

Editorial

ON THE 14 NOVEMBER 1913 the Governor-General of Australia, The Right Honourable Thomas Denman, formerly opened the Public Library of Victoria's new Dome Reading room, a structure that dwarfed the existing buildings and dominated the City's northern skyline. To mark the centenary of the opening of the Dome, the State Library of Victoria has run a year long celebratory program. The first two articles in this issue of the *La Trobe Journal* also commemorate this great Melbourne landmark.

In 'Building the Dome', architectural historian Miles Lewis provides a detailed account of the building of the Dome coupled with an architectural summary of its history. His article is followed by one by Harriet Edquist, guest curator of the Library's major 2013 exhibition, 'Free, Secular and Democratic: building the Public Library, 1853-1913', which looks at the grand architectural vision for Melbourne's public library from its original 1850s buildings through to the plans for the Dome.

Sue Reynolds discusses the various memorials to the nineteenth-century champion of the Melbourne Public Library, Sir Redmond Barry. In the bi-centenary of his birth, she has the statue of Barry at the front of the Library taking a walk around Melbourne admiring the various memorials to him.

One of the great treasures of the State Library is the extensive records relating to the ill-fated Burke and Wills Expedition of 1860-1861. Dave Phoenix provided a detailed survey of these records in a previous number of the *La Trobe Journal*.^{*} In this issue he focuses on a startling fact only alluded to in an endnote in his 2010 survey article. Here he shows conclusively that the meteorological journal covering the period when Burke and Wills made their dash to the Gulf of Carpentaria and back was not the work of William John Wills, as has always been thought, but that of William Brahe, the expedition member that Burke had left in charge of the depot at Cooper's Creek. This is a startling discovery as the journal has always been considered to be one of the few documentary relics from Burke and Wills trek from Cooper's Creek to the Gulf.

The Melbourne Mechanics' Institute (later and now the Melbourne Athenaeum) was founded in 1839. It was Melbourne's first institutional library. Anne Marsden looks at the squabbles between the 'gentlemen' and 'players' in the formation of its first committee of management.

The Cremorne Gardens in Richmond were a popular outdoor entertainment attraction in the 1850s. The area was subdivided for housing during the 1880s land boom. James P. Lesh examines the public auction of these lots in January 1885 through the colourful advertising poster produced by the noted Melbourne lithographers, Troedel and Cooper. As with much modern advertising, it was a case of buyer beware,

^{*} 'All Burke's Books &c Have Been Saved: The Burke and Wills Papers in the State Library of Victoria', *La Trobe Journal*, no. 86, December 2010, pp. 3-22.

especially after a good lunch or refreshments which were often provided by auctioneers at these land boom sales.

Many readers of the *La Trobe Journal* will be familiar with the remarkable diaries of the Victorian swagman, Joseph Jenkins, through the edited extracts published as *Diary of a Welsh Swagman, 1869-1894* (1975, reprinted 1999). In 1997 the State Library of Victoria acquired the original diaries and these are have since been digitized and are available to read online. Rachel Solomon has carefully read the complete diaries and here she provides a detailed survey of the context in which they were written with many detailed extracts which should encourage the reader to consult the full online texts.

Former printer and Ballarat born Dennis Bryans looks at the career of Robert Bell, printer and publisher of the *English and Chinese Advertiser*, and his role as a Chinese interpreter on the Ballarat goldfields in the 1850s. His article is followed by one by Colin Holden, a previous contributor to the *Journal*, contrasting printmaking in Melbourne and Sydney from the 1890s to the early 1930s.

The issue concludes with extracts with commentary by Chris Elmore from Robert Bage's Antarctic diary written while Bage was a member of the Douglas Mawson led 'Australasian Antarctic Expedition, 1911-1914'. Not long after he returned from Antarctica, Bage was killed at Gallipoli, another major centenary for Victorians and Australians which the *La Trobe Journal* will commemorate in 2015 with a special 'Victoria and the War' issue.

John Arnold

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