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# Newsletter

Federation of  
Australian Historical Societies Inc.



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## Collaboration and Participation

In this issue we highlight collaboration and community participation as important factors in running an historical society or community heritage group.

Collaboration (with artists, universities, GLAM organisations, etc) helps to develop new networks and activate local interest in history. Such collaborations are also critical in obtaining support and ensuring that your work is recognised and rewarded.

Some of the collaborative ventures featured in this issue are: joint exhibitions (*Botanical Wonderland* in WA) an international tribute (Christina Henri's *Roses from*

*the Heart*, Bonnets Project) and the memorial project (Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project). John Petersen writes about partnering with performance artists for community heritage activation and Gionni Di Gravio on building digital programs. Other writers reflect on tourism development and new workshop models for the community history sector.

For 2018, check out the GLAM Peak workshops for training and support in making your cultural heritage and history collections readily available online. Read more on pages 8-9).

Dr Bernadette Flynn, Editor  
FAHS Outreach Officer

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3D VISUALISATION OF THE FEMALE FACTORY: *Parragirls, Past, Present*, Collaboration between ParraGirls and National Institute for the Experimental Arts, UNSW

Collaboration and participation are the themes of this edition of the FAHS Newsletter. The articles provide examples from each state and territory that demonstrate in a range of ways how members of community organisations are working admirably together to promote their local history and heritage. As the editor has written, these forms of collaboration help develop new networks and activate local interest in history. They are also critical in obtaining support and ensuring that the society is recognised and rewarded.

*However, reading these articles also brought to my mind two other terms that may not generally be associated among the wider community with the work of historical societies - innovative and inventive.*

As FAHS President I am very privileged to be able to observe, both from afar and by visits, the activities of historical societies

across Australia. I am always impressed, and sometimes surprised, by the many innovative and inventive forms that our volunteers devise to disseminate their work.

In this Newsletter you will find, for example: bringing people together to undertake challenge activities rather than the usual conference talks; broadening awareness of suffering of women and children through establishing a Site of Conscience; dance as a creative way to portray history; a collective activity focussed on Australian botany; and the creation of an historically themed Christmas decoration.

But there are so many other inventive ways to spread our work. One of my favourites is the stubby holders sold by the Broken Hill Historical Society featuring images of heritage structures including the former synagogue which they occupy. Recently I came across a double CD produced by the Bendigo Historical Society of *Songs of the Anzacs*. I understand that members of the society did the singing.

Many societies are now using well-designed websites to publicise their work and advertise their activities, such as the Cairns Historical Society, but others have gone deeper into the use of social media, notably the Mortlake & District Historical Society which operates largely through its Facebook page which has thousands of followers from around the world.

In a fine example of collaboration and networking, last October the Queenscliffe Historical Museum, the Queenscliffe Maritime Museum and the Fort Queenscliffe Museum jointly held a 'week of stories' in and around the Borough of Queenscliffe – a mixture of film, concert, talks, walks, tours and a book launch.

All these help to demonstrate that working with history can be creative and fun, as well as contributing to the intellectual depth of the community and the popularity of our cultural heritage.

Associate Professor Don Garden  
FAHS President



## Dr. Christina Henri, Honorary Artist-in-Residence, Cascades Female Factory Historic Site

In 2003 I undertook a 'Historical Landscape' subject as part of my UTAS Fine Arts Degree. Included within this module was a visit to the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site. Unaware of the site's existence I was astounded to learn of a history pivotal to Australia's successful social and economic growth, a history of convict women transported along with some of their children to provide free domestic labour to a newly acquired colony.

Subsequent to my initial visit I returned to the CFFHS to raise the idea of using my art as a means of highlighting Australia's female convict story and boosting the site's profile. This conversation led to my becoming the site's honorary artist-in-residence. This partnership evolved into a twelve-year association (2003 - 2015). My relationship continues through membership of the Cascade Community Advisory Committee (CCAC).

In 2003 I choose to use cloth bonnets as symbolism. I first focused on the babies born to convict women who did not survive the rigours of the System. I used a simple colonial christening bonnet as the template for my *Departures and Arrivals* project that involved women across Australia and New Zealand sewing a precious, yet unadorned, token of remembrance. This art project offered a means of understanding, giving closure to families whose ancestors

children died within female factories or orphan schools.

In 2007 I commenced my *Roses from the Heart* memorial. This project uses a cloth bonnet metaphor to give meaning to the lives of the 25,566 women transported to Australia and to value the contribution made to the growth of the emerging Australian nation by these women and their children. As with the colonial christening bonnet, both bonnet templates circa 1860, were sourced from the Narryna Heritage Museum costume collection. I specifically chose a colonial servant's bonnet with a brim, similar to those worn in Ireland by women in the Kilmainham Gaol awaiting transportation.

CHRISTINA HENRI :  
Presenting bonnet  
tribute for Mary Walsh  
to Dame Quentin Bryce.



*Roses from the Heart* has been extraordinarily successful in building an international community engaged with the experience of women convicts.

My art offers community custodianship of its history. History as experienced, not just observed. Each cloth bonnet involves approximately eight hours in cutting out and

A BONNET FOR MARY  
WALSH: transported  
to Van Diemen's Land  
aboard the Hope  
from Ireland in 1841



sewing, eight hours in stitching a name, the ship and year of transportation and embellishing plus, often, scores of hours researching the woman being memorialised, whether she is an ancestor or a chosen lass identified from a ship's indent. The process of making a bonnet can be meditative and cathartic. The broader project connects individuals and craftspeople and builds community well-being. To date I have received over 25,000 bonnet tributes.

My art values places that are central to the experience of female convicts such as Hobart's Cascades Female Factory, Tasmania; the Ross Female Factory; George Town FF (through the Watch House Museum); Parramatta Female Factory, New South Wales; Grangegorman, and Kilmainham Gaols, Dublin, Ireland; Wicklow Gaol, Wicklow, Ireland; the Cobh Quayside (Cobh Heritage Centre), County Cork, Ireland and the Down County Gaol, Downpatrick, NI.

My work activates heritage site/s through my community memorial projects which focus on creating a memorial from a uniform component.

Since 2010 I have visited Ireland and the UK annually working hard to forge a relationship recognising the mutual colonial history that links both countries. My events have assisted in raising awareness of convict women, especially Irish transportation to Australia.

In the Republic of Ireland I have successfully held events, displays and exhibitions and *Swept Under the Carpet* a 2000 bonnet exhibition, given talks in Mayo, Galway, Cork, Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow and Dublin.

In 2013 my exhibition of



KILMAINHAM GAOL  
2013: *Swept Under the Carpet* 2000 bonnets,  
Photo, Christina Henri

***'Roses from the Heart has been extraordinarily successful in building an international community engaged with the experience of women convicts.'***

2000 bonnets, *Swept Under the Carpet* displayed in the Kilmainham Gaol, where over 6000 convicts were held awaiting transportation, was viewed by more than 10,000 visitors. In March this year I held a major event at Grangegorman. Bonnets were worn by the public remembering the 3,216 women and their 506 children confined within this, the first ever female depot built within the British Isles. The concept followed on from Quaker Elizabeth Fry's social reform ideas of prison segregation with female staff managing female inmates.

Event attendees included the 2017 Lord Mayor of Dublin, Brendan Carr, the Australian Ambassador to Ireland HE Richards Andrews, officials from Dublin Arts, Grangegorman DIT, Grangegorman Development Agency, Irish Prison Service staff, Quakers, Quaker Schools staff and students, busloads of attendees from NI, staff and students from numerous schools within Dublin and surrounds, Irish sculptor Ronan Gillespie,

Government officials, RTE Nationwide crew, print media. Visitors travelled from Australia to participate and honour their ancestors.

The media exposure was significant publicising a story rarely given airplay within Ireland and NI. RTE Nationwide filmed their second documentary on my *Roses from the Heart* memorial work. These documentaries have been viewed by over a million households.

In 2010 I organised a *Blessing of the Bonnets* in the Cork City Gaol and also at the Cobh wharf, one of the two Irish ports from which colonial ships of transport departed. Since then there has been a *Blessing of the Bonnets* ceremony held annually in Cobh. The event is now a major feature of the Australia Day celebration, coinciding with the Sea Princess cruise ship carrying 1500 Australians and 300 New Zealanders on a world cruise.

This year HE Richard Andrews took part along with Cobh



LORD MAYOR OF HOBART,  
THE HON. SUE HICKEY:  
Welcoming visitors from  
across Australia and the  
UK. Photo, Josh McDonald



### ***Wear a Bonnet - Living Art Installation, Hunter Street, Hobart wharf, close to where the convict women and their children stepped ashore.***

Tourism, the Cobh Heritage Centre and members of the Cobh Animation Team who since 2010 have added a wonderful visual appeal to the event.

<http://www.visitcobh.com/index.php/2017/06/10/australia-day-in-cobh-2017/>

A permanent bonnet exhibition is displayed at the Cobh Museum and visitors are invited to leave bonnet tributes in a specially provided wooden boat.

In March this year I was the invited guest speaker for the 1848 Tri-colour celebrations in Waterford. Bonnet tributes created within Waterford remembering Waterford convict women were displayed at this event and remain on show across the county. My plan is to install a permanent installation of these bonnets in Waterford in 2018.

My aim is to continue to forge cultural tourism links. Each year I visit schools and include

students and communities in my projects. I am presently planning a major event at Dun Laoghaire, the second Irish departure site for colonial ships of transport, previously named Kingstown between 1821-1920.

My art with its global participation continues to lift the veil of amnesia that for decades obscured mention of Australia's

female convicts.

Bonnets are still welcome as part of my *Roses from the Heart* Memorial and mens shirts for my Cherish the Children project

Dr. Christina Henri  
Hon Artist-in-Residence,  
Cascades Female Factory Historic Site, Tasmania



## Making History: The Peterborough Project



Peterborough welcome sign



Audio recordings for the walking tour



Interpretation Planning Group

*'We thought we'd try something a little different – a project based weekend 'sprint' format ....based around seven challenge activities'*

In October 2016, 50 people took part in *Making History: The Peterborough Project*.

This event was run by the History Trust of South Australia, and brought together people from the community history network for a weekend of intensive workshop activity in Peterborough, a town in South Australia's mid-north, about three hours from Adelaide.

The History Trust has previously run the State History Conference biennially in regional South Australia, but the regional conference model was proving difficult to make viable, and so we thought we'd try something a little different – a project based weekend 'sprint' format. The sprints were based around seven 'challenge activities', and the topics were devised in collaboration with the volunteers at the Peterborough Museum.

The challenge activities were: creating a digital historical image slider, developing a walking tour app, getting collections online, developing a memory box for reminiscence, developing a new exhibition, creating a school visit program and creating family-friendly activities. Our goal was to work intensively in small groups over two days in the hope of devising some practical solutions for the issues identified.

We were all barred from using the C- word to describe the weekend. This was most definitely NOT a conference, and

we wanted to make sure that participants understood what they were coming to share. But it was hard to know what we should call it – especially when we were still working on the structure when we began the promotion for the event... So we stuck with calling it a 'weekend' or an 'experience'.

Participants were invited to join us on Friday early afternoon, and were required to commit to both Friday and Saturday, with optional activities on Sunday. On Friday afternoon, we set about exploring Peterborough. We divided into groups, and set out on a scavenger hunt, designed to take people around the town, and encourage them to get a feeling for the history of the place. It was also designed to be fun, and give group members a chance to get to know each other.

After a cup of tea in the afternoon, we had a presentation by a local historian, to give us some deeper understanding of the region, and then we then moved into the main business for the weekend. Our group facilitators were each invited to pitch their 'Challenge Activity'. They were given a couple of minutes each to tell people why they should join their group. We formed our groups, and immediately began work on the task at hand – we had two hours to make our plans and start work before dinner.

For the very keen beans, there was an early morning history



walk on Saturday, followed by a hearty BBQ breakfast to fuel us for the day ahead. We then took some inspiration from a series of 5 minute SPARK talks from participants – people who had a great idea to share. Ten short, sharp, shiny nuggets of gold!

After morning tea, we went back into our groups for another couple of hours work on our challenge activities. Group facilitators were tasked with ensuring that at the end of this session, all teams would be ready to present back to the whole group after lunch.

In a period of just under 24 hours, each group had posed a problem and worked towards a solution. We used the various museums and historical attractions in Peterborough as our canvas, and we'd come up with some creative and practical solutions. We ensured that there was a Peterborough local in each group, so we were not flying blind. Given the time constraints, we knew that we were not going to be able to offer polished finished products, but that was not the intention. Instead, we wanted to use the collective knowledge within the group to find new ways of tackling problems that were common to all of us working in the community history sector.

We wanted to strengthen the bonds between people working with different community museums, and to discover new ways of working. This was deliberately a 'quick and dirty' approach; it was designed to try out some different ideas. It was hoped that there would be skills development for all the participants, as well as perhaps some useful ideas generated for the Peterborough community. With no firm ideas about final products, each group had succeeded in creating something



### Reminiscence group in action at the aged care home, Peterborough

new by the end of Saturday. Following afternoon tea and group presentations, the main part of the program ended, only 28 hours after it began. On Sunday morning, those of us who stayed on were treated to a tour of one of two historical sites some distance out of town – another chance to learn about the history of the region, and to share our thoughts about interpretation and preservation.

In preparing for the weekend, we were mindful that there was a potential danger that our groups might reflect critically on the work that had been done by the volunteers in Peterborough. We worked hard to ensure that all our facilitators were sensitive to this. However, the spirit of event was embraced by all – locals and visitors alike, and offense was neither given nor taken. With hindsight, our goal of asking each group to turn their work into a 'how to'

guide to be shared with the other participants following the weekend was perhaps a step too far in the time that was allowed. However, a follow-up trip to Peterborough allowed us to pass on the resources and to establish that the weekend had left some ideas that would be useful Peterborough Historical Society.

We have just presented the State History Conference in Adelaide earlier this month – in our usual conference format – so our minds are now turning again to a regional location, and we are beginning our planning for next year's 'event', when we hope to again excite and inspire people with a weekend of hand-on activity, and some fun.

Allison Russell,  
Director, History Festival,  
Centre of Democracy and  
Community Programs,  
History Trust of SA

# Wendy Quihampton outlines the GLAM Peak Digital Access to Collections Initiatives



GLAM • PEAK

<http://www.digitalcollections.org.au/>

*'The end game of the Digital Access to Collections project is to help make Australia's diverse arts and cultural heritage collections readily available online'*

Providing digital access to the collection items and objects hidden in all cultural and collecting organisations is a key aim of GLAM Peak. GLAM Peak is the peak representative body of galleries, libraries, archives, museums and historical societies sectors in Australia, working together to achieve common goals. Digital access unlocks a wealth of inspiration, knowledge and secrets to all, from the creatives seeking a new muse, to teachers and researchers discovering new sources and stories, to families exploring their own histories – to everyone from the comfort of their own lounge room, study, workplace or classroom.

GLAM Peak commenced the work to progress digital access to collections nationally, with funding received in May 2016 from the Commonwealth government through the Catalyst Arts and Culture Fund. The initiative delivered a draft national framework that details principles and strategies to achieve digital access to the rich and diverse collections content in Australia. A prototype

toolkit, supported by case studies, was also developed to support capacity building in the sector, particularly for smaller organisations that have limited resources.

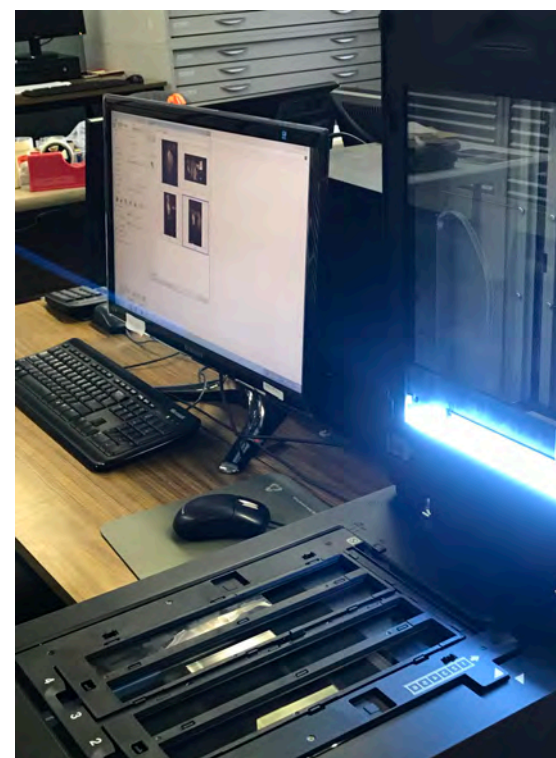
To push further forwards, additional funding from the Catalyst Fund was sought in 2017. Together with substantial support and in-kind funding by GLAM Peak bodies and technology partners, this has ensured the GLAM Peak Digital Access to Collections initiative can continue through 2017-2018. The next steps in the Digital Access to Collections project are spreading the word and engaging with institutions across all jurisdictions about providing digital access to collections.

Ten workshops will be delivered in regional centres. We are going regional to acknowledge the challenges in regional Australia of smaller cultural organisations - limited recourse to advice and expertise, lack of resources, and limited or no funding.

In taking the training, advice and specialist expertise to where

it's needed, the workshops aim to assist, motivate, and guide organisations to getting started or pushing them further along to the path to digital access.

So, who should go? The two-day workshops will be delivered in regional centres across Australia, targeting non-metro collecting organisations to increase their confidence and knowledge of digitisation and digital access.





The workshops are aimed at the staff and volunteers in collecting organisations or bodies, including historical societies, galleries, libraries, archives, museums, Returned Service Leagues, sporting clubs, Indigenous keeping places, and community groups.

The workshops will provide an abundance of information about how organisations can plan and work towards digitising their collections. The workshops are aimed at the staff and volunteers in collecting organisations or bodies, including historical societies, to make galleries, libraries, archives, museums, Returned Service Leagues, sporting clubs, then available online, as well as addressing the issues many see as barriers. Participants will gain a clear understanding of how to manage copyright, permissions, privacy, cultural sensitivities and security, as well as what equipment is needed and the different technology options available – to make digital access a feasible proposition no matter what size their organisation may be. A main aim of the training is to take the complexity out of digital access, to make it readily achievable by the smallest organisation.

Each workshop will be supported by GLAM Peak's Technology partners, including collection management system providers, digitising specialists, web aggregators and online sharing platforms, who will share their expert advice both formally and informally across the two-day workshops. Grants are also available to help the participants – to get there or get started. Financial assistance can help meet the costs of accommodation or travel, or purchase the camera, scanner or lighting equipment an organisation may need.



***'We are going regional to acknowledge the challenges in regional Australia of smaller cultural organisations - limited recourse to advice and expertise, lack of resources, and limited or no funding'***

Participants will also meet and work with other cultural organisations in their area, having the chance to swap ideas, examine and discuss common issues, and identify possible solutions or collaborations while considering their own organisation's needs. In addition, local case studies will provide insight into different approaches to digitisation and digital access as well as local sources of advice.

The end game of the Digital Access to Collections project is to help make Australia's diverse arts and cultural heritage collections readily available online, with the aim that anyone and everyone will have access (while understanding that some sensitivities and restrictions will apply). This initiative aims to share the kudos currently held by larger institutions with the smaller organisations – historical societies, sporting and community clubs, and Indigenous keeping places – to open the world up to the value within their collections,

to encourage them to engage a broader audience than their physical presence can ever hope to attract. GLAM Peak is repositioning the small to medium organisations – acknowledging the significance and usefulness of their collections and seeking to ensure their collection items are available online for all to use.

The second stage of the GLAM Peak Digital Access to Collections project is now getting well underway, with the first two workshops held in Hobart and Albury, in November 2017. The other workshops will be conducted in February through to May 2018.

Keep a watch on the Digital Access to Collections website. <http://www.digitalcollections.org.au/>

Wendy Quihampton  
Project Manager, Digital Access to Collections, Museums Australia, ACT

### Bonney Djuric presents the creative collaborations and multiple histories of the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct.



Photo Lily Hibberd, courtesy PFFP Memory Project.

### The PFFP Memory Project aims to broaden awareness about the institutionalisation of women and children in Australia and to activate this historic precinct as Australia's first Site of Conscience.

Situated in Fleet Street North Parramatta, the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct is the location of two of Australia's earliest institutions for women and children, namely the Female Factory and the adjacent Roman Catholic Orphan School. Both institutions were re-purposed over time with the Female Factory assigned as a Lunatic Asylum in 1847 and the Orphan School as the Parramatta Girls Industrial School in 1887.

Popularly known for its convict heritage the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct institutional heritage dates back to 1821 with the Female Factory, but its history extends to millennia for the Darug people.

It is a complex site with multiple histories and has yet to be recognised as the cradle of interventionist child welfare in Australia where the first forced removal of children from their convict mothers was enforced. By the turn of the 20th Century, this interventionist practice was foundational in the forced removal of Aboriginal children. A century later the *Bringing Them Home Report* (1997) laid bare the extent of this genocidal practice on Australia's Indigenous people.

Then in 2004, the *Forgotten Australians Report*<sup>1</sup> was handed down. The Report found that 'upwards of, and possibly more than 500,000 Australians experienced care in an orphanage, Home or other form of out-of-home care during the last century'. Careleavers showed immense courage in putting intensely personal life stories on the public record. They spoke of neglect, humiliation and deprivation of food, education and healthcare. Such abuse and assault was widespread across institutions, across States and across the government, religious and other care providers.

The dam of silence had broken and with it came questions that needed answers and given the age of Careleavers, a sense of urgency to set the record straight. It was these circumstances that Parragirls support network and contact register was established in 2006. Building on this foundation, Parramatta Female Factory Precinct (PFFP) Memory Project was launched in 2012 with the aim to broaden awareness about the institutionalisation of women and children in Australia and to activate this historic precinct as Australia's first Site of Conscience.

The PFFP Memory Project provides opportunities for Careleavers to re-interpret their experiences and to articulate their own memories and perspectives in the face of pervasive public silencing, deliberate forgetting and apathy. This coupled with the threat of development from the Parramatta North Urban Transformation program, together with the favouring of convict history over that of children's 'welfare' history has given a sense of urgency to the Memory Project to actively subvert forgetting and neglect through living memory.

The Memory Project brings together artists, historians, academics and Careleavers in a justice-centred and collaborative approach to creative practice that empowers otherwise isolated, disadvantaged and often disabled individuals as creative authors in the production of nationally and internationally recognised artworks and culture.

In this way it recognises the capacity of former residents to provide expertise from their intimate experience of welfare institutions, in





Photo Lucy Parakhina, courtesy PFFP Memory Project.

particular, for ethical heritage interpretation, welfare services, community engagement and in more complex and rich ways of including marginalized institutional memories in the annals of public history. This is in part because they bring the subject matter of injustices into a contemporary context not just as art objects but as democratic spaces where conversations about the relationships between past, present and future can open the possibilities of new insights, perspectives and responses about the contemporary legacies of institutionalisation in Australia. This new thinking is particularly important in the context of institutional and post-institutional care and the current Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

In the creative collaboration, *Living Traces*, former residents of the Parramatta Girls Home explored the tactile memory embedded in graffiti found at the site. For them the embodied memory of these 'marks' represent an act of resistance to the institutional regime where they had no rights whatsoever (property, bodily or otherwise) and connects them with every single person who passed through the institution. Guided by artist printmakers, Gwen

Harrison and Sue Anderson, these marks were incorporated onto collagraphic plates then layered with texts and references from 'official' records to challenge the veracity of official history and records generated by state agencies. Now referenced in *Setting the Record Straight for the Rights of the Child*<sup>1</sup> as an exemplary model of collaboration and participation in record keeping and archiving, *Living Traces* has recently been showcased at the Centre for Information Research (CIRN) conference, Prato, Italy.<sup>2</sup>

This year the Memory Project has produced two creative developments with the first, *Long Time Coming Home* bringing together Aboriginal Parragirls, the Darug community

and members of the Stolen Generations' in the production of songs that articulated their experiences and the legacy of institutional intervention.

More recently, the immersive 3D cinema, VR work, *Parragirls, Past, Present* was one of four new media works produced for the Big Anxiety Festival in a unique partnership with Parragirls and media artists from the National Institute of Experimental Arts (NIEA).

Into the future the Memory Project will continue to explore ground-breaking ways of representing difficult experiences, particularly those arising from trauma and marginalisation as a result of family separation and childhood institutionalisation.

Bonney Djuric OAM  
Parramatta Female Factory  
Precinct Memory Project

1. *Forgotten Australians*, Community Affairs References Committee, Australian Parliament, Canberra, August 2004.
2. *Setting the Record Straight for the Rights of the Child*. Centre for Organisational and Social Informatics Faculty of IT, Monash University funded by the Australian Research Council.
3. Centre for Information Research (CIRN) conference, Prato, Italy, 25 – 27 October 2017.



Photo: Catherine McElthorne, courtesy PFFP Memory Project.

## John Petersen reports on his role as Community Heritage Officer



THE VOICES OF THE  
ELDERS: Listening to *This*  
is where it happened: a  
dance down memory lane,

Yarra Ranges Council is a result of the 1994 Kennett era amalgamation of Lilydale, Sherbrooke, Upper Yarra and Healesville shires. A little over one hour by road from the former Melbourne General Post Office, as Council boundaries change, the areas retain distinctive histories and community identities.

I work as a Community Heritage Officer in an arts and heritage department called Creative Communities, a naming trend that mirrors that of state governments' Creative Victoria and Create NSW. My role is not within town planning or heritage approval teams. I am situated in a team responsible for cultural development, festivals and events and art in public places. The Council also operates a regional museum and the shire's passion for its Dame Nellie Melba collection rivals Melbourne's for Phar Lap.

The Council supports a Heritage Network of 16 volunteer run historical societies and museums created under a Memorandum of Understanding. A similar model operates in many NSW local government areas to bring volunteer run museums and historical societies in collaborative working

partnerships with regional museums and galleries and their local council.

The scope of the Memorandum of Understanding includes:

- Support, training and advice;
- Meeting, work, storage and display space;
- Recognition and promotion; and
- Building the Council and Group relationship.

Groups operating in a Council facility enter into a written agreement and need to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to improving their practice and processes. This can sound ominous for historical societies that keep the flame alive and continue the legacy of decades of volunteer activities, family history and rigorous historical research. What's to improve?

The Community Heritage Officer works as an honest broker - representing, and to the extent it is possible, advocating for the historical societies to the Council and raising and monitoring heritage issues of concern to the Network. This typically means locating teams managing heritage places - bushland and recreation, or

building and planning. The Heritage Network is also a useful partnership for the Council and keeps me informed about what is going on in the shire - heritage places under threat, or poorly maintained, and ones not subject to a heritage overlay. The wealth of historical information held by the shire's historical society collections, research files and membership is immeasurable and is assisting the Council in everything from family history research to town planning.

Recently Creative Communities consulted the Heritage Network on a RidgeWalk thematic study by NSW-based historians Dr Bronwyn Hanna with Dr Judy Denby who are researching influential Australian artists in an area known to flatland dwelling Melbournians as 'the hills'. RidgeWalk is a Federally funded 26km walking track and artists' trail and open air gallery proposed for the Dandenong Ranges. The historic artists were inspired by the Dandenong Ranges cultural landscape of 'beauty spots', soaring mountain ash trees and ferns, bird life and biodiverse natural and aesthetic values and indigenous history. They also viewed the hills from paddocks on the outskirts of the city and at lookouts looked out from the hills to distant



townships. The hills was an artists journey into both a real and imagined world. My role includes helping historical societies to make the pitch for Community Grants and maximise their opportunities - \$390,000 was allocated in 2017/18 to deliver projects that develop, explore and express Yarra Ranges diverse cultural heritage, creative practice and foster opportunities for community to experience and participate.

Historical societies in Yarra Ranges compete with arts and cultural projects, including ones creating new works of art, from the same funding pool. This can be a source of frustration for the Heritage Network. A key part of my role is to advise historical societies to think and work regionally, to support community participation in heritage and to promote public history that is visible and accessible. Hard copy publications in small print runs, a worthy and traditional legacy of historical society research activities, are rarely funded unless there has been community participation, for example, through a substantial oral history project, or a more publicly accessible project associated with it.

The Council has been consulting communities across the shire for a new ten year cultural plan. While data is still being collated and reviewed, it is clear to me that while many of the respondents showed a strong interest in arts and heritage, the 25-44 age brackets and 45-64 age brackets were less interested in 'connecting with the past' than the over 64 year olds. This is a concerning statistic for the future.



***This is where it happened: a dance down memory lane includes the people, places and associated memories, by weaving a narrative through the voices of elders in the local community, with contemporary dance-theatre.***

***Are history and heritage sectors failing to engage with younger people outside of educational institutions?***

I have spent much of my career as an historian developing projects with sound methodologies and historic rigour even when I ran a virtual museum and explored new media and documentary. I am not always comfortable with the way that complex histories can be mediated in works of art, especially ones that allow multiple readings and unclear narrative structures.

My time at Yarra Ranges Council has moved me from suspicion to curiosity. I am newly open to the potential for historical societies to partner, as project leaders or equals, with arts organisations to mediate histories to broader audiences in more engaging ways.

Where arts and cultural organisations consult the Council about grants for projects with historical themes or heritage components, they are referred to the historical societies. The Council is seeing a number of hybrid grant applications. I am excited to see historical societies advising artists in the shire, or promoting history through tourism, often without my direct involvement.

The Council has only just funded the Mount Dandenong and District Historical Society's Voices of the Past project. It cleverly combines essential historical society activities with public engagement. It includes digitisation of 30 cassette tape recordings of historical reminiscences from local residents, skills development in digitisation, storing recordings on a database and aggregation into the Victorian Collections, and in turn, Trove. It includes the design of four historical bus tour routes, highlighting historic places in the region illuminated by oral history.

PERFORMANCE EVENT  
AT MELBA PARK: *This  
is where it happened: a  
dance down memory  
lane*, led by Gülsen Özer



*This is where it happened: a dance down memory lane* is a performance event led by Gülsen Özer, an Australian born inter-disciplinary performing artist and choreographer based in Melbourne reflecting on Lilydale and Yarra Ranges dance history as a theme across time. It includes the people, places and associated memories, by weaving a narrative through the voices of elders in the local community, with contemporary dance-theatre. Site-specific stories connected to people and place are woven with dance scores and choreography. Performed in the public, but only heard through headphones, it includes an historically based animation video of photo montages to set the scene for dancers to animate live performances at Melba Park in Lilydale.

This work was developed in consultation and collaboration with a number of community groups and individuals including; The Yarra Ranges Council, Lilydale Probus Club, Lilydale Senior Citizens Group, Lilydale & District Historical Society (which provided historical research, images and publications as source material), Murrundindi,

AKA Gary Hunter Elder and head man (Ngurungaeta) of the Wurundjeri people, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum and collection and The Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Group.

Organisations working in arts and culture that tell stories through various art forms benefit from the research of historical societies to make informed and truthful works of art informed, underpinned and evidenced by history.

***History is challenging, inspiring and often confronting, in particular, where it gives voice to people who have not been included in mainstream narratives.***

Art in this regard can be rather like history. It is also incredibly accessible and involving. Surely the two areas can work more closely. Well-researched history and tangible and intangible heritage can be made accessible and participatory through various media and art forms.

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John Petersen, (MPHA, MICOMOS), Member of the Professional Historians Association of Victoria and Australia ICOMOS.

John Petersen, completed the national GLAM Peak Digital Access to Collections for Small Organisations strategy and is currently Community Heritage Officer for Yarra Ranges Council, Victoria and a casual lecturer in 'Significance' for Melbourne University's Master of Art Curatorship course. In NSW, John is Museums Advisor for Wollongong City Council and better known for his career leading a virtual museum, the NSW Migration Heritage Centre at the Powerhouse Museum.



## Collaboration with Heritage



Being small, it can be relatively easy to make connection in the Territory between heritage and cultural organisations. It is however still easy to become locked into one's own organisation. Connectivity does require work for there to be results and connections and collaboration do not happen without effort.

The Historical Society of the Northern Territory has attempted to make contact with all voluntary and government organisations concerned in the galleries, archives, libraries and museums (GLAM) sector in the Territory in 2009 and 2015. With a great deal of effort, the result was two brochures listing then current contact details and some half dozen reciprocal memberships with the Society. This has settled into regular exchange of flyers for events, newsletters and journal with the reciprocal members.

For the past five years, the Society has jointly with the Larrakeyah Branch National Trust held talks on the last Friday of the month (up to ten talks per year) in the heritage listed Burnett House. There is a sharing of technology for the talks and in set-up and catering for the night and the occasional book-stall. It is also usual to circulate flyers for these talks and share news of other events through each of our



membership lists. The Society also circulates news to members of events at the Northern Territory Archives Centre and the Northern Territory Library.

The focus of this Society is on publishing our local Territory and northern Australia history. It is actually the responsibility of the authors of our books to arrange launches for their books, with assistance from the Society as necessary. Thus the Society is always looking for suitable and relevant venues with potentially new or different community audience for the launches.

As well as at our own History House, recent books have been launched at:

- a local restaurant
- Charles Darwin University
- Parliament House
- Northern Territory Library
- International Nurses' Day at Charles Darwin University's Nursing Museum
- the Katherine Museum and Historical Society
- Christ Church Cathedral

The Society also regularly speaks to the Northern Territory Government on heritage and arts policy and makes submissions

in government consultative processes on relevant policy and proposals for government policy and structural change and proposals for new museums and heritage site buildings and construction. It is not uncommon with our small population, that representatives to consultation meetings can be representing more than one heritage or cultural organisation – 'wearing more than one hat'.

All endeavour for any voluntary organisation is of course dependant on the strengths and numbers of its members. Like many others, this Society does have concerns for generational change with an ageing cohort of active participants. Over recent years, there has been a significant and successful effort to increase membership numbers. Our strength however also must lie in maintaining and continuing to build our membership participation and our collaboration with other interested and committed individuals and organisations in the GLAM sector.

Janie Mason, Secretary, Historical Society of the Northern Territory

## Botanical Wonderland A Collaborative Exhibition



Grevillea Plate by Helen Creeth, WA Museum, H2016.19.1-2



The Album of Seaweeds, RWAHS, MA1985.89



Seaweed Woven Hat by Hallie Stow, on loan from Shellam Family

In keeping with the terms and intention of the MoU with the then Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA), the exhibition project in liaison with the State Library of WA and WA Museum began in February 2017 with the planning of the exhibition *Botanical Wonderland*. The opening was on the 10 August and was held in the 'Nook' on the ground floor of the State Library for six weeks over our West Australian spring.

This exhibition explores the many ways in which Western Australians have responded to its rich plant life. Wildflowers have been collected, pressed, sketched and painted on canvas and china, embroidered, woven and constructed in fabric. They have decorated all manner of household objects, and been reproduced in print and electronic formats for commercial, educational and social purposes. Seaweeds have been used as home decorations and albums of delicate beauty put together.

Regular planning meetings were held with usually two representatives from the project team of each organisation present. As part of the planning

process the representatives from the WA Museum and the State Library visited the Society's Museum and Library at our headquarters to become acquainted with our selection of artefacts for the exhibition.

Each organisation provided its own collection items, panel text and object labels within the theme. The collection content was discussed between all the representatives. However, each organisation wrote and edited its own text though all texts were shared. The WA Museum provided the display cabinets and its exhibition team undertook all the necessary design features, production of panels and installation. Their team was very imaginative and cooperative in solving the light level problems and within budget. The design was based on the content of the Album of Seaweeds that the Society had on display. The exhibition consisted of an entry statement, six display cabinets, nine text panels, one wall of artworks and an acknowledgement panel.

The Library extended content by providing a digital exploration of one of their botanical albums.





The project entailed numerous meetings and email communications between the project teams and within the RWAHS to keep the project to the tight time line while inviting the wider membership to be involved with use of their skills. The Society's museum committee was particularly involved with selection of artefacts and writing object labels. The panel texts went through various versions with our volunteers researching, writing, editing and with great assistance with graphics from the WA Museum exhibition team the result delighted and informed visitors. The Society's membership was kept informed throughout by our Chair of Council.

Promotion was undertaken by each organization on its own website and through Facebook. The Society provided a speaker for a public evening lecture and also one lunch time floor talk. The Society contacted the media, through local newspapers and radio.

The State Library held an official opening and made all the arrangements. Our President, The Hon Robert Nicholson, made the opening speech. It was attended by representatives of the three organisations, the 'DCA', members and supporters. During the exhibition the Library acted as host and managed security.

A debriefing meeting with all those involved in the project praised the level of collaboration. The Society had clocked up many volunteer hours while the WA Museum and the State Library had supported their staff time. The short time frame was difficult to manage together with other commitments but it had concentrated all effort to a successful outcome.

DONKEY ORCHID VASE:  
Handpainted by Charlotte  
Lapsley, Western Australian  
Museum Collections  
H2016.21

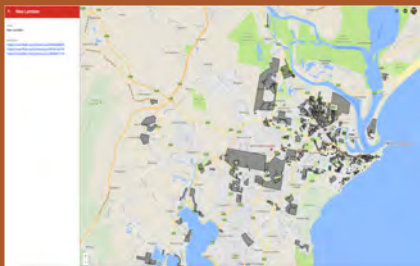


PRESSED WILDFLOWERS:  
Lilian Wooster Greaves,  
C1929 . State Library of  
Western Australia.  
ACC 6111AD



Sally Anne Hasluck,  
Immediate Past President

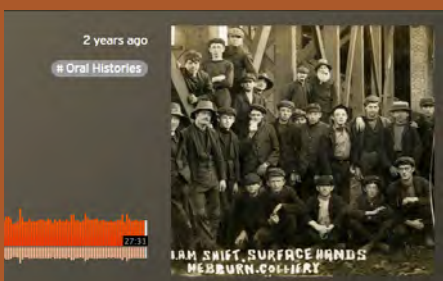
Royal Western Australian  
Historical Society.



Visual Index to Subdivision Plans,  
<https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2016/01/14/visual-index/>



Voices in the Hunter, recordings of  
coalmining historian Jack Delaney



Margaret Henry Oral History Archive on  
Soundcloud

*'By making history  
"cool" and attractive to  
increase interpersonal  
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## Community Collaboration & Participation at the University's Cultural Collections

At every meeting of the Hunter Living Histories (<https://hunterlivinghistories.com/>) our local regional historical societies and heritage groups all have a common gripe; that they find it difficult to attract young people, their average age is getting older and older, and they worry that much of their work will be lost, if no one can be found to keep it all going.

Our University, as regional repository for the Hunter Region, has a similar issue; that we have so much archival primary source research material coming in that needs to be properly looked after and not enough trained professional staff, space or resources to handle it all. We depend on our volunteers who help us immensely to keep everything going.

The University of Newcastle's Cultural Collections, located in the Auchmuty Library, is located 160kms north of Sydney, is a recognised NSW State Archives & Records Regional Repository as well as the home to the University's archives, rare book cultural treasures of the Hunter Region. Our oldest European holdings date from the mid fourteenth century, but the most ancient are Aboriginal artefacts, dating from 6,500 years ago. Sharing these resources with our University's researchers and wider communities, whilst at the same time safeguarding them physically, has been made much easier with the emergence of the Internet.

Gone are the days of the one-way street, where single image or copy went out from the archive to a single individual, one off exhibition or book. From 1996, we began digitising (with a borrowed scanner) selected items from the collections and provided to the wider virtual community its documentary history through high-resolution images free of charge. To date 80,000 images on our UONCC flickr site have had over 45.7M hits since 2007. Our oral history recordings on UONCC Soundcloud, 41.7K hits since 2015, and over 547,000 minutes of digitised historic footage and presentations have been watched on our UONCC YouTube channel. But all this is just the tip of a massive iceberg. We have collections of hundreds of thousands of images that we have not even begun to prepare, and huge amounts of digitised film footage ready to upload, not to mention the thousands of pages of blog posts and resources.

What we really needed was a cultural heritage 'army' of trainees and apprentices to help us, similar in a way to how BHP trained up its young apprentices and trainees for work in the heavy industries. Instead of training electricians and fitters, we could train the future conservators, archivists, or curators, preparing them for jobs in the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museum) sector, as well as being on hand to help community history groups and





THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE  
AUSTRALIA

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organisations. So, in 2016/2017 we established a GLAMx Living Histories Digitisation Lab to bring young students through work integrated learning placements (WIL) to work with our collections, volunteers and community partners.

It is through this collaboration with community that some exciting possibilities have been emerging. For instance, during the 2015 Christmas break a community member mapped hundreds of our online subdivision plans, in so doing created a visual index, so we didn't need to enter a search term, just click on the shaded areas of the map to go directly to the digitised scans. The gaps in the map are plans probably held in other institutions, illustrating the need for them to get their material freely available online and accessible.

In 2016 the Voices in the Hunter Project was launched consisting of over 800 tracks digitised from over 500 audio tapes recorded by coalmining historian Jack Delaney from the 1970s-1990s. These were the "unfinished business" arising from his landmark work, *A History of the Greta Coal Measures* (1998) (<http://www.coalandcommunity.com/preamble.php>) A team from Cultural Collections worked closely with Jack's family, the Coalfields Heritage Group at Kurri Kurri, who held an original copy of the tapes, with funding from the Coal & Allied Community Development Fund to digitise Jack's cassette tapes and make

them available to the world. Two oral history workshops were also conducted in Muswellbrook Library and Cessnock Library. To find out more go to [www.coalandcommunity.com/oralhistory](http://www.coalandcommunity.com/oralhistory).

Thanks to the generosity of Vera Deacon, (<https://uoncc.wordpress.com/vera-deacon-fund/>) a local pensioner and Stockton resident, also librarian for the Stockton Historical Society, another oral history treasure trove, The Margaret Henry Oral History Archive consisting of over 209 hours of recordings conducted during the 1980s across the wider community was also digitised. <https://uoncc.wordpress.com/2015/11/10/margaret-henry-oral-history-archive-2/>

In 2016 a new digital platform was established, Living Histories @ UON to bring all our digitised content under the one roof. This new platform not only allowed us to re-absorb all our online content, with community comment, but also enabled community groups to have a portal into our platform. The GLAMx Living Histories Digitisation Lab helps create

an avenue to bring students through Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programmes across all faculties and disciplines to work through community projects. These projects are formulated through the Hunter Living Histories (formerly Coal River Working Party) a community forum consisting of historical society representatives, heritage professionals, historians, academics and students, with the University providing the infrastructure to enable the training across the professions.

So, hopefully, we have a model here to allay our fears, attracting young people to history, and placing them in contact with 50,000 years of human expression across time, in all its forms and formats. By making history "cool" and attractive to increase interpersonal skills, connections and employability of our young people, we can also provide an avenue for the work of local history to continue into the future with amazing new possibilities.

Gionni Di Gravio,  
University Archivist,  
University of Newcastle



CONCEPT DESIGN  
GLAMx: Living Histories  
Digitisation Lab (2017)

GLAMx L  
WIL and Practicum Studies





## Artist's Impression of the Queen's Wharf development precinct Destination Brisbane Consortium (image Destination Brisbane Consortium)

The Royal Queensland Historical Society (RHSQ) formed in 1913 has a long history of working successfully with the community and government and industry organizations –historical societies and professional associations, Brisbane City Council through Newstead House, state and Commonwealth governments through the \$2.2 million conservation project undertaken by the Society on the Commissariat Store between 1997 and 2001, regional shire councils on tours of the state, and heritage groups. The current partnership with Destination Brisbane Consortium is the most recent. This will be a long and sensitive one within the milieu of one of the largest infrastructure

constructions in Queensland and its impact on the Brisbane CBD life and community.

Several RHSQ Councillors and Hon Research Officers had collaborated previously with the Treasury Casino in 1994-1995 in a fruitful partnership when the Treasury Casino, Brisbane's first, was being established. This involved a book, *From the Beginning: the History Behind the Conrad Treasury International Casino*, training of casino staff on the history of Brisbane CBD, and oral history interviews.

'Now we have a similar partnership with, and commitment to, the Destination Brisbane Consortium,' the

President, Dean Prangle said.

The RHSQ has its headquarters in the Commissariat Store, in the heart of the Destination Brisbane Consortium's Queens Wharf development precinct. The Society is staying throughout the construction in contrast to tenants of the other heritage buildings.

'We are proud of the fact that the Store is the oldest continuously occupied building in Queensland, built in 1829,' Mr Prangle said. 'The Queen's Wharf development is breathing new life into the place where European settlement started in Queensland 192 years ago.'





## ***'The Queen's Wharf development is breathing new life into the place where European settlement started in Queensland 192 years ago.'***

'There are nine heritage buildings and two historic parks, Queen's Park and Miller Park, within the Queen's Wharf development precinct. The Society is a very active participant in monitoring that attention to preservation in the precinct.

'All will be preserved, and several will be given new life as restaurants, bars and retail outlets in the completed development,' he said.

Mr Prangley said that the completion of Queen's Wharf Brisbane would open up more of the city's precious heritage buildings for public use. The Royal Historical Society of Queensland Council has been advocating this since 1986 at the time that the Queensland State Government first raised the idea. In 2005 the Society published a book, *Brisbane's Historic North Bank 1825-2005*, to meet the need for valuable historical

knowledge in the area.

'Of course the Commissariat Store, also known as 'the convict museum', at 115 William Street, will remain open to the public throughout the construction phase,' Dean Prangley said. Destination Brisbane Consortium is assisting by placing directional signs to the Commissariat Store in Queens Park.

'While there have been odd difficulties due to the construction site close by, we have worked together to achieve

a positive outcome for all.' The Society has a focus on the Queens Wharf Integrated Resort Development in its strategic vision to evolve within the precinct and provide opportunities for understanding the history of the area.

The Queen's Wharf Project is due for completion in 2022.

Dean Prangley,  
Immediate Past President Royal  
Historical Society of Queensland





**If you were to create a Christmas decoration, no greater than 10cm squared, that represented your local community and its history, what would you create?**



HON LINDA DESSAU:  
Unveiling of the Christmas Tree at Government House in 2016

When the Royal Historical Society of Victoria was invited by the Governor of Victoria, The Hon. Linda Dessau, to create such a decoration for the Government House 2017 Christmas tree, fifty-two Monash University History pre-service teachers were presented with the opportunity to undertake an unusual task.

The task was presented to them as not only one with considerable honour, but also an opportunity to undertake basic research, think and act creatively and contemplate the possibility of undertaking the same activity with Year 9 Australian history students in the 'messy' time of year when all Year 10s-12s have disappeared and Year 9s are tired of cleaning storerooms.

The History pre-service teachers were advised that entries would be judged by the Council and were given a deadline. They were also given the colorful copy of the RHSV's new membership brochure which embraces diverse peoples and perspectives of Victoria's and





One pre-service teacher also made an all-gold decoration consisting of craft shapes glued together to make an angel with books. The RHSV Council was particularly impressed by Vennetia Tzanis's accompanying statement:

*Just as angels are known as 'special messengers' with an important message to deliver, so is the RHSV. Angels bring 'glad tidings' but also 'warn' and protect. Knowing about the past can serve these same purposes. The Christmas ornament focuses on RHSV's role to collect, research and share Victoria's history. The three books represent these areas.*

Australia's history, and given time in the weekly workshop to visit the RHSV website and learn about its work. The pre-service teachers then began to discuss different themes and colours as well as historical and environmental facets of Victoria's and Australia's history.

Certainly not all students made decorations – indeed, only seven were produced - but the time given in two workshops validated some rich discussion and supported the completion of seven decorations.

Gold – the bedrock of Victoria's fortune – featured often. One decoration consisted of a small round glass terrarium suspended on gold ribbon; the ribbon had been tied to represent a poppet head. In the terrarium was a garden rock covered in gold stickers and circles of gold stars on wire swirled around the terrarium. 'Gold' with national (and festive) green was also picked up in another small terrarium piece. Small sprigs of dried wattle fanned out behind small sequined pine cones, with the terrarium being suspended by green ribbon. 'The 'green and gold' of Australia represented the national flower of wattle as well as festive tones.

Two clocks represented 'time' as synonymous with history. One was a commercially-produced gold fobwatch Christmas decoration, suspended on black ribbon; the other was also a commercially-produced decoration, but the blue of its clock-face was paired with blue ribbon as opposed to the original thin gold tie, to pick up the RHSV's principal colour of blue. A third locally bought decoration was a wreath of white bells but the important and convenient feature was the decoration's tag that announced the brand as 'Pure and Simply Melbourne'.

The winner was a terrarium, suspended on red ribbon, which contained little Italian miniatures of a lamp, candle, red parcels tied in gold twine and three books. The books' spines had borne the names of Renaissance classical works but were re-covered with labels to say 'Victoria', 'History', 'Australia'. To this entry was affixed a cardboard label on which the RHSV logo was pasted.

All parties to the process thoroughly enjoyed it.

Rosalie Triolo,  
History Education,  
Monash University

THE WINNING DECORATION: Terrarium with miniatures and three books 'Victoria', 'History', 'Australia'.

