

# Treasured Friends

Attendance at the AGM and Christmas Party in December was larger than usual, due no doubt to a special, early opportunity to meet the curator of the Library's new exhibition, Margaret Dent, and to glimpse some of the international treasures in the Gallery.

In a time of world division and uncertainty there is a great opportunity this summer to witness humankind's amazing intellectual achievements, those positive and enduring gifts that transcend wars and continue to enhance our lives through the centuries.

*Treasures from the World's Great Libraries* is the National Library of Australia's free gift to the nation until 24 February. It is a way of celebrating the significance of libraries as caretakers of knowledge throughout the world, and a marker for the centenaries of both the National Library and of Federation.

Two years of planning have brought more than 150 rare exhibits from 36 libraries around the globe to Canberra for this unique exhibition. There is only one venue and only one short window of opportunity for a viewing of these very significant contributions to world knowledge and creativity. And you can see it without leaving Australia! Can you afford to miss it?

I know this exhibition will delight and amaze every member of the Friends, so if you're travelling on the eastern seaboard over the holiday period, why not detour to Canberra? (Special accommodation packages are available with the Novotel Canberra, and Friends receive discounts at the upmarket Barton Cottage Bed and Breakfast in the CBD, Tall Trees Motel in Ainslie and the Forrest Inn & Albany Apartments in Forrest.)

There is also a Friends discount for the audio tour, and new members who join the Friends after seeing the exhibition will receive a discount for the beautiful catalogue, on sale through the National Library Bookshop.

The exhibition closes on 24 February 2001.



Congratulations and welcome to the two newly-elected Committee members, Claudia Hyles and Jenny Gleeson.

Claudia has travelled widely in Africa and Asia, has been active in the Arts for a number of years and is a long-time member of the Friends of the National Library. Many Canberrans will recall her charming exhibition *And the Answer Is a Pineapple!* at the Canberra Museum and Art Gallery several years ago.

Jenny Gleeson was a librarian in the National Library from 1963 to 1973 and says that she still considers it her spiritual home-away-from-home. She now lives at Gunning in regional New South Wales.



*English Bestiary* c.1255  
Harley MS 3244  
By permission of The  
British Library,  
London

A bestiary or 'book of beasts' is a collection of moralised animal tales, combining natural history, legend and mythology. The *English Bestiary* has recently been dated to c.1255, partly on the basis of the inclusion of this well-observed drawing of an elephant. (A specimen was presented to King Henry III by Louis IX of France in that year, and kept in the Tower of London.)

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