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# AURUM

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Newsletter of the Ballarat Gold Museum Society

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## JULY MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday, July 9<sup>th</sup> when our speaker will be Susan Pilbeam and her topic is "The Development of the Visual and Performing Arts at Sovereign Hill". Her talk will include a brief history of Sovereign Hill and the importance of the Arts in creating a living museum. Shirley Prowse, Jane Miller and Ellen Frayne are on the Tea Roster.

## JUNE MEETING

Dennis Spielvogel described being 'The Film Man' in the tiny one-teacher schools of Victoria in the 1960's. He did this for five years and eventually trained the teachers to take over. Great fun for the pupils. He then showed us one of the movies in his collection, called 'Golden Beginnings'; it was about Ballarat, both in the 1960's and the 1850s. A walk back in time for many of us.

## GUIDING REMINDER

During the much anticipated Christmas in July celebrations (June 27—July 13<sup>th</sup>) the Gold Museum's activities will be in the morning NOT the afternoon. **The Golden Treasures tour will take place at 10.30am**



A recently acquired Rosswell Patent Graphoscope of 1875. See Roger Trudgeon's Notes.

## **GOLD MUSEUM MAY TRIP**

More details as promised.....

Members of the Gold Museum Society, with friends and partners, enjoyed a great day in Melbourne on Thursday May 14<sup>th</sup>. We arrived early at the mystery destination, which was the Old Melbourne Gaol. This left a short time for a welcome coffee.

We were divided into two groups for an inspection of the Gaol and guided tour. This left no doubt that the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was not a time to fall foul of the law. The Kelly story featured, of course, and we saw the tiny cells, death masks, and means by which prisoners were hung, including Ned. However, it was good to see the original gaol still exists. This is the second most visited Tourist site in Australia.

Next stop was lunch and then a tour of the Shrine of Remembrance. We saw a great range of medals awarded, an actual rowing boat that transported soldiers to the shores of Gallipoli, heard many stories of bravery and courage, saw bronze statues of father and son depicting First and Second World Wars. A very contemplative place. There was only time for a few of the newer basement exhibits. The main Shrine will need another day.

Tour Guides at both places were excellent. Knew their topics well and engaged with their groups in a friendly way. The Gold Bus driver, David Aitken was fantastic, and was a Postmaster at Sovereign Hill in the early days. We must thank Sovereign Hill for funding the bus, which was much appreciated. Bill Llewellyn, who organised the day, had thought of everything. He moved around the bus en route attending to problems, requests, lollies, name tags, announcements, and must be congratulated on managing a bus load of 40 people very smoothly and without mishap.

Mary Clark

## **GUIDING NOTES MORNING TEA**

### MORNING TEA

Sovereign Hill's official historian Dr Jan Croggan will honour us by participating in our Guide Training morning on the **13<sup>th</sup> July next**. Jan will highlight six exhibits in the museum and suggest ways in which they can be best interpreted to visitors during our Golden Treasures Tours.

Also happening that morning will be a question and answer session where one new guide will interview another new guide. Helen Muir has set a good template for these interviews and it will be interesting to see how our two new players will perform.

I extend an invitation to all members and especially to those who work behind the scenes, to come and enjoy the fellowship always evident at these functions.

Bill McGregor



## NOTES FROM THE CURATOR

### Three Well Known Australians



The Gold Museum's latest exhibition is *Three Well Known Australians* from Sydney-based artist Martin Shaw

In 1982, Shaw painted his portrait of three mysterious figures which represent noted Australians. He has not revealed the identities in his artwork, except the dog who is called Pea and passed away in 1991.

*Three Well-Known Australians* has been touring Australia since 1983 and has been hosted by over 146 venues. It is one of the longest running touring exhibitions in Australia.

As the exhibition has traveled across the nation, visitors have been recording their thoughts on the identities of the figures in yearbooks.

Some people have recorded politicians, sport stars and artists, while others have suggested general and abstract themes, such as compassion and strength.

Gold Museum visitors have provided some interesting suggestions as to who these figures are. They include pop culture icons such as Katy Perry and Lady Gaga and historical figures including Ned Kelly and Banjo Patterson.

Over the last 30 years, Shaw has invited many noted Australians and international figures to offer their thoughts on the mysterious identities in his painting.

The exhibition features a selection of letters from various public figures government, the arts, sport, religious organisations, Aboriginal communities, science and medicine.

Snez Cosmic

## NOTES FROM THE SENIOR CURATOR

One of the fascinating and exciting aspects of the role of Senior Curator at the Gold Museum has been having the opportunity to attend historical auctions in Melbourne where goldfield's and Ballarat material is on offer. This year, on May 19<sup>th</sup>, the Mossgreen Auction house in High Street, Armadale held its annual Australian and Colonial Antique and Historical Auction which involved 547 lots. The auction started at 10.30 in the morning and continued until about 5.00pm, with a fifteen minute break for lunch! As everyone can imagine, auctions are very intense occasions and you need to be well focussed, remain calm under fire and stick closely to your budget. The auction this year was a challenge as we had an interest in around 25 lots and they were scattered throughout the day.

The tension of the auction room is complicated by the fact that bids are coming from four different sources and you can never be sure who you are competing with. You have the bidders in the room, telephone bids, online bidders and then the auctioneer themselves who hold the absentee bids. Online bidding has brought a new dimension to the event. There is a big screen at the front which shows the item on offer and the highest bid to that second. The auctioneer has to be across all the bids flying around and prices can jump very rapidly if you have a contest across room based bidders and online or telephone bids.

This year we had considerable success with our lots getting nearly all the items we wanted. The highlights of the auction included everything from a very rare Ballarat Flying School postcard of c. 1912 to a superb 1903 framed photograph of Hugh McKay Sunshine Harvesters bound for America on railway wagons at Ballarat station. Stereographic photographs were a bit of theme this year, based around a beautiful mahogany Rosswell Patent Graphoscope of around 1875 which was used to view the stereo cards. This viewer is a step above the usual hand held viewers, being designed to sit on a table whilst the user is comfortably seated. We acquired some sets of stereo cards including a group of the 1908 American Fleet visit to Australia.

This was the time of the famous Ballarat Naval Cadet march to Melbourne when local boys were refused train tickets to get to Melbourne to see the great fleet, so they walked all the way instead! It caused a huge uproar in Melbourne, the boys were feted by the Americans and the Victorian government was forced to pay the train fares to get them home.

A large lithographic panorama with architectural portraits of Ballarat businesses includes a hand sketched view of Ballarat. The date of this is not stated but looks to be around the 1870s, subject to more research. An album of small advertising cards and labels shows how Ballarat businesses promoted themselves in the 1860s and 70s. The beautifully inscribed and decorated labels show the imagery of the era and clues to the activities of local retailers and manufacturers. Other printed matter includes dozens of Ballarat made carte de visites, share certificates of Ballarat mines, cheques from local banks, and miner's rights from the Ballarat district.

Various useful books were acquired including "Ballaratania 1881-83 Descriptive Notes and Statistics", a complete original condition copy. ST Gill's Victoria Illustrated 1857, William Strutt's "Victoria The Golden" and an 1887 Mining Registrar's report were snapped up too. Amongst an array of objects was a stunning set of W & T Avery "Handsome" scales and weights dated to the mid-1800s. Other items purchased were two Chinese Banjo gold scales, Diamond pocket scales, a gold miner's brooch, a gold miner's bucket, a kerosene banker's lamp and a Hollway & Sons tinware food storage container made in Ballarat.

Hopefully we will have opportunities to exhibit these items in the coming months and be able to share these treasures. Sovereign Hill was able to acquire the material through the generous support of Bob and Noelle Hinchey and the Cowles Family. I'm very grateful for the strong interest they have shown in developing the collection.

Roger Trudgeon

