

A man, a library, a collection and a quest

My Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, ladies and gentlemen. This is a very happy day in my life because it marks the achievement of my ambition, an ambition I have had for many years past. I believe that most people are interested in their local history and will be pleased to learn or reminisce from the photographs in my collection.'

This is how Mr Bert Lovett described his feelings on the recent opening of a special exhibition room named in his honour at the Newcastle Region Library.

Mr Lovett has generously donated his personal collection of photographs to the library. The collection comprises several thousand prints and negatives amassed from Mr Lovett's own photography and from donations.

At the opening of the Lovett Room the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Alderman John McNaughton, described the great number of photographs in the collection coming directly in response to Mr Lovett's 'persuasiveness, persistence and insistence'.

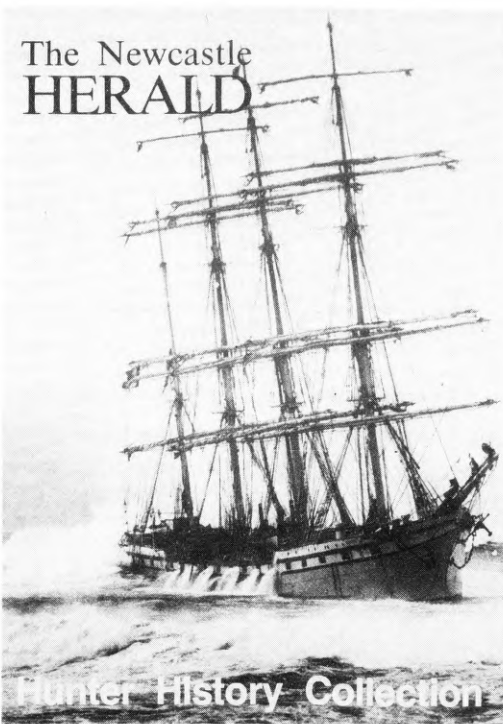
One such acquisition came from the *Newcastle Herald* which handed over around 150,000 negatives dating from 1950 to 1970. Another major collection of around 30,000 negatives is about to be acquired from the well known Newcastle photographer, Ron Morrison. A thousand photographs are about to be purchased from the NSW Government Printer and negotiations are proceeding with the State Rail Authority.

According to Mr Lovett the idea of starting a collection came about after his retirement when he was able to merge his interest in local history and photography. The search for a permanent exhibition spot for his burgeoning collection has some history itself.

The collection's first home was Fort Scratchley Maritime Museum (a museum brought into being largely through the efforts of Mr Lovett) but as the collection grew and its scope widened from maritime themes a new venue was needed.

Then the *Newcastle Herald* succumbed to some of Mr Lovett's 'persuasiveness and persistence' and agreed to enlarge and frame 100 historic photos for exhibition. This exhibition was staged at the Newcastle Regional Art Gallery and was outstandingly successful. It attracted 10,000 people in four weeks! With in-

Photos. (right) The Windeyer sisters go cycling in 1890; (below) The French barque Adolphe fast on the Oyster Bank at Stockton in 1904.



terest at this peak the search for a permanent exhibition space began in earnest.

It was at this stage in 1985 that the Newcastle City Council and the City Library Manager, Mr Charlie Smith, stepped in and offered space for the collection in the library. Of course Mr Lovett's quest was well known to library staff as he had been a frequent visitor to the library over the years while looking for information and researching historical material.

Final arrangements were soon worked out. Mr Lovett undertook to not only to donate his vast collection but to also organise regular exhibitions. The Council and the library began alterations to create an exhibition space and working on the logistics of integrating the collection into the library's Local History Section. Even private sponsorship was sought and this came in the form of photographic equipment for an adjoining dark room being donated by Howard Smith PL.

So now half the rooms in Mrs Lovett's house can be used for their original purpose, the Newcastle Region Library has a new exhibition space, and library users, researchers and local historians have access to a new resource — one which brings Newcastle's history dramatically to life!

Exhibitions in the Lovett Room will be free and open to the public from 10.00 am to 8.00 pm Monday to Friday, and from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm on Saturday, excepting public holidays.

HERITAGE WEEK 5 — 12 APRIL

The 1987 Heritage Week activities throughout Australia, organised by Heritage Week organisations and National Trusts in every state and territory, provide an exciting introduction to the Bicentennial. It is a time when Australia should reflect on its past, and on ways to ensure its conservation and preservation.

Western Australia

Heritage Week became a national event just a few years ago with the entry of Western Aus-

tralia.

The America's Cup, and particularly the rejuvenation of Fremantle, highlighted heritage conservation in the state. So it is with much pleasure that the eastern states can, belatedly, welcome Western Australia to the Heritage Week club.

One of the most exciting Heritage Week events is a special exhibition at the Museum of Childhood at Subiaco. Toys of early Western Australians, some dating back to the early years of colonisation, as well as toys made in the state, form the nucleus for the display.

Following a successful formula, country fairs will again be held across the state. Another favourite, the Avon Valley Car Rally,

taking in several historic points of interest, will be repeated this year.

The Heritage Week opening event will be a commemorative race meeting at Gloucester Park.

New South Wales

In Sydney, Heritage Week begins with a trip back to the early nineteenth century. The time is 1810 and a pioneer family make their way from Parramatta to Sydney Town. The head of the family is an emancipist and he seeks an audience with Governor Lachlan Macquarie in order to secure a land grant.