

National treasures

HEAVENS, DO LIBRARIES KEEP ALL THAT STUFF?

YOU'D BE SURPRISED — UNTIL YOU SEE FOR YOURSELF, AS MIKE BINGHAM SUGGESTS

OUR libraries are much more than book depots. They're a living part of our community and they breathe our history — and from next week Tasmanians will be able to sample the proof.

The State Library and the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery will co-host a major touring exhibition "National Treasures from Australia's Great Libraries".

It will open at the museum next Friday and continue until July 23. The free exhibition has already drawn more than 100,000 visitors in Canberra and Melbourne.

On display will be more than 170 objects, some never shown before, ranging from Don Bradman's favourite bat to Cook's Endeavour journal, Ned Kelly's helmet, Governor Arthur's proclamation to Tasmania's Aborigines, Eddie Mabo's papers and Azaria Chamberlain's wrist band.

Among the treasures are 15 items from the state, five each from the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, the W.L. Crowther Library and the Tasmaniana Library.

A highlight is W.B. Gould's *Sketchbook of Fishes* from the Allport collection. It was the inspiration for Richard Flanagan's novel *Gould's Book of Fish*.

The other state contributions include whaling memorabilia, Melba's farewell tour program, paintings, historic photographs of Tasmanian Aborigines at Oyster Cove in 1858, convict records and historical apple labels.

Margaret Dent, of the National Library of Australia in Canberra, has curated the exhibition. "The idea for it sprang from the success of a Centenary of Federation exhibition drawn from the great libraries of the world in 2001," she says.

"It ran for three months at the National Library and was such an amazing success that the Council of Australian State Libraries saw an opportunity to put our own treasures on show."

The world collection did not leave Canberra but library staff noted that not only did it pull big attendances but that many people spent extended periods viewing the items. At least one stayed for the entire day.

The national project, which took four years to bring to fruition, began with staff in all states drawing up lists from their own collections.

"All the special collections staff were wonderful," says Dent. "They brought us material and we all worked to prune the list."

The outcome is that the exhibition is divided into various themes, including war and loss, national obsessions, heroes and villains, culture, innovation and industry, settlement, hope and hardship, and early maps and exploration.

"National Treasures is, in part, a celebration of the role of the founding collectors," she says. "They were the people who preserved what otherwise would have been lost."

Visitors who have seen the exhibition in Canberra and Melbourne rate Bradman's bat and Kelly's helmet as among the most fascinating objects.

Learning

<http://ink.news.com.au/mercury>

In next Tuesday's *Mercury*, Learning will have a guide for teachers planning school visits to the exhibition.



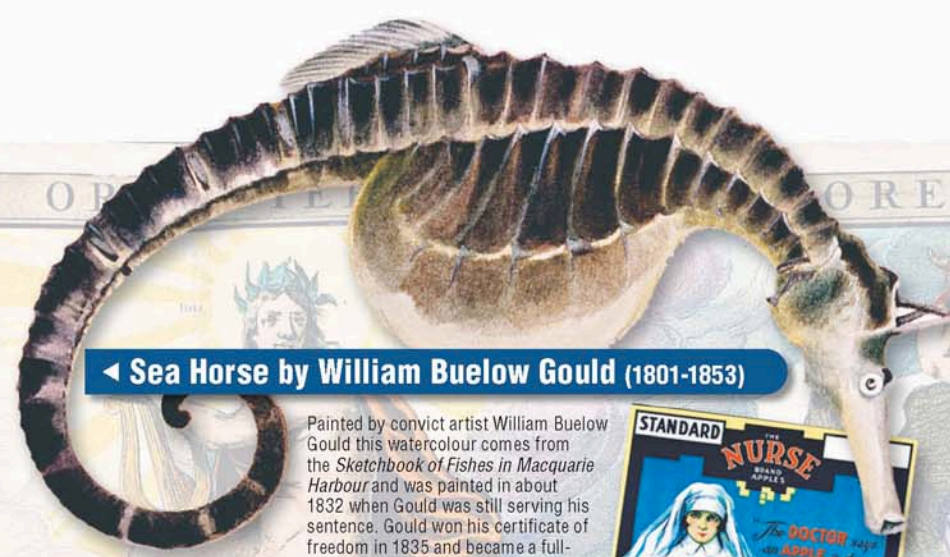
Painting of a kangaroo ▲ Kenelm Digby (1800-1880) "The Kangaroo, copied from a living animal exhibited in Dublin" from Digby's *The Naturalists Companion* painted between 1810-1817. *Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW*

Australian treasures exhibition

Australia's libraries are filled with intriguing objects, many of which have rarely been seen by the public. For the first time some of the most famous and significant items have been gathered together in the exhibition National Treasures from Australia's Great Libraries.

The exhibition is on at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery from May 26 — July 23.

For more details <http://nationaltreasures.nla.gov.au/index.html>



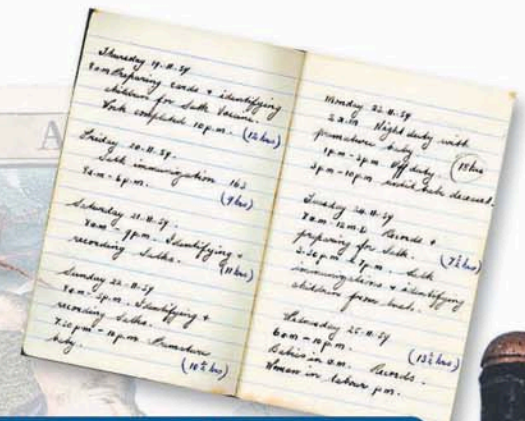
Sea Horse by William Buelow Gould (1801-1853)

Painted by convict artist William Buelow Gould this watercolour comes from the *Sketchbook of Fishes in Macquarie Harbour* and was painted in about 1832 when Gould was still serving his sentence. Gould won his certificate of freedom in 1835 and became a full-time painter, but he soon became an alcoholic and his artwork suffered. *State Library of Tasmania*



Label for Nurse Brand Apples (1930s)

Tasmania is known as the "Apple Isle" because at one time it grew half of Australia's apple crop. *Tasmaniana Library, State Library of Tasmania*



Sister Ellen Kettle's Diary

Sister Kettle (1922-1999) began working as a nurse in an Aboriginal settlement in the Northern Territory and was appalled by the state of Aboriginal health and the standards of care available. She devoted her life to improving health care for Indigenous people. The diaries show some of her methods and the problems she encountered. *Northern Territory Library*



Souvenir of the opening of Parliament House at Canberra

A printed book with a blue velvet cover given to guests at the opening of Parliament House in 1927. *ACT Heritage Library*



Scrapbook of an undercover policeman (1920-1952)

Frank Fahy (1896-1978) This scrapbook contains newspaper cuttings and photographs covering Fahy's years as an undercover agent in the police force. Fahy was made famous in the 1954 book *The Shadow*, by Vince Kelly, which detailed some of his exploits. Fahy's scrapbook shows, among other things, a young criminal named Darcy Dugan growing up in a series of mugshots. It was presented to the State Library of NSW by Joyce Cardinals, December 2001. *Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW*



The Diary of Mary Watson (1881)

Mary Watson was the wife of a fisherman living on an isolated settlement on Lizard Island off the coast of Queensland. Her husband had left her alone with her three-month-old baby Thomas and two Chinese servants while hunting for beche-de-mer further north. She was attacked by Aborigines for whom the island was a sacred site. One servant was killed but Mary escaped with her baby and the other servant to sea in a ship's tank only to die from dehydration. The diary was later recovered recording Mary's final days. *State Library of Queensland*



Convict uniform and two caps (1830-1849)

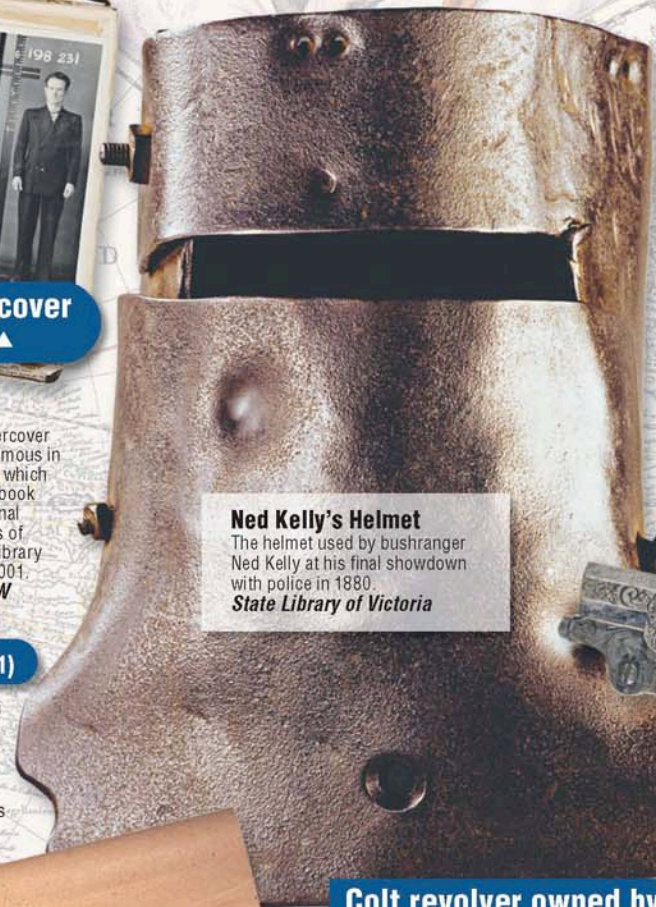
This is the only complete convict uniform known to exist in Australia. *National Library of Australia*

Diary on a roll of toilet paper

Raymond Stanley Stewart (1914-2001) After being captured in Egypt Ray Stewart kept a series of diaries, the first of them written in pencil on toilet paper, of his time in prison camps in North Africa and Italy. He kept it hidden in a Red Cross gift box because keeping a diary was against prison camp rules. The diaries give an insight into life in a prison camp — the anxiety and the boredom. Stewart donated the diary along with other items to the State Library of WA in 1999.

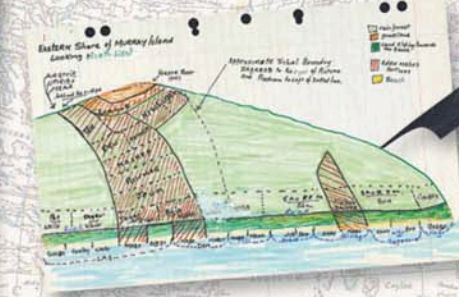
Journal of HMS Endeavour (1768-1771)

This book is the most prized manuscript in the possession of the national library. It records the journey of the explorer James Cook on his first voyage of exploration where he became the first person to chart the east coast of Australia and claimed the land for the British government. It was acquired by the federal government in 1923 and became a founding object of the National Library. *National Library of Australia*



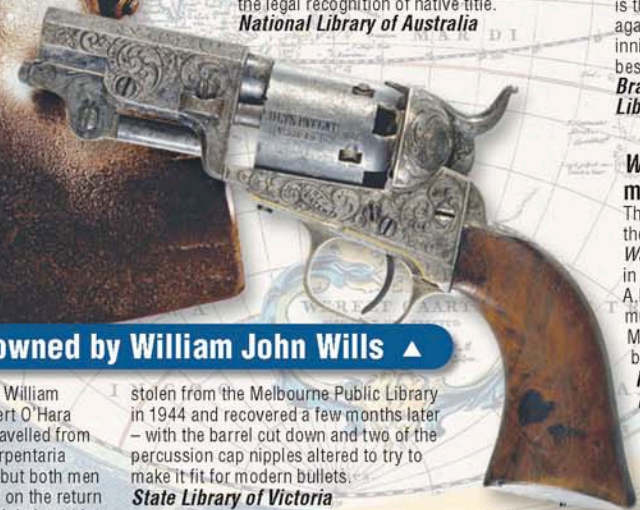
Ned Kelly's Helmet

The helmet used by bushranger Ned Kelly at his final showdown with police in 1880. *State Library of Victoria*



Edward Koiki Mabo (1936-1992)

Mabo's sketch of Murray Island shows tribal boundaries, part of his successful claim for the legal recognition of native title. *National Library of Australia*



Colt revolver owned by William John Wills

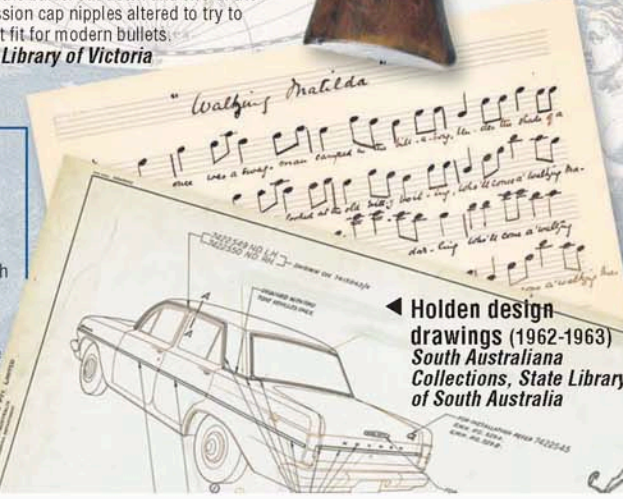
A gun belonging to explorer William John Wills. Along with Robert O'Hara Burke, Wills and his team travelled from Melbourne to the Gulf of Carpentaria setting out in August 1860, but both men and most of their party died on the return trek in April 1861. Although it belonged to Wills, Burke died holding the pistol. It was

stolen from the Melbourne Public Library in 1944 and recovered a few months later — with the barrel cut down and two of the percussion cap nipples altered to try to make it fit for modern bullets. *State Library of Victoria*

BACKGROUND IMAGE

Arnold Colom's Zee-Atlas

This *Zee-Atlas ofte water-wereldt* (Sea Atlas of the Water World) was published in 1658. It was acquired by the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia in 1905. It was created by Dutch engraver Arnold Colom (1624-1668) and was meant for a library or shipping office rather than to be taken to sea. Its importance to Australia lies in the fact that it contains one of the earliest published charts showing detail of the coastline of Western Australia and the Cape York Peninsula. *State Library of South Australia*



Holden design drawings (1962-1963)

South Australian Collections, State Library of South Australia

Henry Lawson's Pen (1916-1917)

Used by the famous author, made from pencil lead, wood and steel. *National Library of Australia*

Bradman's bat

Don Bradman was one of the world's greatest cricketers. Born in 1908 he played 52 tests for Australia in the 30s and 40s, captaining the side on several occasions including the 1948 "Invincibles" tour. This bat is the one he used to score 334 against England, then a record innings. He later said it was "the best bat I ever had". *Bradman Collection, State Library of South Australia*

Waltzing Matilda manuscript

This manuscript represents the original notated version of *Waltzing Matilda* written down in about 1895, with words by A.B. "Banjo" Paterson and music by Christina Rutherford MacPherson (1864-1936) based on a remembered tune. *National Library of Australia*

