



Conference update

Gillian Dooley has reported that arrangements for our upcoming conference [*The History of the Book and the Future of the World*](#) are progressing well. The response to the call for papers was pleasing and reflects the diversity of scholarship in the field. She comments “Our topic now seems especially prescient, given that we chose it before the pandemic took hold, and we’ve all had to contemplate what the future will look like.”

Details of both keynote speakers and an associated free public lecture by Danielle Clode are now available on the conference website. The conference program is forthcoming, but I can report that it includes 24 presenters - predominantly our Australian and New Zealand members, but also a handful from further afield. A small physical gathering will be held in Adelaide for local presenters, while the rest of us attend online. The conference organisers have been sensitive to the issue of screen fatigue and have arranged an extended three-day program to provide room for breaks. Presenters are also being asked to keep their presentations to 15 minutes. Provisions for interactivity for online attendees are currently being workshopped.

Registrations are free this year for online or in-person attendees.



Keynote Speaker Dr Sue Anderson

Sue Anderson is Lecturer in Aboriginal Cultures and Australian Society at the University of South Australia. She is immediate past President of Oral History Australia, was editor of its Journal from 2011 to 2018 and is the current President of the International Oral History Association. She has worked for over 25 years with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as an oral historian, archaeologist, and cultural consultant, specialising in oral history, Indigenous culture and Australian history. Her co-authored book, *Doreen Kartinyeri: My Ngarrindjeri Calling* (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2008) was oral history-based because this was the only way of telling the story from an authentic voice. Her current research is a \$523,000 ARC grant-funded project: *Songlines of Country: Baiame, the Mundaguddah and the Seven Sisters*.



Dr Alan Brissenden AM, 1932-2020

Alan Brissenden, long-time member of BSANZ and President 1983-1985, died in Adelaide on 9 September 2020. A genial and modest man, he made many outstanding contributions in the world of literature and the performing arts in Australia and the world.

Alan was born in country New South Wales in 1932. He studied at Sydney University before undertaking a doctorate at the University of London. On his return to Australia in 1963 he opted to join the University of Adelaide, where he spent his whole academic career as a Lecturer, later a Reader, in English, retiring in 1994.

Alan's research interests were broad, encompassing Australian literature as well as Shakespeare. He was committed to making sure his students were exposed 'to the experience of the dramatic text as theatrical text', as he told Stephen Beaumont in a 2013

interview.¹ One of his most important publications was *Shakespeare and the Dance* (1981), a foundational text on the subject. Dance history and criticism were central to his work. He was the dance writer for several periodicals, including the *Australian*, for many years. In 2010 he published *Australia Dances: Creating Australian Dance 1945-1965*, co-authored with the late Keith Glennon.

An active scholar like Alan knew very well how vital a good library is. He told Stephen Beaumont that he decided to stay at Adelaide University rather than going to the new Flinders University campus in 1966 because the library at Adelaide was too valuable to part with. He was not content to be a passive library patron, however. He served on the committee of the Friends of the State Library of SA for many years, was President of the organisation from 1994 to 2000, and remained a key member of their Australiana Publications sub-committee. When I co-edited Matthew Flinders' *Private Journal* in 2005, published by the Friends, Alan was the publisher's editor – without exception the best editor I have worked with on a publication of that nature.

One of Alan's most extraordinary contributions to bibliography was his part in establishing the Early Imprints Project. The project aimed to create a list of all books and other material printed before 1801 held in Australia, and went on to become a trans-Tasman undertaking. From 1976 to 1987 Alan chaired the South Australian Committee of the project and was a member of the Executive of the combined EIP in Australia and New Zealand 1977-87. One unique feature of the South Australian branch of the project was that it included material held privately as well as in libraries. The information gathered was provided to the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue and the National Library's Australian Bibliographic Network.

Alan married his fellow Sydney University student Libby in London in the early 1960s. Libby died late last year, and they are survived by their three children, Roger, Piers and Celia.

- Gillian Dooley, BSANZ Representative (South Australia)

¹ Stephen Beaumont, Interview with Alan Brissenden. Adelaide University Library. Online. <https://digital.library.adelaide.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/2440/99612/1/Transcription%20-%20Dr%20Alan%20Brissenden.pdf>

A month at the British Museum

In February 2020, I set off with great excitement to take up the Harold Wright and the Sarah & William Holmes scholarships at the British Museum, London, which enable an Australian or New Zealand curator to spend time in the Prints and Drawings collection. I was awarded this opportunity in 2019, the 50th happy recipient since the scholarships were established in 1969. My trip was also generously supported by the Colin Holden Trust. I thank both committees for this invaluable opportunity. As with so much of 2020, this well-laid plan was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and I returned to Melbourne after just one of the four months I had intended to be in London. I would like to record my sincere gratitude to Hugo Chapman, Simon Sainsbury Keeper of Prints & Drawings, and Stephen Coppel, Assistant Keeper of Modern Prints & Drawings, who were exceptionally kind throughout my stay and especially during its difficult conclusion.

Despite this premature departure I still managed to see a dazzling array of material. My scholarly interest is in medieval manuscript and graphic culture and early printed books, and particularly in Italian material, so I began by exploring the earliest material in the collection: 15th- and 16th-century Italian and German drawings and prints, and 15th- and 16th-century books. Like our own State Library Victoria, National Gallery of Victoria and Museums Victoria, the British Library and the British Museum were once part of the same institution and housed in the same building. In 1973, the British Library was created by the British Library Act 1972, and in 1997 it moved into its current premises on Euston Road, a short walk from the Museum. As someone with an interest in both books and single-sheet prints and drawings, and in their relationship to each other, it was highly stimulating to be able to spend time in these related collections. For

example, in the Museum I viewed [detached examples](#) of the engraved illustrations for the 1481 edition of Dante's *Commedia*, published by Niccolò della Magna in Florence. These engravings (attributed to Baccio Baldini) were based on a series of 92 surviving drawings by Sandro Botticelli, part of a planned series of 100 drawings, one for each canto (the first time anyone had attempted to illustrate every canto of Dante's masterpiece). The book for which they were made was a publishing experiment. Book illustrations were usually created with woodblocks, as both woodblock and letterpress are relief forms of printing; using an intaglio print method – engraving – was far more complex. The plates had to be printed on separate sheets and then glued into place. As a result of this difficulty, only 20 engravings were completed (illustrating the first 19 cantos of *Inferno*), and only a handful of copies of the book contain all 19. The British Library holds [two such volumes](#), and so I was able to see these engravings in two contexts: preserved as independent works of art in the Museum, and preserved within their literary context in the Library. This was a rich opportunity not only to study multiple states of the prints, but also to reflect on curatorial legacies and their impact on scholarship.

I will complete my scholarship term when conditions permit, but in the meantime, the ongoing lockdown in Melbourne has provided me the space and time to reflect on my month in one of the world's finest prints and drawings collections, and to begin to write several articles. I have just received acceptance from *Print Quarterly* for the first of these, which examines an unusual sheet that features prints on both recto (a devotional engraving) and verso (letterpress text with woodcut diagram), registration number [1860,0609.55](#). I was able to clarify the meaning of the hitherto unidentified verso print, and point to a shared intellectual and religious origin for both prints. I will share the publication details with BSANZ members

when they are confirmed, and I look forward eagerly to my return to London to continue learning from that great collection.

- Anna Welch, BSANZ Vice President

Update from Monash Special Collections



The abrupt halt to normal activities in exchange for working at home presented a number of immediate challenges for Monash Special Collections. From rapidly having to delay our new exhibition (The Perfect Migrant) to 2021, close 'Return: The Journey Home' four months early, to the sudden realisation of how little of our collection is available online and supplying transcription work for frontline staff. Amongst the constant emergencies there have been positive outcomes, one of which been the temporary appointment of Daniel Wee into the vacant role of Special Collections Librarian. Having two full time staff has been wonderful, allowing us to start developing a proper plan to begin a text analysis of the collection as well as more strategic planning. Busier than ever!

The Matheson library, where Special Collections resides, is still open to students and researchers, providing us with limited access to the collection once a week. So, we have been able to make some headway in the assessment of what how our items are catalogued and what we have collected in. This includes reworking our subject headings so there is clarity around the ephemera, our fairy tales, artist books and cookbook collection. To aid in bibliographic pursuits, we

have also started the process of recording details on bindings and other information that have been missing to this point. Especially as we will be working to make collections such as the Comic Collection and the Meteor Inc. and Melbourne Science Fiction Club fanzine donation available.

Other activities have involved creating deeper engagement with faculties. The main challenge has been rapidly moving our object-based classes into a digital space for units. Due to the nature of the lockdown, the first round was quite hasty, but out of this experience Daniel Wee has been developing new ideas that will make the online teaching less of a 'make do' and more of a unique experience. We also continue to collaborate with the wonderful Master of Design and Master of Multimedia Design students to bring our collections to life using augmented reality and virtual reality.

Perhaps the most entertaining aspect of our changed working conditions has been developing online engagement opportunities. As team bonding, the greater library has been reading some of our digitised fairy tales for Instagram. Then we ran a 'Rare Books Bake Off' for first year students using recipes from the collection in April, where they were in the chance to win \$100 Coles Myer gift voucher. After this success, our sister university library, Penn State, reached out and challenged us to an institutional 'Great Rare Books Bake Off'. They chose some classic Pennsylvanian recipes and we chose some 'Australian' recipes. We were very pleased to see that between Penn State and Monash we cooked some 160 recipes and successfully introduced part of the US to 'Lemon Delicious.' The downside of lockdown is that no one could taste them!

- Anne Holloway, Special Collections, Monash University

Member profile: Erin Mollenhauer



I'm the Library & Archives Team Leader at Moore College in Newtown, NSW. Moore College is the theological college of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, founded in 1856. I started working at Moore while completing my Masters in Librarianship. I've been working there since 2012, first as a librarian, then gaining an additional qualification in archives & records management. As well as coordinating the activities of the Library team, my role includes looking after the cataloguing, conservation and curation of the Rare Book & Archive collections. The College's new Library & administration building, opened in 2017, includes museum-quality display cases, so I've been able to curate quite a few small exhibitions. The collections I look after range from incunabula to digital, so I'm yet to develop a specialty! I'm very interested in personal manuscript collections and the provenance & personal ownership of books, as they reveal so much about an individual. The main reason I joined BSANZ was to keep up with developments in the rare book world, and take advantage of any learning opportunities.

News

[The news](#) of plans to deaccession 600,000 books from the National Library of New Zealand recently raised public concern over the preservation of physical library collections. BSANZ President Véronique Duché responds to these events on [our website](#). A [lobby group](#) has been established to challenge the planned sale of deaccessioned books.

A new 'Working with Special and Cultural Collections' unit has been launched as part of Charles Sturt University's Master of Information Studies course, and some BSANZ members have appeared as guest speakers. Additionally, this semester RMIT Information Management students received a guest lecture on rare book cataloguing from BSANZ's Victorian representative, Gemma Steele. It's great to see specialist skills in rare books appearing on the syllabus for Australian librarians, although one has to wonder whether this can be sustained given the current financial pressure that universities are under.

I am once again impressed by the quality and variety of online materials in bibliography, book history and rare books that are being so generously shared by organisers around the world. Some fantastic and thought-provoking discussions have been had in the last few months, including the [Decolonizing Book History Round Table](#) hosted by SHARP that I mentioned in the last *Broadsheet* issue. I recently enjoyed [An Alternative History of the Atlas](#), presented by Ayesha Ramachandran and hosted by Rare Book School. Ramachandran asks us to move beyond imperial histories of maps to transnational analysis, and encourages an interdisciplinary approach that is pluralistic and spans different formats. Additional talks from Rare Book School include the panels [Black Bibliography: Dorothy Porter's "Early American Negro Writings" at 75](#) and [Black Print Culture](#). I tuned in to [Pride Month in the Archives: Exploring the LGBTQ Collection](#) with Brett

Shingledecker from the Ohio State University Library. I really enjoyed this discussion, which ranged across the collection, bibliography, teaching, and zines. The Smithsonian Libraries hosted [Curious Creatures in the Margins](#) which included one of my most admired Twitter librarians, Ally Alvis, looking at the representation of animals in a medieval manuscript. [A talk on fragmentation](#) in manuscript studies posed some interesting discussion around the ethics of collecting manuscripts, including their relationship to source to communities and potential for de-contextualisation in distant libraries. As a complete novice when it comes to the study of manuscripts, I was interested in the discussion around the definition of fragmentation, which, while having specific meaning and application, at its most expansive might include fragmentation of intellectual or cultural heritage or fragmentation of collections; certainly a most pertinent theme for us to consider.

I am always on the look-out for content on natural history books, and was pleased to see Mitchell Librarian Richard Neville's [talk on John Lewin](#) looking at the evolution of his artistic style and changing social position in colonial society. Still on the theme of natural history, the 'Birds of Paradise - Ellis Rowan in New Guinea' exhibition has launched at the National Library of Australia, and there is [an online tour](#) and exhibition available for those of us that can't visit in person. I was interested to see that the curator had done her own research to identify the birds in Rowan's paintings – as a librarian that works with numerous scientists, I wouldn't dare!

With SHARP News in the process of an update, now is the time to browse their archives, which includes issues both [recent](#) and [vintage](#). The University of Melbourne Collections magazine have taken a break from print publishing, however the [back issues](#) are available online, and other content can be explored via their [Cultural Commons](#) platform.

While we missed Melbourne Rare Book Week in the bleak midwinter of 2020, Museums Victoria has made [recordings from 2019](#) available on Soundcloud. This includes the popular talk 'Theft from Collecting Institutions: an Australian History', along with presentations from two of our wonderful BSANZ members, Daniel Wee and Gemma Steele.

I was recently [profiled](#) for the popular online magazine *Broadsheet's* 'Meet the Experts' series and *may* have noted our shared title!

Coming up: the Bibliographical Society of America has announced their [Fall/Winter 2020-21 virtual lecture program](#), and there are some really interesting looking sessions. The Huntington has a new online lecture series 'Curatorial Dialogues', which pairs two curators to compare and contrast diverse items from their collection. The [first lecture](#) covered two manuscripts with very different histories.

I hope this *Broadsheet* issue has provided you with some bookish diversion until we convene for the conference in November.

- Hayley Webster

Please send *Broadsheet* submissions to editor Hayley Webster hwebster@museum.vic.gov.au

