

NLA PUBLISHING SPOTLIGHT

Australia's First Naturalists:

Indigenous Peoples' Contribution to Early Zoology

By Penny Olsen and Lynette Russell

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Most Australians are familiar with the name John Gould and his book on the birds of Australia. The Library holds a full set of this seven-volume masterwork. If you can draw your eyes away from the glorious illustrations to the text, here and there, sprinkled among the references to habitats, clutch sizes and migratory habits, are the names Natty and Jemmy. These two Kamilaroi men accompanied Gould throughout his four-month stay in the summer of 1839–1840 at his brother-in-law's property in the Hunter Valley. Among the snippets that Gould reveals, Natty showed Gould the nest of a shy Superb Lyrebird and scaled a Casuarina to collect the eggs of both a Whistling Kite and a Diamond Firetail that had built its nest in the safety of the raptor's nest. Jemmy brought in a little short headed mouse, probably *Pseudomys gouldii*, a species new to science, later named by Gould and now known as Gould's Mouse. On Gould's longest expedition, with his 'faithful companions' he crossed the Liverpool Plains to the Namoi, through sparsely settled country where he was not sure they were welcome. He was pleasantly surprised.

Gould was an exception among these early collectors, many of whom gave little or no credit to their Indigenous guides and collectors. Notions of European superiority and communication difficulties often meant that opportunities to learn about Australia's fauna were lost. A century later, during his crossing of the Simpson Desert in 1939, Cecil Madigan had no doubt about the importance of having an Indigenous member of the expedition party.

In *Australia's First Naturalists*, my co-author, Lynette Russell, and I have gathered together these scattered accounts. Indigenous people gave Europeans their first views of iconic animals such as the koala and lyrebird and helped unravel the mystery of the egg-laying mammals: the echidna and platypus. Well into

the twentieth century, especially in northern and inland parts of the country, they were routinely engaged by natural history collectors and interviewed for their knowledge of rarities.

It has long been acknowledged that Indigenous Australians acted as vital guides to European expeditions. *Australia's First Naturalists* shows that they also played a crucial role in the scientific discovery and description of the continent's unusual fauna.

Penny Olsen

FRIENDS EVENTS

Exhibition Preview:

Inked: Australian Cartoons

Inked features a selection of the best cartoons from the National Library of Australia's collections.

The exhibits are selected from about 14,000 cartoons held at the Library. Join exhibition curator Dr Guy Hansen as he discusses the significance of selected items. This will be followed by a walk through the exhibition and refreshments in the foyer.

Tuesday 5 March | 6pm

Theatre

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

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

White Gloves: Asian Textiles

View the Library's Asian textiles collection and discover some hidden treasures. From 100-year-old Japanese textile sample books to intricate modern Chinese woven 'posters', the history and delicacy of these items are impressive to see.

Tuesday 9 April | 6pm

Nan Kivell Room

\$20, Friends only (includes refreshments)

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

Coffee with the Curator: New Treasures

The Treasures Gallery displays the extraordinary riches of the National Library of Australia. Join curator Matt Jones as he highlights some of the newest items. Ask questions and enjoy discussion over tea and scones afterwards.

Thursday 30 May | 10.30am

Treasures Gallery

\$15, Friends only (includes refreshments)

Further information: nla.gov.au/whats-on or 02 6262 1234

FRIENDS DISCOUNT CODE FOR NATIONAL LIBRARY EVENTS

Claim 15% discount on ticketed Library events by booking online at nla.gov.au/whats-on. The discount code is **FRAUT19**, and is valid from 1 March 2019 to 31 May 2019. It does not apply to Friends events (select the members ticket option) or free events.

FRIENDS OF THE
NATIONAL LIBRARY
OF AUSTRALIA INC.

AUTUMN 2019

Friends

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends

I hope you have had a wonderful holiday and you are looking forward to an exciting and informative 2019 program of Friends events.

My thanks to the 2018 Committee for their hard work, great ideas and friendship, especially to Gary Kent, the former chair, for his long support of the Friends and the time he has devoted to the Friends Committee.

Our new Committee members for 2019 are Diane Bell, Meredith Hinchliffe, Howard Murray, Jennefer Nicholson, Mary Pollard, Graham Thom, Ros Welch and me as Chair.

We look forward to meeting you all at events.

As usual, we aim to coordinate our Friends events with the program of the National Library and to introduce different areas of the collection. This year, 2019, is the International Year of Indigenous Languages and the exhibition *Cook and the Pacific* provides an appropriate segue.

The first event in this series was Cultural Connections—Papua New Guinea, held on 26 February. Future events will celebrate Indigenous Australian culture and literature, and South Pacific society and language, recognising the strong influence the region has on many areas of Canberra and Australian life.

Our special Friends White Gloves evening for members will feature beautiful Japanese and Chinese textiles from the Asian Collection. Staff will be in attendance to answer your questions.

You may have noticed on your visits to the Friends Lounge that there is now a children's corner with a tiny table, chairs and a well-stocked bookcase. We are trialling this new initiative and we hope that it will encourage new members and provide a quiet space for Friends with young children visiting the Library.

The Friends Committee is looking forward to making 2019 an enjoyable year for all.

Best wishes

Lyn Adams

Chair

INKED: AUSTRALIAN CARTOONS



Illustration by David Pope

The Library holds over 14,000 cartoons from dozens of different artists, and they cover the period from before the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 right up to the present. The collection includes examples of early satirical hand-coloured prints that sold from print shops in London in the 1780s, satirical drawings done by early settlers, cartoons prepared for colonial publications such as *Punch* and *The Bulletin*, as well as numerous examples of artwork from major newspapers and magazines in the twentieth century.

Taken together, this is a wonderful archive of Australian cartooning. Delving into these works is like discovering thousands of time capsules. Each points to events and controversies that briefly came to the surface of the news cycle. Occasionally, however, a cartoon captures a moment in a truly memorable way. A declaration of war, the dismissal of a prime minister or a crash in the economy—all can be frozen in time in a single image. Looking back, these images can appear like fossils embedded in a cliff face that remind us of the evolution of Australian politics and society.

The exhibition *Inked: Australian Cartoons* charts how cartoonists initially provided amusing illustrations for magazines and papers, but over time they developed their own voice for commenting on the news. Artists such as David Low, Will Dyson, Bruce Petty, Les Tanner and Alan Moir demanded, and received, the right to maintain creative control over their work. By the second half of the twentieth century, many cartoonists had emerged as fully fledged social commentators.

Inked: Australian Cartoons is a celebration of Australia's wonderful tradition of cartooning. Cartoons are more than just visual gags that provide a momentary diversion. Like the work

NATIONAL LIBRARY BOOKSHOP SPECIAL OFFER FOR FRIENDS

The Friends are pleased to announce a special offer for members on the new NLA Publishing title *Australia's First Naturalists: Indigenous Peoples' Contribution to Early Zoology* by Penny Olsen and Lynette Russell.

Friends will receive a 20% discount on *Australia's First Naturalists* when purchased between 1 March 2019 and 31 May 2019, online and instore (available April 2019, pre-order now).

To claim your 20% discount on *Australia's First Naturalists* in the online shop, use the promotional code **FRAUT19** at checkout. You can also use this code to apply the usual Friends 15% discount* to other eligible online purchases.

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



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of filmmakers, writers and journalists, they hold up a mirror to Australia and invite us to reflect on what is going in our society. They help generate the cultural capital that makes our society work. At their very best, they capture the zeitgeist or puncture the spin of politicians. Please enjoy this journey through Australian history with some of the best cartoons from the collections of the National Library of Australia.

Inked: Australian Cartoons is open from 7 March to 21 July.
Guy Hansen

2018 FRIENDS AGM

On 22 November 2018, approximately 60 members of the Friends of the National Library gathered for the Annual General Meeting.

Outgoing Chair of the Friends Committee, Gary Kent, highlighted some of the key activities that had taken place in 2018.

These included the funding of the digitisation of the Jessie Street papers; the 2018 Creative Arts Fellowship; and nine events highlighting the Library's collections.

In 2018 we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the National Library building. The Friends welcomed visitors to the Friends Lounge for refreshments on the Library's Open Day on 12 August.

Membership continues to hover around 2,000. The Friends' strategies to attract and retain members are bearing fruit, including this year's outreach activities to regional libraries.

Gary presented Shirley Gollings with the 2018 Friends Medal. Together with Judith Robertson and Jenny Hadlow, Shirley is one of the longest serving volunteers at the Library. As Shirley has now elected to retire from the volunteers, this award acknowledges Shirley's 20 years of service to the Library.

Friends Treasurer, Jennefer Nicholson, presented the annual financial report. Income in 2017/18 was \$98,496 compared to \$81,651 in 2016/17. The increase in income is primarily due to an increase in membership and functions income. Expenses in 2017/18 were lower compared to 2016/17.

Library staff member Kathryn Favelle reported on her Friends Travelling Fellowship, awarded in 2017. She returned with new ideas to discuss with her public programs colleagues at the Library.

Five members of the Friends Committee were required to stand down after the maximum three continuous years of service. In his report, Gary Kent thanked them for their service and the fellowship they offered.



Gary Kent with Shirley Gollings, 2018 Friends Medal recipient

Overall, the AGM noted a successful year for the Friends and the meeting concluded on a note of optimism for 2019.

Howard Murray

INTRODUCING 2019 FRIENDS COMMITTEE



2019 Friends Committee

2019 brings a strong and diverse group of people to the Friends Committee who are passionate about strengthening the Friends of the Library.

Lyn Adams—Chair

Lyn has served on the Friends Committee twice previously. She has been a Library volunteer since 2002, initially as an exhibition guide and now with preservation. Lyn brings experience as a public servant, nursing sister, domestic and international flight attendant, the wife of an army officer posted in Australia and internationally, and a graduate of the Australian National University.

Howard Murray—Deputy Chair

Howard Murray is a retired public servant with a working background largely in investigation, security and human services. He has a keen interest in history and is an active member of two historical societies. Since early 2018, he has been a member of the Friends Committee, specifically as a member of the communications sub-committee.

Jennefer Nicholson—Treasurer

Secretary general of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions until 2016, and previously the executive director of ALIA, Jennefer has an acute understanding of how libraries create informational, social, cultural and economic benefits for their users, the wider community and the nation.

On her return to Canberra in 2017, she joined the Friends to support and raise awareness of the significance of Library services to our growth as individuals and as a nation.

Mary Pollard—Newsletter Editor

Mary joined the Friends in 2009. She has worked as a reference librarian in university libraries and at the Australian War Memorial Research Centre. For the last eight years of her career she worked in collections management at the National Archives of Australia in Canberra.

On retirement she joined the volunteers and now conducts research for guest authors with the publications team and works front of house at the information desk.

Ros Welch—Events Sub-committee Chair

Ros served on the Friends Committee in 2017 and 2018 and between 2012 and 2014. She was a volunteer between 2007 and 2016. Initially a primary school teacher in the United Kingdom, she later taught business administration and communication in TAFE New South Wales for 18 years.

Since 2000, she has worked with migrants and has presented Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) workshops to trainee teachers in Vietnam, Turkey and New Zealand.

Diane Bell

Diane has held senior positions in higher education in Australia and the United States of America and undertaken a range of consultancies for community-based entities.

She has published across a number of fields and genres, is currently Distinguished Honorary Professor in the College of Asia and the Pacific at ANU and is preparing her own papers for deposit with the Library.

Meredith Hinchliffe

Meredith began work with the Crafts Council of the ACT in 1977 and is now a freelance curator, writer and an arts advocate.

Meredith has worked for several arts organisations; managed several public art installation projects; and has served on the boards of a number of local arts organisations.

In 2000 she was awarded an ACT Women's Award and in 2011 was awarded an Australia Day medal by the National Gallery of Australia.

Grahame Thom

Grahame first used the Library's reading room in 1963 when it was located on Kings Avenue, Barton. He is a fellow of the Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra and has been a member of the Friends since its inauguration in 1990. Grahame has a Bachelor of Economics and is a fellow of CPA Australia. He retired in 2001 and now lives in rural Victoria.

2019 FRIENDS CREATIVE ARTS FELLOW: JOEL BRAY

The Friends Creative Arts Fellowship is a \$10,000 award that enables creative practitioners and artists to undertake a sustained period of intensive work at the Library, using the collections to develop a new artwork, body of work, or artistic concept for future elaboration. We are delighted that the 2019 Friends of the National Library Creative Fellow is Joel Bray.

Joel grew up in country New South Wales, studying dance at the National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association Dance College and Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. For most of his career Joel danced in Europe, but now lives and work in Melbourne. Joel is of Wiradjuri, Scottish and English descent, and his choreography springs from his Wiradjuri cultural heritage. Rather than attempting to recreate a supposed Indigenous 'form', his methodology is rooted in traditional Wiradjuri ways of making work: durational, site-specific and cross-genre processes. His works are often intimate encounters with small audiences in unorthodox spaces, in which audience members are 'invited in' as co-storytellers and co-performers. Running themes in Joel's work include the

experiences of fair-skinned Indigenous people and the unique forms of subtle racism they face, and the experiences of contemporary gay men in an increasingly digital and isolated world.

During his fellowship, Joel proposes to undertake research of the primary and scholarly sources in the Library that document traditional Indigenous ceremonial practices in the south-east of the continent to write a script for his new work of immersive dance theatre for large-scale presentation in 2021. In this work, called Burbang, he will redeploy the dramaturgy of traditional Wiradjuri ceremony. The Library has a series of collections of papers and photographs that depict his people's ceremonial life from the 1800s to the early years of the twentieth century. Ceremonial practices were outlawed by the colonial government and crushed. While in Canberra, he will research eyewitness accounts, oral history recordings and photographs of the traditional ceremony of his people—the Wiradjuri of central New South Wales and the neighbouring peoples with whom he shares his ceremonial practices.

Joel Bray will be in the Library later in 2019.

RECENT FRIENDS EVENTS

Uncovering the Beauty

On Thursday 6th December Friends enjoyed Uncovering the Beauty, an event exploring the inspiration for the digital display *Beauty Rich and Rare*.

The first speaker was Creative Director of AGB Events, Anthony Bastic. His inspiration for *Beauty Rich and Rare* was his regard for the exceptional skills of James Cook in charting the east coast of Australia in 1770. Fascinated, too, by the achievements of Sir Joseph Banks, and wanting to recognise the contribution of other members of the crew, he decided to highlight how Europeans on the *Endeavour* perceived the unfamiliar botanical richness of Australian plant life and the practical uses Indigenous people had for these plants.

Our second speaker, Nat Williams, the Library's Treasures Curator, revealed how invaluable the Nan Kivell collection is for Australia in understanding its past. The collection of portraits and paintings he described linked to the personalities mentioned in *Beauty Rich and Rare*.

In addition, two volunteer guides from the Australian Botanic Gardens, Glenys Bishop and Pam Cooke, provided us links between the native Australian plants collected by Banks and Solander (and drawn by Parkinson) that were depicted in *Beauty Rich and Rare*. Glenys provided significant research into plants and their uses by Indigenous Australians which was fascinating.

Our thanks go to the Friends of the National Botanic Gardens for organising two walks in January 2019 to view some of the plants in situ that were illustrated by Sidney Parkinson and subsequently published in Banks' *Florilegium*.

Many Friends later visited the annual Christmas sale in the Bookshop and shared some Christmas cheer with the staff.

Lyn Adams