A landmark acquisition

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**TAL & Dai-ichi Life collection**

Six albums recently acquired by the State Library, and now known as the TAL & Dai-ichi Life collection, provide an evocative record of the genuine wonder and pleasure with which Europeans viewed Australian natural history.

The 741 natural history watercolours comprise one of the largest archives of the First Fleet period, and constitute the Library’s most significant addition of early colonial material since the 1930s.

Aylmer Bourke Lambert, a wealthy gentleman collector and botanist, compiled the collection from Surgeon General John White’s specimens and drawings brought from Sydney to London in 1795. The 13th Earl of Derby, a legendary collector of natural history, acquired the drawings from Lambert’s estate sale in 1842. The albums are in excellent condition, having remained in the Derby library ever since.

Three of the albums were sent to England’s leading ornithologist, John Latham, who used them to publish many of the first descriptions of Australian birds. The other three albums, which have never been described or seen before, depict exquisite drawings and watercolours of Australian fish, flowers and plants.

An extraordinary acquisition, the TAL & Dai-ichi Life collection is a valuable addition to the Library’s collection of journals, diaries, letters, maps, books and watercolours.
The Library’s most significant addition of early colonial material since the 1930s
Comprising one of the largest archives of the First Fleet period
When the Glasshouse Learning Space was launched in May 2011, it was revealed as a dynamic education centre fitted out with the latest learning resources and technologies.

Through designing, developing and delivering high-quality learning programs for everyone from K–12 students and teachers to lifelong learners, children and families, the Library fulfills the goal of enabling equitable access to our collections and expertise.

Lifelong learners are offered tours of the Library and courses from ‘Where do I start?’ for researchers, to ‘Social networking’ for beginners; while schoolchildren and teachers participate in exhibition-related courses and workshops specifically linked to the curriculum, and special courses for gifted and talented children; and for younger children and their families, storytelling sessions.

With NSW Government support, the State Library has embarked on a major renovation project, focusing on creating a welcoming and accessible Library. With the launch of the Glasshouse Learning Space, the first stage of this project was completed.

The next stage of the renovations transforms the State Reference Library and this will be followed by major changes to the ground floor space encompassing the Library Shop, the Cafe and foyer areas. These renovations will enable the Library to meet the ever-changing demands in information service delivery and improve access to its collections and resources onsite and online.
In 1951, 3500 nineteenth century glass plate negatives were discovered in a garden shed in Chatswood. The photographers were Beaufoy Merlin and Charles Bayliss of the American and Australasian Photographic Company, who had travelled to Hill End in 1872 to record the rush. The newly rich Bernhardt Otto Holtermann employed Merlin and Bayliss to photograph gold-producing areas and cities in NSW and Victoria for exhibition overseas.

While Merlin and Bayliss’s wet plate negatives captured exceptional detail, previous copies failed to reveal the wealth of information hidden within. Through the generous assistance of benefactors, the completed digitzation of this wonderful collection reveals what Merlin and Bayliss photographed, with astonishing clarity and fidelity, for the first time in 140 years.

This photograph shows the studio established by the American and Australasian Photographic Company in Tambaroora Street Hill End in 1872. Photographer Beaufoy Merlin’s assistant Charles Bayliss stands, hands in pockets, in the doorway, with studio operator James Clinton behind him. Beside the door is a frame containing large photographic views of Sydney, including the General Post Office and harbour. Among the group of curious miners who have chosen to be part of the tableau is the driver of Merlin’s outdoor photographic van, to Bayliss’s immediate right. The miners could also have their portrait made in the studio and, for the sartorially challenged, the A&A studio supplied suitable clothing.

Revealing extraordinary details
The Governor: Lachlan Macquarie 1810 to 1821 was an exhibition which commemorated the 200th anniversary of Lachlan Macquarie taking office as the fifth Governor of NSW. On display in the Library’s galleries from 5 July to 10 October 2010, the exhibition examined Macquarie’s contribution to the development of colonial Australia. It included an exploration of his character and his achievements in revolutionising colonial architecture, reviving commerce, and promoting education and social welfare. It also looked broadly at Indigenous experiences under Macquarie’s regime.

The exhibition detailed exploration and expansion in the colony during the Macquarie era, which included a series of landmark tours by Macquarie and the establishment of many new settlements, including Liverpool and Port Macquarie.

A touring exhibition with 35 unique objects, visiting four regional centres in NSW — Liverpool, Port Macquarie, Dubbo and Albury — began in 2010 and runs to 2012.

The free display features extraordinary original items from the Library’s collection including Macquarie’s journals, maps, watercolours, an authentic portrait of the Governor, his travelling trunk and other personal items.

The exhibition was supported by the Nelson Meers Foundation.

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For thousands of years the Aboriginal people of central, north-western and north coast NSW have ceremoniously carved trees as a form of artistic and cultural expression. Whenever you see a picture of an Aboriginal carved tree, it’s more than likely from NSW.

These elaborate cultural expressions — carved into the sapwood and heartwood of trees once a section of external bark was removed — were meant to last. Sadly, after European colonisation, the practice was abandoned and the original meanings lost.

When more than a thousand photographs from the Clifton Cappie Towle collection were recently rediscovered, they formed the heart of the Library’s Carved Trees: Aboriginal Cultures of Western NSW exhibition, along with additional material that helps explain their place in our discourse over time.

Towle (1891–1946), a founding member of the Anthropological Society of NSW, was a keen recorder of Aboriginal sites and deeply concerned about the protection and conservation of Aboriginal relics. In the early 20th century he travelled extensively throughout western NSW, photographing Aboriginal rock art, middens, carved trees, implements and ceremonial sites.

From June 2011 to May 2013 Carved Trees will be on display throughout NSW at places including Gilgandra, Dubbo, Cooma, Goulburn, Condobolin, Tamworth, Tumut, Wentworth, Warren, Wyong and Armidale.