. The lithograph was by — a quick check of my newspaper index card files confirmed this — Earle himself, and was the first portrait lithograph published in Australia.

The sum of these little triumphs is still addictive. There is the satisfaction of confirming a common understanding or the thrill of developing a contradictory theory. There is the pleasure in thinking through the strategies for locating new resources: I well remember my delight in discovering in the pamphlet files, house content sale catalogues from the 1840s which document, amongst hundreds of other artefacts, the types of pictures on the walls of middle-class colonists. Surprisingly, many colonists decorated their rooms with prints of Napoleon.

I have always loved the possibilities and unpredictability of the Mitchell Library’s collections. They are so big and so vast that voyages amongst them head off into wonderfully uncharted waters. Twenty-five years on, the practice of research is enhanced by the online world. Newspapers, once laboriously trawled through on microfilm, can now be searched online by keyword. The fundamentals, however, remain the same. Research is part of the process of creating a coherent narrative and analysis around a subject. It can be an exhilarating journey!

LEFT: *BUNGAREE*, 1826  
AUGUSTUS EARLE  
HAND-COLOURED  
LITHOGRAPH, P2/4  
BELOW: RICHARD NEVILLE  
MITCHELL LIBRARIAN  
PHOTO BY DIEU TAN



# INSIDE STORY



WORDS Laila Ellmoos



Petty thief and hawker, chronic alcoholic and Currency Lad, Joseph Orton Bragg was sentenced for the first in his long list of crimes in 1863 when he was just 13 years old. 'Being left homeless and destitute by parental drunkenness, and stung by the pangs of hunger', he would later write, 'I committed the offence of stealing a loaf of bread.'

Bragg was periodically incarcerated in the NSW prison system for almost 30 years. He taught himself to read and write in English, French and Latin during his long spells in solitary confinement at Berrima Gaol and it was here that he 'first experienced the deliciousness of thought', although he later believed he had cultivated 'a demon to torment me'.

Joe Bragg went to extraordinary lengths to pursue his studies while in gaol, including feigning insanity so he could be sent to solitary in the first place, and cutting his throat when he felt that 'the prison officials were driving me from my book'. This quest for learning was a critical part of Bragg's long and rocky path to salvation, and his eventual release from the prison system.

By 1886 he had formed a friendship with the Baptist reformer George Ardill, who was operating a number of homes for discharged prisoners throughout Sydney. Three years later Bragg penned *The Confessions of a Thief*, which Ardill sent to British psychologist Havelock Ellis.

Ellis discussed Bragg in quite some detail in the third edition of his seminal book *The Criminal*, claiming that 'on both sides Bragg came of insane and neurotic stocks'. Although not a flattering assessment, it is likely that this attention would have appealed to Bragg, who relished the limelight his notoriety brought. This was a man, after all, who tattooed his name and initials on his arm, and named not one, but two of his sons after himself. His second-born son was named after one of his aliases.

After his release from gaol, Bragg became a regular at Speakers Corner in the Domain where he related stories of his criminal days to the crowds, telling Ellis in 1898 that 'a good audience intoxicates and carries me away. I tell it everything.'

OPPOSITE: HISTORIAN LAILA ELLMOOS IN THE SIR WILLIAM DIXSON RESEARCH LIBRARY PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK  
BELOW: *CONFESSIONS OF A THIEF*, JOE BRAGG, BROOKS MANN & CO, SYDNEY, 1889 ML DSM/365/B SET PT 1 & 3





FAR LEFT: DARLINGHURST GAOL, 1891, HENRY LOUIS BERTRAND, WATERCOLOUR SVI/GAO/DARH/2

LEFT: A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE PENAL PROBLEM JOSEPH ORTON BRAGG SYDNEY, C. 1900S SRL S364/9

I have never been to gaol, not even close, but I share with Bragg a love of books and reading. And so it is fitting that I have become acquainted with him by reading the published accounts of his time in prison, which are today part of the Mitchell Library's rich collection.

I came to know the Library in the final years of my undergraduate degree in history, when visits to the Mitchell Library Reading Room became the highlight of my week, and, as a historian working in the heritage field, the State Library of NSW has been an integral part of my professional life since this time.

But it was in 2007 when I became the recipient of the National and State Libraries Australasia Honorary Fellowship that I came to know the collections of the Mitchell Library in greater depth. My topic explored first-person accounts of life inside NSW gaols from the mid nineteenth century through to the 1920s, a period when the prison system was evolving from convict outpost to penitentiary.

The system was overhauled in 1867 with the introduction of a new set of regulations, which placed the most severe class of prisoner in 'separate treatment'. Prisoners in separate treatment were kept in solitary confinement for up to 23 hours a day and had to wear a mask so that other prisoners would not recognise them. A separate treatment prisoner could 'neither read aloud, sing, whistle, dance, nor make any noise in his cell, exercise yard, in the corridor or chapel'. They were forbidden to communicate except with prison guards, and were not allowed to send or receive letters.

Rebecca Ross is another of the handful of prisoners and ex-prisoners who wrote about 'doing time' in this period. She was a teacher and journalist and by the turn of the century was the 'editress' of a monthly journal, *The Australian Woman*.

In June 1904, she was charged and arrested for conspiring with three others for swearing falsely in the trial of her brother Norman Manly Ross. He had been arrested for deserting his four-year-old daughter and stealing money from her mother.

Rebecca Ross was singled out as the ringleader in the conspiracy, and was given a sentence of a year and 11 months, which she served at Darlinghurst and Bathurst gaols. Some four years after her release, Ross produced a tract titled *Gaol Life: Prison Administration in NSW: The Humane System Criticised*. It was an appraisal of the reforms under Frederick Neitenstein, who was Comptroller-General of Prisons from 1896 to 1909.

Ross's chief aim was to provoke a 'searching inquiry into the whole subject of Prison Administration in NSW'. But the dominant theme is the oppressiveness and monotony of the daily routine, and, most evocatively, the power of solitude to break down fortitude in spirit:

For we were all there ... murderers and pickpockets, abortionists and shop-lifters, thieves and robbers, 'drunks' and 'vags', guilty or innocent ... But whatever we were, good or bad, innocent or guilty, sensitive or callous, night in gaol ... with its long hours of loneliness found the weak spots in our armour and mercilessly broke down our barrier of cheerfulness.

For others, solitude evoked a creative response as well as being reformatory. James Francis Dwyer, for example, looked forward to the long hours alone in his cell to reflect on his wrongdoings: 'Now in a white washed cell I could sit by myself on a little wooden stool and think.' While in Goulburn Gaol, Dwyer began his career as a writer. Here he describes the process of writing a story called 'The Lost Button':

... that night I wrote on my slate the story of the 'dark cells'. And that night I knew that little story would go round the world. Regretfully I rubbed it from my slate in the morning, but that same evening I wrote it again. Forced to rub it out lest a prying warder would see it, I again put it down with loving care. This re-writing and rubbing out continued for a month. I was the victim of the tale.

Dwyer later befriended one of the warders, who smuggled out his stories and poems and sent them to the editor of *The Bulletin*, Jules Francois Archibald. Some of these were published at the time; others on Dwyer's release. After he left gaol in 1902, Dwyer travelled overseas and became an internationally popular author.



Prisoner 32, otherwise known as Henry Lawson, was also busy writing poetry while in gaol. In 1909 he told publisher Joseph Lockley that he had just completed a poem, 'Song of the Prison', but was 'not allowed to write here and have to keep constantly repeating it to remember'. Like Dwyer, Lawson had to employ clandestine means to disseminate his writings from the confines of gaol, including memorisation and cultivating the friendship of sympathetic warders to smuggle them out.

In their writings, prisoners and ex-prisoners like Bragg, Ross, Dwyer and Lawson recounted the monotony of day-to-day life in gaol and the hardships endured, or offered critiques of the prison system. They also showed frustration at their loss of liberty and separation from family and friends, as well as remorse about the crimes they committed. So, while incarceration was meant to silence them, they expressed 'the transcendent value of the self' through their writing and other creative outpourings.

ABOVE: GAOL LIFE: PRISON ADMINISTRATION IN NSW: THE HUMANE SYSTEM CRITICISED, REBECCA ROSS BEATTY, RICHARDSON & CO.: SYDNEY, C. 1908 SRL S365.991/1

BELOW: PRISON RECORDS OF REBECCA ROSS AND JOSEPH ORTON BRAGG COURTESY OF STATE RECORDS NSW

LAILA ELLMOOS IS THE HISTORIAN AT THE NSW GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT'S OFFICE. HER HISTORY OF THE PEAT ISLAND CENTRE ON THE HAWKESBURY RIVER, *OUR ISLAND HOME*, IS PUBLISHED IN MARCH 2010.



# preservation

## Solidarity and pride

A team of State Library conservators has preserved one of our largest and most visually striking objects for display in *ONE hundred*, our centenary exhibition.

A trade union banner, created for the Sydney branch of the Federated Society of Boilermakers, Iron and Steel Shipbuilders of Australia, has been treated to reveal its original colour and detail and stop further damage. Conservators worked over several months to ensure that the banner, a symbol of the solidarity movement in NSW, could take its place in the exhibition.

The banner's two oil-painted surfaces have a magenta silk border. One panel features a kneeling figure surrounded by scroll work and decorated with native Australian flowers. Images of a steam train, a furnace, and the Hawkesbury River rail bridge evoke the union members' labour. The '8 hours' symbol has been overpainted with '6 hours', indicating the banner's later use following the achievement of the eight-hour day. The other side shows the warship *Australia*, which was in operation from 1913 to 1919. The presence of the warship was used to date the banner.

Produced by master painters and decorators Althouse and Geiger, the banner would have been carried stretched across a large frame and displayed with pride at Eight Hour Day processions.

The Eight Hour Day movement had its beginnings in Britain, and is based on the maxim of an ideal life based on a balance of 'eight hours labour, eight hours rest and eight hours recreation'. The movement galvanised workers, encouraging different trades to cooperate towards a common objective.

BELOW: 8 HOUR JUBILEE DEMONSTRATION AND ART UNION, 1905, POSTER PXD 2/8

OPPOSITE TOP: EIGHT HOUR PROCESSION, 4 OCTOBER 1909, STAR, SYDNEY, NSW SV\*/EIGHT/1

OPPOSITE: TRADE UNION BANNER OF THE FEDERATED SOCIETY OF BOILERMAKERS IRON & STEEL SHIPBUILDERS OF AUSTRALIA, C. 1913-19 ALTHOUSE & GEIGER CANVAS & SILK, XR 4



Held in October each year, the Eight Hour Day or Labour Day processions were the major festival in the Australian trade union calendar. There was a strong sense of solidarity and pride in one's workmanship, as workers marched with their unions to the accompaniment of local brass bands. Sporting events usually took place after the procession.





The banner is one of two in our collection, and one of few surviving examples. It was in poor condition due to extensive use, past storage conditions and the 'inherent vice' of the silk and canvas reacting against each other. The banner's silk border was worn and abraded. The oil-painted canvases were covered by a 'white bloom' surface discoloration. Both surfaces were generally dirty and had creases, tears and lost pieces of material.





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- 01 LAYING OUT THE BANNER IN THE DOMAIN TO DEACTIVATE MOULD
  - 02, 03 CLEANING THE PAINTED SURFACE
  - 04 REPAIRING THE SILK FABRIC
  - 05 SURFACE CLEANING THE SILK BORDER
  - 06 TURNING THE BANNER OVER FOR TREATMENT
- OPPOSITE: CONSERVATION TREATMENT OF THE TRADE UNION BANNER

While researching treatment possibilities, the Library's conservators consulted with their textile colleagues from the Powerhouse Museum and a specialist paintings conservator. Current conservation practice aims to stop deterioration of historically significant material, rather than restoring it to appear as new. The materials and techniques used in the treatment of the banner can be reversed.

At the beginning of the treatment, the banner was exposed to 10 minutes of sunlight on a pre-prepared, supervised area in the Domain. This measure was used to deactivate mould spores on the surface of the banner.

The banner was cleaned in sections. First it was brush-vacuumed to remove loose dirt particles. It was then cleaned with water-based solvent swabs to remove the white bloom. The tears in the silk border were repaired with silk crepeline dyed to match its magenta colour. The painted canvas was repaired with a polyester fabric. The painted canvas surfaces were then consolidated to stabilise the fragile and brittle paint areas.

With the banner ready for exhibition, a new storage system has been developed to preserve the banner after its display in *ONE hundred* and into the future.

—  
LANG NGO, JENNIFER O'CALLAGHAN,  
AGATA ROSTEK-ROBAK



FEDERATED  
BOILERMAKERS

SOCIETY OF  
BUILDERS AUSTRALIA

IRON & STEEL SHIP

UNITY IS STRENGTH

ESTD 1873

SYDNEY BRANCH NO 1

# new acquisitions

## A soldier's words

A recent purchase that sparked media interest was the diary of Private Charles Hardy of the 19th Battalion 1st Australian Imperial Force. In the face of spirited competition from a private overseas collector, we secured this piece of World War I history at auction, along with Hardy's pay book and several letters home to his sweetheart.

A Sydney man, Hardy enlisted at Liverpool in 1915, aged 21. He served at Gallipoli, in the Middle East and on the Western Front, where he was wounded in July 1917. Discharged because of his injuries, he returned home and settled in the Seaforth-Balgowlah area.

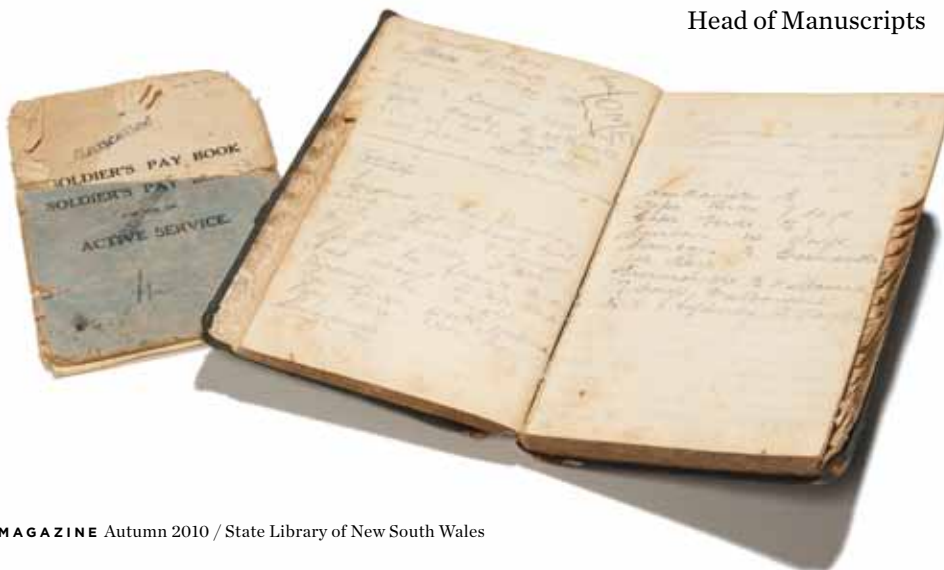
Hardy's observations are frank and poignant. He describes his surroundings as 'hell on earth', and writes of artillery peppering the trenches and the stench of dead bodies lying in no-man's-land. Hardy records his surprise to see so many unmarked graves in a cemetery on Lemnos, remarking that 'it is one of the prettiest little graveyards I ever looked through'. Several entries list mates killed in action. One laconic entry notes, 'Corporal Wilson got his head blown off'.



Some pages, however, are more akin to the travel journal of a young man abroad. He writes of visiting the Cairo Zoo, swimming at Alexandria, and seeing beautiful paintings inside Greek churches. He lists local words and their meanings.

Acquiring the diary of Private Charles Hardy continues a collecting tradition begun in 1919 when the Principal Librarian, WH Ifould, advertised in newspapers and servicemen's publications that 'Good prices will be paid for good material'. The Library's collection includes the diaries of more than 200 servicemen, as well as maps and photographs from the trenches.

**TRACY BRADFORD**  
Head of Manuscripts



PRIVATE CHARLES HARDY'S  
WORLD WAR I DIARY,  
PAY BOOK AND LETTERS  
INCLUDING A PHOTOGRAPH  
OF SAILORS BELIEVED TO  
INCLUDE HARDY'S BROTHER  
1915-16, ML MSS 7931



COVER DESIGN FOR THE HOME MAGAZINE, 1930  
ADRIAN FEINT, GOUACHE ON PAPER, COURTESY OF THE ESTATE OF ADRIAN FEINT

## For the modern woman

Complementing our almost complete collection of *The Home* magazine, published from 1920 until 1942, the Library recently purchased an original cover design drawing by Adrian Feint.

The monthly *Home* magazine, published by Sydney Ure Smith, was subtitled the 'Australian Journal of Quality'. Authoritative and influential in matters of taste, design and style, the magazine's target audience was upper middle class Australian women.

Articles included fashion and cosmetics, interior decoration, social and cultural events, travel destinations, and other perceived interests of the modern woman.

Advocating an active lifestyle, being stylish, independent, and being seen, the magazine definitely catered for its target audience.

Adrian Feint (1894–1971) – painter, printmaker, bookplate designer, illustrator, commercial artist and, later, gallery director – provided cover designs for *The Home* magazine which were characteristically sleek and vibrant. Other cover artists included Hera Roberts, Thea Proctor and Douglas Annand.

Typically, Feint's covers featured vivid colours, bold shapes with sharp angles, sleek forms and dramatic viewpoints and, almost always, a sophisticated modern woman.

For this cover, prepared for the October 1930 issue, she is seen wearing a futuristic-looking Hinkler hat, inspired by Bert Hinkler's flying cap during his 1928 solo flight from England to Australia. Feint's gouache artwork incorporates symbols of the progress and power of the industrial age, encapsulated in the aeroplanes at a busy aerodrome, and an ocean liner.

His cover sends a message not only of the confident new woman but also of Australia, an increasingly confident part of the international community as rapid industrial and technological change brought the nation and its people closer to the rest of the world.

—  
**LOUISE ANEMAAT**  
Head of Pictures

A L I V I N G C O L L E C T I O N

As a writer and a reader, there's a lot to get excited about when you set foot inside the Mitchell Library. You can feel your ideas standing a little closer — close enough to reach.

# a living/collection

WORDS Markus Zusak



For me, though, the most exciting thing about the Mitchell Library is that you can come here looking for something specific and walk away with the unexpected. Last December, I was researching photos of the Harbour Bridge, and I came across this beautiful panoramic drawing of one of the bridges we *might* have had.

The history of the bridge is so dramatic already, but I love the fact that we also had these alternative ideas for its design. For me, the attraction of that thought ties in with writing, and with the Mitchell Library itself. In any library, but particularly in the Mitchell (and at the risk of sounding a bit sentimental — but who cares?), so many ideas and possibilities are just waiting for us to discover them. I was originally looking for the photo of John Bradfield standing at the top of the open arch — one foot each side — but I was lucky enough to find this suspension bridge design instead. Even after seeing different plans in works like Peter Lalor’s excellent book, *The Bridge*, there was something special about looking at one of the original drawings. The thrill of a tangent swept me away. I was involved immediately in an alternate history. I was transported to another Sydney — to what might have been.

OPPOSITE: MARCUS ZUSAK  
IN THE MITCHELL LIBRARY  
READING ROOM

ABOVE AND BELOW:  
SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE  
SUSPENSION DESIGN, 1912  
JOHN JOB CREW  
BRADFIELD, 1867–1943  
ARCHITECTURAL AND  
TECHNICAL DRAWING  
(PEN & WASH)  
XV1/BRI/SYD HAR/1



In terms of writing, there is also a great deal of time spent planning and imagining, trying and failing. Beneath each book I’ve ever completed, there is every idea that didn’t survive. The irony, of course, is that this cavalcade of failed attempts and crooked moments is what gives the book its foundations. If a book is a bridge between writer and reader, it’s the countless pages of work that the reader *doesn’t* see that allows the crossing to take place. Often, there are also a few good ideas that just don’t make the cut, which makes me realise that sometimes a book’s worth might also be found in the quality of what we have to leave out.

Which brings me again to this drawing, and the questions surrounding it. Would Sydney still be Sydney with a suspension bridge, or a cantilever? What sort of nickname would we use instead of “The Old Coat Hanger”? What stories would stand in the place of the ones we treasure now? Whatever we imagine, this proposal paints a stunning picture of what might have been — but I also like to think it gives us an even greater appreciation of the incredible bridge we have.

**A SECTION OF BRADFIELD’S BRIDGE  
DESIGN WILL BE ON DISPLAY AT THE  
LIBRARY FROM 9 MARCH**

#### **A LIVING COLLECTION**

This display runs alongside our *ONE hundred* exhibition. It illustrates some of the ways that writers and artists use the Mitchell Library collections.

*A Living Collection* features both new acquisitions and long-standing material that has inspired art or fiction, or has informed research.

Each contributor has written about why the chosen item is significant for them, with their selection on display for a short period during the exhibition.

The following people are contributors to *A Living Collection*:

Todd Fuller  
Linda Jaivin  
Grace Karskens  
Lex Marinos  
Siobhan McHugh  
Geoffrey McSkimming  
Markus Zusak.



partners

*Discover Collections* is an online initiative that dynamically transforms the way the Library provides access to our collections. Through the generosity and support of many benefactors, we now have over 23 engaging and informative stories.

[www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover\\_collections](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections)

# building a strong Foundation



## Women cricketers

*Discover Collections: Cricket in Australia* now includes the story of female cricketers in New South Wales and Australia. From the first official match for women in 1886 right up until the present day, women have been enthusiastic participants in the sport.

The first international matches for women were played in Australia when the English women's team toured in 1934–35. This tour was significant as it was the first time the two countries had met on the pitch since the controversial bodyline tour two years earlier. The fairness of the English women's play was a major factor in restoring cricketing goodwill between Australia and England.

The rest of the 20th century saw women's cricket played at all levels in Australia and overseas at increasing levels of professionalism. Today, Australia is one of 11 countries competing in international women's cricket and the national team, the Southern Stars, is currently ranked number one in the world in both one-day and Test cricket.

Thanks to the generosity of sponsor Sir Ron Brierley, we have digitised a quirky selection of cricketing material, including photographs and ephemera, as well as a unique collection of scrapbooks kept by New South Wales cricket player and administrator Lorna Thomas, whose papers are held in the Mitchell Library. These are now all available online.

[www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover\\_collections/society\\_art/cricket/](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/society_art/cricket/)

IMAGE: UNIDENTIFIED WOMEN'S CRICKET TEAM, C. 1930S FROM HOOD COLLECTION PART II: [SPORTS, VIGORO AND WOMEN'S CRICKET], PHOTOGRAPH BY SAM HOOD PXE 789 (V.55) / 9



# Darling Point subdivision plans

The Library has a wonderful collection of over 40,000 subdivision plans, including several hundred relating to the Darling Point area. Dating from the 1850s to the 1930s, these plans advertise the subdivision and sale of land, and tell the story of urban development in the area. Visually striking, they range in format from hand-drawn surveyors' plans to elaborate colour lithographed posters. They now provide a valuable resource for genealogists, local historians and art lovers.

Darling Point's rugged terrain and isolation made it virtually uninhabitable in the early days of the colony, but as land was cleared and subdivided, it was opened up for settlement. The first land grant was made to James Holt in 1833. By the 1850s, most of the land was taken up by private individuals.

Some of Sydney's most wealthy and influential people settled in Darling Point, including surveyor-general Sir Thomas Mitchell and businessman Thomas Sutcliffe Mort. Their grand estates were the envy of Sydney.

However, in the early 1900s, with urban development and population growth, these large estates were broken up and the land was sold as smaller allotments.

This online story is part of *Discover Collections*, thanks to the generosity of Belinda Hutchinson AM and Roger Massy-Greene.

[www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover\\_collections/people\\_places/east/](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/people_places/east/)

IMAGE: (FRONT) DARLING POINT, 26 BUILDING SITES, 1883, JOHN SANDS, D3/43 (BACK) DARLING POINT, CARTHONA ESTATE, 1912, F CUNNINGHAME & CO. LTD D3/34



## Library Circle

The Library Circle is comprised of people who have demonstrated a deep commitment to the Library and its vast and unique collections through bequests. A bequest is a provision in your will that names the recipient or recipients of your estate. In making a bequest to the State Library of NSW Foundation, you may wish to specify an amount of money or a percentage of your estate, the remainder of your estate, a book collection or work of art, or other items such as shares or real estate.

The Library Circle was established to acknowledge the generosity and support of State Library benefactors and membership is open to anyone whose Library bequest has

been confirmed. Members of the Library Circle enjoy an interesting and varied program of events and exclusive functions that reflect the work of the Library and demonstrate the important role it plays in the community. On 7 December, the Library Circle held a special Christmas luncheon in the Jean Garling Room.

If you are passionate about supporting the State Library of NSW, and would like to leave a bequest or planned gift please contact the Foundation on (02) 9273 1593 or email [foundation@sl.nsw.gov.au](mailto:foundation@sl.nsw.gov.au).

IMAGE: KEN BLOXSOM, KEVIN HEWITT, LAWRENCE HINCHLIFFE, REGINA SUTTON, PAM CONNOR, MARILYN ENDLIN, IAN MCLACHLAN AT THE LIBRARY CIRCLE LUNCHEON ON 7 DECEMBER

# Volunteer news: ACP Magazines archive

Over the past six months a diligent group of Volunteers has been counting, rehousing and entering data from the Australian Consolidated Press Magazines Ltd archive which has recently been donated to the State Library. The archive of 185,000 photographic negatives is a treasure-house of mid 20th century Australian visual history.

‘No collection currently held by this institution is as large, as comprehensive or as interesting’, explains Alan Davies, Curator of Photography. ‘Not all the negatives in the archive were published, so many of these images are unknown and some will throw new light on the social history of Australia.’



/01

- 01 VOLUNTEERS  
JOHN RYRIE (FRONT)  
AND JOHN KERR
- 02 BUYING NEW SEASON'S  
COSTUMES AT JANTZEN  
23 AUGUST 1938  
PHOTOGRAPH BY IVAN  
IVES, ACP ARCHIVE
- 03 TEENAGERS DANCING  
KINGS CROSS, SYDNEY  
1949, PHOTOGRAPHER  
UNKNOWN

/03



/02



friends

Being a Friend of the State Library gives you a different perspective on the Library. You'll enjoy a closer involvement with our work and contribute to the Library's exciting revitalisation. As a Friend you will receive a wealth of privileges and benefits. You will meet like-minded people, have exclusive access to our private Friends Room, an exclusive subscription to this magazine, invitations to unique events and discounts at our cafe and shop.

# for our friends



ABOVE: MILES FRANKLIN'S WARATAH CUP AND SAUCER C. 1904, R230 A & B PRESENTED BY THE MISSES BRIDLE, 1956

RIGHT: SIR WILLIAM DIXSON RESEARCH LIBRARY

BELOW: PAUL BRUNTON SENIOR CURATOR

## Events

To acknowledge the Mitchell Library's contribution to the cultural and intellectual life of Australia, a program of special talks, tours and events has been planned for 2010.

- Free Friends exhibition viewing of *ONE hundred* and curator's talk by Paul Brunton (pictured left), Wednesday 10 March at 10.30 am.
- Free Foundation members viewing of *ONE hundred* and curator's talk by Paul Brunton, Thursday 11 March at 5.30 pm.



## Tours

These special Inside OUT backstage tours (see p. 4) are offered free to all Friends of the State Library on:

- Tuesday 13 April from 12.30 to 1.30 pm
- Tuesday 13 April from 5.30 to 6.30 pm
- Thursday 15 April from 5.30 to 6.30 pm.

For more information on events and tours please call (02) 9273 1593 or go to [www.sl.nsw.gov.au/events](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/events)

## Joining and renewing

For existing Friends please note that renewals will now be one month later on 31 March 2010 not 28 February 2010. Existing Friends will get one month FREE! A new-look Friends benefits package, in conjunction with the centenary celebrations of the Mitchell Library, will be announced shortly.

**FOR NEW FRIENDS ENQUIRIES PLEASE GO TO**

**[www.sl.nsw.gov.au/support](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/support)**

**OR CONTACT US AT:**

**State Library of New South Wales Foundation**

**Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000**

**Phone: (02) 9273 1593**

**Fax: (02) 9273 1270**

**Email: [friends@sl.nsw.gov.au](mailto:friends@sl.nsw.gov.au)**

H I G H L I G H T S

*recent highlights*



/01



/02



/03



/05



/04



/06

- 01 MORRIS GISSING SHOWS HIS FATHER'S WWI DIARY TO HIS GRANDCHILDREN 24 NOVEMBER 09
- 02 AN 'OUT OF THE VAULTS' VIEWING 5 NOVEMBER 09
- 03 CAIRO JIM LEADS A TOUR OF THE LIBRARY 15 OCTOBER 09
- 04 REGINA SUTTON, PETER TINSLAY AND DAVID MALOUF AT THE AUSTRALIAN ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR, HOSTED BY THE LIBRARY 12-14 NOVEMBER 09
- 05 THE SINGERS OF ST LAURENCE PERFORM AT THE FRIENDS CHRISTMAS CONCERT 27 NOVEMBER 09
- 06 BROWSING AT THE BOOK FAIR



/07



/08



/09



/10



/11



/13



/12



/14

- 07 ALFIE HENSHAW-HILL PERFORMING AT THE AUSTRALIAN POETRY SLAM 09 NSW FINAL 13 NOVEMBER 09
- 08 ANNETTE FALLON AT THE AUSTRALIAN POETRY SLAM 09 NSW FINAL
- 09 PREMIER'S READING CHALLENGE AWARD WINNERS VISIT THE LIBRARY 2 DECEMBER 09
- 10 VIRGINIA LLOYD, GERMAINE GREER, LARISSA BEHRENDT AND BONNY CASSIDY AT A SYDNEY PEN TALK ON 'LEGACY', 18 NOVEMBER 09
- 11 A WORKSHOP ON PRESERVING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY, 27 NOVEMBER 09
- 12 GWYN CURRAN, LORRAINE ROOK AND PATRICIA GIBSON AT THE VOLUNTEERS CHRISTMAS PARTY 4 DECEMBER 09
- 13 LUCY MILNE, NICHOLAS PICKARD AND VIVIENNE SKINNER AT THE LIBRARY COUNCIL CHRISTMAS PARTY 14 DECEMBER 09
- 14 THE ORAVA STRING QUARTET AT THE LIBRARY COUNCIL CHRISTMAS PARTY

PHOTOS BY SCOTT WAJON  
BRUCE YORK AND SARAH HERMAN

# the library shop

Open 7 days  
(02) 9273 1611  
libshop@sl.nsw.gov.au  
www.sl.nsw.gov.au/shop



Magnets



T-shirts



Postcards



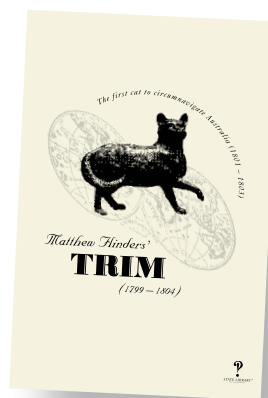
An exciting new range of Library merchandise is coming!

To celebrate the Mitchell centenary, the Library Shop has commissioned a range of merchandise featuring highlights from the *ONE hundred* exhibition, Mitchell Library architectural features, the new logo and icons from the collection.

The range will be launched along with the *ONE hundred* exhibition.

A selection from the range is pictured here.

See [www.sl.nsw.gov.au/shop](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/shop)



## STOP PRESS

Back in stock:  
our much-loved  
Trim teatowels  
and T-shirts

# “Q&A Jane Bennett

Featured in our *ONE hundred* exhibition is Jane Bennett's striking landscape painting of the Anzac Bridge and Pyrmont. The award-winning artist is inspired by the constantly changing harbour.

## WHAT FIRST FASCINATED YOU ABOUT PYRMONT?

From the 1980s, Pyrmont represented the end of the inner city industrial era. I realised how radically the area was going to change and that I was painting history.

## HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THE NEW BRIDGE?

I felt hopeful when I set out to paint the Anzac Bridge in 1995. It was tall enough to allow ships to pass underneath, so it seemed to promise that a vestige of the working harbour would stay. But it also made Pyrmont more accessible, and development more desirable.

## ARE YOU AFRAID OF HEIGHTS?

I do suffer from vertigo. Painting from the top of a bridge pylon nearly killed me but I wasn't going to let anyone see that I was scared.

## WHAT IS THE ADVANTAGE OF PAINTING ON LOCATION?

You can see a landscape in different lights and use the most dramatic shadows to enhance the scene, while

staying true to its spirit. Being on site for up to 12 hours a day, I see things I couldn't predict. Of course you have to put up with the harsh sun, the canvas blowing in the wind and insects drowning in your paint.

## HOW DO PEOPLE REACT TO YOUR WORK?

They spend hours looking for where they live and other places they know. In *Closing the gap* (see overleaf), I hope people feel the exhilaration, as though they could slide down those cables.

## DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE WORK BY ANOTHER ARTIST IN THE LIBRARY'S COLLECTION?

I have always admired Jessie Traill's elegant sketches of Sydney Harbour Bridge under construction. She knew what bridges meant to people, and the freedom they offered.

## WHAT IS YOUR LATEST CHALLENGE?

I'm painting streetscapes in Victoria Street, Darlinghurst, before a new St Vincent's cancer institute is built.



## WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

In the best still-life painting you can see the fruit rotting before your eyes and it reminds you of your own mortality. Industrial landscapes can give the same sense that everything around us is temporary.

## WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR WORK?

I've visited over 100 building sites and I've seen the glamorous side and the underbelly – how it all fits together. Art has given me a licence and a reason to do this.

PHOTO BY BRUCE YORK



*Far*  
OUT

Jane Bennett's *Closing the gap* (1995) is part of *ONE hundred*, our centenary exhibition of remarkable stories from the Mitchell Library.