

## Historical Society of the Northern Territory

**Patron:** The Hon Austin Asche AC

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### President's Report by Dr Brian Reid

I hope members had an enjoyable and safe Easter break.

The Society was honoured to have two of its Council members; Wendy James OBE and Emeritus Professor Alan Powell feature on the ABC's TV coverage of Anzac Day. Wendy was interviewed on her parent's involvement during the Second World War and Alan co-compared the Anzac Day commemorations.

Speaking of commemorations, Vice-President, Bev Phelts has been busy co-ordinating the forthcoming celebrations of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of John McDouall Stuart reaching the northern sea. It's pleasing to know that all Darwin history/heritage organisations are keen to be involved including the NT Government. More about this below.

With the anniversary fast approaching, a few of us reacquainted ourselves with a section of wood from Stuart's tree which was located at Chambers Bay (Pt Stuart). The wood was donated by the Society to the Museum in 1994. It is believed that the wood came from the tree that Stuart inscribed his initials on in 1862 when he reached the northern coast. Our records show that the wood was souvenired by Samuel Brown who visited the tree in 1885 with Inspector Paul Foelsche. Some years later, Brown's daughter gifted it to the Society.



Inspecting the wood. From left: Dr Schacht, MAGNT; Glen Whiteman, Botanist Herbarium; Robin Wait, past NT Reserves Board member and Stuart fanatic; Col Beard & Brian Reid, HSNT President

## HSNT Coming Events

### Wednesday 25 May – Talk at the Museum & Art Gallery Theatrette – 7.30-8.30pm

The theme this year is on the commemoration of the transfer of the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth Government 1911-2011

Dean Carson, a CDU research fellow on population studies, will speak about the influence that the Commonwealth takeover had on the Territory's population.

Join us for refreshments afterwards.

### Monday 23 May at 6pm – Book Launch

Justice Dean Mildren's book, *Big Boss Fella all Same Judge* on the history of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory will be launched at Darwin's Parliament House. It will be launched by the Chief Justice French of the High Court of Australia. The book has been published as part of the Court's centenary celebrations. All HSNT members are welcome to attend.

### Tuesday 31 May at 5.30pm – Book Launch

Bev Phelts' book, *Felix Ernest Holmes: Darwin 1890-1930: Racehorse owner, Pearler, Agriculturalist, Pastoralist, Butcher, Baker, Icemaker; and the first to switch on Darwin* will be launched in the foyer of the Darwin Plaza Building by Robert Knight MLA, Minister for Essential Services. The Minister will also be unveiling two plaques - one plaque will commemorate Holmes and the other, the Darwin Plaza Building site as the site of the first public "power station". The Power Water Corporation will be hosting the event and engine parts from Holmes' power plant will be on display.

Felix Holmes is of Holmes Jungle fame. "Holmes Corner" flanked Smith, Knuckey and Mitchell Streets and some senior HSNT members may recall that was where they bought their ice, cordials, frozen foods, meat and bread from. Holmes not only operated Darwin's first public electricity supply and a butchery/baker but he also owned a fleet of pearling luggers, a share of the Don Picture Theatre, an awesome number of landholdings (32 lots in the Darwin CBD alone), and lastly, a stable of 24 racehorses which raced in both Darwin and Sydney

All HSNT members are welcome to attend the launch.

### The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of John McDouall Stuart and his party reaching the northern sea.

In July 2012, there will be celebrations to mark the anniversary of the successful expedition from south to north. The HSNT is working in collaboration with the John McDouall Stuart Society on events to mark the anniversary. Below is the program so far but more events are expected to be finalised as the anniversary approaches.

## DRAFT Program

Date	time	Event
Tuesday 24 July	Full day Depart 6-7am	Day trip to Pt Stuart to mark the day and time that Stuart arrived (11am). Reenactment of flag raising and speeches will accompany champagne toasts.
Wednesday 25 July	10am	Darwin City Council Commemorative Event in Raintree Park, The Mall, around the statue of Stuart The event will include a range of speakers and reenactments A morning tea will be held for the public
Wednesday 25 July	6pm	Dinner cruise on Darwin Harbour in an old pearling lugger. Cost p/p approx \$70 food. Drinks extra
Friday 27 July	5pm	Parliament House Sunset drinks and nibbles in conjunction with an art exhibition highlighting Stephen King's sketches.
Other Activities		The Northern Territory Library and Museum and Art Gallery will hold displays

## Other Events

### **The National Trust - *Ten Days At The Top***

When: Saturday 7th to Monday 16th of May 2011    Where: Myilly Point Heritage Precinct

### **What's Happening at the NT Library? Free and open to the public.**

#### **Friday 6 May, 12:10pm - Aya-I-Ga's Albert Medal Exhibition**

An informative lunchtime talk by historian Don Christophersen will launch the exhibition.

On 7 May 1912, King George V awarded the Albert Medal for bravery to Aya-I-Ga, an Aboriginal man known as Neighbour from the Roper River region. The medal was awarded for his action in saving the life of Mounted Constable W F Johns in an incident on the flooded Wilton River on 1 February 1911. It was the first time that a medal for gallantry was awarded to an Indigenous Australian. The medal is housed at the National Library of Australia, and will be on display in the Northern Territory Library until 31 July, 2011.

#### **Thursday 12 May - 2011 Northern Territory Literary Awards and the Chief Minister's NT History Book Award Ceremony**

Established in 1984, the Northern Territory Literary Awards recognise written works of outstanding literary merit and highlight the achievements of Northern Territory writers. The Chief Minister's NT History Book Award is for a book about Territory history published in the previous year. Winners will be announced at the awards ceremony. Although the NT Library's web site does not mention a time, it usually commences around 5.30pm.

#### **Friday 13 May 2011, 10:30am - 'Federalism and the Northern Territory' by The Hon Dr Gary Johns**

Dr Johns is an author of many books, and has been actively involved in public policy for his entire adult life, including as a politician and a community activist. In his talk, Dr Johns will give his thoughts on where the NT fits in the federal system, now and into the future. Would statehood be a good thing? Who would benefit, who would not?

**Friday 20 May, 12:10pm - 'Re-imagining Early Years Learning with the Arts'**

Anja Tait, Northern Territory Library, Edel Musco, Department Education and Training and Dr Petra Kern Music Therapy Consulting from the USA -via Webex, will share their presentation from an international conference on early years learning presented in May 2011 in New York City. They will talk about highlights from the conference and introduce what they learned from observing community educational programs in libraries, museums, galleries, community centres and schools in New York City.

**Monday 23 May, 5:30pm - Northern Territory Library's 30th Anniversary Commemorative Publication & Exhibition Launch**

To help celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Northern Territory Library a new exhibition from the Library's collection has been created. Thirty significant items from the collection have been selected, researched and catalogued; they are our 'Treasures'.

A commemorative booklet has been published, showcasing thirty years of the Library, and to provided an historical context to the artefacts, documents, letters and photographs. Many of the 'Treasures' are fragile and not often displayed; the exhibition will be a great opportunity to discover them. The '30 Treasures' will be on display in the Library from 23 May until 26 August 2011.

**Raising the War: the Japanese Salvage of Darwin's War Wrecks' Exhibition - Showing until 1 May 2011**

Focusing on the Japanese underwater salvaging operation undertaken in Darwin Harbour in the late 1950s, this exhibition was developed collaboratively by the Northern Territory Library and the Heritage Branch. Unique film footage, photographs and documents donated to the Northern Territory Government by the Fujita family are key items on exhibit.

***Tick Tock, Tick Tock, What's Up Croc? ' by Kim Toft - Exhibition until 15 May 2011***

A display of hand painted silk illustrations from a new children's book about the day in the life of a saltwater crocodile, will be on display in the Library.

Kim Toft has written many children's books including, One Less Fish, Turtle's Song, The World That We Want and A Sea of Words, which was named a Notable Book by the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards in 2007.

**NT Writers Centre**

June 25 - July 2 - DESERT WRITERS 2011 with Jan Cornall

Walk and write the Larapinta Trail near Alice Springs using the senses and elements to access the creative power of your writing. Supported camping and walking through spectacular desert country with Indigenous guides, taking in the Beanie Festival and finishing at Hermannsburg community. Taking part in morning and evening writing workshops and daily writing/walking activities, you will have an opportunity to use this unique journey for your current writing project or for beginning a new work. All genres, medium fitness required. 0415921303 [www.intotheblue.com.au](http://www.intotheblue.com.au) View video:<http://www.youtube.com/user/IntoTheBlueCW1>

**Sydney Heritage by Bev Phelts**

Over the Easter break, Yvonne Forrest and I took a trip to Sydney and visited some of the wonderful heritage highlights that Sydney has to offer. We also found time to catch up with past HSNT president, David Carment and Sue Harlow who used to be the Museum and Art Gallery's regional museum curator.



At David's home overlooking Mosman Bay

From left: David, Sue Harlow & Yvonne Forrest

Government House, Macquarie Street.

In 1788 with the arrival of the First Fleet, the first Government House was a makeshift canvas "house" but later in 1788, convicts commenced the construction of a two – storey brick residence in Bridge Street . This Government House went on to serve the first nine Governors – Phillip to Gipps. In 1816, Governor Macquarie commissioned architect Francis Greenway to design the current Government House. Government House was built between 1837 and 1845, and has since hosted many dignitaries including Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip. Inside the drawing room is a showcase of contemporary Australian art, craft and design. Throughout the building is a wonderful collection of colonial furniture, portraiture and furnishings by leading Sydney craftsmen and artists. The grounds contain beautiful gardens with exotic plants, fountains, a gate house, stables a gothic style chalet, and the original carriageway to the residence. Free tours run half hourly on most weekdays and it is well worth the visit.



The entrance to Government House



The Ballroom



The view of Sydney Harbour and gardens from the Queen's Suite



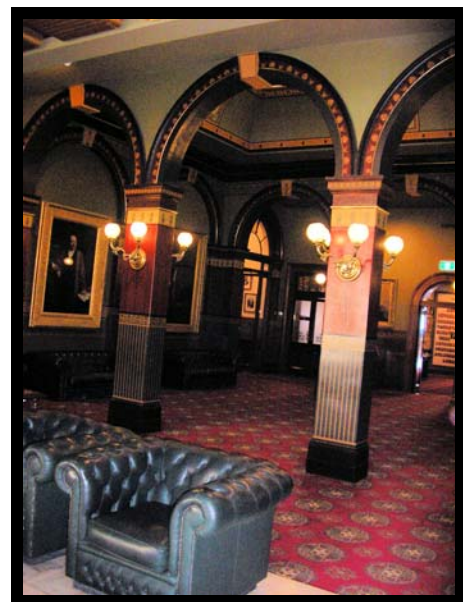
The Main Hall

Parliament House, Macquarie Street.

Parliament House is situated in a wing of what was Sydney's first permanent hospital built in 1816. To fund the hospital, Governor Lachlan Macquarie allowed the building contractors to import and sell 60,000 gallons of rum in exchange for the construction of the hospital. In 1829, the first Legislative Council moved into the Surgeons Quarters sharing it with the Surgeons until 1852 when the Legislature took over the entire wing. Today, Parliament House is a complex of several buildings which were constructed to accommodate new offices and modern facilities. Inside there is a large collection of paintings /photographs of past politicians and a wonderful historical display. Parliament House is open weekdays from 9am to 5pm.



Parliament House



Inside Parliament House

## Train Works, Thirlmere

Located on the outskirts of Sydney, this railway heritage precinct has a remarkable display of over 100 engines/carriages. The precinct also includes a railway station built in 1885, a station master's cottage built in 1891 and a co-op shed constructed in 1908. The great train hall houses the largest collection of railway items in Australia. The collection of carriages and engines have been refurbished and restored over the years by dedicated volunteers. Some of the highlights include:

- The Governor General's carriage – complete with a lounge, dining and sleeping quarters. it is a palace on wheels which used for his touring during 1855;
- A 1905 steam engine which was the first locomotive to cross the Sydney Harbour Bridge;
- A RS1962 dining cart that was the envy of the world for luxury and speed during the years after World War II;
- The Rail Pay Bus which was used for transporting employees wages all over the NSW railways. The Bus was held up near Picton in 1941 with £2000 taken. A fortune then and the robbers were never caught.
- The “Louvre” 1880s-1920s - a fruit and vegetable van that sold produce in regional areas.
- Then there are the cattle, sheep and horse carts.
- Some of the more intriguing vans were the prison, coffin and mail carriages.

Engines range from steam, coal, diesel - to the modern electric locomotion. On boarding a Spirit of Progress van and a 1960s dining carriage, childhood memories were evoked on the sight of opulent leather upholstery, metal pull down basins and solid wood furnishings.



The Rail Pay Bus which was robbed



Some of the many carriages and engines in the great hall



A couple of the displays



Inside the mail van

