

WINTER/SPRING
2012

VOL XXIX, ISSUES 68 & 69
ISSN: 1323-0190

FOLA
NEWS UPDATE

Sustaining Friends



All 6 presidents from the Friends of Port Macquarie Library with Daniel Ferguson, FOLA

**Friends and the future:
Developing an e-Newsletter @ Stirling. See page 11.**

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Daniel Ferguson
Executive Director FOLA



Sustaining Friends

Sustaining Friends — highlights the contribution of four of our most successful FOL groups in the country. These Friends groups — State Library of South Australia, Port Macquarie, Balmain and Stirling, each have characteristics to be both admired and emulated.

FSLSA — our oldest Friends group, celebrating 80 years of support to the State Library of South Australia, have over this period displayed a unique commitment to collection development and voluntary participation.

Port Macquarie — have become adept players in the politics of community action, confronting and challenging the policy-makers at local government level.

Balmain — harnessing the resources amongst library users to develop networks into the community, schools and business.

Stirling — another high profile group who have harnessed modern communication methods to deliver programs and services, along with an outstanding new library building.

Key to the success of these four, very different Friends groups, are some obvious features which bring long-term and sustained success for the Friends, the Library and the Community.

Successful Friends groups embrace some common features: partnership with stakeholders, community programs, high level of political judgement, ability in persuading decision makers, marketing excellence and building new and sustainable marketing with the community.

Also, a successful Friends partnership, requires three things: Successful Friends leadership: a willingness of library management to embrace Friends; and the understanding of both parties, as to defining each other’s roles and responsibilities.

Australian FOL groups, and worldwide Friends, can learn much from these four groups, featured in our *NewsUpdate*. Take a closer look.

“A successful Friends partnership, requires ... successful Friends leadership: a willingness of library management to embrace Friends; and the understanding of both parties.”



Friends of Balmain Library & Bendigo Community Bank

A community partnership in action

FOBL Awards Night Writing Competition for Primary Schools, Balmain and Rozelle, 2012 has once again been a great success. This was the third edition of the competition which has become an integral part of the academic year in the schools of the area, supported by the local Community Bank, which has committed to continue supporting the Friends of Balmain in the next triennium.



Madeline Gass receiving award from Richard Ware, Balmain/Rozelle Community Bank



Zinnia Robinson - year 6 winner, Birchgrove PS receiving award from Richard Ware



L - R, Richard Lin, Georgia Bowrey, Madeline Gass, Sophie Ohlin, Kevin Shi, all from Balmain Primary School.

A high profile for your Friends group can bring **big rewards**

The Friends of Port Macquarie are experts in lobbying. Take a tip from their recent campaign.



Judith Hansen, Deb Summers with Daniel Ferguson, displaying some of the many FOLA awards

Port Macquarie Library



Who are the Friends of Port Macquarie Library?

- We are a non-profit organisation dedicated to supporting the public library system
- We are people who know that a community with a first rate library is a better place to live
- We bring together involved caring people who are willing to work for excellent libraries

Our purpose is:

- To maintain an association of people interested in books and libraries
- To promote the use of port Macquarie-Hastings Library Service and appreciation of its value as an asset to the community
- To encourage and support the extension and improvement of library services in the Port Macquarie-Hastings area
- To assist in maintaining Port Macquarie-Hastings Library Service as a free public library
- To support the freedom to read and access to free information for all

“We bring together involved caring people who are willing to work for excellent libraries.”

“To support the freedom to read and access to free information for all.”

The Friends of the State Library of South Australia

80 YEARS OF SUPPORT

“Friends of the Public Library of South Australia was established to ‘assist encourage and promote the interests of the Public Library’”

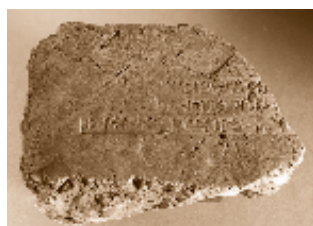
“Most of the Friends income today comes from its Australiana publications, high-quality reprints, mainly of accounts of Australian exploration expeditions.”

In 2012 the Friends celebrated 80 years of dedicated service to the State Library of South Australia and the community. The Friends’ President, Valmai Hankel, reflected on its history and accomplishments recently.

Australia’s first FOL group was formed on 25 July 1932. On that day a public meeting was held in the Adelaide Town hall, and the Friends of the Public Library of South Australia was established to ‘assist encourage and promote the interests of the Public Library’.



At first, the Friends raised money to buy ‘bread and butter’ books for the Library. But as the economic situation improved the Friends’ emphasis changed. In 1936 they decided to adopt the policy of the Friends of the Bodleian Library, and limit their purchases to ‘manuscripts and other unique pieces and to books of exceptional rarity or beauty or interest which would not be obtained by the Library in the ordinary way’. With few exceptions this has remained the Friends’ policy.

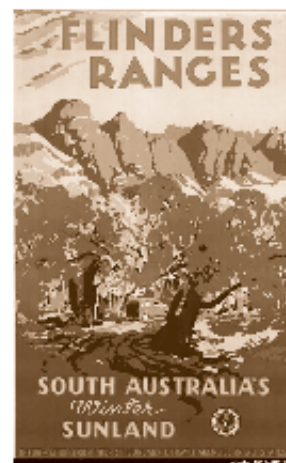


Over the years the Friends have presented hundreds of thousands of dollars’ worth of books, manuscripts, art works, children’s games and toys to the State Library. These items have been admired both in person and ‘online’ at www.slsa.sa.gov/treasures/antiphonal.

Pride among the treasures is a magnificent late-13th century manuscript Antiphonal from Central Italy or Bologna. It cost the Friends £77 10 shillings in 1945, but is currently valued at around \$500,000.

Most of the Friends income today comes from its Australiana publications, high-quality reprints, mainly of accounts of Australian exploration expeditions.

The Friends operations today are wide and extensive, with education programs, tours, visits, lunchtime speakers, events and special dinners and other forms of voluntary assistance to the library. However, as a collector of rare and special items, the Friends of the State Library of South Australia have remained steadfast over the past 80 years, an enduring legacy to the community of South Australia.



New CEO of the British Library: *Why I value the Friends*

Roly Keating, the Library's new chief executive, tells how he approaches the challenges of "this amazing place"

On the day before I went to interview Roly Keating, just a month after he joined the Library as chief executive, he had been passing through the Entrance Hall and saw two of our volunteers at the Friends' recruitment desk. On a whim, he walked over, introduced himself and asked pertinent questions. The volunteers were flattered and delighted. "I saw them sitting there and I just wanted to go up and say hello," he told me. "What the Friends do is of huge value to the Library. That extra injection of support for mounting an exhibition or a small or medium-sized acquisition can make all the difference. . . . The Friends represent a vital community of supporters, people who care deeply about what the Library is and is for."

Keating comes to the British Library from the BBC, where he had worked for nearly 30 years.

Although both are large publicly funded institutions, many would say the resemblance ends there. So how, I asked, does his past career feed into his new position? "It isn't as different as you might think," he replied. "Although the Library is unique and has an extraordinary mix of expertise and different professional cultures, there's a surprising amount that I recognise from life at the BBC. It's a very ethos-driven organisation, although every bit of it expresses that purpose in a different way. I recognise that sense of pride and fascination with what this amazing place is here to do. "There's an awful lot of creativity here and that's the world I come from — cultivating creativity of different kinds. I feel at home with that. The surprise is just the sheer range of things the Library does; but even that shouldn't be so odd because, like the BBC, this is an institution which by its nature and its remit is interested in everything."

In the years when he was researching and

producing factual television programmes he occasionally used the resources of the Reading Rooms — first at Bloomsbury and Colindale, then here at St Pancras. "Once I had to look at old editions of *Robinson Crusoe* for a TV documentary; and another time I found in the Sound Archive some extraordinary recordings of John Gielgud on stage."

He forged closer links with the Library in the last four years when, as the BBC's director of archive content, one of his principal tasks involved digitising the programme archive. "With that huge project I found that we were asking many of the same questions as the British Library. Both of us are in different ways collectors and accumulators of the national memory in both cultural and historical areas and were working out how to make it available.

Keating is the first to admit that he comes to the British Library at a difficult time. The reduction of the Government grant forced his predecessor, Dame Lynne Brindley, to make cuts in staffing and other areas, and there will be more pain to come as the country struggles to emerge from recession. "As I've said to the staff, I've been very impressed by the resilience with which this institution has confronted the inevitable challenge of the reduction of core public funding. Everyone is facing this at the moment. We're in a very very broad and deep recession and all organisations have had to cut back.

"Here there's clearly been a determination as far as possible to protect user-facing services. It's been tough for staff sometimes because they're committed to quality. But I've been struck by their resourcefulness in finding new ways of doing things, trying to protect Readers and visitors from the negative effects of the cuts as far as possible, by working harder or more innovatively behind the scenes and using resources more efficiently.

"But I don't know how much further that can go. There comes a point where you might have



"The Library is unique and has an extraordinary mix of expertise and different professional cultures."

"I've been very impressed by the resilience with which this institution has confronted the inevitable challenge of the reduction of core public funding."



"The union said that in the year to April, 100 libraries in England closed or were being run by volunteers or as a social enterprise."

to make more visible cuts. I hope we don't get there. . . . It will be my job at the top of the team here, working with all our supporters — not least the Friends — to spread the word about the value and range of what we do." "The Library is here to serve everyone who wants to do research and can demonstrate that they have a research project that rightly can make use of the resources that the Library has. Inevitably, with any public service based on a building there are limits, but on the whole I've been very impressed with the way this is managed. What I particularly love is that hum of diverse research going on here: there are some undergraduates and some who have been researching here for decades.

"It shows great social mix and you can see innovative patterns of research happening in the Reading Rooms, many of which are

increasingly digital. That inevitably affects patterns of use but in the end I think it's the library of the future coming to life in front of our eyes." He is touched by the welcome he has received from the staff. "People are united in love for the Library. Whatever the financial challenges there's a great sense of shared determination to perform. I have been made welcome and I feel very much at home." So saying he crossed the corridor into the boardroom, where the Digital Scholarship Department was holding an open day, showing some highlights from the collections. He spent time talking to curators and looking at the maps, stamps, eastern scrolls and other material they had brought along: making connections; learning on the job.

(from Friends of the British Library Newsletter Issue 79 Winter 2012)

FRIENDS & THE FUTURE

Developing an e-Newsletter @ Stirling

With a membership list of over 600 members, the Friends of Stirling Library remain in touch with an e-newsletter and e-postcards. Jo Marshall convenes the Membership and Promotions Sub-committee and she gives some answers to how they have developed this very successful program.

Q. How did you select the company — Vieve

In the end, the reasons FOLS went for Vieve were:

- It offered a number of simple templates for newsletters and postcards to promote one-off events
- The support from Vieve was outstanding not only in designing the newsletter format but ongoing
- The start up costs were low if we opted for a casual rate until we found our feet and then we could move to an unlimited use at a higher cost as our membership grew
- Once we developed some limited in-house expertise we could be pretty self sufficient, ie. we would not need to pay consultants or Vieve for plugging material in

- Finally, we had close at hand (the editor previously mentioned someone who was experienced in this platform and could help us set it up as a small consultancy project.

Q. Did you have a budget you were working with, or were you prepared to pay for a 'good' product?

The committee didn't set a budget and then go looking for a suitable company to fit it. They were sending out an email based newsletter already using one of the member's secondary email addresses and attaching a publisher document. This threw up a few problems so once they investigated VMessage they calculated the costs involved (how many newsletters per annum x membership numbers less their current cost of postage, printed labels and envelopes). They then looked at whether they could afford it. Also, although it wasn't a dollar cost, they took into account the time it took the committee to get out their email and snail mail newsletters and decided that electronic was a much more efficient way to go and that they could afford it. *(Continued overleaf)*

"The start up costs were low if we opted for a casual rate until we found our feet and then we could move to an unlimited use at a higher cost as our membership grew".

FRIENDS & THE FUTURE

Developing an e-Newsletter @ Stirling

(continued from previous page)

Q. What are your average costs per year, to implement the product?

For the year ended 2012 we spent \$316 on the newsletter. This included 1 mail outs (4 full newsletters and 7 reminder cards) on the casual rate.

When the account was casual it cost us:

- \$20 per month and 3 cents for each email for 250-500 subscribers
- \$30 per month and 3 cents for each email for 500-1000 subscribers

We have now chosen to go unlimited which is priced at:

- \$49 per month and no cost per email for 250-500 subscribers
- \$69 per month and no cost per email for 500-1000 subscribers

As we have reached 600 subscribers it will cost us \$69 per month until we reach 1000 subscribers.

Stirling may be rather unique when it comes to Friends groups. We have no fee for membership. Since making that decision, our membership has jumped from around 150 to the present 600 plus. Most other Friends organisations may not have to budget for that amount and their membership fees would probably cover the cost of the emails.

Q. How much time, ie. hours per week or month do you put into the task

This is a difficult question to answer. Currently I do spend a lot of time, probably around 8-10 hours on each newsletter but this is for 3 reasons:

- The current library database can't give us the information we need so I have to check each member one by one against what I already have in Vieve
- Sometimes I want to place the pictures outside where the template says I can so I spend quite a bit of time looking for ways to do this

- I'm always investigating what this or that button will do to find if there are easier ways of doing things.

I envisage that I spend:

- Half an hour a month importing and checking new members (half an hour only because I have to manipulate the library database to get it into the same format as VMessage for importing)
- 1 hour for each newsletter which includes writing, placing pictures, proof reading, and sending
- Half an hour 10 days before an event to send out an e-card reminder
- Half an hour 2 weeks after each newsletter to ring people whose email addresses have bounced
- 2 hours twice a year to do a full member by member check

Q. Do you have an IT background (ie. what is the level of understanding required to maintain the product)

I am very computer literate, but I don't have any formal training. I just know what to expect from a computer and therefore will keep looking until I find a way it can be done. For newcomers, if they are prepared to stick to the basic template it really is just straight typing (or cutting and pasting), and inserting picture if they want to. As long as someone isn't scared of having a go I think most people could learn it easily.

The last thing to say is that there is much more that VMessage can do which I haven't yet investigated. For example, we want to start doing a yearly membership update request and also a survey on what our members want from FOLS and VMessage can do both these things easily, I believe.

"For the year ended 2012 we spent \$316 on the newsletter. This included 1 mail outs (4 full newsletters and 7 reminder cards) on the casual rate."

"Stirling may be rather unique when it comes to Friends groups. We have no fee for membership."



NOBEL PRIZE LAUREATES ON THE SHELVES OF BALMAIN LIBRARY

Dr Mariella Totaro-Genevois (President, FOBL)

“Australia is a multicultural society and the presence in a public library of the best authors from all over the world seemed to us not only appropriate but also highly desirable.”

Generalising is always dangerous, however I suggest that a shared experience of Friends of Libraries is that a healthy relationship with their own local libraries is of paramount importance for the success of their initiatives. A balance has to be struck in the interaction between libraries’ staff — especially library managers — and the Friends themselves, so that each party can carry on with their tasks efficiently and independently, and yet with the same aims in mind.

There may be occasions when an idea that seems brilliant to the Friends is not seen as such by whoever in charge of libraries’ affairs, in which case Friends — in my experience — are required to step back and re-think: after all they are there to enhance the services of their libraries not to run their affairs.

With this in mind when at the end of 2010 the friends of the Balmain Library (FOBL) decided to allocate some funds left over from a previous successful event to a new project, its significance was carefully evaluated within Committee meetings before proposing it to the Library Authorities. But what was the project?

It was about FOBL purchasing and donating books written by all Nobel Prize laureates to Balmain Library in order to enrich its fiction collection and endow it with a unique additional feature.

Australia is a multicultural society and the presence in a public library of the best authors from all over the world seemed to us not only appropriate but also highly desirable.

The first Nobel Prize for literature dates back to 1901 (when Australia became a Federation), and as we all know it is awarded to authors for their work in general, not to a specific book/ title. Of course some of the books in question would be hard to find, however we envisaged



Mario Vargas Llosa, winner of the 2010 Nobel Prize for Literature

our project as a long term one: any committee member could participate in the research, but most importantly being our local bookshop, *Hill of Content*, FOBL’s partner, we could rely on their willingness to be involved in our bookish adventure.

When it seemed to FOBL that all aspects of their plan had been carefully covered we officially asked Balmain Library whether they would be happy for us to go ahead with our idea. The answer came back promptly and ... it was affirmative. Soon after another good news arrived: a bookshelf would be donated by the Leichhardt Council and designed and built according to the requirements of Balmain Town Hall, a heritage building where our Library is located.

So if you enter Balmain Library you will see that now at the end of the hall, under an impressive old clock, there is a handsome dark bookshelf with still some spaces to fill. That is the place where our collection in progress is ‘residing’. So far we have covered Nobel Prize laureates 2012-1960 but we are still working ‘backwards’ to cover 1959-1901. In a few more months all Nobel Prize winners from 1901 to 2012 will be represented, and to tell the truth we look forward to get to know them.

“...you will see that now at the end of the hall, under an impressive old clock, there is a handsome dark bookshelf with still some spaces to fill.”

Friends around *Australia*

Kingscliff (NSW)

We call ourselves FOLK (Friends of Kingscliff). We are small in number, only about a dozen of us, but we are hard workers when it comes to our Spring and Autumn Booksales and Raffles. These are our main source of funds together with a permanent Books for Sale cabinet, at the library entrance. Recent purchases of equipment for our library include a DVD cleaner, an Audio-Read unit, a newspaper stand, a glass display cabinet and a magazine rack. We have donated \$1,000 to the Library for eBooks and organised a very successful authors' evening at Babalou (a local restaurant and bar). We like to hold more functions such as book launches for our local authors but such activities are limited due to lack of space.

State Library (SA)

On 11 October, a function was held at the State Library of NSW in the presence of the Governor of NSW, Professor Marie Bashir, State Librarian, Dr Alex Byrne to launch the Narrative of a survey of the inter-tropical and western coasts of Australia by Captain Phillip Parker King between 1818 and 1822. The President of the Friends of the SLSA, Valmai Hankel and the State Librarian welcomed guests. The 2012 AGM was held on 21 November at the Naval and Military & Air Force Club, Hutt Street Adelaide, the guest speaker was Amanda Blair a columnist and former broadcaster with 5AA.

Mount Gambier (SA)

In July, Mount Gambier Library was awarded the Jim Crawford Award for Library Innovation. The award was accepted by Library Technician Patrica Ellis who had been instrumental in assisting Library Manager Cathryn Harris implement the amazing programs and service enjoyed by 40,000 people each month. Mount Gambier also enjoys the support of a very successful and energetic Friends of the Library group.

Salisbury (SA)

Committee members, Ros and Murray Whitcher and Derrick and Mary Verringer attend the recent FOLA AGM at Nurioopta library on 6 September.

Antique expert, Paul Bartlett visited Ingle Farm Library on 27 October to provide information about antiques, collectables and personal treasures. Warren Fahey, author, cultural historian and performer was the guest at the August Meeting.

Barossa (SA)

Book sale at the CWA hall in Tanunda, held in June over 3 days, was the biggest sale for the year. People are encouraged to bring their own shopping bag and fill it for \$5, or buy a purple library bag for \$1.50.

The Friends applied to the Co-op store for a donation to assist in the cost of Story Book Picnic. They received a donation of \$500.

Research has shown that they will require up to \$6000 to obtain a scanner, and a Co-op donation has been applied for. The Friends have already applied a contribution of \$1000 to the project. A Council community grant has also been applied for.

Wilunga & Aldinga (SA)

The Friends recently received a thank you letter from Awareness Cambodia for their contribution to *A Case 4 Change 2012*. A modest donation of just \$15 can purchase education supplies for a child and impact on a life. In September, Stephen Orr, award-winning author and winner of the SA 'Our Story' competition for his novel *Time's Long Ruin* was guest speaker at Aldinga Library.

Stirling (SA)

The Friends of the Library have provided 6 Kindles which are now available for loan to Adelaide Hills Library members. Twenty e-Books have been downloaded to each Kindle.

Long term member and former president, Christl Markovic states: *I love reading, and always said that no computer or the new kindle could replace a good book. Well, I have had to eat my words, I put my name on reservation list for a Kindle — go and have an adventure with a Kindle from our library! Happy reading.*



Friends of Kingscliff

"People are encouraged to bring their own shopping bag and fill it for \$5, or buy a purple library bag for \$1.50."



"A modest donation of just \$15 can purchase education supplies for a child and impact on a life."

“Friends continued their sponsorship of the Children’s Illustration Competition and support for the Biggest Morning Tea for Cancer research.”



“Readalong Dads’ is a project which helps men in the Loddon Prison to connect with their children.”

Altona (Vic)

At the Annual General Meeting, the president, Margaret Broeks reported on another successful year for the Friends. They continued their sponsorship of the Children’s Illustration Competition and support for the Biggest Morning Tea for Cancer research, with nearly \$500 being raised for cancer research. The Big Book Sale took place on 5-6 October.

The Book Sale Room continues to be open for business Tuesday, Friday and Saturdays.

Castlemaine (Vic)

‘Readalong Dads’ is a project which helps men in the Loddon Prison to connect with their children. FOCAL secretary, Anne McAlpin read about a similar program operating at Risdon Prison in Tasmania and after some research discovered that similar programs have been running for some years in the UK and USA.

Fathers in the prison are given the opportunity to choose a suitable book for their child. Their reading of it is then recorded and copied to a CD. This is sent to the child along with a copy of the book so that he or she can listen to it while reading the book. FOCAL has employed Lisa D’Onofrio, Director of the Castlemaine Literature Festival to organise the books and recordings and give a little tutoring in reading if necessary.

As well as encouraging reading by both dads and kids in this National Year of Reading, it is hoped that the project is also another way in which the men can maintain their father-child relationship in a unique way while in prison.

Loddon Prison and FOCAL are excited about this new partnership which provided the men in the prison with an opportunity to remain connected to their family unit. FOCAL president Denise Jepson also announced that FOCAL had received a grant from the Maldon and District Community Bank to continue the program beyond the initial funding.

Echuca (Vic)

The WOW program now delivers 36 sessions per month and many other libraries in Victoria and NSW have taken up the program. They have introduced new ‘mens only’ sessions which have been quite successful. The Echuca Friends of the Library contributed a staggering \$46,000 to the project (includes \$7,800 raised from Medicare customers) which will virtually pay

for the fit out of the meeting rooms, baby care room and the majority of furniture, whitegoods and some electrical items. The Friends are also busy working on their next fundraising item which is a special recipe book to celebrate and recognise their 20 plus years of hard work. They are also writing up their history.

Library Manager Jenny Mustey has stated: *The Friends contribution and continued support has been without a doubt what has kept me going and they have been exceptionally generous and gracious in the donation, with no particular demands.*

Toowoomba (Qld)

Friends president, John Borradaile will step down from the position in April 2013. He was recently interviewed by Carmel Stuart, City Librarian. Amongst the questions asked were:

What have been the highlights? ...the introduction of the Volunteer Lunch, thanking the volunteers and the library staff at the annual gathering. The 2012 national year of reading has also been a success and the Friends have been pivotal in the support of this for the City Library.

How would you encourage the next president to take on the position? ...The sense of achieving something positive for the community. ...The library is the central part of the social structure of our community. Being president has given me great satisfaction in partly promoting this concept.

“Be a leader... Remember the lead sled dog is the only one with a decent view”

Wagga Wagga (NSW)

On 8 November, meet Holly Kerr Forsyth, the noted garden author. Holly spoke about her new book — *Country gardens, country hospitality*. Included in this new book are a number of Riverina gardens, including “The Homestead” at Darlington Point and gardens at Jugiong and Gol Gol. The Housebound Service is being revamped in partnership with the government funded Home and Community Care Service. This service replaces the original service put in place by the Friends. Also, a new constitution was brought forward at the AGM for approval. Apart from successful booksales being held, the Friends provided funds to purchase childrens books for the Childrens Ward at the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital.

Friends RESOURCE BOOK

Daniel Ferguson

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FOLA NEWS UPDATE

Published four times a year by Friends of Libraries Australia Inc
Locked Bag 1315
Tullamarine Victoria 3043 Australia
Phone + 61 3 9338 0666
Fax + 61 3 9335 1903
www.fola.org.au
Editor: Daniel Ferguson
dferguson@fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au
Production/Design: Chameleon Print Design
Printing: Aberdeen Press

FOLA COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2013

10 April — Melbourne
September — AGM, Adelaide
11 December — Melbourne

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