

## **SPECIAL LIBRARIES – DEMONSTRATING OUR VALUE THE MCC LIBRARY: A VALUED RESOURCE FOR THE NATIONAL SPORTS MUSEUM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

During the Northern Side redevelopment of the Melbourne Cricket Ground from 2003 to 2008 the staff and volunteers of the Melbourne Cricket Club Library played an integral part of the design and development of the Melbourne Cricket Club Museum and the National Sports Museum (NSM), adding value to the projects through the collection items, as well as the accumulated corporate and expert knowledge.

The MCC Library, established in 1873, has developed Australia's leading specialised sports history collection. Staffed by professionally trained librarians, complemented by 20 volunteers, the library team contains some of Australia's leading sports historians.

Based at the MCG, with the initial installations funded by the Australian Government (AUS\$25million), the National Sports Museum opened on March 12, 2008. The NSM contains six separate exhibitions, an interactive area, temporary exhibition space and a direct connection to the (AUS\$3million) MCC Museum on non-event days.

Nine of the MCC Library staff and volunteers were seconded onto the various exhibition committees for the National Sports Museum, using their expertise to assist in selecting themes and stories or supplying content and artefacts, text and label writing for the NSM designers and exhibition team. Indeed the MCC Library proved to be a vital readymade resource for the NSM project in both human and collection terms. The NSM was able to tap into both the collection and the personal accumulated knowledge and expertise of those involved with the library. The inside knowledge combined with the treasures provided by the library proved invaluable to streamlining the NSM project and demonstrates the value of the MCC Library collection and team to the organisation as a whole and the wider community.

In the words of the NSM Exhibition Producer, "We would not have been able to have accomplished this project without the knowledge and assistance of the Library team and their collection".

## **1. MCC LIBRARY**

The Melbourne Cricket Club heritage collections date from 1873, when the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) established its library collection. It has operated continuously since that date, with a presence in each of the four Members' Pavilions.

### **1.1. Mission**

The MCC Library's mission is to act as a major national and international repository for information on sport and sports history. While primarily a library for MCC members, it has a public responsibility to sustain and expand equitable access to its resources to a wide range of users.

### **1.2. Collection**

The MCC library collection has been described as one of the best sport-related collections in the world. The major collection is on cricket, although there are healthy representations for Australian Rules football, tennis, the Olympic Games, golf and athletics. The Library collects on sports played by the Melbourne Cricket Club, at the Melbourne Cricket Ground or covered by the components of the National Sports Museum (NSM). Over 100 sports are represented. The main emphasis of the collection is historical, biographical and statistical. The National Sports Information Centre at the Australian Institute of Sport covers technique, training and sports medicine and we seek to not duplicate holdings with each other. There is a large collection of rare books, some dating from the 1600s. Some are in mint condition, and others are well read but are annotated by famous or prominent previous owners.

In this time the collection has grown to over 125000 items including:

- Monographs
- Periodicals
- Illustrative newspapers
- Menus, programs and ephemera
- Microfilm and fiches
- Videotapes, DVDs and CD-ROMs.

The MCC Library is housed across 350m<sup>2</sup> on Level 3 of the Fourth MCC Pavilion at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) and has its own collection store of over 300m<sup>2</sup> at Basement 2 level. The MCC Library was relocated from the Third Members Pavilion which was demolished in 2003 to make way for the new Northern stands complex, completed in 2006 in time for the Melbourne Commonwealth Games. The collection moved into its new premises in mid-2006 and opened in late-September 2006.

### **1.3. Collection database**

The Library has used Inmagic/DB Textworks software for its collection management system since October 1990 when it established the catalogue database. We use our in-house Geary sports classification scheme, named after the first professional librarian, Catherine Geary. As well as the main library catalogue the Textworks software is used for the accessions register, the index catalogue, the photographic archive catalogue and the MCC Sporting Sections achievement register.

The operations of the Library are funded by the MCC Foundation; a trust administered by the MCC committee, to protect the club library and museum collections against dispersal should anything happen to the Melbourne Cricket Club.

#### **1.4. Service Provision**

The MCC Library provides a collection of material for a range of users. Clients include MCC members, staff of the MCC, academics, journalists, historians, students, tour groups and members of the MCG community (including organisations situated at the MCG, tenants of the MCG or working with the MCC). As a reference library it does not loan its holdings. The Library is open to Members, their guests and the media on all MCG match days. It is also open on weekdays from 10am to 4pm, when the general public is able to visit by appointment. It operates as both a service for members of the Melbourne Cricket Club and a resource for historians and researchers.

During the past year the Library received over 20,000 match day visitors and undertook over 3500 reference requests. When the library is open, every MCG Tour visits the library foyer and looks at the rare book display as part of their MCG experience. Just under 150,000 non-match day visitors attended the NSM or took an MCG Tour in our financial year running April 2009 to March 2010, with roughly 110,000 visiting the library.

The Library also plays a crucial role in the development and preservation of the MCG Heritage collections (consisting of the MCC Archives, MCC Library, MCC Museum, Australian Gallery of Sport & Olympic Museum and the National Sports Museum) as well as being responsible for providing research and reference services. The library has its own publishing and exhibition programs which are linked to its role in providing content for the heritage cases and displays throughout the Members Pavilion.

#### **1.5. Staff and volunteers**

The MCC Library has the following staff:

- MCC Librarian
- MCC Assistant Librarian
- Assistant Librarian [Cataloguing Team Leader]
- Assistant Librarian (Cataloguing) 1 full time with .5 position vacant)
- Library Technician (.5 position vacant)
- Research Officer (.8)
- Administrative Officer (.2)
- MCC Library Assistants [Match day casuals] (4)

The MCC Archives collection, with records dating back to the 1840s, was established in April 2009, and is now located in the Library Store. An Archivist has been appointed for two years to organise the collection and arrange for the cataloguing and significance assessment of the material. It was transferred so that the Library staff could mentor the archivist and assist with initial care of the collection.

In addition to the paid staff, there are currently 20 Library Volunteers, mostly members of the Melbourne Cricket Club and each with a specialist sporting or bibliographic interest. Volunteers have

been an integral part of the MCC since the inception of the library in 1873. Indeed honorary staff and researchers managed the MCC Library until 1988. As a professional organization the library would not be able to undertake its day-to-day operations and research or publications programs without the assistance of the volunteers. The fruits of their work – which range from original research on behalf of the Club through to assisting with the general upkeep of the library - enhance the value and prestige of the collection and maintain its reputation as a leading research institution.

Among the volunteers are some of Australia's leading sports historians, including multiple winners of the Australian Cricket Book of the Year and International Cricket Statistician and Historian of the Year and Australian Sports History Book of the Year awards. Some of their works are published under the library imprint, either in-house or with commercial publishing houses. The relationship provides mutual benefits for both the MCC and the volunteers, as the volunteers are able to access our collection and the Club is able to access the extensive personal knowledge, files, notes and collections that have been built up by the volunteers over decades of research.

## **1.6. Support for the Museum**

From 2003 to 2007 the Library played a pivotal role in the development of content and research for text panels and labels for the new Melbourne Cricket Club Museum (opened in November 2006) and the new National Sports Museum (opened in March 2008). In May 2003 the MCC Library closed its public operation and relocated offsite for the Northern redevelopment. In the following five years three library staff and six of the research volunteers were coopted onto the design projects for the MCC Museum and MCG City (which developed into the NSM). Initially the MCC Librarian and three volunteers were called upon to act as researchers for thematic and content design for the MCC Museum (which was to be seen as a model). The volunteers had all been recognised nationally or internationally for their work as sports historians and statisticians. Alongside the Librarian's expertise in cricket and art history, the group proved an invaluable resource. Indeed it was soon apparent they were far more knowledgeable than the external historical consultants hired by the club, who were soon deferring to them or tapping into the library collection to supplement gaps in the museum's holdings.

With their longevity of service, the Library staff and volunteers had acquired a collection knowledge that was superior to that of the new curatorial staff in the museums and complemented the skills of the Exhibitions Production team. They were able to inform their colleagues of items that would be most appropriate for the different areas of display. Once design was signed off, the Library team moved on to display text and object labels. Formal design and research meetings were held at least once a week, with daily contact between the Library and Exhibition Production teams. All proceeded well up to the official opening of the Club's museum in November 2006, in readiness for the 2006/07 England cricket tour and Marylebone Cricket Club's travelling Ashes exhibition (which was hosted at the MCC Museum in January 2007, the only non-state museum host during the national tour).

When the funding for the opening exhibitions at the National Sports Museum was secured from the Australian Government, the success of MCC Museum research and design model led the Exhibitions Producer and her team to second more staff and volunteers. Library representatives were attached to each of the NSM's six inaugural displays, and work proceeded upon lines similar to the initial exhibition. The diversity of research backgrounds and expertise of the staff and volunteers proved a good fit, enabling Olympians to work on the Olympic Museum, football historians to assist with the AFL

display and other multi sport researchers to work on Sport Australia Hall of Fame, with the MCC Museum team now working on the *Back Yard to Baggy Green* and *MCG home of Australian sport* exhibitions. At the peak period of the project the Librarian was spending close to 70% of his time on the Museum, while his assistant and the library research officer each spend over 50%.

In some ways the MCC Library subsidized the NSM project for the Club and the Australian people. The Club committee came to see the role and contribution of the library staff as one way to assist and minimize cost to the public purse. This reinforced the Club's historic role as a private club with public responsibilities and great pride was taken in the successful integration of the Club's Library resources into the NSM. Overall the MCC heritage department came to value the MCC Library as an in-house centre of excellence, to be called upon to offer assistance, advice and expertise.

With the NSM now open for over two years, further developments are underway and the Library continues to play a support role for the cultural heritage collections of the MCG and the two museums.

### **1.7. Embracing new technology**

Now that the Library has established itself in its new premises and the two new museums have opened and commenced operations, a review of library operations was recently undertaken with the following objectives in mind:

- the MCC Library to continue to be one of the world's finest sporting libraries; and
- the MCC Library to explore new ways of operating using Web 2.0 and Library 2.0 technology.

The Library has been very good at providing traditional library services; however we need to respond to the evolution of modernized forms of library service that reflects a transition within the library world in the way that services are delivered to users.

## **2. APPENDIX 1 - MCC MUSEUM**

The Melbourne Cricket Club museum – a magnificent, world-class facility that showcases the rich history of the club and the ground it manages – was officially opened in November, 2006. Located on Level B1 of the Members Pavilion, the 400-square metre MCC Museum has more than 1500 artefacts on display.

The first MCC Museum was established in 1969 and it was an integral destination on the MCG Tours until the old Pavilion came down in 2003. The new facility takes MCG heritage activities to a new level. The mix of artefacts, paintings, rare porcelain and items of "cricketana" is enchanting, and you don't need to be a sports buff to enjoy the experience. MCC Members have access to the museum on match-days for themselves and their guests. On non-match days the MCC Museum is offered as a valued added experience for visitors to the NSM, as it is directly linked by double doors to the Baggy Green Room of the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame.

The design and construction of the new MCC Museum spanned more than three years from 2003 until opening day on November 15, 2006, the 168<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Club in 1838.

The Museum's principal objective is to tell the story of the Club – how and why it was founded and by whom, which characters and events helped shape its destiny and the role the MCC has played in the development of sport locally, nationally and internationally, and in society generally.

Our museum design team, especially the staff and volunteers from the MCC Library, generated countless thousands of words to place people and artefacts in perspective throughout the chronological display that run along the edge of the space. In combination, this body of text covers the evolution of the MCC simply and effectively and it serves as an interesting reference point for all. The chronological exhibition features countless fascinating artefacts ranging from MCC secretary Major Ben Wardill's military helmet holder (c.1900) to the US Marines' flag that flew on Guadalcanal as the servicemen valiantly held the Japanese before repairing to the MCG for rest and recreation in 1943.

The centrepiece of the Museum is the story of the mythical Ashes, where the club's outstanding collection of related memorabilia includes the famous Blackham Ball and an exquisite silver ashes "urn" from manager Frank Laver's successful Australian tour of England in 1909.

### **3. APPENDIX 2 - NATIONAL SPORTS MUSEUM**

The Melbourne Cricket Ground is one of Victoria's leading tourist attractions and a "must see" destination for sportslovers throughout the world. Widely recognised as the home of Australian sport, the MCG has outstanding heritage value to Australia and in December, 2005 was included in the National Heritage List so that these values may be protected for generations to come.

In March 2008, the MCG added a new dimension to its significance with the opening of the National Sports Museum (NSM), Australia's only truly dedicated multi-sports museum. The NSM celebrates the contribution that sport has made within the development of our uniquely Australian culture. The achievements of Australian sportsmen and women at all levels are showcased within interactive exhibitions including sports memorabilia. Their stories and imagery represent all sports played within Australia. The National Sports Museum is a national focal point for achievements and values in sport, in particular the notion that the pursuit of excellence at all levels is consistent with a commitment to fair play - a philosophy that has contributed to the evolution of our beliefs and culture.

#### **3.1. Background Information**

- A baggy green cap and batting pads worn by Don Bradman...
- Olive branches and first place medals awarded to Edwin Flack, Australia's first ever Olympic winner, in Athens in 1896, along with 24 other gold medals among 48 Olympic medals...
- Hand-written notes outlining the rules of the game by Australian football founders Wills, Hammersley, Smith and Thompson in 1859...
- The first ever Brownlow Medal awarded to Edward "Carji" Greeves in 1924...
- Ian Thorpe's full body swimsuit...
- Catherine Freeman's infamous swift suit, worn during the Sydney Olympics in 2000.



All are icons representing some of the greatest moments in Australia's sporting history. Each has found a home in the National Sports Museum at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Located on two levels of the Olympic Stand, the National Sports Museum is home to more than 3500 items from Australia's rich sporting history. More than just a museum – the National Sports Museum seeks to capture the spirit of Australian sporting life – and relive the moments that have shaped Australia's rich sporting traditions. From the Malvern Star bicycle that Hubert Opperman rode in his record-breaking 24-hour marathon in 1940, to the Repco BT19 racing car Jack Brabham designed, built and drove to victory in 1966 and guernseys worn by Australian Football heroes such as Alex Jesaulenko and James Hird, the National Sports Museum houses Australia's most comprehensive sporting collection and celebrates the important place sport holds in Australian life.

### 3.2. Highlights of the National Sports Museum include:

- **Game On!** – an extensive interactive area offering the visitors the chance to test their own sporting skills.
- **Two 3D theatrettes** featuring Essendon champion James Hird and cricket great Shane Warne discussing the highs, lows, setbacks and triumphs of their sporting lives. Using the latest in simulated hologram technology, audiences feel they are actually in the room with these sporting greats.
- **Eight permanent exhibitions** offer visitors an insight into the greatest moments in Australian sport:

#### 3.2.1. Faster, Higher, Stronger

From the ancient games to the present day, *Faster, Higher, Stronger* traces Australia's participation in the Olympic Games. Highlights include an Olympic timeline with each Olympic relay torch from Berlin in 1936 to Athens in 2004, excluding Helsinki in 1952 and medals and artefacts from past and present Olympians including Petria Thomas, Catherine Freeman and Edwin Flack – Australia's first Olympic winner.



#### 3.2.2. Backyard to Baggy Green

Including the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame and the fabulous Baggy Green Room, showcasing a collection of Baggy Green caps worn by Australian Test cricketers, *Backyard to Baggy Green* traces the evolution of equipment used in cricket, its rules and undeniable spirit. Included within the exhibition are over 20 baggy green caps, the Cricket World Cup trophy, one of Shane Warne's trademark white floppy hats and Betty Wilson's personal collection of items profiling her celebrated career.



#### 3.2.3. Spirit of Sport

*Spirit of Sport* introduces athletes inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame since 1985 and honours the 27 who have achieved Australian sport's most prestigious honour, Sport Australia Hall of Fame Legend Status. The exhibition showcases the careers of



Legends including Shane Gould, Sir Donald Bradman, Scobie Breasley, Greg Norman and Sir Jack Brabham (right) amongst others.

### 3.2.4. Australia's Game

*Australia's Game* traces the history of the game of Australian Football and includes a selection of the greatest VFL/AFL Grand Final moments; a wealth of material collected from the greats of this uniquely Australian game. View the hand-written notes outlining the rules of the game by the founders of Australian football, in 1859; the 1933 Brownlow medal awarded to Wilfred 'Chicken' Smallhorn and trace the evolution of player from past to present day.



### 3.2.5. Australian Football Hall of Fame

The *Australian Football Hall of Fame* was established by the Australian Football League in 1996 to recognise those who made a significant contribution to the game since its inception in 1858. Footy fans can pay homage to these greats at the recently launched Australian Football Hall of Fame exhibition, which features an outstanding array of material from the Legends and Inductees of the Australian Football Hall of Fame. Included is the guernsey worn by Darrel Baldock on the day he captained St Kilda to their 1966 premiership, a certificate presented to Haydn Bunton Snr. in 1931 recognising the first of his three Brownlow medals, John Coleman's Essendon training bag and guernseys worn by Ron Barassi (right) and many other greats.



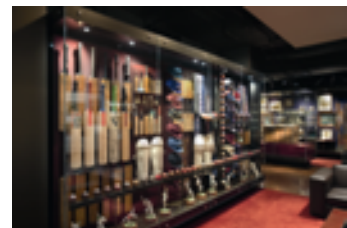
### 3.2.6. The People's Ground

*The People's Ground* presents a history of Australia's spiritual home of sport – the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The exhibition highlights the history of the MCG, its World Heritage Listing status, the important role it has played in the history of cricket, the 1956 Olympic Games, Australian Football and as a home for thousands of Australian and United States servicemen during World War II.



### 3.2.7. Melbourne Cricket Club Museum

Located on Level B1 of the Members Pavilion, the 400-square metre *Melbourne Cricket Club Museum* has more than 1500 artefacts on display, showcasing the rich history of the club and the ground it manages.



### 3.2.8. Multi sports display

The National Sports Museum also displays collections on a range of other sports including basketball, boxing, cycling, golf, hockey, tennis, soccer, netball, Paralympic Games, rugby union and rugby league.

A visit to the National Sports Museum offers the opportunity to revisit more than 150 years of sporting achievements and participation – and the opportunity to reflect on what makes Australia such a great sporting country.