

Welcome to the Living Museum's Newsletter for the second half of 2007. We apologise for the delay in getting out the Newsletter but events have been piling up on each other in an extremely busy second half of the year. With guest artists coming from overseas for the 'Stone Circle' project and having to find large pieces of bluestone to facilitate this very underfunded project. Hosting a major art exhibition about Opportunity Shops. Organising an extended tour of the prize winning exhibition, Pobblebonk. Working on upgrading the web site to complement a growing demand for education requests. Preparing a very special event, 'Meet the Neighbours', to draw in marginalised new arrivals into our local cultural world. And of course deal with the daily visits and requests that are part of the work of a museum.

We were sorry to see the departure of our part-time Operations Manager, Janine Hill who has found full-time employment elsewhere. The Operations Manager position will likely be filled in 2008 by Pasha Lukovic and Alarna Gray as two part-time job-share roles. Pasha has been working on the bookkeeping and accounts for a couple of months now and Alarna re-worked the Museum's Business Plan in August which received a good deal of positive feedback, so this team has been warming into the job for some time.

After searching for some time the Museum has acquired a new Marketing advisor, Trish Khoury, who is the Business Development and Partnership Manager for Melbourne Citymission. Trish who now heads the Marketing Sub-Committee. Wasting no time the new sub-committee has reviewed the Museum's market branding and has come up with a simpler clearer logo with a message to convey the Museum's purpose. See above.



Pasha Lukovic



Alarna Gray



Edgar working with a school group at Pipemakers Park.

VALE EDGAR

On a sadder note a former Aboriginal Cultural Officer for the Museum, Edgar Harris, died in August after a long struggle with cancer. Edgar died at home in Yarrabah, near Cairns in Queensland.

A special service was held in Melbourne for those of us who couldn't get to Queensland for the funeral there. Edgar will be dearly missed

VISITS AND PARTNERSHIPS

One significant thing about this year has been the number of visits and requests from other organizations for co-operative ventures. In July we worked with the Gathering Place supporting NAIDOC week in a number of ways as we usually do.

In the second half of the year we have hosted seminars by Parks Victoria and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. The AGM of the John Shaw Neilsen Society. We also hosted a Senior Citizens Festival for Maribyrnong City Council in the park and attended their Mental Health Week to give history talks. We even had a visit from the Royal Botanical Society of Victoria during which the Director, Peter Haffenden, discovered one of his old lecturers from his University days, Duncan Ironmonger.

Peter was also asked to attend a seminar on Community Museums which is part of an ongoing process by the State Government which is investigating the role of community museums in communities throughout Victoria.



Edgar Harris

THE STONE CIRCLE PROJECT

A very interesting project followed and email exchange with a German artist/sculptor Johannes Matthiessen. Johannes looks for partnership projects around the world to engage in a major stone work with indigenous groups which aim to forge a strong international cultural link between people.

The connection was made through a new Management Committee member, Gotthard Killian, who has recently come to Australia from Switzerland.

The Museum bought in Wurundjeri artist, Mandy Nicholson, and other members of the Wurundjeri clan to ensure the project was credible and true to its purpose.

A mixed group of people came from Victoria, NSW, Germany and America to meet the Wurundjeri and carve stones with symbols designed by the Wurundjeri and other symbols from their own heritage.

Several very large pieces of bluestone were donated by TTI Stone in Thomastown who were approached by a friend of the



'Parks Victoria Indigenous inservice seminar at Melbourne's Living Museum'

Museum, artist, David Waters which made this project possible. This was a classic example of a large project done on a very small budget.

After weeks of chipping these large newly carved stones were carted to a clear space in Pipemakers Park and placed in a circle. We held a ceremony launched by Wurundjeri elder, Vicki Nicholson and the stones were given an appropriate blessing.

A series of postcards about the project are available at the Museum.



Clockwise from left: The Stone Circle participants, stones carving in front of the blue-stone building, Aboriginal dancing at the launch, the project launch, a stone designed by Mandy Nicholson, City of Maribyrnong Mayor Michael Clarke launching the project.



TOURING

After a year long saga of getting a re-print done of our prize winning exhibition, 'Pobblebonk', the exhibition is re-printed and out touring. The Pobblebonk re-print started its tour at the Visitor Centre at Brimbank Park for a few weeks in October, then moved to Footscray Library in the City of Maribyrnong where it spent most of November receiving 1500 visitors per day. Then it attended the Brimbank Festival, attended by 30,000 people, in late November as the guest of the Iramoo Sustainability Centre, which has been working with the Living Museum on a number of projects. Now the exhibition will be visiting various Parks Victoria Venues over summer and major libraries in the western suburbs in the new year.



L-R: Pobblebonk at the Brimbank Festival, Maribyrnong Councillor Janet Rice launches the display at MREAM, then to Footscray Library.



THE WEB

As well as touring in its physical form 'Pobblebonk' has also been put on the Museum's web site where it can be an important resource for information on local animals and habitat. To find it simply go to the Museum's home page and click on the frog.

RIPE

Meanwhile work has been continuing all year by two pre-service teachers, Jenny Albanese and Gemma Trimboli, on an interactive web site project related to the exhibition, 'Pobblebonk'. This project has taken place under the RIPE project initiated by the School of Education at Victoria University.

The RIPE projects have been instrumental in developing structures and processes for the Museum to engage more effectively with local schools. And has been a most effective partnership project between the University and the Museum. This latest project has built on the curriculum notes developed last year during an earlier RIPE project.

The two young woman have adapted the information in the exhibition to develop an education tool to encourage students with games and question and answer quizzes about local animals in the local environment.

The site also includes downloadable lesson plans for teachers designed by Jenny and Gemma. Follow the links from the Museum home page.



The Pobblebonk website home page.



The VUT students Pobblebonk Interactive website home page.

EXHIBITIONS

Another successful collaboration has been the fabulous Op Shop Exhibition developed by two Victorian University lecturers, Enza Gandolfo and well known artist Sue Dodd. Enza has worked with the Museum before on a project with Helen Laffin some years ago.

Enza and Sue began a conversation about opportunity shops over a coffee somewhere and the conversation turned into a project. They approached the Museum to see if we were interested and after an exchange of enthusiastic emails the idea set sail. The installation encompassed both floors of the bluestone building and included a substantial catalogue, video installation, poetry readings and other performances. Exhibition participants included many local Op Shop volunteers who were interviewed on video as part of the project and who also attended the opening.



Prize winning writer Alice Pung was one of the opening guest speakers. Other speakers included Professor Elizabeth Harman, the Vice Chancellor of VUT, and the exhibition was opened by artist Lyndal Jones.



Above, detail of The Op Shop Exhibition in the Bluestone Building. Left, artist Sue Dodd performing within the installation.

EDUCATION

Talks and tours continued during the year with more variation. One notable request was for an environmental education unit delivered by Brett Hosie and Larry Walsh for pre-service teachers from Melbourne University.

There were also visits from a number of schools and we are experimenting with a number of different ways to deliver education programs.



Gemma Trimboli (left) Jenny Albanese (above) doing a test run of the interactive web site with students at Footscray City Secondary College.



WORK FOR THE DOLE

Under Brett Hosie's supervision Work for the Dole projects have been running end to end under a program to maintain the Museum's leased areas in the park and other areas managed by Parks Victoria and Maribyrnong City Council. The team has actually assisted Parks Victoria in the newly acquired parklands around the Edgewater estate.

Sponsor for most of the WFD projects, Spirit West Services, have taken a stronger interest in the projects, the park and Museum in more recent months and are talking about future partnerships with a community focus.



Bulldogs ruckman and full forward, Peter Street, visits the team working at Pipemakers.



MEET THE NEIGHBOURS

The biggest event for the Museum this year was the second version of 'Meet the Neighbours'. A concert with an animal theme that arose out of efforts to teach newly arrived migrants about local animals and habitat. Performers included the Italian Senior Citizens Group, Aboriginal dance group 'One Fire', local Ethiopian musicians, Altona North Primary School, the Abbott of Quang Minh Temple, the Chinese Youth Society and Gilmore Secondary Girls College.

This year 'Meet the Neighbours' became part of the City of Maribyrnong's Big west Festival and the concert drew an audience of more than a thousand people. Including 500 primary school students from selected schools with a high proportion of migrant students and more than 200 adults from AMES and the Western English Language Centre. New audiences for cultural events like this from marginalised groups.

Once again the event owed its great success to collaboration with a range of partners, particularly a group of people on the City of Maribyrnong's Refugee Week Committee including representatives from the New Hope Foundation, Melbourne City Mission, Spirit West Services, North West Migrant Resource Centre, Victoria Police, Centrelink and the Womens Circus. This years event was funded by VicHealth and the RE Ross Trust.



images from
MEET THE NEIGHBOURS



THEN THERE WERE THE SMALL EVENTS

In between the projects and programs and planning there are hundreds of smaller enquiries and visits for a wide range of small things that happen in a museum. Although they may be small some of these events can be very important for those involved.

A former member of the Koori Gardening team, Serene O'Halloran, now works at the Museum of Victoria tending the inside forest there. Serene comes to Pipemakers Park regularly to get gum leaves to feed rare stick insects from Lord Howe Island as part of a new breeding program they are carrying out.

A member of the Gathering Place, Samantha Salamon, landed on our doorstep a few weeks back with a long necked turtle she had found on a road. This fortunate turtle was released back into the wild in Pipemakers Park.

Perhaps the most touching story of comes from a Vietnamese man called David who came into the Museum during the year to help his nephew research a project about Vietnamese migration to Australia during the 1970's and 80's.

During the search through the files we came across a picture of a refugee camp in Indonesia called the Galang Camp. It turned out to be the camp David had spent a couple of years at more than twenty years ago and he had never seen a picture of the camp before.

The picture released a flood of memories and tears. It was a very emotional moment for David and we were all very moved that our collection has such importance in the community.



LIZARD GOES TO TOWN

Another touching story is the discovery and recovery of the mock up twelve (12) metre Legless Lizard who was lost in a cupboard at the Iramoo Sustainability Centre for seven years. During discussion we heard about this fabulous creature and asked if it could be a feature of the Meet the Neighbours Concert. Which it was.

The Gould Group was participating at Meet the Neighbours and following further discussion thought they could use the Lizard for an event they had coming up at Federation Square. Which they did. So from cupboard to Federation Square went the Legless Lizard.

