# EDITORIAL

A glittering silk and velvet pageant costume worn for the centenary of Victoria celebrations in 1934 and 1935 is currently a centrepiece of State Library Victoria's *Velvet, Iron, Ashes* exhibition, and is our cover image for this issue. The story of Jessie Brookes (later Clarke), who wore the costume, featured in issue number 102 of *The La Trobe Journal*. Annette Soumilas now takes us behind the scenes and introduces us to the designer of the costume, Thelma Thomas. Thomas had an extraordinary talent for creating allegorical costumes that are as innovative today as they were when she conceived them.

Manton's department store was a household name in Melbourne from the day it opened in Bourke Street in 1926, until it was bought by GJ Coles in 1955. The Art Deco facade of Manton's sported the slogan 'It's smart to be thrifty', and the store prided itself on offering a wide range of quality goods at affordable prices. Annette Cooper documents this iconic department store using photographs, newspapers and other material from the Library's collection, including some from the Coles Myer archive.

The thousands of photographs held by the Library represent the history of this medium. Many of these are viewable online, and more are added to the digital catalogue every year. Some readers may be surprised by what it takes to make this possible. In an article about a collection of early 20th-century glass plate negatives from a Bendigo photographic studio, four Library staff describe the process of assessing, preserving, digitising, researching and cataloguing the photographs.

Madeleine Say relates how a set of photographs dating from the late 1850s provides a unique record of European settlement in western Victoria and insight into the work of travelling photographers of the period. Annotations accompanying the photographs, and advertisements and articles in colonial newspapers – now digitised and accessible online – give clues to the identities of the subjects and locations of the photographs and the life and work of the photographer, Thomas Hannay.

Opposite: Detail from, British Imperial Oil Co. promotional merchandise, 'Shell wins', board game, Melbourne: British Imperial Oil Co., 1927, Children's Literature Collection, Ken Pound Collection, JLTF 794 SH4B
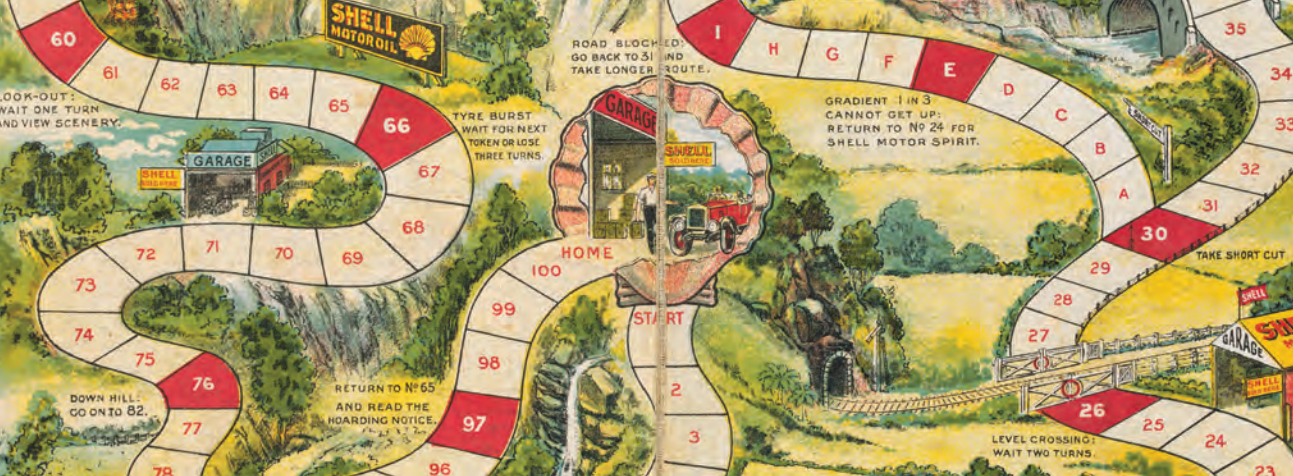
Contemporary photobooks are featured in Des Cowley's overview of the medium in the State Library Victoria collection. Local independent art publishing, including photobooks and artists' books (see journal issue number 95), tends to circulate outside of mainstream publishing and distribution channels and is often produced in small runs; as Cowley explains, building representative collections of this work can be challenging. State Library Victoria works closely with local artists, publishers and bookshops to ensure that recent publications are acquired and represented in the collection.

The Library's Children's Literature Collection is the most comprehensive of its kind in any public institution in the world. The collection was considerably augmented in 1994 with the acquisition of a private collection of 25,000 Australian and New Zealand children's books amassed by collector Ken Pound. Juliet O'Conor, a children's literature expert and children's literature research librarian at the Library for many years, explains the significance of this acquisition and shares some of her favourite books, booklets and ephemera from the collection.

Natural history illustrator and author Stephanie Holm relished the opportunity to explore the Children's Literature Collection during her Creative Fellowship and investigated how the Australian landscape and its flora and fauna were portrayed in stories and illustrations in 19th- and 20th-century children's books. Her creative response was an anthology of her own illustrated stories set in various Australian landscapes.

We hope you enjoy the diversity of collection materials represented in this issue and that the glimpses behind the scenes at the Library will inspire you to explore more for yourself.

Sally Heath
GUEST EDITOR