

ANME News

Newsletter of the

ANME | AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL
MUSEUM OF EDUCATION

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In this issue we are pleased to publish a short report written by Ms Esther Davies, the archivist of Telopea Park School concerning a very large painting of local and national historical importance. This giant painting, or tableau mural, which is over 60 years old hangs above one of the staircases in the original 1923 building of the school, which was Canberra's first school to be erected and opened by the Commonwealth Government in the then newly established Federal Capital of Canberra. The Newsletter also brings to readers the second in the series relating to school teachers, who were authors of school textbooks, by courtesy of Helen Jan Garner and Brook Martin.



Heritage in Schools and Telopea's Mystery Painting

In January 1950, the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration, the Hon. Harold Holt opened the first Australian Citizenship Convention. An Arts and Crafts exhibition associated with the convention was held at the Canberra University College, then located in the Melbourne Building in Civic. Above the main entrance to the exhibition, was a large oil painting on canvas by the father and son artists Verners (Werner) and Gurt Linde, recent migrants from Latvia. The subject of the painting is migration and the contribution of migrants to Australia.

The artist, Verners Linde trained in the Stieglitz Palace, now the School of the Decorative Arts, in St Petersburg. In both its size and style, the painting at Telopea certainly has echoes

of 20th century Russian art. Linde went on to become a successful artist and newspaper cartoonist in pre-war Latvia before the successive invasions of his country forced him to flee and eventually migrate to Australia. In the last few years, recognition of his work has grown and a number of his paintings have featured in international art auctions

Sometime, in the three years following the Convention, the painting was relocated to its present hanging space at Telopea Park School, Canberra's oldest school. Its prominent location in the school has meant that it has become familiar to the many thousands of students who have attended the school over the past 50 years. It is also worth noting that the school was the focus of migrant education throughout the 1950s and 1960s. This year, the painting is to be the focus of Dr Nicholas Brown's study of migration in his forthcoming official history of Canberra.

This painting and its theme of migration and association with a national convention on citizenship still has national significance in an era when Australians are still facing difficulties concerning refugees and migration. It is therefore vital that it is preserved for future generations. After 60 years hanging in its present location, the painting is in need of cleaning and conservation. The current estimate for such work is nearly \$15,000, a sum which the school would have difficulty in finding. Previous efforts to obtain funding from the usual heritage-based sources have not been successful. It would be most unfortunate, if such a treasure were allowed to deteriorate for such a relatively small sum of money.

Visitors from Veterans Affairs Department

In July ANME was visited by two officers from the Commonwealth Veterans Affairs Department. Merrilee Chignell, Assistant Director Commemorative Projects, the Commemorations and Anzac Centenary Branch of the Department were seeking any books, pamphlets and ephemera which ANME might hold relating to special publications which education departments and schools may have published relating to the Anzac contribution to the First World War. The ANME Director and Senior Curator were able to show the visitors three particular items held by ANME which were published by the NSW Department of Education. Veterans Affairs photographer Brett photographed these items for inclusion in their current Anzac Commemorative Project.

University of Canberra Open Day Display

To mark ANME's second contribution to Canberra's Celebration of its Centenary the Museum mounted a display of books, pamphlets and ephemera titled "A Century of Tertiary Education in Canberra 1913-2013". The display contained over fifty items, drawn mainly from ANME's Australian history of tertiary education collection, but includes items of ephemera and photographs lent to ANME by some of the tertiary educational institutions in Canberra. Unsurprisingly, Canberra is the home of quite a number of tertiary education institutions including: Australian National University, University of Canberra, Australian Catholic University, Australian Defence Force Academy, St Mark's Theology Centre and Library (Charles Sturt University affiliation) and Canberra Institute of Technology. The ANME's Display opened on 21st August and continues until the end of September. It is located in the main entrance foyer of A Level of Building 5 at the University of Canberra. Our thanks go to our exhibition curator Ms Chrissie Lombard who prepared the items and arranged the display.

ANME Annual Lecture – A Celebration of Canberra’s Centenary



Museum Director, Dr Malcolm Beazley AM, Professor Geoffrey Sherington and Professor Geoffrey Riordan.

This year’s Annual Lecture, which was a special Centenary of Canberra event was delivered by Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Sherington, on Wednesday 25th September, in the Inspire Centre, Building 24 at the University of Canberra. Professor Sherington is an eminent educational historian and former Dean of the Faculty of Education and Social Work and former Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney. His lecture *Education and Nation Building in Australia 1913 and Beyond*, focused on

how the idea of nation building has shaped Australian education over the century since the foundation of Canberra, as a national capital site in 1913. Guests enjoyed refreshments prior to the lecture and were officially welcomed by the Dean of U.C’s Faculty of Education, Science, Technology and Mathematics, Professor Geoffrey Riordan. Following the lecture, a number of guests joined Professor Sherington and his wife Lisa, at a fireside dinner specially convened at “Sweet Copper”, formerly the Ginninderra School House (c.1883).

The Changing Role of School Museums

School museums, like other local, state and specialist museums are beginning to adapt to the changes in their social functions and public expectation in the digital age. To remain meaningful and relevant in the era of e-books, Google and ipads, school and education museums need to see their future as more than repositories for school artefacts, classroom furniture and the preservation of historically significant school buildings. Although these preservation and conservation functions will continue to remain very important, school museums, like other specialist museums, are increasingly perceived to have a cultural function, as agencies of social and community education in the context of their local communities.

To fulfil these additional purposes, school museums are increasingly expected to use their artefacts and buildings to perform an interpretative role, explaining to visitors not only what artefacts were used in the classroom but also why they were used. For example, why school room architecture of the period 1800-1850s had large tiered classrooms with long forms, or desks seating 5 to 8 pupils, and how teachers used a “sol-fa” chart and a tuning fork in music lessons. An example from more recent decades is the use of Cuisenaire Rods for developing number readiness in the kindergarten and junior grades. These sets of coloured rods are now definitely museum items.

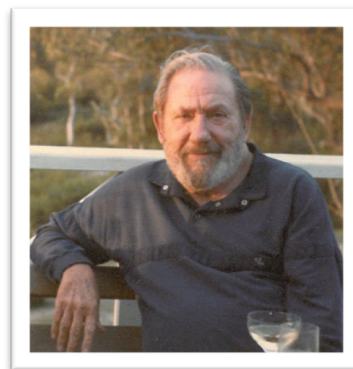
An emphasis upon the interpretative role of school museums requires greater detail in caption and label description, explanatory “theme” panels for special displays and the use of interactive digital programs available to visitors. An interpretative approach to school

museum displays is better able to reflect changes in educational values, theories and ideas. In these ways the school museum becomes an effective cultural agency describing and explaining cultural change in a community using examples of curriculum change in the local school. For example, a school museum displaying items from the early decades of the twentieth century is better able to reflect, through an interpretative approach, changes in social attitudes towards sport or music as reflected in a comparison of a 1915 primary school sport or music syllabus with a 2010 physical education or music syllabus. Similarly, how might a school history text book published in 1890 differ in content and format from a school history text book published in 1950 and one published in 2010?

To more effectively fulfil these emerging roles, school museums need to build up their data bases and files of photos, school ephemera, syllabus and curriculum records, teachers' lesson notes, pupils' exercise and work books, lesson programs, school readers, school textbooks and school timetables from various decades, all of which reflect significant aspects of Australia's schooling history.

School Textbook Author: Owen Martin

Owen Martin did his teaching training at Sydney Teachers' College where, he was a member of the Sydney University Regiment. He won both a Commonwealth and Teaching Scholarship and was Dux of Parramatta High School. His dream was to become a lawyer but at that time, the economy was so grim with The Depression, Owen was forced to accept the Teaching Scholarship, as it provided many benefits such as, travel concessions.



He began his teaching career in 1940 and his first teaching position was a private one. A Grazier had built a Schoolhouse on his property and his, plus neighbouring children were taught there. Owen was recommended as the Schoolmaster by a Lecturer. Hill End was next followed by Tathra. He did a year as Director of the National Fitness Camp and his family lived there and were taught by Correspondence.

He became the first permanent Headmaster of Belrose Public School in 1951 and during his time there, he produced many quality educational worksheets and exams. Fellow teachers found these so helpful that he started to write more of these texts.

To meet the growing demand, Owen started producing multiple copies of these early texts on a Gestetner, a hand-turned printing machine that he set up in the garage. Some of the earliest texts included New Plan Maths and New Plan English. This growing mail order business operated out of the garage until the late sixties, when Dominie Educational Supplies set up shop at 8 Cross Street, Brookvale. He named the business "Dominie" as it was the term for the schoolmaster in a Scottish village. Owen died on 2 December, 1990 but he left an impressive legacy. A number of Owen Martin's texts are still in publication — *Simple Script Levels 1 and 2* and *Fractions Made Easy!*

The Dominie Educational Superstore is still owned and operated by the Martin family today. It continues to publish and distribute quality, educational resources for busy teachers and parents.