



Please note: The Cultural Collections Reading Room, Baillieu Library, will be open on Saturdays for a trial period from 28 July until the end of 2007. Requests for UMA material to be used on a Saturday need to be placed by 4.00 pm on the previous Thursday.

## UMA Bulletin

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## Recent Exhibition

### tea *the global infusion*

THE HIGHLIGHTS of a recent exhibition held at the Leigh Scott Gallery in the Baillieu Library on the history of tea, titled *Tea: the global infusion*, were two collections of Chinese silk paintings from the UMA. These exquisite 19th century works were borrowed from the Strathfieldsaye Estate and Una Porter Collections for the duration of the exhibition and were also used to illustrate the catalogue and posters.

The Strathfieldsaye Estate Collection documents the Gippsland pastoral property that Clive Disher bequeathed to the University in 1976. The Disher family had owned this estate for over a century and the bequest included the extensive archive that documents in detail the management of the property during this period.

Una Porter was a graduate of medicine from the University of Melbourne and youngest daughter of F.J. Cato, co-founder of the grocery business Moran and Cato. The Porter papers include the personal correspondence of the Cato family dating from the 1880s as well as material related to Moran and Cato, and Porter's own career and personal life.

An online version of the exhibition showing the full selection of the silks displayed can be viewed at <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/culturalcollections/exhibitions/tea>.

Left: Chinese silk paintings from the Strathfieldsaye Estate Collection; right: Images from a scrapbook containing Chinese silk paintings, Una Porter Collection.



# UMA Bulletin

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES

[www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/archives/index.html](http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/archives/index.html)

No. 21, July 2007

## Missionaries of Civilisation The Commercial Travellers' Association of Victoria

BEFORE THE ADVENT of huge retail chains, and long before online commerce, commercial travellers rode the nation's back roads, dusting off their sample kits in front of the keen eyes of storekeepers. Their work was more than a nine-to-five job — it was a lifestyle. Many would spend weeks away from their families living in hotels, mixing with other commercial travellers and drinking with locals. In addition to their valued merchandise they were carriers of gossip and conveyers of news from town to town.

Commercial Travellers' Associations (CTA) sprung up in each Australian state in the second half of the 19th century, starting in South Australia in 1866. These influential bodies negotiated special rates of accommodation for their members, provided substantial clubhouse facilities, established sick leave funds, mortuary benefits and scholarships for members' children. In addition, they instigated social interaction between members by holding sports events, billiards tournaments and charitable functions.

An exhibition highlighting the Commercial Travellers' Association of



Above: Australia To-day, 1916, illustration by Norman Lindsay; left: Australia To-day, 1940, illustration by C. Dudley Wood. This image was used for the cover of the Missionaries of Civilisation exhibition catalogue.

Victoria will be presented in the Leigh Scott Gallery at the University of Melbourne's Baillieu Library between 3 July and 5 October this year. Titled *Missionaries of Civilisation*, the show is drawn from the approximately 68 linear metres of Commercial Travellers' Association archival records held by the University of Melbourne Archives. The acquisition of this significant collection was negotiated by the late Frank Strahan, University Archivist from 1960 to 1995.

This exhibition investigates how a group of humble travelling salesmen developed such lobbying power that they were listened to by governments and endorsed by prime ministers.

In part, the success of the CTA in Victoria was due to the long-serving General Manager and Secretary, James Davies OBE (1865–1931), who led the organisation for 45 years and effectively developed a cult of personality around him. He oversaw the building of palatial clubrooms

in Melbourne's Flinders Street and was also influential in forming a national United Commercial Travellers' Association. When he died the flamboyant Melbourne sculptor, Paul Raphael Montford, was commissioned to execute a sculptural bust of him, and a copy was cast in bronze for each state office.

Davies was also editor of the pictorial magazine, *Australia To-day* which was an annual supplement to the monthly CTA journal, *The Australian Traveller*. *continued page 2*

## New collections/additional accessions

- Malcolm Fraser
- John C. Taylor & Sons (builders)
- Ian Potter & Co.
- Bates, Smart & McCutcheon
- Yvonne Aitken (agricultural scientist)
- Nahum Barnett (architect)
- Gretna Weste (botanist)
- Duncraggan Open Air Kindergarten
- Craftsmen Press
- Melbourne University Classics Club
- Zelda D'Aprano (feminist)
- Victorian Woolbrokers Association
- Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, Victorian Branch
- Val Noone (historian)
- Food Preservers' Union of Australia, Victorian Branch
- Liberty Victoria

First published in 1905 (and printed annually until 1974) *Australia To-day* had the well-defined objectives of recruiting British immigrants to populate Australia's hinterland as well as supporting Australia's fledgling tourism industry. Thousands were sent each year to British commercial travellers' associations and to the offices of Australian Agents General in London for distribution. The simple logic motivating this project was that the more populated regional areas became, the more lucrative it would be for commercial travellers. However, what may have started as respectable opportunism became a spirited mission. The CTA became an ambassador for the Australian nation. Alfred Deakin applauded the inaugural publication; later, Prime Ministers Robert Menzies and John Curtin willingly wrote forewords to a number of editions.

*Australia To-day* became known as 'Australia's Pictorial Annual' — Davies shaped it into a sophisticated publication. In addition to a handsome layout and a lavish use of fine quality black and white photographs, accomplished visual artists were commissioned to design annual covers. The UMA has a rich holding of the original artworks and the exhibition includes paintings by Lionel Lindsay, Norman Lindsay, Ernest Buckmaster, Napier Waller and C. Dudley Wood.

Brian Allison, Curator of Exhibitions, Cultural Collections

### Missionaries of Civilisation

The Commercial Travellers' Association of Victoria

Exhibition runs  
3 July to 5 October 2007  
Leigh Scott Gallery  
First Floor, Baillieu Library  
University of Melbourne

## Art History at UMA

ONE EVENING in 1945 Daryl Lindsay, director of the National Gallery of Victoria, and Sir John Medley, Vice-Chancellor at the University of Melbourne, were dining with Sir Keith Murdoch, when Lindsay pointed out that there was no training ground in Australia for the staff of art galleries and museums. Murdoch rose to the occasion and after only a few moments hesitation offered to fund a Chair of Fine Arts at the University. Thus was Joseph Burke appointed the first Herald Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Melbourne in 1946, where he established the first department of art history in the country. Burke had a Master of Arts from London and Yale Universities, had worked at the Victoria and Albert Museum and at the time of his appointment was Secretary to the British Prime Minister Lord Attlee, a wartime secondment. Charismatic and witty, he is remembered by many of his former students as the most exciting and engaging lecturer they ever encountered. In his long career at the University he spawned two generations



Sir Joseph Burke, c.1975, unknown photographer (Sir Joseph Burke Collection).

of art historians, critics, curators and gallerists who are still predominant in their fields, including three female professors: Jaynie Anderson, the current Herald Professor, Margaret Plant and Virginia Spate.

Sixty years later there is great interest in the legacy of Burke and the people he appointed to the Department of Fine Arts — Ursula Hoff, Franz Philipp and Bernard Smith, amongst others. In 2005 Sheridan Palmer's PhD thesis, *Intersecting Cultures: European influences in the fine arts: Melbourne 1940–1960*, examined the way in which the enforced displacement of European Jews to Australia after they fled from Nazism enabled the Department to become a 'force in the academic, intellectual, museological and cultural environment of post-war Melbourne'.<sup>1</sup> *The Melbourne Art Journal* of 2005

continued this examination with essays on Burke, Hoff and Philipp, and further works are in progress.

In January 2008 the legacy of these pioneers of art history in Australia will be celebrated in an exhibition curated by PhD student Ben Thomas. The exhibition will coincide with the 32nd Congress of the International Committee of the History of Art, the first to be held in Australia, indeed, in the southern hemisphere. The exhibition will largely draw upon the archival collections of some of the major figures from the Fine Arts Department which are held in the University of Melbourne Archives; these include the papers of Burke himself and those of Ursula Hoff, Margaret Manion, Franz Philipp, Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack and Leonhard Adam. The latter two were sessional teachers in the Department, brought in by Burke for their singular abilities: Hirschfeld-Mack had been a leading figure in the Bauhaus movement; Adam was an ethnologist who collected and wrote on primitive art. Hoff and Philipp had trained under the leading art historians of Germany and Austria when art history was still a

new discipline, and one of the themes of Ben Thomas' exhibition will reflect on the manner in which these European intellectuals brought their unique sensibilities and traditions to the antipodes whereupon they each engaged with local art and artists, including indigenous art in the case of Adam.

When Joseph Burke took up his position as Herald Professor, his brief was not only to create a department, but also to take art into the public sphere. The Burke papers show the close friendships that he formed with many members of the art world over 60 years, amongst them Daryl and Joan Lindsay, Lionel and Norman Lindsay, Eric Thake, Russell Drysdale, John Brack and Mary Cecil Allen. A 'clubbable man', he founded the Society of Collectors in Australia and belonged to dozens more: from the Dante Alighieri Society to the William Morris Society. His papers also hold his many articles and publications including his magnum opus, *English Art, 1714–1800*, part of the *Oxford History of English Art* series, which he worked on intermittently over 30 years. A corresponding set of his Department of Fine

Arts records reveal how inseparable were his professional and private lives.

In addition to the papers of Ursula Hoff and a smaller collection for Franz Philipp, the Archives also holds the papers of Professor Margaret Manion who succeeded Burke to the Herald Chair; they include her personal correspondence and material relating to her teaching and research. There is also much material on the history of the development and growth of the Department of Fine Arts in other University records such as the Registrar's Correspondence, Faculty and Council minutes, administrative and student files. Add to this that the records of art schools in Australia are currently being sought and it seems that research into the teaching of art and art history in Australia will provide fertile fields for years to come.

Sue Fairbanks, Senior Archivist, Collection Management and Jane Ellen, Senior Archivist, Access and Outreach

<sup>1</sup> Sheridan Palmer, *Intersecting Cultures: European influences in the fine arts: Melbourne 1940–1960*, PhD thesis, Department of Fine Arts, University of Melbourne 2005, p. ii.

## Principal Archivist's Report

AS I REFLECT on my first year with the University of Melbourne Archives I am struck by the enormous amount of change that the Archives has undergone over recent years. Location, staffing and processes have all altered to significant degrees. This year promises to be no different and it is inspiring and gratifying to watch staff take this in their stride. Of course we are not alone in this; the whole University is experiencing perhaps the greatest change in its history, in terms of its revised degree structure. The Library has once again re-emerged as an organisational entity, meaning that careful planning and setting priorities for the future will be

instrumental in ensuring the Archives makes a significant contribution to serving students, researchers, the community, and depositors.

The period covered by our *Strategic Directions Plan 2003–2007* expired in April and accordingly we set aside 15 June to conduct a Planning Day with all staff participating. The agenda included a review of previous goals and strategic priorities; how we might improve services to researchers; addressing what we collect and how we provide access, which led us to drafting new goals and priorities for 2007–2011. At the time of going to press the new strategic plan requires a final drafting, but expect to hear more on this in our next edition.

### Funding

A successful submission to the Miegunyah Trust has secured almost \$100,000 to begin work on the Integrated Archival Management and Access System (IAMAS) and conversion to the Series System.

Currently, management of our 15 kilometres of archival records is achieved through a number of disparate databases. An integrated system (the IAMAS) would lead to streamlining of archival data recording; production of an efficient collection management tool; integration with current University-wide systems; and would allow access to information regarding our collections online.

The Series System is a method of archival documentation created and adopted by the National Archives of Australia in the 1960s. To

fully understand and document a record, context may consist of important information other than its content, including who 'created' it and when; its purpose; or the existence of other records that deal with the same issue or subject. Adoption of the record series eliminates problems with physical arrangement and allows archives to be linked to their context.

Taking advantage of the Archives' location in the Information Management program, which includes Records Services who deploy and run TRIM as the University's EDRMS and record keeping system, we will:

- leverage the existing expertise within the Records Services group to adapt and configure TRIM to meet the Archives' particular requirements and technical specifications for an

Integrated Archival Management and Access System;

- employ a project manager, with both the requisite technical skills to plan a pilot implementation and conversion of the Archives' accessioning system to the Series System; and plan the implementation of the modified TRIM system including IT support, migration of data, training personnel, integration with other Information Services' systems such as CoSI/Dam and Records Management systems, and integration of the web interface; and
- employ professional specialists for data conversion and migration to the new system.

A \$25,000 donation from the Baillieu family will fund the listing of collections of University leaders. The Archives would like to con-

tinue adding depth to available information on the University and its leaders — chancellors and vice-chancellors. Most leaders within the University were also influential members of society within the law, medicine or business and are therefore of interest to both historians of the University and to more general researchers.

The Archives hold the papers of seven chancellors, five deputy chancellors, eleven vice-chancellors and three deputy vice-chancellors. At present, the archives of four of these university officials are well used, but not easily accessible. They need to be better arranged and described, and a complete list of their contents added to the Archives website, resulting in easier access for the research community, and easier handling by Archives staff.

The project will arrange and describe and update into electronic format the existing lists of the records of chancellors and vice-chancellors:

- Sir James William Barrett, Vice-Chancellor 1931–1934, first Deputy Chancellor 1934–1935 and Chancellor, 1935–1939 (oculist and surgeon);
- Sir Raymond Edward Priestley, Vice-Chancellor 1935–1938 (geologist and Antarctic explorer);
- Sir David Plumley Derham, Vice-Chancellor 1968–1982 (lawyer, Professor of Jurisprudence);
- Sir Roy Douglas Wright, Deputy Chancellor 1972–1980, Chancellor 1980–1989 (Professor of Physiology, Director of the Peter MacCallum Clinic).

Helen McLaughlin

## FRAUGHT & FASCINATING artefacts in archives

FROM ITS VERY BEGINNING in 1960, the University Archives has managed archival records — firstly, of the University's own administrative structures and people; and secondly, although unusual for the time, also of businesses and businessmen.

But as can often happen as organisations evolve, the Archives came to perform several less obvious functions. Its most enduring and vital extraneous role, however, has been to operate as the University's unofficial museum, preserving artefacts relating to our own history.

The Archives has long conceded the inevitability of this foster parent role because it already manages over a kilometre of the University's administrative archives and papers of senior executives and academics. These same sources can complement historic university objects, sometimes directly shedding light on their origins. Recently we acquired from an outdoor market in Castlemaine a plaque once mounted in the main entrance of the Union House for its opening in 1938. The building, parts of which remain incorporated in the current student union, was funded entirely from donations by staff, graduates, colleges and the public, as well as a university loan. There was also major support from what the Vice-Chancellor, Raymond Priestley, called 'progressive' firms. The plaque acknowledges very substantial gifts for the building and the Metallurgy School from Broken Hill Associated Smelters and the Electrolytic Zinc Company of Australia Ltd, and also commemorates the Hon. W.L. Baillieu 'whose courage and constructive imagination contributed so greatly to the development of the metallurgical industry in Australia'. All this background detail resides in the central administration files at the Archives.

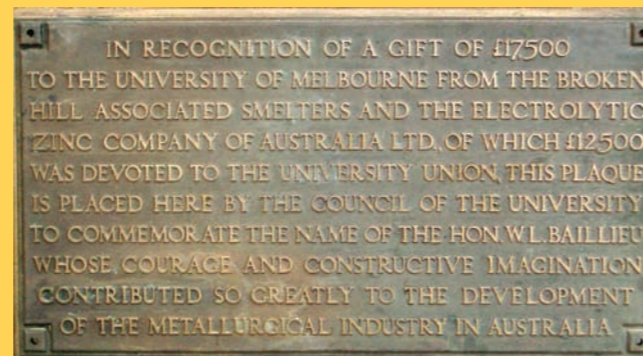
In reverse, artefacts can add meaning to archival documents. Some do this in the most immediate way as document containers, in effect an extension of 'letter + envelop' logic which recalls one

of the historical meanings of hamper, or more accurately hanaper: 'a round wicker case or small basket in which documents were kept'. There are a number of examples of containers in the University Archives, including a briefcase belonging to the controversial trade unionist Clarrie O'Shea and another, stamped 'The Rt Hon The Speaker', used by the father of Victoria's governor 1866 to 1873, Sir John Manners-Sutton, and whose papers we hold. Far more symbolic is the so-called Childers casket, an ebony and silver container presented to the University in 1882 and currently on display in the University's Council chambers. In it, a group of UK-based Victorians sent documents, now in the Archives, illustrating Childers' role in establishing the University.

Recently acquired by the Australian Prime Minister's Centre at Old Parliament House is the dispatch box of our first PM Sir Edmund Barton; it helps elucidate the long-forgotten practice of prime ministers here and in the UK of ministers 'doing their boxes'. Typically used in pairs, they were designed to be locked and to accommodate a day's worth of (foolscap size) working papers. The University Archives has a similar item in Sir Redmond Barry's deed box bearing his name, and in which, according to Carolyn Rasmussen and Mark Richmond, 'he probably carried papers, letters and books back and forth between his various offices'.

Throughout its history, the University Archives has acknowledged several other benefits in holding objects additional to its museum role and the direct document/object links. Extending the latter reason, there is a more standard argument about relatedness, as well as the practical value of objects as illustrations for publications drawing on archives and exhibitions needing objects to lift two-dimensional documentary content.

No archives ought to collect 'related' non-archival material lightly. Indeed, our own policy guideline on this point states



Clockwise from top left: *The recently returned Union House plaque; eight-hour day ceremonial tinplate armour, c.1885–1895 (United Tinsmiths, Ironworkers and Japanners Society of Victoria Collection); prototype model of the 1948 Hartnett Car (Sir Laurence Hartnett Collection); late 19th and early 20th century office equipment collected by Frank Strahan; plaster bust of Sir Robert Menzies by Les Tanner, 1966 (Sir Robert Menzies Collection); Sir Redmond Barry's deed box (E. Hoey Collection).* All photos, except the armour, are by Lindsay Howe

'we are an archive, not a library or museum (although we operate a support library); only in very exceptional circumstances will we take in non-archival material'. Most archives around the world do to some degree or another and the practice quickly became a feature during Frank Strahan's long reign as University Archivist (1960–1995).

## Collection Highlight

### Glenara Ambrotype James Stewart Johnston Collection



AMONG ONE of many photographic gems held by the UMA is a half-plate Ambrotype (also known as a Collodion positive) photograph of the historic homestead of Glenara at Bulla, Victoria. Measuring 13.3 x 18.4 cm and presented in an embossed, leather-covered wooden case, this photograph shows the earliest known view (pre-dating 1864) of this National Trust and Victorian Heritage Register listed property.



*Glenara, Bulla, c.1857–1860, Ambrotype, oval image in its presentation case and close-up image (J.S. Johnston Collection).*

Taken by an unknown photographer, the Glenara Ambrotype is a brilliant example of this early photographic format which reached its peak of popularity in Australia between the mid-1850s and the early 1860s. This particular one is also a relatively rare example of an Ambrotype landscape view as the format was commonly used for portraits.

The Ambrotype process involved producing an underexposed and then developed negative on glass which was backed with an opaque coating, commonly a black lacquer, to produce a positive image. Once the image was created it was covered with another layer of glass and set in a presentation case.

Glenara was built for pastoralist Walter Clark in 1857 by the building firm Hornby and Pigdon to the design of the prominent Melbourne architectural firm of Purchas and Swyer. Walter Clark accepted the tender by Hornby and Pigdon on 17 June 1857 with work on both the house and garden layout largely completed by November of that year. (The progress of Glenara's construction is recorded in some detail in the Purchas and Swyer letter book held by the UMA that covers this period.)

Charles Swyer is credited with the original design of the garden of which the western aspects can clearly be seen in this photograph. The garden was greatly improved upon by Walter Clark and later by his son Alister Clark, who was internationally recognised for the new varieties of roses and daffodils he developed at Glenara. The garden is now considered one of the most historically significant aspects of the property.

This photograph's depiction of the original garden layout is significant; not only because of its early date, but also for the fact that it is the only early image that depicts the property from the west. The other early depictions, which include the 1867 Eugene von Guerard painting of the property (titled *Mr Clark's Station, Deep Creek*) held by the National Gallery of Victoria, are from the south and do not clearly show the layout of the northern aspects of the property as this image does.

The Glenara Ambrotype forms part of the James Stewart Johnston Collection held by the UMA. Johnston was a prominent early Victorian who was elected MLC in 1851, was one-time manager of the *Argus* and, in the 1860s, established a vineyard close to Glenara. The Clark and Johnston families were closely related by marriage.

Thus in a 1990 letter of thanks to the widow of the meteorologist and polar explorer Dr Fritz Loewe, he captured the rationale perfectly in referring to her gift of two sleeping bags Loewe had used in the world-renowned Wegener Expedition to Greenland as 'these rich symbolic additions to the Loewe collection at [the] Archives'. By contrast, the 1990s also saw the Archives hand over eight huge trade union banners to a better home at Melbourne Museum, but where they continue to complement our extensive labour collections. Both cases, I think, sum up the fraught and fascinating dilemmas and delights of artefacts and archives.

Michael Piggott, University Archivist and Manager, Cultural Collections Group

Jason Benjamin, Coordinator — Reference Services

## Researcher Profile — Kieran Crichton

**I**N MY RESEARCH I am examining the development of the music curriculum at the University of Melbourne between 1891 and 1927. Where previous work on the Conservatorium during this period has tended to move from the Council chamber or committee room to the public domain, making use of official and press records, my aim is to focus on the development of music teaching from the perspective of the lecture room.

Although the University had the power to confer music degrees from its foundation in 1853, and did confer two music degrees *ad eundem gradum* before 1891, teaching for music degrees did not commence until the arrival of the first Ormond Professor, G.W.L. Marshall-Hall, in 1891. After the first University Conservatorium was established in 1895, the University instituted a Diploma of Musical Associate, which was different from the degree because it allowed the student to be



Left: *Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne, c.1930* (University of Melbourne Photograph Collection); right: *Professor George William Louis Marshall-Hall, c.1900, unknown photographer* (University of Melbourne Photograph Collection).



examined for instrumental studies, whereas the degree was awarded only on the basis of a composition exercise.

The University Archives contains very substantial collections related to the official business of the institutional structure through University Council and committee records, and a complete sequence of University Calendars. Occasionally personalities are illuminated by material in the invaluable Registrar's Correspondence series; Professor Franklin Peterson's intermittent battles with the Finance Committee as he sought to prevent the

loss of funding through charges for non-existent administrative assistance would resonate with many heads of faculties and departments in the University today. The Registrar's Correspondence also documents the University's communications with other institutions, and gives a very rich record of the models adopted in the evolution of the music degree and diploma courses, and the highly ambivalent relations with examining bodies such as the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music that can be seen in correspondences after the University set up its own

examination scheme (now the AMEB) in 1902.

Fortunately the University Archives and the Grainger Museum contain much complementary material and my research is immeasurably benefited by the close proximity of these two important collections. For instance the Marshall-Hall papers shed interesting light on Marshall-Hall's spectrum of activities and broaden the official record in the University Archives. The Laver papers contain a wide range of material relating to the third Ormond Professor, W.A. Laver, including autobiographical writings, correspondence and a very important photographic record of some of the activities in the Conservatorium during his long association with the institution. Other collections in the Grainger Museum relate to notable teachers who had a significant influence on the Conservatorium, such as A.E.H. Nickson.

Kieran Crichton is a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne

## New Staff



Maria Gionis  
Photo by Lindsay Howe

**I**N FEBRUARY Maria Gionis joined us from Property and Campus Services. She has taken on the role of Assistant Coordinator, Repository and Systems and is proving to be an invaluable addition to the Collection Management team.

In December 2006, at the end of the three-year contract, it was decided to redefine the position of the Senior Archivist, Rio Tinto and Business. The position was advertised and Melinda Barrie was the successful applicant. Melinda has been the Senior Records Officer at the City of Darebin for the last 14 years. She has also undertaken archival projects at the Koorie Heritage Trust, BHP, Austel and Esso, and last year worked on a processing project with UMA. She has expertise in the areas of electronic records and EDRMS, websites, intranets, privacy and vital records. As well as a Bachelor of Arts (Deakin University), she has postgraduate diplomas in Archives and Records (Monash University) and in Public Policy and Management (University of Melbourne), and a Master of Business/IT (RMIT). She has also been active with the Australian Society of Archivists (Victorian Branch), the Oral History Association of Australia and the Institute of Information Management. Melinda joined us in mid-June.



Melinda Barrie  
Photo by Lindsay Howe

## Volunteer Profile — Jean Taylor

### Interview with Jane Ellen

**J**EAN TAYLOR has worked as a nurse, tram driver, waitress, author and lesbian feminist activist. These days she works at UMA as a volunteer on the body of collections collectively called the Victorian Women's Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archive (VWLLFA), which she and others have spent many years compiling. I started by asking Jean how she got involved in documenting the women's movement.

I joined what was then called the Women's Liberation Archives in 1984. It had been established in 1982 by a feminist reading group who had realised that the records of all the Women's Liberation Movement activism in Melbourne were fast vanishing and something needed to be done to collect and preserve all of the periodicals, posters, banners, leaflets, minutes of meetings, badges and everything else that had been generated back then. I felt connected to the Archives because of my own activist involvement in the Movement and continued archiving the collections even though by the late '80s I was the last remaining member. After the Women's Liberation Building in Gertrude Street — and I think radical feminist activism in general — wound up in 1992, I moved the archive into my home. In some ways I enjoyed the cosy feel of the box-lined walls in my spare room and study but it couldn't go on indefinitely! So in 2000 I initiated the collective now known as the VWLLFA to work out where all this considerable amount of invaluable material was to go. We incorporated and by the end of that year the Archives had been transferred to UMA.



Jean Taylor  
Photo by Jane Ellen

*What aspect of archives' work most appeals to you?*

I love the hands-on approach and the collaboration with others. I love the excitement of getting a new donation — there's always something in there I haven't seen before. I especially like getting all of our most treasured possessions, the log books from the WL Centres during the 1970s, for example, and all the banners we carried on innumerable marches, and the newsletters that were run off on Gestetners, knowing they could then be stored appropriately, made available for research and preserved for posterity.

*Is there any item you would especially like to have in the VWLLFA Archive?*

In 1992 when the Women's Liberation Centre was closing, I really wish now that I'd taken one of the Gestetner machines. They were so crucial to what we did there, printing out all those newsletters and minutes, that it would have been good to have kept one to illustrate the 'means of production'.

*Which historical period would you like to have lived through?*

I was in my late twenties when Women's Liberation started and I've always enjoyed the fact that I was able to contribute, benefit from and be influenced by one of the most vibrant political movements of all times.

## Recently Read

Books some of our staff and volunteers have been reading

### Jane Ellen

Senior Archivist, Access and Outreach

*The Last Mughal*, by William Dalrymple  
A wonderfully readable and poetic account of the Indian Uprising of 1857 which draws on previously unseen Indian archives and tells the story from Hindu, Muslim and British perspectives.

### Tony Miller

Coordinator, Repository and Collection Systems

*The Argus: Life & Death of a Newspaper*, edited by Jim Usher  
With the striking of hammers on metal forms, distraught workers wept as the Argus office fell silent for the last time after 111 years of publication. An evocative memorialisation by the last generation of newsmen and women who worked for this Melbourne icon, which summarily closed in January 1957, throwing 1000 people out of employment on a day's notice. Contributors include UMA depositor, Bob Murray.

### Jean Taylor

Volunteer

*Everybody's Autobiography*, by Gertrude Stein  
I loved her turns of phrase and way of expressing herself, her whole take on the world. And especially, of course, that she was in a lesbian relationship with Alice B. Toklas and they lived together in Paris for all those decades.

### Oliver Brown

Repository Assistant

*My Uncle Oswald*, by Roald Dahl  
Naughty, cheeky and titillating, Dahl's adult novel tells us what happens when Oswald discovers the world's most powerful aphrodisiac.

### Helen McLaughlin

Principal Archivist

*The Castle in the Forest*, by Norman Mailer  
An amazing dialogue with the Devil's assistant which explores not only the origins of Hitler (spanning three generations), but the origins of his philosophies and hatred.

### John Ellis

Volunteer

*River of White Nights*, by Jeffrey Tayler  
This American adventurer tells a fascinating story of life in present-day Siberia. While rafting on the Lena River towards the Arctic Circle he discovers that despite the past history of the region, many of the local inhabitants in towns and villages preferred living with their former socialist system than with the laissez faire mess they are in today.

### Jason Benjamin

Coordinator, Reference Services

*The Mystery of the Hansom Cab*, by Fergus Hume  
This 1886 crime novel set in Melbourne gives a rare and interesting contemporary fictional account of the city with the added bonus of a gripping murder mystery.

### Caitlin Stone

Curator, The Malcolm Fraser Collection

*100 Bollywood Films*, by Rachel Dwyer  
A pocket guide to the biggest film industry in the world, this British Film Institute publication provides a historical overview of the main actors, directors, composers and playback singers in Indian cinema, as well as reviews of films from the 1930s to the present.