TUMBLEBEE

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**COALFIELDS LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**

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CONTENTS

Articles

Welcome to Tumblebee, the official newsletter of the Coalfields Local History Association Inc.

Aims and Objectives

To discover, record, print, preserve and teach the History and Heritage of the specified district. The specified district being all the land situated in the Cessnock Local Government Area. Primarily known as the Hunter Valley in general

The Coalfields Local History Association Manages the Edgeworth David Museum, Manages and maintains the Jim Comerford Collection and offers assistance with Family History Research and inquiries.

Office Bearers

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Secretary	Lexie MATTHEWS	0409452555
Treasurer	Peter ALLEN	
Public Officer	John MURPHY	

Committee Members

PATRONS
Catherine PARSONS
Meryl SWANSON MP

Newsletter Editor	Lynette Hamer	49362493

LIFE MEMBERS OF EDGEWORTH DAVID MUSEUM
Brian ANDREWS   OAM (deceased)
Lexie MATTHEWS
Cheryle SHOESMITH

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The affairs of the Association shall be conducted by the management committee, which includes the office bearers of the Association. Members of the association are welcome to attend and observe at any meeting and may take part at the discretion of the chairperson

MONA HESSING
(nee JOHNSTON)
ARTIST & WEAVER

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Mona JOHNSTON was born at Kurri Kurri on 12 January 1933. Only daughter of Edward JOHNSTON & Mona Hannah GILL. Mona married Leonard HESSING on 12 July 1957 in Sydney NSW She died about 25 April 2001 in Tuross Bay Post on the South Coast of NSW. Mona was well known in artistic circles as a fibre artist and weaver. She was described as making "a very significant contribution from the 1960's into the 1980's to the development of weaving as a monumental public sculpture". She was innovative, imaginative, and willing to try new techniques in the areas of fabric and weaving. Being born into a mining family in a mining town, Mona would have had the typical upbringing experienced by other children from mining backgrounds. She lived at 37 Wallsend Street Pelaw Main with her mother Mona Hannah JOHNSTON, grandmother Pearl Sarah (nee SMITH) and grandfather Arthur (Snow) GILL.

In 1953, when Mona was about 20 there was a serious mine subsidence event in Pelaw Main, mainly impacting in the area of Wallsend Street. Some residences were damaged, others were relocated to alternative places in Pelaw Main. This event caused some residents of Pelaw Main to relocate permanently to other towns. It appears that Arthur, Pearl, Mona Hanna and Mona moved to Belmont. Arthur GILL died on 15 January 1959 and Pearl remarried to William ROBINSON, hence Mona was sometimes referred to as Mona ROBINSON.

For a women coming from a mining background Mona HESSING "had a particular impact on interior design and architecture" working with the likes of Marion Hall BEST interior designer.

In 1972 Mona was quoted as stating "The concept of non-ridgid, yielding, flexible form that grows and develops at each touch is tremendously exciting. It includes a subtle relationship of things within things and the final form that contains within itself countless co-ordinated levels."

Mona lived in India between 1967 and 1968 and this experience influenced her use of vivid colours and traditional fibres.

She combined flat and knotted weaves in large tapestries that reflected the texture of Australian architecture in the 1970's.

By the 1960's she was well known as a fibre artist, contributing large floor rugs to the 1967 exhibition at the Australian Design Centre. In 1968 one of her tapestries was selected to be exhibited at the Stuttgart Craft Exhibition.

She was commissioned in 1971 to create a large "civic scaled" tapestry for the University of New South Wales. Titled "Banner" it weighed a quarter of a tonne, stretched over twenty metres in length and was composed of homespun wool.

Mona showed her works at the Realities Craft Shop with the likes of Jutla FEDERSEN, Eva HESSE and William TUCKER.

At the "Clay and Fibre" exhibit in 1973, Hessing was invited to show her works along with friend, artist and ceramicist Marea GAZZARD at the National Gallery of Victoria.

In 1990 Mona Hessing moved to Tuross Head on the south coast of NSW in order to care for her mother. Whilst living there she continued to work and create, showing at the Priory Bingie NSW and in 2000 at the Canberra Museum and Gallery.

Mona HESSING died 25 April 2001 at Tuross Head NSW

Mona Hannah GILL & Mona JOHNSTON

WORKS BY MONA HESSING

This article was inspired by a research request from Dr Evelyn JURES who is researching the background of Mona HESSING. This article was produced with her approval.

SIMON WHITLOCK – The Wizard
PROFESSIONAL DARTS PLAYER

Simon WHITLOCK is a professional darts player accredited with being largely responsible for the growth of darts in Australia. He was born in Cessnock on 3 March 1969. He spent a good deal of his life living in Hornsby NSW before eventually moving to Queensland.

He began his working life in a photo factory, which he hated. He then became a bricklayer, an occupation that he continued in Queensland. When he was ten years old his father asked him if he would like to play darts. At this time he was not particularly interested, however when he was fifteen his father again asked him if he would like to play darts, after throwing a few darts he decided to give it a try. This was in 1984 and was the beginning of a brilliant career in the sport of darts.

Simon WHITLOCK has three sons from two previous marriages, Nicholas, from his first marriage and Mason and Locky from his marriage to second wife Peta. Peta and Simon met when they were both darts players. They were the first married couple to win an Australian title. Peta's father coached Simon for a time.

Simon is passionate about his darts and it was not long before he wished to play against the worlds best players. This meant that he needed to go to the UK. He needed to move to the UK in order to compete at an elite level and also to make some money, as there was very little money to be made from darts in Australia.

According to his own confession he has always sported long hair and a beard. He is typically laid back and unimpressed by any media coverage. He is a very private person and keeps his personal life separate from his professional life.

He has designed his own darts "Red Dragons" which suit his mode of playing. He has often been criticized because his darts tend to damage the boards, which he attributes to the inconsistency of the manufacture of the different boards,

Simon likes to keep his association with Australia and he enters the darts arena to the music of "Down Under" by Men at Work. He plays in the Professional Darts Corporation Tournaments and played in the British Darts Organisation between 2004 and 2009..

Players Championships won (AUT) in 2010, (BAR) 2012, 2016 & 2017, (COV) 2014, (WIG) 2010, (CRA) 2012, (IRE) 2010 & 2016 & (DER) 2014. He won the European Championship in 2012 and the World Cup of Darts for Australia in 2022.

At 53 he is still competing at an elite level and admits that while ever he maintains a passion for darts he will continue to play

Sources
Internet

DAVID SCOTT MITCHELL
Benefactor of the Mitchell Library

David Scott MITCHELL, the only son of Dr James MITCHELL (who was interesting in his own right) and Augusta Maria Frederick SCOTT was born 19 March 1836 in Sydney. Born into an affluent family, David was able to indulge in many interests. In 1852 he was one of the first undergraduates of the Sydney University, gaining a BA in 1856 and an MA in 1859. He also won scholarships in Mathematics and prizes in Physics and Chemistry. He obviously had varied interests because he was admitted to the Barr in 1858, and never practiced. He also turned down the position of Attorney General. Was this an indication of his desire not to be in the public eye, as it turned out David was an extremely private person, although he had an active social life within the elite circle, being a member of the Sydney Club.
The death of his parents (father in 1869 and mother in 1871), an alleged broken romance and a dispute over his father's will caused David to become more reclusive, withdrawing into his world of books. At this time he moved from the family home in Cumberland Street to Darlinghurst Road.
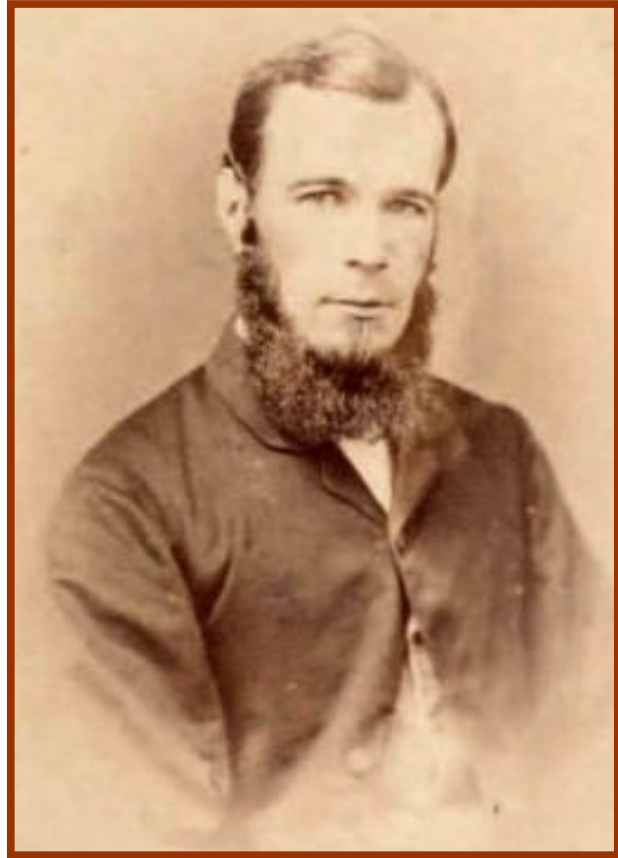
He became "*Australia's greatest book collector. Bequeathed his amazing library to the people of Sydney and ultimately to Australia and the World, along with the condition that the Government house and maintain the collection in a separate building of the State Library*" and so the MITCHELL LIBRARY became a reality.
The new wing of the library was begun in 1906

Given Mitchell's independent means, affluence, education and reclusiveness he was able to immerse himself in his passion for book collecting. His collecting began with English Literary works and by 1900 his collection exceeded 10,000 volumes. From 1886 he turned his attention to records of Australia and its surrounding regions, his aim being to gather all documentation pertaining not only to Australia but also to the Pacific, East Indies and Antarctica.
Mitchell's collecting was enhanced by his access to booksellers, especially George ROBERTSON and his assistant F WYMARK. After 1895 he was associated with the principal librarian of the Public Library of NSW, H C L ANDERSON, who having met Mitchell had aspirations of combining forces with him. The Public Library of NSW, apart from Mitchell had the best Australasian collection and was able to demonstrate the capacity and will to develop it.
David Scott MITCHELL was beginning to suffer the effects of age and ill health and having no relatives with like interests offered to bequest his collection to the Library Trustees along with an endowment of £70,000.

EVENING NEWS SYDNEY

Thursday 3 November 1898   **Page 6**
THE MITCHELL BEQUEST
The Minister for Education stated in the Assembly yesterday that Mr David Scott Mitchell has offered to bequeath his magnificent library to the people of this country, on condition that the Government will house it and maintain it intact as a separate wing of our National Library. As to whether a rented building will be used for such purposes, that question is rather premature at the present time, but it is highly improbable that a building for a national purpose of this kind will be rented

David Scott MITCHELL died 24 July 1907, aged 71 at his home, Darlinghurst Road Sydney NSW and was interred in Rookwood cemetery.

ORANGE LEADER

Thursday 25 July 1907   **Page 2**
DEATH OF DAVID SCOTT MITCHELL
A Benevolent Literateur
David Scott MITCHELL, the donor of the famous library to the State died this morning at his residence, Darlinghurst at the age of 71

The Mitchell family were affluent due to the efforts of Dr James MITCHELL, David's father. They had substantial property in the Hunter Valley, though David showed no interest in these leaving the running of them to managers.
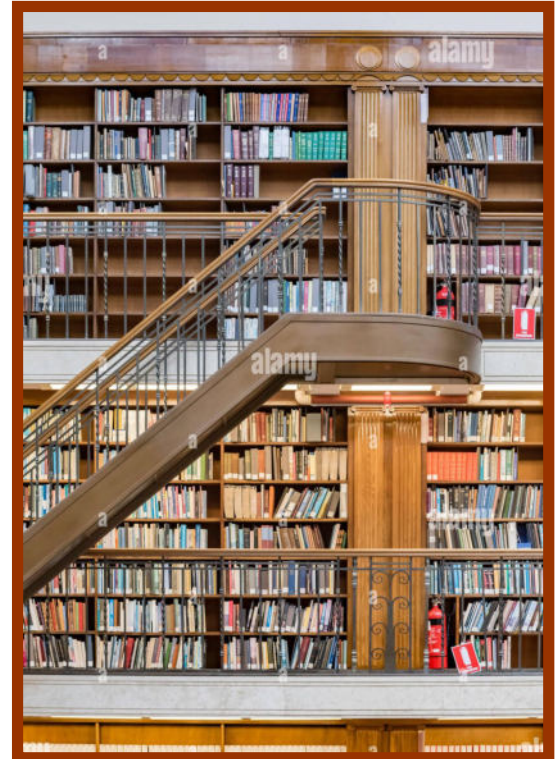
MITLAND MURCURY

Friday 6 December 1907   **Page 5**
LATE DAVID MITCHELL'S ESTATE
The estate of the late Mr David Scott Mitchell, donor of the Mitchell Library to the State has been valued for probate purposes at £261,552

SINGLETON ARGUS

Thursday 26 May 1910   **Page 2**
MITCHELL'S FLAT ESTATE
The Mitchell's Flat Estate which was recently purchased by Mr J C MAYNE, of Rothbury, from the trustees of the late Mr David Scott Mitchell, has been placed under offer to the tenants, most of whom have been in occupation for nearly 30 years. The property is chiefly rich agricultural lands, the following males are reported: Wake Bros 800 acres, Mrs HOLZ 150 acres, P J HOLZ 200 acres and F TACON 70 acres

STATE LIBRARY OF NSW
A Treasure Trove of Australian History

The State Library of NSW, of which the Mitchell Library is a large part, is a large heritage listed special collections, reference and research Library. It is one of the oldest libraries in Australia and one of the biggest in the World. It is open to the public. Established in 1869 the collections date back to the Australian Subscription Library, itself established in the colony in 1826. The subscriptions Library was started by a group of wealthy Sydney citizens at a meeting at the Sydney Hotel in 1826, chaired by barrister John MACHANESS. Membership was subjected to committee approval.

In December 1827 the Subscriptions Library was situated in rented premises in Pitt St. Over the next two years it found homes in George St, Bridge St, Macquarie St and Macquarie Place. The library grew and suffered financial problems and lack of space. Negotiations in 1838 to construct a new building broke down due to the unwillingness of members to broaden access to the Library. Later negotiations with the Government proved more successful and construction of a new library building was commenced in 1843. The foundation stone was laid at the corner of Bent and Macquarie Streets by Alexander MACLEAY and it opened in 1845, however financial difficulties continued to plague the Subscription Library and by 1869 it was in serious debt. The NSW government was persuaded to purchase the library for £5100 for the books and £3600 for the building. In 1869 the Sydney Free Public Library opened with a stock of 20,000 volumes.

In the first year of the library opening it attracted 60,000 visitors.

The library building was designed by Walter Liberty VERNON assisted by H C L HENDERSON. After construction further additions were made in 1939 by HOWRE BROS, 1959 by F W C POWELL & SONS and in 1964 by MELLOCCO BROS. The Library was NSW heritage listed in 1999.

Dr James MITCHELL (father of David Scott MITCHELL) was a committee member of the Australian Subscription Library 1832 – 1853 and Vice-President 1856 – 1869. This could have been an influencing factor in the bequest made by David, of leaving his amazing collection to the State Library.

The Sydney Free Library expanded and a lending branch opened in 1877. This library was handed over to the Sydney Municipal Library in 1909 and became the City of Sydney Library.

Principal Librarian, Robert Cooper WALKER, established services across the State and in regional areas, by 1883 the

library had continued to grow and was experiencing over crowding problems, new additions were added to accommodate the storage of books.

In 1885 the library acquired it's first Folio, and in 1902 it obtained the papers of William BLIGH.

Wagga Wagga Advertiser   Saturday 12 November 1904   Page 2

EARLY RECORD OF N S W

The trustees of the Public Library of NSW are anxious to secure for preservation in the Public Library of the State, early records of the history of NSW - which is for the first 50 years, practically the history of Australia. Copies of some of the historical documents in the archives of the Public Records Office in London have already been made, and printed in the historical records and these cover the history of the earliest period of colonization, The Trustees are now desirous of obtaining local records of our early history, with special reference to the first settlements of the various country districts. They will be grateful if old residents and others, who have in their possession documents relating to the early settlement of their districts, will present them to the Public Library of New South Wales, Sydney, where they will be preserved and made available for students. If in any case persons possessing valuable records of this nature are unwilling to part with them the Trustees will esteem it a great favour if they will submit the documents for inspection, so that copies may be made and a record kept of there whereabouts.

Expanding the Library's collections (particularly Australiana and Pacific Material) was a priority of both Hugh WRIGHT and William IFOULD (both Principal Librarians). IFOULD's vision for the Library was as a repository of material relating to the history of Australia, not only New South Wales. He led many efforts to collect such material. The Library has been continuously adding to it's collections since 1926. It has grown into one of the World's best Libraries holding much material available for research.

Some of the collections held by the State Library of NSW

- Original Log of the Proceedings of HMS Bounty in a Voyage to the South Seas, William Bligh, 1 December 1787- 22 October 1788..

- Journal kept by Joseph Banks on board HMS *Endeavour* during the first voyage undertaken by James Cook to the Pacific Ocean.

- Harold Lasseter's diary documenting his expedition in 1930 searching for gold.

- George Augustus Robinson's journal from 1832 recording his activities in Tasmania, notable for the detailed information he recorded about the local Aboriginal people he encountered.

- The Holtermann Collection of over 3,500 glass-plate negatives and albumen prints, many of which depict life in New South Wales goldfield towns between 1871 and 1876.

- Richardson Collection of 289 volumes of rare bibles, religious works, early printed books and a small collection of medieval manuscripts.

- First Fleet Journals. The Library holds the most comprehensive collection of First Fleet journals in the world; of the fifteen journals known to survive, ten are held in the State Library's collections.

- Shakespeare Folios. The Library holds a copy of the extremely rare 1623 "First Folio" as well as copies of the "Second", "Third" and "Fourth" folios.

- World War One Collection. The Library holds a rich and significant collection of personal diaries and letters written by those who served in the First World War.

- Indigenous Languages Collection. These records are vocabularies and other language material from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and date from 1788 to the 1930s.

- George Morrison Collection. A comprehensive collection of the personal papers of 'Morrison of Peking' that documents a volatile time in world history and is of international significance.

- Australian Antarctic Expedition (1911-1914) photographs, notes, and reports. Includes over 2000 photographic negatives taken on the expedition.

- Frank Hurley's Antarctic colour plates of Shackleton's Endurance as well as his colour Paget plates from World War One.

- The Social Media Archive is the Library's Digital Collecting Strategy partnership with CSIRO Data 61 to collect and archive publicly-available social media.

- Sir William Dixson numismatic collection of over 7800 coins, notes and tokens.

- Two of three surviving copies of the *New South Wales General Standing Orders*, the first book published in Australia.
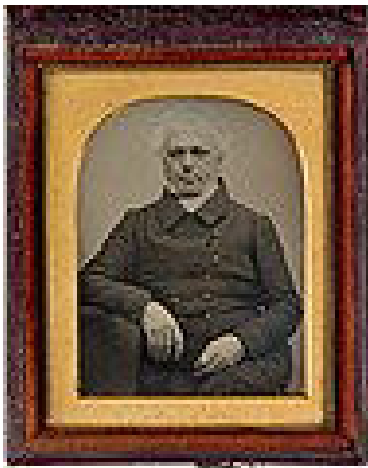
DR WILLIAM BLAND
OLDEST SURVIVING AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPH (1945)

HOLEY DOLLAR AND DUMP
FIRST DISTINCT NSW COINAGE
(1813)

The State Library of NSW offers a vast range of services these inclclude:
Ask a Librarian; Drug Information; Events; Exhibitions; Pod casts; Family History; Find Legal Answers; HCS; Indigenous Services; Learning Services; Multicultural Services; Public Library Services Tertiary and E Resources.

Legal deposit

"In Australia, legal deposit legislation exists at the national and state levels to support the provision of access to Australian research, heritage and culture. The *Copyright Act 1968* governs legal deposit requirements at a national level. In New South Wales, legal deposit is required under the New South Wales Copyright Act 1879–1952, ss 5–7.The State Library of New South Wales, along with New South Wales Parliamentary Library and *University of Sydney Library* are entitled to "receive a copy of every book first published in New South Wales within two months of publication. 'Book' is defined in the Act as any book, newspaper, pamphlet, leaflet, music, map, chart or plan separately published and 'bound', sewed or stitched together'.

As a member library of *National and State Libraries Australia*, the organisation collaborated on the creation of the *National edeposit* (NED) system, which enables publishers from all over Australia to upload electronic publications as per the 2016 amendment to the Copyright Act 1968 and other regional legislation, and makes these publications publicly accessible online (depending on access conditions) from anywhere."

MUSEUM REPORT

With the impending centenary of the Bellbird Mine Disaster, The Coalfields Local History Association has decided to take the lead in organsing an event to celebrate this important historical event in our local history. The towns in the South Maitland Coalfields area came into being as a result of the establishment of the different coal mines in the area. The Bellbird Mine Disaster was the worst mining disaster in the Northern District and was the catalyst for the introduction of the Mines Rescue Act. Twenty One miners lost their lives, and their families were devastated on that fateful day of 1 September 1923.

The Sub Committee has been working very hard over the past three months and have developed a program of events. People, Dignitaries and Politicians have been approached for their participation and all have shown interest in being a part of the celebration. The Retired Mineworkers Associations (Local, District and State) have been exceptionally supportive. Coal Services have come on board with assistance with Media coverage and assistance with other tasks The CEM Union has also come on board and have offered financial and other help to make this a significant and successful event.

With Anzac Day looming the Lost Diggers team have again been working hard at the preparations for what has become an annual event, **THE FIELD OF HONOUR** and spectacular river of poppies.

Every year uncovers more service personnel buried in Kurri Kurri cemetery, Lawn cemetery and Columbariums who deserve and are given a flag to commemorate their services. The Field of Honour is a joint project between Towns with Hearts and Coalfields Local History Association. The river of poppies at Rotary Park is always a great attraction and many hours of knitting and crocheting have gone into providing over 3000 poppies for this display. Many accolades to the hard working team which makes this event such a success every year.

Several improvements have been made throughout the museum, with picture rails being installed and new map draws being purchased. The map draws will now protect our valuable maps from damage. A defibrillator has been purchased and placed in the museum. All these projects have been made possible with grants.

THE COALFIELDS LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION IN CONJUNCTION WITH COAL SERVICES AND THE CEM UNIION ARE PLANNING A COMMEMORATION FOR THE CENTENARY OF THE BELLBIRD MINE DISASTER

MEETING TIMES

General meetings will be held at Abermain Bowling Club
Corner Armidale & Goulburn Streets Abermain at 3.00 pm on the third Tuesday of every second month

Tuesday 18 April		3.00 pm Abermain Bowling Club
Tuesday 20 June		3.00 pm Abermain Bowling club
Tuesday 15 August		3.00 pm Abermain Bowling Club
Tuesday 17 October	**AGM**	3.00 pm Abermain bowling Club

MUSEUM OPENING TIMES

The Museum is open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays 10.00am to 2.00pm.
Other times by appointment.

MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW OVER DUE PAYABLE BEFORE 31 MARCH 2023 TO STAY FINANCIAL

A GOLD COIN DONATION IS APPRECIATED

The Museum is located in the Abermain School of Arts Building 209 Cessnock Road Aberrmain.
Parking available at rear of building

Association's Area Interest
The specified district of the Coalfields Local History Association Inc's area of interest is all that land situated in the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA), primarily, as well as the Hunter Valley in general

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