

Two of his main collecting areas were printing ephemera, which was unusual for his day, and autographs, so this piece would have been of interest to him on both scores. He had his autographs and other pieces of ephemera bound up into scrapbooks and meticulously labelled with the dates he acquired them.

Turner died in 1858, but in 1853 he'd sold off half of his collections of books and autographs in an auction that took 13 days to complete. One of the lots was the scrapbook, which was knocked down to another book dealer, George Willis, for 15 shillings. Willis then sold it in 1855 to Canada's Parliamentary Librarian, Alpheus Todd, who was visiting Europe to replenish the Parliamentary Library's stocks after a fire. This and two other Turner scrapbooks bought at the same time subsequently appeared in the Parliamentary Library's catalogue, but although there were other playbills (including another one for an earlier performance of *Jane Shaw* in 1768), the cataloguers must have decided that the trade and commerce contents took precedence over theatre, because that's how the scrapbooks are described in the catalogue. An Australian printing or theatre historian would never have guessed that there was anything relevant in them.

In 1973, the Parliamentary Library transferred a large amount of material, including the scrapbook, to the National Library of Canada, which had had a new building erected in 1967, and had taken over the role of collecting, preserving and promoting the printed heritage of Canada.

Because the scrapbooks contained no Canadiana and the rare books staff didn't want to dismantle them, they remained in a storage vault until last year, when the vault had to be cleared out. It was then that Elaine Hoag saw that several items in the scrapbooks were laid in loose, and in danger of being lost or damaged. The playbill was one of these, and her research quickly uncovered its significance.

Ian Wilson then began the process of repatriating the playbill to its country of origin, in a generous display of the value that both our nations place on preserving our cultural heritages. In the longest but definitely quickest leg of its two century odyssey around the world, it was flown over from Ottawa to Canberra and presented by Canadian Prime Minister Harper to then Prime Minister Howard on September 11th 2007.

* *Elaine Hoag has published an article on the playbill and its provenance, The Earliest Extant Australian Imprint, with Distinguished Provenance, in the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand's journal Script and Print, Vol. 31 No 1, 2007, which is held in the National Library.*

Andrew Sergeant
Rare Books Reference Librarian
National Library of Australia
asergeant@nla.gov.au

Gold Coast City Council Heritage Expo

It's amazing how much interest the 'old' has in the 'new age' on the Gold Coast!

Vintage cars and caravans, oral histories from the 1960s, pictorial displays, free antiques' valuations, old fashioned washing machines and farming tools were a definite draw card in Council's recent Gold Coast Heritage Expo at Robina Community Centre.

Organised by Council's Office of the City Architect and Heritage, it was a hit with the young, nostalgic and curious. Crowds rolled in – some to relive and others to experience – the vibrant sixties on the Gold Coast.

Families were fascinated by the 'old-fashioned' washing machines and farming tools, filling their 'showbags' with historical information from each display.

Fifty-two photographs, contributed by Council's Local Studies Library, made up the '100 years ago: 1908' pictorial display about the communication, transport, education, church, clergy of the era.

Typical queries fielded by library staff fielded were the verification of an old photograph the Coolangatta Town Council.

Staff investigated details about the Aldermen of the time and matched them up with named images, confirming the identity of three people in the photograph – a promising start.

A painstaking search of the old Coolangatta Town Council minute books for 1914 to 1924 raised a conundrum – only four of the individuals named on the back of the photograph were referenced in the minute books. By consulting biographies of the aldermen we picked up on their various interests. One was an avid surfer. By researching yearbooks of the local surfing clubs the other names on the photograph were tracked down. It turned out to be the committee of the Kirra Surf Life Saving Club.

Our Local Studies collection contains books, photographs, newspapers, newspaper clippings, serials and manuscripts. The family history material includes births, deaths, marriages microfiche and CDs for most states, shipping lists, council minutes, postal directories, maps and oral histories. About 60 display kits on various themes are available to local schools and community groups for a monthly loans – particularly popular with students. The adage 'a picture says a thousand words' is definitely relevant where history is concerned.

Local history libraries and societies from other areas often send us material outside their collection parameters. In return, we forward anything that may be of value to them. Recently we received some unique photographs from the Toowoomba City Council library service sent to them from a bequeathed estate.

Sharing is a wonderful idea - thanks to everyone who helps in this way.

Lyn Duncanson
Acting Local Studies Librarian
Gold Coast City Council
lduncanson@goldcoast.qld.gov.au