

HORDERN HOUSE

RARE BOOKS • MANUSCRIPTS • PAINTINGS • PRINTS

THE COLLECTION OF
ROBERT EDWARDS AO



INTRODUCTION

Over my life as an antiquarian bookseller one of the great pleasures has been meeting charming and wise people. The shared interest in historically important books, paintings and manuscripts has always helped to form a link that bridges countries and cultures and makes conversations flow easily. Such exchanges have been deeply enriching for me and none more so than the long friendship I have enjoyed with Bob Edwards.

Bob's gentle demeanour veils a strong character; he is an intelligent collector and an insightful man. Over the decades we have been friends, our shared bookshop cups of tea have always been accompanied by wide-ranging and fascinating discussions – anthropology, Aboriginal art, museum exhibitions, development of new museums and galleries, books, politics and our families – nothing has been too big or too small for us to discuss. Bob has an open mind and a generous spirit and I have been fortunate to see him at times when he has been taking small breaks from his hectic work life.

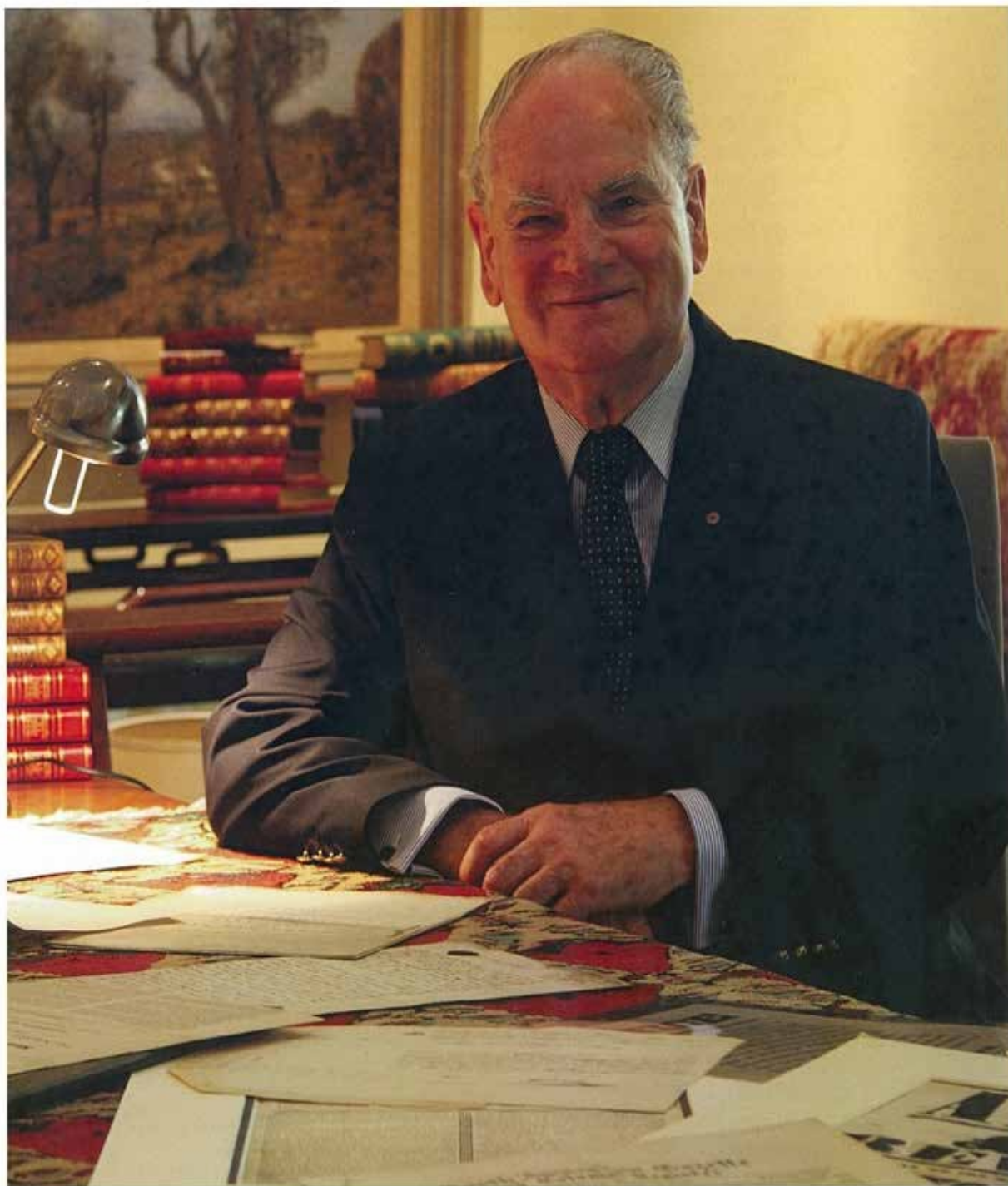
Like all good collectors Bob considered his library central to his own development, in his case as a public figure in the Australian fine arts world. His books have been his road maps: not only did they chart historical events, but they showed him a way forward on his personal journey. For Hordern House now to have the honour of offering his fine antiquarian collection to a wide audience brings me great pleasure. We hope this catalogue, and the catalogues to follow, will help to ensure that Bob's lifetime passion for rare books is justly celebrated.

This catalogue describes some 165 items from the Edwards library. We will be offering more material from the collection over the next couple of years. Some other items have made an appearance in recent Hordern House acquisitions lists, including *Sydney Printers before 1860*, which are available online.

Our website – www.hordern.com – includes a section devoted to the library in which we will draw attention to these books and the catalogues they appear in as they pass through our hands. Some books will be catalogued directly online.

Many readers of this catalogue will already be familiar with the extraordinary part that Robert Edwards has played in Australia's wider cultural life. A recent tribute to him at the National Museum of Australia took the form of a full day's symposium. As the Museum noted, "At this tribute, friends, colleagues, protégés and admirers celebrate Bob's contribution over more than seven decades of public life". I was honoured to be present for this event at which the speakers included the directors of both the British Museum and the National Museum of Australia, along with many other notable figures from the world of museums and galleries. His peers and colleagues (the proceedings are available online at <http://www.nma.gov.au/audio/series/a-tribute-to-bob-edwards>) told the wonderful story of his career in a moving and affectionate manner.

Anne McCormick
Hordern House



AN AUSTRALIAN JOURNEY

Robert Edwards reminisces about the fulfillment of life as a book collector during a long public career

One of the delights of my life as a youngster was to be taken to visit my Grandfather who was secretary of the Adelaide Fruit and Produce Exchange in the east end of the city. His office was in the midst of the hurley burley of the market where, upon the sounding of a siren at 7 am, great loads of fresh produce would change hands from growers to shopkeepers. On one of these visits I happened upon the Old Curiosity Shop, which was quite close to the market, in lower Rundle Street. It was a young boy's paradise, overflowing with an extraordinary array of intriguing objects beckoning for attention. Aboriginal and Pacific Islander artefacts covered the walls and hung from the ceiling. After several visits my attention focused on a small set of shelves holding a collection of old books on Australian history. My interest in Australiana had been aroused.

Over the years I became a regular visitor to the Old Curiosity Shop and was allowed to browse to my heart's content. I was always drawn to the books. My favourite was the two-volume journal of Capt. Charles Sturt telling the story of his epic voyage of discovery down the mighty River Murray in a whaleboat in 1829-1830. Eventually, over a series of visits, I managed to read the entire account: I was fascinated by Sturt's narrative of his long inland voyage in the heat of summer, and his terrible disappointment on arrival on the southern coast to find that there was no ship waiting to take his small party of intrepid travellers back home to Sydney as had been promised. With supplies running short and under attack by the local Aborigines, Sturt had no alternative but to retrace his steps back up the river for several thousand kilometres under the most gruelling conditions.

Having read the book, I was determined to own it. The Sturt Journal remained on the shelves in the Old Curiosity Shop until I had managed to save up five guineas and was able to rescue the much loved volumes. It was a proud day and the beginning of a large and interesting library.

The youthful admiration I held for Sturt and his adventures would much later lead to my involvement in the initiative to acquire for the public the home he built in 1840 at the Reed Beds west of Adelaide – where my own family had also originally settled. Named 'The Grange' it became a house museum dedicated to the memory of Charles Sturt and his contribution to Australian exploration and the founding of the British Province of South Australia. The Sturt family in England generously donated important items to the Governing Trust including a number of books from his library.

Interest in Sturt influenced my early book collecting and I

gave high priority to works relating to his life and times. I was particularly pleased to find the copies of his two classic exploration accounts (*Two Expeditions into the Interior*, 1834 and *Narrative of an Expedition into Central Australia*, 1849) which his widow inscribed and presented to one his closest friends [136 & 138].

In my teens I worked on the family orchard and vineyards at Marion in South Australia. A neighbour and family friend, Gordon Ragless, noticed my interest in history and encouraged me to accompany him to regular meetings of the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Society of South Australia. This brought me into contact with a whole generation of well-respected historians, anthropologists, geologists (including Sir Douglas Mawson), geographers and learned scholars in many professions.

Prominent among the local historians who befriended me was Keith Travers Borrow, a young non-practicing lawyer with an insatiable interest in the history of South Australia. He and his father had spent many years researching the initiatives taken to found a colony on the south coast of Australia on the principles of a new system of colonisation enunciated by Edward Gibbon Wakefield and a group of influential followers and investors.

Keith Borrow's great grandfather, Boyle Travers Finniss, was an assistant surveyor to Colonel William Light and had played a key role in laying out the city of Adelaide. He later became the first Premier of South Australia. As my own family had supported the guiding principles of the Wakefield system my interest was stimulated in the direction of the state's foundation and I began to give a high priority to my quest for books and documents about the founding and settlement of South Australia.

A key addition to my library at this time was the 1839 edition of Colonel William Light's detailed plan *The District of Adelaide, South Australia; as Divided into Country Sections* published by John Arrowsmith [77]. This document delineates the original land holders in South Australia.

Keith Borrow and I became joint secretaries of the Historical Section of the RGS in 1956 and arranged a program of monthly meetings over a number of years. We were also active members of the Pioneers' Association, the John McDouall Stuart Society and Charles Sturt Memorial Museum Trust.

I read all that I could find about Edward Gibbon Wakefield and his innovative colonisation scheme, and followed his influence from London to Canada with Lord Durham, and then to South Australia and New Zealand where he

eventually settled. He died in Wellington in 1862. My quest for books by Wakefield intensified and extended world-wide. As a consequence this section of my library eventually contained many fine editions of his published works including several proof copies [122, 125, 151-2]. The highlight was the purchase of the original manuscript warrant for the arrest of Wakefield (along with his brother) for the audacious abduction of the heiress Ellen Turner in 1826 [153]. It was months in reaching my library as its export had to be negotiated in the United Kingdom.

As my interest in books developed I became an avid reader and my knowledge of Australian history continually expanded. Even more importantly I grew to recognise the importance of finding fine copies of first editions and consequently placed increasing emphasis on acquiring handsome volumes which could be valued both for their content and for their intrinsic worth.

My youthful visits to the east end of Adelaide were extended to take in the Beck Book Company Limited in nearby Pulteney Street, where Harry Muir encouraged my youthful enthusiasm and gave me good advice. The next stop was George Holman's Antiques in Pirie Street where rare books often made an appearance among the wealth of riches on offer. Then on to Mary Martin Book Shop in Gawler Place to purchase the most recent releases. Later I would venture out to Walkerville and consult with James Dally who could be relied upon to have several desirable volumes on offer.

At that time there were a number of important private libraries in South Australia passed down in pioneer families. They were of inestimable historical value and contained a treasure trove of wonderful books and documents. Foremost among them were the Glover, Dutton and Bonython collections. When these families decided to dispose of their libraries it created keen national competition on the floor of the local family auction house of Theodore Bruce founded in 1878 and then located in Pulteney Street.

These sales highlighted the richness of the collections held by the founding families of the State and brought a wealth of material on to the market. It was frustrating to be confronted with the opportunity to choose from such a wealth of highly desirable books while having only a slender budget. Being the under-bidder for almost every item on a wish list of intended purchases is always a disappointing experience.

On succeeding Norman B Tindale as Curator of Anthropology at the South Australian Museum in 1965 I had my first chance to venture forth into remote regions in the vastness of Central Australia and the rugged escarpments of Arnhem Land on a quest for ancient rock art sites. I was fortunate on one of these expeditions to gain a glimpse of earlier times as I had to escort Michael Terry, one of the last of the early travellers in the outback, on a visit back to a remote rock art site he had chanced upon in the 1920s.

This and later journeys of many weeks duration shadowed the journeys of a number of explorers and those who sought to understand and record the beliefs and ways of Aboriginal Australians who had lived in this country for countless millennia.

The explorers whose tracks I followed included Stuart, Warburton, Giles, Gosse, Tietkens, Elder, and Horn. I also visited the lands of the Aboriginal Elders associated with Spencer, Gillen, Strehlow, Tindale, Thompson, Mountford, and many others.

These were exciting and very demanding years made more meaningful through the descriptive accounts in the journals and records of those who had traversed this timeless land in drought and flood to explore, gain an understanding of its indigenous people and later settle and establish the cattle, mining and tourist industries.

During these years I sought out the original journals of the explorers and read them eagerly between trips to the outback. This gave me special insights into the vast regions I traversed. As there are no borders to Australian exploration this section of my library continued to expand as I carefully assembled a series of fine volumes covering the unveiling of the continent.

Contact in my early youth with Aboriginals living on the lower reaches of the River Murray and its associated lakes had also aroused my interest in their origins and way of life. I became deeply committed to learning more about these forgotten people living on the fringe of society. This led me on a lifelong quest for further knowledge and understanding. One of the outcomes was an extensive working library including many rare editions tracing the origins of contacts between the original Australians and European settlers. The journals of those who came later were added progressively to the collection as opportunities arose.

My initial focus was on vocabularies as the newcomers from Europe sought to communicate with the numerous groups occupying the entire country. Each had its own language and dialects making it a complex task to reach any form of common understanding. Adelaide was a rich source of these precious little books and the interesting editions that reached my shelves included some great rarities. Some of these were among the working materials donated to the National Museum of Australia, while others remained in my library like those by Moore (1842) [94] and Ridley (1866) [105].

However I had to wait over 40 years before I located a copy of the extremely rare first Aboriginal vocabulary. Compiled by the Reverend Lancelot Edward Threlkeld and published in a small edition in Sydney in 1827, it was lengthily titled *Specimens of a Dialect of the Aborigines of New South Wales being the First Attempt to Form their Speech into a Written Language*. I was doubly fortunate: the copy I found was a very fine example of this great rarity, bound in parchment wrappers to protect it when in use in the field around the

time of publication [143]. These parchments were discarded printed forms for land registration in New South Wales. One has the imprint of Stephens and Stokes, and the other has been filled out for land in the County of Argyle at Goulburn Plains.

Sometimes I acquired books that needed care and attention, and I soon discovered that I would need the services of a skilled binder. I had been told that the London firm Sangorski and Sutcliffe, or "S and S" as many knew them, were the best bookbinders in the business. We corresponded by mail for many years until I had the opportunity to make regular trips to London.

Always the highest priority on my arrival in London was a visit to Poland Street off Oxford Street to meet with Stanley Bray who had run the firm since 1936. We always met in the workshop and I would be escorted on a grand tour to watch as highly skilled craftsmen worked patiently on the restoration of the rarest books from the great libraries and wealthy collectors scattered across the globe. I was able to see at first hand every facet of the art of book binding from dismantling fragile centuries old volumes through to cleaning, stitching, re-binding, trimming and pressing. Finally the aptly modest but very distinctive decoration and new titles were added. Skills passed down over countless centuries were still being applied in accordance with the best traditions of this fine craft.

Stanley always made me welcome and shared his great pride in the excellence of Sangorski and Sutcliffe fine bindings. He would often arrange for me to see my own books being restored and invite me to choose the leathers for my next bindings from their wide ranging stock of high quality skins from sources stretching across the world. In a small way I gained the impression my limited orders were contributing to the continuation of the book binders' art – an art that was already feeling the pressures of rising costs. And once I was at home again, to open a parcel of books beautifully restored by S and S to perfection in leather bindings with titles in gold leaf could evoke feelings of great pleasure and satisfaction.

My visits frequently ended up at a nearby favourite restaurant where Stanley and I would enjoy a flounder and apple cider and talk about bookbinding.

In the afternoon I would visit Bernard Quaritch Ltd, then in Lower John Street in Golden Square, to meet with my friend Felicity Browne. While I was there the company's owner, Milo Parmoor, would often invite me into his office for a chat. He was a captivating figure, a peer who had been a leading banker and was having a second career at the helm of the great booksellers. I would spend time too with the travel book specialists Derek McDonnell (who would appear again on the other side of the world) and his successor Anthony Payne. I was astounded at their knowledge of books and their skills at researching a wealth of rare material relating to the discovery and history of every region of the world.

I was shown the rarest volumes, mostly quite out of reach of my resources, and allowed to browse in the basement stacks and enjoy the wide diversity of material. Most of the books eligible for my library were far beyond the means of a father of four. However there were no constraints on the opportunities I was given to learn from those who had spent a life-time in the world of antiquarian books. It was always a pleasure to leave Quaritch with at least one rare book.

On one sunny London day in June 1982 I entered the familiar premises of Maggs Bros Ltd in Berkeley Square to be asked whether I had any interest in Edward John Eyre! Minutes later I was sorting through the residue of the explorer's deed box. There were letters, papers, books and the will of the first European who in 1841 journeyed the 850 miles across the Nullarbor Plain, mainly on foot, to Albany in Western Australia. His journal was another of those graphic accounts of the challenges faced by those who unravelled the secrets of the Australian continent.

Among the Eyre books and papers were a number of items relating to the slave uprising confronted by Eyre in 1864 when Governor of Jamaica. This led to a worldwide search to bring together a collection of material relating to this perplexing incident, including the relevant Hansard of the House of Commons dealing with the crisis arising from Eyre's actions to quell the uprising¹.

I departed Maggs having purchased the Eyre material – and a fine copy of Grant's *Voyage of Discovery to New South Wales* [56].

Edward John Eyre was another of the young Englishmen who had come to Australia at an early stage of settlement in search of adventure and a lucrative future. He made an extraordinary contribution and then sailed away to serve his Queen and country in other realms. His two-volume journal published in 1845 makes wonderful reading and includes one of the most interesting and informative accounts of the Aboriginal people of the River Murray, recorded by Eyre while he was Protector of Aborigines at Moorundie from 1841 to 1846. I acquired a fine copy of the Eyre Journal at the F.G. Coles Australiana Auction in Melbourne in 1965. At the time I was in Arnhem Land, camped at a remote rock art site, and had to send a message to ask Gaston Renard to bid on my behalf. [39]

Reg and Philip Remington at 18 Cecil Court, London had a remarkable skill in locating Australiana. They were the source of many rare items in fine condition including the Wakefield *Plan of a Company to be Established for the Purpose of Founding a Colony in Southern Australia, Purchasing Land therein, and Preparing the Land so Purchased for the Reception of Immigrants* (London, 1831) [122].

A call on Alan Biles-Liddell at Sotheran's of Sackville Street established in York in 1761 and London in 1815 was always a rewarding experience for a lover of books.

¹Most of Robert Edwards' Eyre material will appear in a later catalogue.

In 1975 I transferred from Canberra to Sydney to take up the position of Founding Director of the Aboriginal Arts Board with the Australian Council for the Arts (the forerunner of the Australia Council). I had been involved in its embryo Aboriginal arts program for a number of years and was now to hold a permanent position at the head office in North Sydney.

The move to Sydney opened up a new and important opportunity to extend my interest in books as I was able to assist in initiating a literature program to encourage Aboriginal Australians to write their own Dreamtime stories, recording aspects of their changing way of life and their rich heritage of art. Among the many books published was *An Aboriginal Children's History of Australia* as well as local histories and autobiographies of community leaders both in traditional and urban centres.

I became a regular visitor to the Mitchell Library in its monumental building on Macquarie Street, where it housed fabulous collections of diverse material on the founding and development of Australia. I was fascinated with its insightful exhibitions and my curiosity was aroused to learn more about the history of East Coast Australia and Tasmania.

I was quick to visit the local antiquarian booksellers known mainly through catalogues and correspondence. The main objective was to enhance my collection of First Fleet accounts and probe more deeply into the literature on the transportation system and its contrast to the Wakefield experiment of establishing a free settlement in South Australia.

In those days Angus and Robertson had an excellent range of Australiana. Ken Stewart in George Street, Alec Dickins in The Rocks and Berkelouw in King Street were among those who received regular visits. But it was the distinctive little book shop opened in Paddington by Timothy and Anne McCormick that drew my special attention. I recall leaving Regent Street after an early visit being the proud possessor of a beautifully leather bound copy of a coloured John White journal from the Library of a Bavarian nobleman [160]. My journey with the First Fleet had begun.

Access to book auctions in Sydney opened up further opportunities to make acquisitions at Christie's and Sotheby as they had strong affiliations with their London auction houses and were leaders in this field at that time. An early addition to my library was an almost perfect copy of James Atkinson's *An Account of the State of Agriculture and Grazing in New South Wales*, 1826. The original printed boards were in fine condition as indeed were the lovely plates [7]. This purchase at auction was one of those memorable occasions when I decided that such a rare book in excellent condition was worth as much to me as to any other prospective buyer! I do recall great difficulty in persuading my bank manager that an old book was a sound security for a large loan.

On moving to Melbourne in 1985 to take up the position of Founding Director of the Museum of Victoria following the

amalgamation of the former Natural History and Science Museums, my responsibilities included assisting with the care and maintenance of the majestic but much neglected historic Museum Library building on Swanston Street. Its magnificent reading room has now been restored to its original grandeur. This brought me into close contact with another of Australia's great libraries with its extraordinary collection enriched throughout the golden years of 'Marvellous Melbourne'. I also came under the spell of several of Australia's foremost collectors including Norman Wettenhall, Sir Thomas Ramsay and Rodney Davidson. I had just cause to admire the wonderful libraries they had created with an enthusiasm I could recognise as matching my own.

Among the pleasures of living in Melbourne was being close to the thriving local antiquarian book market, led at the time by such specialists as Kenneth Hince, Peter Arnold, Gaston Renard – whom I knew from his days at Southend in Croydon outside London – and many others who have contributed so much to the enhancement of public and private collections.

I returned to Sydney at the conclusion of my five-year contract with the Victorian Government and renewed an involvement with Art Exhibitions Australia in the management of international exhibitions. My public life of organizing the huge exhibitions of treasures from overseas museums and galleries, was in some contrast to my private passion for books. My library was consolidated in Sydney and I was able to live with my books and spend time reading and identifying gaps in areas of special interest. I also renewed close contact with friends who shared my love of books. I made special efforts to obtain catalogues regularly from abroad as this is the source of some of the rarest books and documents on Australian history.

In Sydney I was also able to renew my association with the Mitchell Library and its exhibitions program and continue to attend antiquarian book fairs to meet with booksellers from most states as well as other keen collectors.

Hordern House had been established in Victoria Street Potts Point by Anne McCormick and Derek McDonnell in 1985. It quickly gained a well-deserved reputation as the leading international specialist in Australiana as well as a fine publisher of excellent books. It became a Mecca for antiquarian book collectors.

Tim McCormick had opened his office in Queen Street Woollahra and continued to play a key role in sourcing rare books, maps and pictures and assisting in building fine libraries. Berkelouw had relocated from King Street to further develop a network of branches including premises in Paddington and Leichhardt while maintaining the head office at 'Bendooley' in Berrima.

As my main focus was now on the management of major international exhibitions, the time had come to place my substantial working library on Aboriginal heritage, social history and archaeology in an appropriate institution

wishing to expand its reference library. The collection was donated over a number of years under the cultural gifts program to the National Museum of Australia as this was the most recent of Australia's major museums. It opened on 11 March 2001 as part of the celebrations of the Centenary of Federation.

It was a time of feverish activity as identifying and negotiating the loan of major exhibitions for Australia is a complex task. My working life involved a heavy schedule of travel visiting galleries and museums throughout Australia as well as in many overseas countries. This had the advantage of enabling me to call on interstate colleagues including Dan Sprod at Astrolabe Booksellers in Salamanca Place Hobart, Robert Muir in Perth and Reads in Brisbane. I especially welcomed visits to Adelaide to confer with Michael Treloar, the expert in South Australian history, and to discuss our deep mutual interest in South Australian history and the dispersal of further family libraries in Adelaide.

Access to overseas travel made it possible to visit many fine libraries, collections and specialist bookshops. I was also able to enjoy many exhibitions of rare books, maps and charts, fine art bindings and limited art editions. Regular visits to The British Museum as well as the British Library were outstanding always with their extraordinary collections, research and regular exhibitions.

Involvement in the visual arts and antiquities from 1980 had resulted in an additional section to my library in a quest for knowledge on art history. I amassed a significant collection. This was the second part of my working library to be dispersed. This time it went to a number of state and regional galleries with whom I had a close association.

An inordinate amount of time is invested in bringing together an important library whereas often little consideration is given to its ultimate fate. Although I had managed to make the decision to devolve my less valuable working collections, I barely gave a thought to the question of the ultimate destination for my library of rare books. As the years passed the excitement and satisfaction of refining the collection never ceased, though finally I realised that I would ultimately have to come to terms with parting with this library gathered over a lifetime with care and enjoyment. It was a decision made with great reluctance. However life is not a series of easy choices and it is impossible to keep such a collection together. I decided to place the entire library on sale to allow a new generation of collectors to share my books and enjoy the same pleasure and satisfaction I had derived from building a significant library.

What is it that makes one person a collector and another not? On reflection I realise that I was probably fortunate enough to have inherited a collector gene from one of my forebears Abraham Hopkins Davis. He was a London publisher and bookseller and a man of the Enlightenment with an active interest in natural history and a member of the Entomological Club and publisher of its magazine in

the 1830s. In November 1837 at the age of 41 he set out with his family to start a new life in South Australia where he became actively engaged in the public life of the young Adelaide community, then barely 16 months from the arrival of the first settlers. In December 1838 A.H. Davis called a meeting at the courthouse where it was agreed to form the Natural History Society of South Australia with the Governor as Honorary President and 'A.H. Davis FLS, etc, etc' as President. This was the beginning of the South Australian Museum. As it happens, a century and more later I became curator of the Museum's Aboriginal heritage collections.

Throughout my life books have been an underlying source of knowledge, understanding and pleasure. As my career path took on new directions my library provided support, stimulus and confidence. As each change occurred my library followed and provided the background needed to make meaningful decisions. This ongoing interrelationship has enriched my life and provided the basis for success in all my endeavours.

To build a significant library you must possess an insatiable appetite for knowledge, have a streak of generosity, and most of all, as I have been so lucky to, you must have an understanding and supportive partner.

Robert Edwards
Sydney, 2012