

A Taste of 1788

The Coming of the Strangers

10 FEB 1988
OF W.A.

agine the dramatic culture-shock of the — an inability to dress for the climate, re to make traditional agricultural oods work or interact with a people ded as inferior. A mature nation recog- that many myths and prejudices tend to from misguided perceptions of the past. ope to dispel some of those myths about Australia through this comprehensive Library exhibition.'

is is how Alison Crook, NSW State Librar- described the impact 'The Coming of the gers' Exhibition is likely to have. This essive Bicentennial exhibition opened on uary in the superbly renovated gallery of the Library. Unlike most exhibitions one does not take a chronological oach but tries to give insight into our onary society by focusing on five main es: Aboriginal people; the environment; en; the early colonists; and Australia's teness from Europe.

son Crook explained the exhibition's oach in this way: 'In coming to terms our development as a nation it is essen- hat we dispel many myths and misunder- lings about our past. We must recognise our historical records come almost exclu- y from people like First Fleet officers — gers to a new land who had difficulty in oling with what they saw as 'strange' le, customs, climate and a hostile onment. From a geographical and cul- standpoint the early settlers were the gers'.

e book of the exhibition (a joint venture een the NSW State Library and William



Collins and sponsored by IBM) was written by Baiba Berzins, formerly head of the State Library's Mitchell Collection, and takes the same non-traditional approach to the Bicentenary and deals with the exhibition's themes.

The exhibition shows off some the historical gems held in the Library's Mitchell and Dixon collections — First Fleet diaries, exquisite miniatures, sketches, maps and a fascinating decorated collector's cabinet.

Alison Crook sums it all up this way: 'This exhibition challenges people to look with new eyes at the early years of colonial settlement. We want people to 'taste' the experiences of 200 years ago — as they were then.'

Relying on mates

After vigorous campaigning by the NSW State Library, the letters of First Fleeter Midshipman Newton Fowell are now a part of the Library's collection. This campaign received wide publicity in NSW and centred on the slogan 'Be a mate of the State'.

Described as the most significant historical documents to become available in almost 50 years, the 13 letters were written by Newton Fowell from aboard HMS Sirius and describe in great detail the events of the First Fleet voyage, the early months at Sydney Cove and the dash to Cape Town in 1790 for food and provisions for the early colonists.

A winning bid of over \$200,000 at Southebys in London in mid December brought to a successful conclusion the Library's race against time to obtain funds and bring the documents 'home'.

Conference success

risers of the 4th National Conference of ary Technicians were overwhelmed with response to the conference which took e in Melbourne during 28 — 31 October at Regent Hotel. Delegates came from every and numbered over 300!

e program was varied and included rs on topics such as the role of library nicians in the library workforce, progres- for library technicians to librarianship ses, overseas job exchanges, job sharing the impact of automation on technicians c. The final session was devoted to indus- issues affecting library technicians and onference concluded with a panel discus- which addressed questions from gates covering a wide range of issues. In addition to formal papers, a program of ry visits was organised and social func- held in the evenings were well attended. e delegates took advantage of the ideal her to stay on for the Melbourne Cup h was held the following week.

eryone spoke enthusiastically of the once and technicians are now looking ard to the 5th National Conference to be in Brisbane in mid 1989.



Conference keynote speaker Peter Dawe, with Margaret Munro and Jane La Scala (left) who was guest speaker at the conference dinner.



Conference Committee Members (left to right): Grace Davies, Secretary, Hub Library; Margaret Munro, Conference Convenor; Kerrie Kelly, Toorak College; Eileen Daykin, Footscray College of TAFE.

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