



State Library of NSW secures rare treasure

There are only two surviving comprehensive natural history collections from Australia's colonial period. One is in London's Natural History Museum – and the other has just come 'home' to the State Library of New South Wales.

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Minister for the Arts George Souris unveiled the collection of 741 exquisite natural history drawings and watercolours in November last year, having paid some \$7.1 million – the most expensive acquisition in the library's history – to secure it for what the Premier described at the time as "the nation's leading repository of Australian colonial history". The acquisition was made possible through the financial support of TAL (formerly Tower Australia) and its parent company Dai-ichi Life, the NSW Government, and the State Library Foundation.

The artworks, depicting local plants, birds, and fish, are elaborately bound in six albums and were compiled in the 1790s by the leading naturalist and botanist Aylmer Bourke Lambert. In 1842, the albums were purchased by the 13th Earl of Derby, a legendary natural history collector and the collection has been in private hands for 200 years. Many of the drawings were previously unknown, created during the earliest years of British settlement.

NSW State Librarian Alex Byrne says the library's curators were aware of the collection, but there were substantial surprises in three of the albums when they were first viewed. He said the collection reveals much about plant and animal species and habitats in the early years following the arrival of the First Fleet, including recording now extinct and endangered species.

The collection, now known as the TAL and Dai-ichi Life Collection, went on display at the State Library of NSW in December 2011.

LibMark winners focus on National Year of Reading

The Victorian LibMark Promotion Marketing Awards were right on track late last year to herald the arrival of the National Year of Reading in 2012, with the latest winners offering an enormous range of programs in line with this theme.

Entries included a children's festival at Eastern Regional Libraries, Goldfields Library Corporation's eBook Expo, and even a reading 'flash mob' at Yarra Plenty Regional Library, where a book from the One Country Reading list is chosen and copies released into a public space to be read aloud by

whoever is occupying that space at the time. And that was just the beginning.

At Brimbank Libraries, the staff are poised to visit playgroups and community events to help parents and pre-schoolers create a small book to take home through their *First Book Program*, while at Frankston a 10-week literacy course will be run for residents. The library is headed out to share with another cultural institution at Hobsons Bay, where a readers' picnic and reading trail will take place in the local Botanic Gardens with local authors, illustrators, and storytellers on hand to help.

There have to be winners, however, and the judges must have had a difficult time deciding on their choices before selecting Hume Libraries with their *Stories on Show*, an "outreach extravaganza celebrating the story in all its forms", and Yarra Libraries with their *Library Bike*, a cargo bike carrying and distributing promotional and sample materials for a range of outreach activities.

LibMark is a Public Libraries Victoria Network special interest group, established in 2005 to market public libraries.



YARRA LIBRARIES STAFFER LINDY GETS IN THE NATIONAL YEAR OF READING SPIRIT

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Marketing public libraries since 2005