

NLA PUBLISHING SPOTLIGHT

Ellis Rowan: A Life In Pictures

by Christine Morton-Evans

Oddly, I was first introduced to Ellis Rowan via the eighteenth-century English artist John Glover. I was viewing an exhibition of Glover's work at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, in Launceston, when I wandered into an adjoining room and was confronted by a wall full of the most dramatic floral watercolours I'd ever seen. I must admit that I had never heard of Ellis Rowan and tried to buy the exhibition catalogue, but there was not one to be found, as this was the last day of her showing. Determined to find out more about this fabulous painter, I began my search on returning to the mainland.

Several years of research resulted in the publication of my biography of her, *The Flower Hunter: The Remarkable Life of Ellis Rowan*. In such a book there is only room for a few illustrations, so this new work concentrates less on Rowan's life and more on her art. In it, I have tried to follow her travels through the pictures that resulted from them, ranging from the exotica of Far North Queensland, through the glorious wild flowers of Western Australia, right up to the highlands of New Guinea, where she travelled in her 70s, much to everyone's astonishment.

There is one great and abiding mystery that overshadows all others in an exploration of the life and works of Ellis Rowan, and that is why a woman who was so revered in her day, was so talented an artist, and who produced over 3,000 paintings in her lifetime has been all but forgotten in her own country. In 1927, the journalist Henry Tardent, one of Ellis's greatest admirers, published a book entitled *Mrs Ellis Rowan and Her Contributions to Australian Art and Science*, in which he asked 'what has Australia done to honour and commemorate the name of one who has done so much for her?' He answered his own question: 'Up to now very little.' Here we are in 2020 and I fear little has changed, but I hope this book will help make Rowan's work better known and encourage people to visit the National Library in Canberra, where her magnificent works are stored.

Christine Morton-Evans | Author

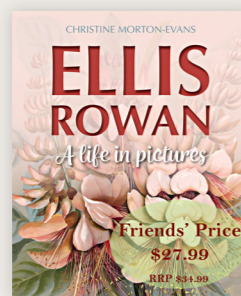
NATIONAL LIBRARY BOOKSHOP SPECIAL OFFER FOR FRIENDS

Friends will receive a 20 per cent discount off *Ellis Rowan: A Life in Pictures* when purchased between 1 March 2020 and 31 May 2020, online and instore.

To claim your 20% discount on *Ellis Rowan: A Life in Pictures* in the online shop, use the promotional code **FRAUT20** at the checkout.

You can use this code to also apply the usual Friends 15% discount* to other eligible online purchases.

* Discount does not apply to limited-edition prints, discounted and remaindered stock, newspapers, stamps, copy cards, magazines and vouchers.



FRIENDS EVENTS

Bookings: nla.gov.au/whats-on or 02 6262 1698

Meet the Members

Discover the interesting and diverse group that is the Friends of the National Library of Australia at this casual networking event.

Wednesday 18 March | 5.30pm

Friends Lounge

Free (includes refreshments) | Friends only

Coffee with the Curator: Australian Dreams

Explore our newest exhibition, *Australian Dreams: Picturing our Built World*, on a special tour with Curator Matthew Jones. Ask questions and discover more over tea and scones following the tour.

Wednesday 1 April | 10.30am

Exhibition Gallery and Friends Lounge

\$17.50 (includes refreshments) | Friends only, places limited

The Legacy of E.C. Manfred: An Architect's Dream

Hear from Community Heritage Grant recipients who have documented the life and drawings of English-born architect, E.C. Manfred. See some of the beautiful original material and learn much more about the architectural style of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Wednesday 22 April | 12.30pm (light lunch from 12pm)

Friends Lounge and Conference Room

\$25 Friends; \$30 non-members

White Gloves: A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson

View our recent acquisition of personal papers of renowned poet A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson. Including manuscripts from some of his best-known poems, diaries, photographs, sketches and letters, you will be intrigued by what you find in this collection.

Tuesday 12 May | 6pm

Conference Room

\$25 Friends; \$30 non-members

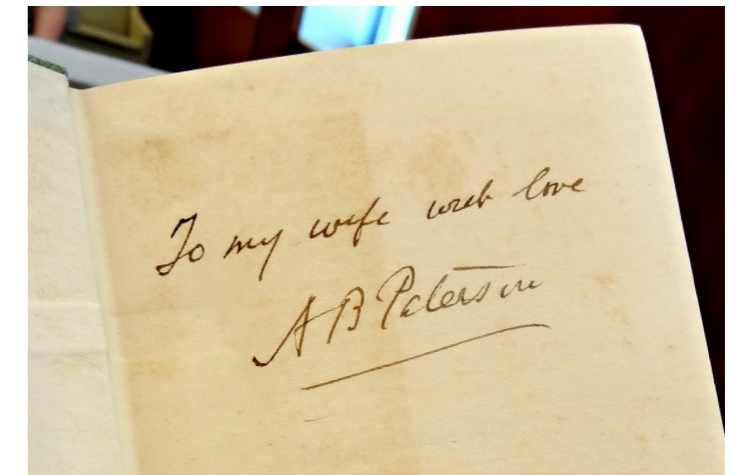
DISCOUNT CODE FOR LIBRARY EVENTS

To claim your 15 per cent discount on ticketed Library events, bookings must be online at nla.gov.au/bookings and the discount code **FRAUT20** entered when booking. This code is valid from 1 March 2020 to 31 May 2020 and does not apply to Friends events (select the member's ticket option for these) or events that are free of charge.

FRIENDS OF THE
NATIONAL LIBRARY
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AUTUMN 2020

The Papers of A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson



Inscription by A.B. Paterson to his wife.

The National Library is excited about its recent acquisition of the personal archive of A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson. Accumulated by Paterson over his lifetime, the papers were in the possession of four generations of his family before being acquired by the Library.

The papers complement other Paterson material in the Library's collections, including the papers of Rose Paterson (Banjo's mother) and the original 1895 composition and melody of *Waltzing Matilda* by Christina Macpherson. The Paterson papers are in good company alongside other literary collections housed in the Library, such as those of Henry Lawson, Henry Handel Richardson, Christina Stead and Patrick White.

The papers represent numerous aspects of Paterson's life, from the personal to the professional. Of particular significance are the drafts of many of his poems, and an 1895 version of *Waltzing Matilda* in Paterson's own handwriting. Other highlights include correspondence; diaries; a significant body of drafts, valuable for what they reveal about Paterson's writing and editing processes; a range of photographs; his records as a war correspondent; and an unpublished memoir titled 'The Life and Times of A B Paterson'. Perhaps some of the most poignant inclusions are letters and personal book dedications to his wife and children.

The papers also describe the literary society in which he circulated, with tales of the friends and acquaintances whose company and correspondence he shared. Henry Lawson once sent him a humble plea for assistance and Rudyard Kipling jotted down a delightful piece of prose on a menu. The papers help to provide a 'whole life' context to this remarkable character of Australia's history.

The Friends' annual White Gloves event on Tuesday 12 May will focus on the Paterson papers.

Melanie Olde | Friends Executive Officer

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends

Greetings and welcome to the first Friends Newsletter for 2020. I hope that you have suffered no property damage nor personal harm after the widespread bushfires in our region and further afield, and that, if you have the painful task of restoring your lifestyle, it is proceeding as smoothly as possible.

At the Annual General Meeting in November last year, a new Friends Committee was elected into office, and met for the first time in early December. I had the honour of being elected Chair and am very grateful for the support of my colleagues. Under the rules of the Friends, the previous chair, Lyn Adams, was unable to sit for re-election, having completed three years on the Committee. Lyn was a gracious and charming Chair, with a keen interest in all aspects of the Library's role, and will be missed from the Committee.

A key role of the Friends is to support the various activities of the Library. To this end, your Committee will have as a major focus this year an increase in membership numbers. You may have family or friends who would appreciate membership; all the information they need to help them make a choice can be found at the following website: nla.gov.au/content/friends-of-the-library.

Talking of membership, I hope you can join us at the Meet the Members evenings, at which you will have the opportunity to meet other Friends. Our first event is on Wednesday 18 March.

White Gloves events are always popular, providing an opportunity to examine material appropriate to a particular person or occasion. This year, Friends will have the opportunity to become better acquainted with the work and life of A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson. I suggest you book early, as White Gloves tickets are always snapped up quickly.

The Committee members and I look forward to catching up with you at events as the year unfolds.

Howard Murray | Chair



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2019 Friends Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Friends was held on 21 November 2019. Chair Lyn Adams noted the success of diverse events for Friends, sound financial management and the honour bestowed on Friends in joining the select group recognised as Platinum Patrons of the Library (having given \$250,000 to the Library since the inception of the Patrons' fund in 2009).

The Friends Medal for 2019 was presented jointly to Jennifer and David Phillips and to Margy Burn for their outstanding contributions to the Library and the Friends. Their service is outlined below.

The 2019 Friends Travelling Fellow, Rachael Eddowes, who visited museums and libraries in the UK to look at their approaches to user interface, gave an excellent presentation on what she learnt and the potential application for the National Library.

The announcement of the Friends Creative Arts Fellow is always exciting, with artist Anthony White awarded the fellowship for 2020. Anthony will investigate material from the Sidney Nolan collection to inform a new body of abstract paintings, that incorporate painterly interventions and collage, for exhibition in 2022.

It was with some sadness that members farewelled from the Friends Committee Lyn Adams, Jennefer Nicholson, Ros Welch, Mary Pollard and Malcolm Thurston, who contributed so much to the Friends through their years of service. However, Friends were able to welcome the new Committee for 2020; their membership is described later in the Newsletter.



Rachael Eddowes, Jennifer and David Phillips chatting with Robyn Holmes at the 2019 Friends AGM.

2019 Friends Medal Recipients

An always pleasurable part of the AGM is the awarding of the Friends Medal. This year there were joint recipients.

Jennifer and David Phillips

Jennifer and David have been volunteering behind the scenes at the National Library for more than ten years. Jennifer is currently part of the Obsolete Carriers Project but her previous projects have included the listings of Sir Hubert Opperman, Dame Nellie Melba and the Melba Conservatorium. David has used his technical expertise to work on projects including the ISMN database (that uniquely identifies publications of printed music), university holdings and the Rex Nan Kivell collection. Jennifer and David have set a wonderful example for other volunteers, contributing widely and supporting exhibitions and colleagues across the Library.



Margy Burn with 2019 Friends Committee Chair Lyn Adams.

Margy Burn

For nearly 20 years, Margy was responsible for overseeing the development and management of the Library's special collections, as well as services for researchers in the reading rooms. Among her notable acquisition projects are the Blaeu Map, and the papers of Patrick White and Dr Anne Summers AO. Margy established and nurtured numerous relationships with significant collection, donation and bequest prospects—relationships that will continue to benefit the Library.

Margy has also been a dedicated friend of the Friends, perhaps most notably through her support for the delivery of White Gloves events featuring special collections, and her oversight and championing of programs funded by the Friends, including the Creative Arts Fellowship and digitisation projects such as the papers of Jessie Street.

Introducing the 2020 Friends Committee

Howard Murray—Chair

Howard is serving on the Committee for a third year. He is a retired public servant with a background in investigation, security and human services, and member of historical societies. As this year's chair, he will ensure commitment to supporting the Library and strong leadership continue.

Kerry Blackburn—Deputy Chair

Kerry, a former senior public servant, joined the Committee last year. She has been a National Library volunteer for the last five years, both as a tour guide and supporting the Library's Publications team across a range of projects.

Grahame Thom—Treasurer

Grahame, from rural Victoria, returns to the Committee. Formerly a senior executive and accountant, his long-term research and publications on history and family history are listed in the Library's catalogue and his website has been archived by Pandora.

Diane Bell

Diane has held senior positions in academia in Australia and the USA, provided consultancies to community-based entities and published widely. She is Professor Emerita of Anthropology at The George Washington University (USA) and is currently Distinguished Honorary Professor in the College of Asia and the Pacific at ANU.

Margo Geering

Margo has an active history with the Friends, including membership of the 2019 Committee. A retired biochemist and teacher, she is a volunteer at the National Gallery and brings that experience and her love of art and literature to the Committee.

Meredith Hinchliffe

Meredith has been involved with the arts since 1977, first with the ACT Crafts Council. Now a freelance curator, writer and arts advocate, Meredith has held senior executive positions with the National Campaign for the Arts Australia, Museums Australia and artsACT, and served on the boards of local arts organisations.

Colleen Kinnane

Colleen joins the Committee this year. A Library volunteer since 2012, as a tour guide and behind the scenes, Colleen is a former nurse and nurse educator. She has also worked in membership-based organisations and the Library's Engagement Branch.

Janice Taylor

Janice's career in libraries spanned 40 years before she retired. She held senior management positions in ACT public libraries, the State Library of New South Wales, the Australian Library and Information Association, the City of Ballarat and Eurobodalla Shire Council. Janice returns to the Committee after a year's break.

Volunteer Project: Obsolete Carriers

Do you still have audio cassettes, old movies on VHS cassettes or floppy disks? Vinyl records, old family movies or reel-to-reel tapes? Do you have the devices on which to play them?

The National Library has been collecting audiovisual material for decades and holds in its extensive manuscript collections not just paper but other media: records, cassettes, CDs, DVDs—the list goes on. These are collectively known as 'obsolete carriers'.

The Obsolete Carriers Project aims to locate, remove and describe audiovisual and digital carriers in the vast number of manuscript boxes in the collection. These formats are deteriorating quickly and need to be housed in a colder environment than that which is used for storing paper documents.

A small group of volunteers, under the direction and supervision of Library staff, searches manuscript boxes for obsolete media. This time-consuming process involves removing and barcoding the carriers, recording the essential metadata and preparing them for rehousing in climate-controlled storage in the Library's Oral History and Folklore section, where the Sound Preservation team can digitise the contents. Since the project started in October 2016, the volunteers have handled more than 18,000 items.

The project brings back memories for the group, who have experienced most of these media—grandparents' 78 RPM records, reel-to-reel tape recorders from the 1980s, ABC cassettes children loved in the 1980s and 1990s, floppy disks used for work in the 1990s, and DVDs and CDs from more recent times.

Sadly, the project team doesn't get to listen to, watch or read the items. But it's still an adventure! Handling recordings of a famous singer, they were able to track her travels across the world from city to city, opera to opera. What a life that must have been! In working through the boxes for a theatre company, they saw the early careers of many of today's stars.

In this digital era, the Library's role in preserving records from the past and making these accessible remains vital. The Obsolete Carriers Project plays important part in identifying and conserving media records from the Manuscripts Collection for the future.

Betty Johnson | Volunteer

FROM THE TREASURES GALLERY

Exploring Australia

Maps have long fascinated us, changing over time as the world has been explored.

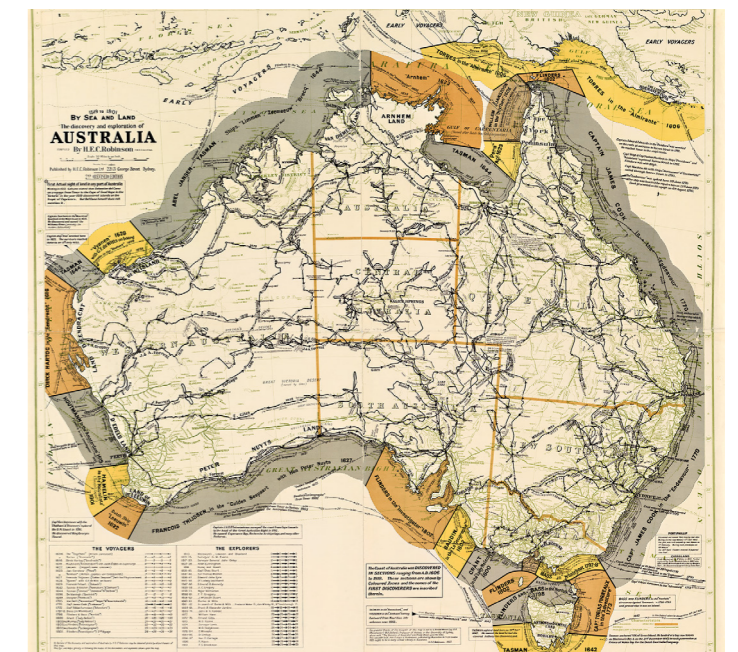
The Discovery and Exploration of Australia, 1519 to 1901, by *Sea and Land*, a 1927 map by Sydney publisher Herbert (H.E.C) Robinson, documents Europeans' sightings and charting of Australia's coastline between 1606, when Dutch Captain Willem Janszoon on *Duyfken* charted 300 kilometres of (now) Cape York Peninsula, and 1803, at the end of Matthew Flinders' second voyage on HMS *Investigator*. Coloured zones identify the 24 voyages that first mapped each part of our vast coastline.

Robinson shows the tracks of early inland exploration as intrepid (and sometimes foolhardy) Europeans ventured into the interior in search of new grazing land, to follow rivers or to cross the continent. He starts with Wentworth, Blaxland and Lawson's crossing of the Blue Mountains in 1813 and ends with F.S. Drake-Brockman's journey through the Kimberley in 1901.

The map also contains an intriguing note that the 'First Actual sight of land in any part of Australia' may have been by Sebastian del Cano in 1519. Basque navigator del Cano completed the first circumnavigation of the globe in 1522, as master of the *Victoria* in Ferdinand Magellan's fleet. In 1555, historical geographer António Galvão wrote that del Cano, on a voyage from Timor to the Cape of Good Hope in 1519, 'discovered islands on the Tropic of Capricorn. But del Cano himself does not mention it'. Del Cano had died in 1526.

Robinson acknowledges eminent historian Professor George Arnold Wood, at the University of Sydney, from whose detailed research he drew freely for his map, and who found no evidence to support Galvão's claim. Nevertheless, speculation and research on the subject of the first European sighting of Terra Australis Incognita has continued.

Kerry Blackburn | Volunteer



Herbert Robinson's 1927 map, *The Discovery and Exploration of Australia* (nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn4693185), now on display in the Treasures Gallery.