

Media release

Raising the dead at the State Library of NSW

17/07/12

Skeletons will be streaming out of the closet this *National Family History Week* [27 July to 5 August] with the State Library of NSW promoting its Family History Service and free access to a cache of online resources that a general internet search won't find!

"The State Library of NSW has created an easier way to discover lost family stories from the past with its eresources, providing direct 24/7 access to a wealth of historical content including local and overseas newspapers, shipping and passenger records and local history links," says NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive, Alex Byrne.

Every NSW resident with a State Library card can tap into a multitude of free eresources via the Library's website and, by selecting Family History, centuries of relevant records will appear onscreen. For example, users can access every issue of London's *The Times* from 1785 to 2006.

Visitors to the State Library will also enjoy free onsite access to popular subscription databases such as ancestry.com and findmypast.com.

For the budding family detective, a free introductory series *Peering into the past, family history online & on foot* will run from Monday 30 July to Friday 3 August, from 10.30am to 12noon. Plus, expert advice and assistance is available onsite from the Library's Family History Service. There are also 'Getting started' and research guides available on the website.

According to David Berry, a State Library of NSW family history librarian: "Unearthing your family history is like putting the flesh on the bones of your ancestors; it can reveal surprising and sometimes moving lost stories that add to an individual's understanding of who they are."

"Using eresources, one of our inquisitive clients traced her great, great, great, great grandfather and found his Naturalisation Certificate, confirming his Chinese origin, home address and his 1858 arrival in the country," explains Mr Berry.

"This led to the discovery of his name in the Library's records and, amazingly, we had in our possession a letter written by her relative. It was like a voice from beyond the grave. He was a domestic servant and the letter was written to his employer."

Peering into the past, family history online & on foot runs from Monday 30 July to Friday 3 August, 10.30am – 12pm. Free, limit of 20. Bookings essential: groupvisits@sl.nsw.gov.au For more information contact (02) 9273 1463.

To register for a free State Library card go to www.sl.nsw.gov.au/using/access and select 'Getting a Library card'.

To find out more about *National Family History Week* go to www.familyhistoryweek.org.au

For more information and interviews please contact:

Vanessa Bond, Media & Communications Manager
(02) 9273 1566, 0411 259 898, vbond@sl.nsw.gov.au

