‘I was *amazed* and *excited* by what I found’
How does one mysterious sketchbook change the perception of early NSW?
Edward Close’s amateur sketches present some of the most detailed and realistic illustrations of NSW and its inhabitants — both free and convict. At a time when no self-respecting gentleman would be seen socialising with convicts, Close put everyone on the same page. Close’s celebratory images, full of optimism for his new home, illuminate the past and allow new stories to be told.
Edward Close sketchbook

AN EXTRAORDINARY SKETCHBOOK
Edward Close was a talented amateur artist who captured parts of Sydney with an energy and verve that professional artists could not match. His sketchbook (c. 1817–18), with 34 unrivalled views of Sydney, Newcastle and the Illawarra, is one of the Library’s most significant recent purchases.

Unlike other colonial art from this period, Close’s vision shows people up close, interacting with their environment. He showed the interior of the town and its people in unexpected ways, providing visual information that is simply not available elsewhere.

The sketchbook celebrates colonial landscapes and colonisation. There is nothing in it which suggests disenchantment or fear of the Australian bush. Close’s optimistic view of the colony is reflected in the sparkling Sydney in All its Glory.

AN UNLIKELY ARTIST
An army engineer who was born in India and served in the Peninsular War, Close arrived in Sydney in 1817 on board the Matilda, seeking an opportunity to acquire land and build a future for himself and his family.

Close became associated with the Hunter district, settling in the early 1820s in Morpeth. He soon became one of the area’s leading citizens, a magistrate and parliamentarian. He chose an Aboriginal name for his property, Illulang, an Awakabal word meaning ‘swampy plain’.

Close has only been recognised as the artist of these sketches since May 2009. Before this time they were thought to be the work of his wife’s aunt, Sophia Campbell. During research for the sale of the sketchbook comparisons were made to other works by Close and it became clear that Close was the real artist.

Having been in family hands for 192 years, the addition of the Edward Close sketchbook to the Library’s collection now makes Close’s drawings accessible to writers and historians.

AT CLOSE VIEW
Costume of the Australasians — a striking frieze of the dress of typical colonists, from officers and gentlemen through to convicts — is perhaps the most historically important drawing in the sketchbook.

This image has no parallel in colonial art and is further distinguished by the very early use of the word ‘Australasian’ to refer to colonists. Governor Lachlan Macquarie had only begun to promote the word ‘Australia’ in 1816.

Close’s drawing of a court case, Philo Free Trial — another unique image — is a fascinating record of colonial costume, legal process and personalities. There were very few active portrait painters in NSW in the 1810s, and rarely was portraiture so informal.

Close’s regimental world is very masculine, which explains why there is only one woman in the entire sketchbook.

NOW ACCESSIBLE
Having been in family hands for 192 years, the addition of the Edward Close sketchbook to the Library’s collection now makes Close’s drawings accessible to writers and historians.

The sketchbook will be one of the highlights of the Mitchell Library’s centenary exhibition, ONE hundred, which opens in March 2010.
Which significant figure in history is being celebrated in 2009 for his landmark work on evolution?
The year 2009 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin (1809–1882), a towering figure in the history of science. Darwin was the gentleman naturalist, or 'philosopher' as they called him on board, on the famous voyage of HMS *Beagle* around the world, 1831–1836.

It is often said that books change the world and no better example of this is Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*, which was first published in November 1859 and sold out in a day. The Library’s copy of this landmark book was formerly owned by Darwin’s great-grandson and is in pristine condition.

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LETTER TO PHILIP GILLEY KNEE, JNR. FROM CHARLES DARWIN, 21 FEBRUARY 1854, ML MSS 3447/2, ITEM 2
SYDNEY COVE MEDALLION
BY JOSIAH WEDGWOOD
ENG. ML. PUB.
PHOTO BY DERO TINN
Charles Darwin

THE VOYAGE
The purpose of the Beagle voyage, under Captain Robert FitzRoy, was to continue the charting of the coasts of South America and to undertake meteorological observations at a number of places around the globe. FitzRoy had witnessed the suicide of Captain Pringle Stokes on a previous voyage of the Beagle and, bearing in mind the suicide of his own uncle, felt the need for ‘some well-educated and scientific person’ as a companion to keep his spirits up. The 22-year-old Charles Darwin was not the first, or even the second, choice as a companion but he was — as no-one could possibly foresee at the time — an inspired one.

CHARLES DARWIN — AN INSPIRATIONAL COMPANION
Darwin had just come down from Cambridge, enthused by natural history and contemplating life in a country vicarage. He did not need paid work as his father, Robert Darwin, was a wealthy man. The opportunity of a voyage was a godsend for Charles Darwin and after some persuading of his father (who would be paying for Charles’ expenses) he was allowed to go on the expedition.

The voyage turned out to be, as Darwin recollected in 1876, ‘by far the most important event in my life, and has determined my whole career’. His observations during the five years on the expedition, and subsequent work on the natural history collections he had accumulated, led to the formulation of his theory of natural selection. Others, including Darwin’s grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, had espoused the concept of evolution. However, no-one had discovered the underlying mechanism of evolution.

The Beagle voyage provided the evidence for that mechanism. A farmer undertakes ‘artificial selection’ to improve his livestock. Darwin termed nature’s mechanism for improvement ‘natural selection’.

The word ‘evolution’ was not used until the sixth edition of On the Origin of Species in 1872, the last edition Darwin published.

His observations during the five years on the expedition, and subsequent work on the natural history collections he had accumulated, led to the formulation of his theory of natural selection.

DARWIN IN AUSTRALIA
HMS Beagle was in Australian waters from 12 January to 14 March 1836. During this time, Darwin visited Sydney and travelled over the Blue Mountains to Bathurst. He sailed to Hobart where he explored the town and its environs as far as New Norfolk, and then spent a week at King George Sound, collecting rocks, insects, plants, animals, observing the inhabitants and thinking over his findings, relating this to what he had seen earlier on the voyage.

Australia provided some important insights for Darwin in the development of his theory of natural selection and would continue to do so as he corresponded with a number of scientists and collectors in the colony who contributed ideas and specimens. These included the Rev. WB Clarke, Sir TL Mitchell, Gerard Krefft and Robert FitzGerald. The latter’s landmark work on Australian orchids, published in 1882, was dedicated to Darwin. ‘I feel a great interest about Australia, and read every book I can get hold of’, Darwin wrote in 1853 to Syms Covington, his servant on the Beagle, who later emigrated to Australia.

CELEBRATING DARWIN
The State Library’s major contribution to the Darwin celebrations was the exhibition Charles Darwin Down Under 1836, which was on show in the Picture Gallery from April 2009 to July 2009, utilising our unrivalled collection of original pictures, manuscripts and books which document his time in Australia.
What collection of world-renowned photographs is being brought to life?
The Holtermann Collection of 3500 glass plate negatives is now being digitised. Thanks to many generous benefactors, and the latest technology, we will soon be able to share this magnificent collection online.

How was this collection created? When Bernard Otto Holtermann struck the largest-ever nugget of reef gold in 1872 he sent photographers Charles Bayliss and Beaufoy Merlin (with a horse-drawn darkroom) to record every detail of a new way of life: sunburnt prospectors and their vast makeshift towns.
Holtermann Collection

**STRIKING GOLD**
A meeting between gold miner Bernard Otto Holtermann and photographer Beaufoy Merlin at Hill End in 1872 resulted in one of the most astonishing feats of documentary photography ever undertaken. Holtermann had been associated with the recent discovery of the world’s largest specimen of reef gold, weighing 145 kilograms, extracted from the Star of Hope mine at nearby Tambaroora. Merlin, an itinerant photographer, had just opened a temporary studio in Hill End. In January 1873, the two announced their plans for Holtermann’s International Travelling Exposition, which would use photography to publicise their adopted country to the world.

**THE COMPANY**
Merlin and his assistant Charles Bayliss had already photographed some of the colony’s gold-producing towns. Holtermann’s patronage enabled them to continue, using a bigger and better camera. Merlin had begun his photographic career in Victoria in 1864 and, within a few years, had developed a unique style of outdoor photography. Charles Bayliss joined Merlin’s American & Australasian Photographic Company in Melbourne, and the pair headed north into NSW, photographing towns along the way. When Merlin and Bayliss arrived in Sydney in September 1870, they had already completed an extraordinary photographic record of ‘almost every house in Melbourne, and the other towns in Victoria’. The distinguishing feature of the company’s style is that they photographed people where they found them. These are the most complete and lifelike portraits of individuals at the time.

When Merlin and Bayliss arrived in Sydney in September 1870, they had already completed an extraordinary photographic record of ‘almost every house in Melbourne, and the other towns in Victoria’.

**FRONTIER PHOTOGRAPHY**
Merlin and Bayliss headed west in 1872 with the new gold rushes. The cry ‘Rush-O!’ meant money for small businesses, including photographers. A studio was built on land owned by Holtermann in Hill End and excursions were made to surrounding areas by horse-drawn caravan. The photographic process of the day required the photographer to coat each plate just before use and develop it immediately before it lost sensitivity. For the itinerant photographers, this meant taking a portable darkroom wherever they went. Despite the difficulty of the wet plate process, the comprehensive goldfields photography of Merlin and Bayliss has provided a unique documentation of frontier life.

Merlin fell ill and died from pneumonia in 1873, leaving his assistant the task of documenting towns for Holtermann’s exposition. Bayliss toured Victoria the following year, but returned to Sydney in 1875 and began making giant panoramas of the city from Holtermann’s house in North Sydney. The venture was to cost Holtermann over £1000 but produced the world’s largest wet plate negatives and several panoramas.

Only a small percentage of the American & Australasian Photographic Company’s output has survived, but 3500 small format wet plate negatives (including extensive coverage of the towns of Hill End and Gulgong) and the world’s largest wet plate negatives, measuring a massive 1 x 1.5 metres, are held by the Library.

**DIGITAL GOLDMINE**
With the collaborative support of many generous benefactors, the State Library is digitising the Holtermann Collection. Students, historians and descendants of early pioneers, as well as those interested in photography, will be able to view these incredible images online.

Library Council of NSW 2008/09 Annual Report
Alan Davies, our Curator of Photographs, rediscovered “beachobatics” — a colourful, forgotten part of Bondi’s history — in a shoebox of undisturbed negatives from the 1930s and 1940s. They belonged to George Caddy, an amateur photographer and champion Jitterbug dancer. Caddy’s immaculately composed work rivals his famous contemporary Max Dupain. But when he returned from World War II, it appears that he did not dance or take photographs again. Caddy’s striking photographs were showcased at the Library this year, and the images are now part of our one million-strong photography collection.
Bondi Jitterbug

THE DISCOVERY
When Paul Caddy cleared out his late father’s estate, he found a shoebox of photographic negatives, neatly numbered and dated. Who they depicted and where they were taken was not known. Mystified, he put them to one side and forgot about them for two decades.

Fortunately, a friend of Paul Caddy’s brought them to the attention of Alan Davies, the State Library’s Curator of Photographs. Davies was bowled over by the quality and originality of the negatives, many of which showed athletic gymnasts performing daring acts on Bondi Beach.

INTRODUCING ‘BEACHOBATICS’
Bondi Beach has always been a theatre for the ostentatious. These days, it’s hard to escape buffed bodybuilders, beach volleyball, capoeira and other displays of physical prowess on Australia’s most famous strip of sand. However, in the 1930s and 1940s, the more physically fit entertained beach crowds with ‘beachobatics’ or clever gymnastic displays on the sand.

Beachobatics would be unknown today if it weren’t for George Caddy, who took his camera to the beach on weekends. He not only recorded parading lifesavers and leisure seekers wearing the latest beach fashions, but also photographed the astonishing gymnastic feats of his friends.

George Caddy’s precious negatives are the only record we have of the beach gymnasts who entertained crowds on Bondi Beach in the 1930s and 1940s.

GEORGE CADDY’S GIFT
George Caddy worked in Kent Street, Sydney, as a paper-pattern cutter for the Australian Home Journal. His hobbies were dancing and photography, and the period from 1936 to 1941 was particularly creative for him. By 1941, he was described as one of Australia’s leading jitterbug dancers.

At that time, Caddy’s photography was not as well known as his dancing. He was a self-taught photographer, who had won prizes in the junior section of monthly competitions held by Australasian Photo-Review. He had converted the front room of his mother’s modest cottage at Bennett Street, Bondi, into a makeshift studio, equipped with an array of homemade floodlights.

Caddy’s portraiture lighting was dramatic, in the manner of black and white cinema at the time. Caddy’s early modernist images from 1936 show the influence of overseas magazines such as Popular Photography from New York. His work displays the hard shadows, raking light and unusual viewpoints of the new photographic aesthetic, a dramatic departure from the soft-focus, romantic images that were still popular at the time.

THE ERA ENDS
Caddy’s outwardly carefree life ceased with the outbreak of World War II. He enlisted in the army and spent the years 1941 to 1945 as a gunner in a heavy anti-aircraft battery, stationed near Brisbane.

Although he returned to his former occupation of paper-pattern cutter in 1946, his days on the dance floor and behind the camera appeared to end. He married Betty York in 1943 and their son Paul was born the following year. Perhaps family interests simply curtailed his personal interests.

DETECTIVE WORK
The brilliance of George Caddy’s short photographic career would have remained unknown were it not for the Library’s resources and some incredible sleuthing by Alan Davies and his colleagues. Books, magazines, newspapers, electoral rolls, telephone directories and the online catalogue were all used to identify people in the photographs and learn about Caddy. This work culminated in the popular Bondi Jitterbug exhibition, which brought Caddy’s incredible story to life. More on this exhibition can be found on p. 48.

George Caddy’s precious negatives are the only record we have of the beach gymnasts who entertained crowds on Bondi Beach in the 1930s and 1940s. They are a remarkable documentation by a gifted amateur, reminding us not only of the popularity of physical culture at that time and the iconic status of Bondi Beach, but also of the ability of the camera to capture the ephemeral nature of our changing society.
Why is a sea captain’s journal linked to the theory of evolution?
It’s one of the classic ‘what ifs’ of history, and a personal tragedy recorded in precise, handwritten script. Pringle Stokes, captain of HMS Beagle from 1826 to 1830, despaired at his ability to lead the expedition through violent storms off the Patagonian coast. He shot himself at sea. His successor, Robert FitzRoy, decided that a young gentleman should accompany him on the Beagle’s next voyage to keep his spirits up. Charles Darwin happened to be that young gentleman. The dramatic story of Pringle Stokes’ struggle and decline is told in his journal — a remarkable manuscript that is now part of our collection.
Pringle Stokes’ journal

**THE VOYAGE**
Pringle Stokes was captain of HMS Beagle on its first South American voyage from 1826 to 1830. Accompanied by HMS Adventure, the expedition was under the overall command of the Australian Phillip Parker King.

In March 1828, the Beagle sailed from Port Famine (Puerto del Hambre), in the middle of the Strait of Magellan, exploring the western reaches of the Strait and the west coast of Patagonia.

In words that betray his troubled state of mind, Stokes described the coastline in his journal on 29 May 1828:

"Nothing can be more dreary than the scene around us. The lofty, bleak, and barren mountains which compose the inhospitable shores of this inlet, are hung, low down their sides, with a dense cloud of mist, upon which the fierce squalls that assail us beat, apparently without at all disturbing it."

The Beagle hit severe storms in June, compelling the ship to take up anchor. The gales damaged the Beagle’s smaller boats. Ill health and food shortages added to the hardships.

**AN AGONISING DEATH**
On 1 August 1828, having returned to Port Famine, Stokes shot himself and died 12 days later. He had confessed to King that his depression had left him unable to perform his charting duties. His men had navigated for him and been sworn to secrecy.

Mindful of his own uncle’s suicide, he thought it prudent to have a young gentleman to accompany him to keep his spirits up and in whom he could confide.

**THE JOURNAL**
King kept Stokes’ journal (dating from 28 March to 24 July 1828) as part of his papers and used it when he was writing up the official account of the voyage. The journal belongs with another incomplete journal held in King’s papers in the Mitchell Library. These papers also include letters from Stokes and some South American surveys he completed.

Pringle Stokes’ journal, purchased by the Library in May 2009, is of great value as part of the King collection. It also has an important association with the second Beagle voyage, on which Charles Darwin sailed.

Mindful of his own uncle’s suicide, he thought it prudent to have a young gentleman to accompany him to keep his spirits up and in whom he could confide.

**IN GOOD COMPANY**
Robert FitzRoy, an accomplished surveyor who had been part of the earlier expedition, succeeded Stokes as captain. When he was appointed to command the second Beagle voyage from 1831 to 1836, FitzRoy recalled Stokes’ breakdown. Mindful of his own uncle’s suicide, he thought it prudent to have a young gentleman to accompany him to keep his spirits up and in whom he could confide. Darwin was invited to join the voyage after the first two choices for accompaniment declined. And the rest is history.
When did French fashion take centre stage on catwalks around Australia?
In July 1948 Sydney audiences were treated to the first complete collection of Christian Dior’s revolutionary “New Look” fashions to be paraded outside Paris. Through photographs, personal papers and magazines, curator Margot Riley has uncovered surprising insights into the French influence on Australian culture that led to this defining moment. Having supplied the French fashion industry with wool for nearly a century, Australia’s interest in French culture peaked after World War II. Stunning photographs from our collection capture the mood on Sydney’s streets at this time — from elegant young women outside a French perfumery to a stylish hat salon on Rowe Street.
French connections

BUSINESS AND PLEASURE

From wine and wool to food and fashion, the French have always had a thing or two to teach Australians about the art of combining business and pleasure.

While it is well known that the Library’s collections are rich in the records of early French explorers of the Australia Pacific region, they also reveal the surprising impact of French settlers on Australian life since 1788.

French migrants seized the opportunities of a new world, while adding a touch of continental, old-world glamour to the local scene. The assimilation of French-Australians was eased by the prestige of French culture and the association of France with luxury products.

The zenith for French fashion in Sydney was reached in July 1948, when a parade billed as the ‘first complete Dior collection ever to be shown outside Paris’ was staged at David Jones’ Elizabeth Street store. How and why this event took place in Australia is a fascinating story which can be traced through an intriguing array of items in the Library’s collections.

AUSTRALIAN WOOL

Until the middle of the 20th century, trade between France and Australia was extraordinarily unbalanced, with Australia selling 10 times to France (mainly wool) as France sold to Australia (mainly luxury products).

The buying and selling of wool was the prime reason for many of the earliest French connections in NSW. From 1852, French and Belgian textile companies, anxious to organise direct sales of high-quality Australian wool and cut out the British middle men, sent representatives to the colonies.

When the wool trade took off in the second half of the century, France became Australia’s largest customer after Britain – the world-renowned French textile industries were avid consumers of Australian wool. By the end of the 19th century, several French wool-buying firms had permanent offices in Australia.

FRENCH STYLE

It is hard to overestimate the contribution of the wool-buyers and their coterie to the French presence in Australia throughout the first half of the 20th century. This small and elegant subset of Sydney society (known as le tout-Sydney) – comprising wool-buyers like Jacques Playoust, surrounded by bankers and other businessmen, French and Belgian consular corps and, of course, their wives and families – ensured the growth of French prestige and influence in Australia.

The allure of French clothes, food and wine and the lingering trend in Australia towards a European-based education saw trips ‘back home’ as a right of passage – invariably including a detour through France to remove all traces of provincialism from both the Australian wardrobe and accent. Madame Playoust and her two daughters were in attendance when Christian Dior launched his first ‘New Look’ collection in Paris in February 1947.

ESSENCE OF FASHION

Following years of wartime privation, women longed for romance and feminine clothes. In 1946 the Australian Women’s Weekly had a brilliant promotional idea. The magazine’s fashion editor, Mary Hordern, was sent to France to bring 120 real Paris gowns back to Australia. Selected to represent the essence of French fashion, yet suited to Australian life, these ensembles would be paraded by four Parisiennes.

Under the supervision of Madame Chambrelent, Directrice of the House of Worth, the models made the six-day journey by flying boat, arriving in August to begin their three-month Australian tour.

The parades – held at David Jones in Sydney, Myer in Melbourne and Finney Isles in Brisbane – were staged with all the panoply of the Rue de la Paix salons. The Weekly produced three more French fashion parades in 1947, 1948 and 1949. After opening nights at Princes Restaurant in Sydney’s Martin Place, the parades were held daily at the Trocadero ballroom in George Street.

DIOUR AT DAVID JONES

From 1947 David Jones held its own French fashion parades. During this time the House of Dior began a system of licensing exclusive ready-to-wear collections created for specific international markets. Christian Dior also collaborated with local manufacturers by using Australian fabrics in his clothes.

In 1948 Dior agreed to show his gowns at David Jones in the first-ever parade of his ‘New Look’ clothes outside Paris, and the store also purchased the rights to reproduce select designs in Australia.

A STUNNING COLLECTION

The Library’s collections provide fascinating insights into the prestige of French culture in Australia as revealed through the business records of French milliner Henriette Lamotte and the personal papers of the Playoust family of wool buyers. These rich resources, together with the magazines and newspapers of the day, highlight the surprising connection between the local wool industry, the French-Australian wool-buying community and the influence of French fashion on postwar Australian style.
When will our most incredible objects break out of the vault?
We’re staging a major exhibition of 100 amazing objects from the Mitchell Library’s collections. On show for 100 days from 9 March 2010, ONE hundred is the centrepiece of the Library’s centenary celebration. With works dating from the 15th century to today, this exhibition of our most treasured and fascinating manuscripts, maps, relics, rare books, photographs and paintings will surprise, entertain and stir the imagination.
Celebrating 100 years of the Mitchell Library

In 2010 the Mitchell Library celebrates its centenary — 100 years of collecting, service and interpretation. But these days, if everything is on the internet, what is the relevance of the Library into the future? As we face uncertain times, the Mitchell Library has never been more relevant. Within its collections are the stories and memories of Australia. Our nation’s history cannot be written without them.

The Mitchell Library is an integral part of the Australian community, and in 2010 we invite our community to help us celebrate its past, and focus on its future. The Library will be part of the next century — it will be online; it will be in our historic reading rooms; it will be within our exhibitions and public programs; in our schools; and in our homes. It will be part of our lives.

A STRATEGIC CAMPAIGN

The 2010 centenary year is our opportunity to reconnect with our stakeholders including government, supporters and partners, public libraries and people who use the Library both online and onsite.

Our strategic campaign will:

• re-position the Library for the future by embracing a broader audience across all media
• acknowledge the Mitchell Library’s remarkable contribution to Australian culture
• raise the Library’s profile as an inspiring destination
• build new audiences and reinforce our commitment to current library users
• recognise the vital role that our staff play in delivering library services.

CENTENARY PROGRAM

All events in 2010 will link back to the 100-year anniversary.

2009
28 November
100 days countdown to ONE hundred exhibition
Dynamic web presence to release our unique alphabet

2010
8 March
Exhibition gala opening and catalogue launch

9 March
Exhibition opens to the public

March–June
Behind-the-scenes tour program

commences
Community learning and school holiday programs

1 June
Virtual Time Capsule launch

15 June
Exhibition closes

July–December
Touring program throughout NSW
including curator events in five key regions and touring displays

3 September
DS Mitchell Memorial Lecture by Kate Grenville

BRINGING THE COLLECTION OUT

The 2010 centenary campaign is built around taking the Library and its collections out into the community in a refreshing and surprising way.

The theme is ‘OUT’:

• All the great Australian stories lead back to the Mitchell Library — Speak OUT!
• The Mitchell’s collection is exciting. If you want to see the real thing — Check it OUT!
• Our messages talk to broad audiences. Our clients engage with our collections, staff and services online and onsite — Reach OUT!

OUR UNIQUE ALPHABET

We’ve designed an alphabet that brings our diverse and eclectic collections ‘OUT’. Each letter is a composite of items ‘from the vaults’ — elements of maps, manuscripts, ephemera, relics and even Library architecture — presented and interpreted in an unexpected way. The alphabet, and the many stories it tells from the collections, will extend well beyond the Mitchell centenary year.