

Fryer and Alumni Friends

My wife, Lana and I were recently invited to a morning tea at Fryer, where we and other visitors swapped stories. Simon Farley showed us a book, in French, "A Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage" (*Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*), a translation of an unofficial published account of the voyage of the Endeavour, attributed to English midshipman James Mario Magra. James Cook is not mentioned in the title, only Banks and Solander. Bougainville was a French hero and Cook obviously a second stringer navigator of Australian waters. I just had to look up Bougainville the first chance I got.

On an earlier occasion, I had mentioned to Emeritus Physics Professor Norman Heckenberg that the Alumni Book Fair auction had realised a reasonable sum of money, but that some books sold for less than expected. He commented that those books would at least be preserved for another generation. These two events reminded me why we are here today. We are enthusiastic about books and their contents, and would like to preserve them. You don't find everything on the electric Internet.

Fryer Library was set up in 1927 as a memorial to a promising student who gradually succumbed to his Great War wounds and illness. It was intended as a repository of books, not for lending, but aiding Australian studies in the humanities, and more specifically covering the two great themes of Australian Literature and the History of Australia.

Alumni Friends of UQ was originally the Alumni Association of UQ. It was set up in 1967, an offshoot of the Development Office. Later, to protect its existence, Alumni Executive and funds, it incorporated, and put monies into its own independent trust fund. Donations poured in and activities such as concerts and spot sales raised funds in addition to membership fees.

Fryer had received personal papers from Mrs Hilda Brotherton in 1968. These were included in a display at the Alumni AGM in 1969. It was commented there that UQ Library could not afford to purchase a copy of a special limited bicentenary publication of *Florilegium* containing paintings and drawings made by Banks and Solander on Cook's 1770 expedition. It cost \$340. A quick whip-around raised \$341 and the publication was acquired. This was not the last time Alumni bailed out UQ, which was then strapped for cash for "discretionary" items.

In 1971, Alumni held a reunion for those who had attended UQ between 1911 and 1939. Past students displayed much historical material including photos, letters, and personal papers. Librarian, Nancy Bonnin asked if those documents could be donated to Fryer. Many past students obliged. This led to further similar donations. How quickly acquisition policy changes!

Lisbeth Hopkins saw the value of an Alumni Book Fair, and organised the first Book Fair along the lines of the one running at the University of New South Wales. This was conducted in the Avalon Theatre on Sir Fred Schonell Drive, Sept, 1979. Its success led to further biennial book fairs at the Avalon, the Exhibition Grounds' Science Hall, Mayne Hall and finally at the UQ Centre.

Book donations began to reveal gems of Australian Literature and rare books, the former donated to Fryer Library, the latter auctioned off. The then Alumni Association set up a number of funds for a number of projects, including Fryer Library. The Association became the Alumni Friends of the University of Queensland after negotiations with VC John Hay and the Advancement Office.

Since the move by AFUQ to Cairngorm at 50 Walcott St, the links between Fryer and Alumni Friends have been closer, with the Fryer staff most helpful. Previous Fryer Manager, Laurie McNeice comes to mind. Through contact with Joan Keating and Erin Pearl, volunteers Jan Thompson and Anne Mullins gained insight into Fryer's acquisition policy. The Fryer collection Development Policy now appears on the library website:

<https://web.library.uq.edu.au/locations-hours/fryer-library/fryer-library-collection-development-policy>

I was grilling Steve Papas (retired Dentist) recently, and discovered that he had been discarding theatre programs that his late wife Meryl (né Hughes) had collected. I insisted that he donate what he had left, particularly as Meryl had been a Borovansky ballerina and Olympics gymnastics coach. And so he has today.

Books turn up at Fryer via odd routes; witness the Bougainville book I mentioned earlier. Fryer has a companion official publication *Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas* by Sydney Parkinson (1773). It was once owned by Sir Everard Home (Banks' doctor and also King George III's physician). These books had come from a St Lucia collector.

A copy of Xavier Herbert's novel "Seven Emus" was found among donations, with a curious and rather cryptic inscription addressed to Fryer Librarian, Nancy Bonnin by the author. Reading between the lines, Herbert must have been a difficult man, a disdainer of academia, an overuser of favourite coined words, but totally charmed by the Librarian. Thanks to Emeritus Professor Laurie Hergenhan, Fryer has Xavier Herbert's papers. Laurie had helped the author with his Miles Franklin Award winning novel *Poor Fellow My Country*.

The Hadgraft family is represented. My father, Cecil Hadgraft, was a UQ English lecturer (1948 to 1974) who perused catalogues of second-hand books, and made acquisition recommendations. I accompanied him around the book stores on Saturday mornings to meet the Lloyds, and to seek out dusty finds 12 feet above the floor in old man Read's Rare Bookshop, around the corner from Jackson's Furs and Tivoli Café. My mother, Jessie, donated her diaries. They probably contain such gems as my brushing-off childhood sweetheart, Miriam, with the comment "I couldn't possibly marry you. You haven't got a gas stove". Lecturer in English, Dr Chris Tiffin, helped create for Fryer the Cecil Hadgraft Memorial Fund in Cec's honour.

At one stage Fryer had a team that went on safari, seeking out the provisional donor. Nancy Bonnin drove, engaged the possible donor, and won their heart and mind over tea. Spencer Routh rode shotgun, looked over the keen donor's collection, and every 15 minutes or so, drew the attention of leader and confirmed donor to an item in the collection, with a phrase such as "This is quite a find you've got here."

By such means, Fryer obtained Father Hayes' collection in 1967. He was a collector of anything and everything. He came into Forster's Drapery store in Toowoomba and eyed off the studs and cufflinks on display. He remarked that the stone in one item resembled the stone he had lost from a ring. Unfortunately, the Forsters were Methodists. The good Father left empty-handed.

He drove what can only be described as a flivver. He came in it to Toowoomba from Oakey to go to the pictures. The vehicle was packed with children, amazing! considering that it had no floor.

People donate willingly, without expectation of a reward. Richard Smith lived in a two-storey house in Sydney. He left his collection of books and Wedgwood, which filled both storeys, to his brother, who donated some of it to Bookhouse. A volunteer before Anne and Jan had been auctioning them off bit by bit, thru successive Book Fairs. Anne found the few left under a table. Among them were a few nineteenth century volumes of superb photos of Egypt. It was drawn to the brother's attention that, sent to England, a volume might reach six figures at auction. He understood, but refused their return. The volumes were passed to Fryer for their viewing, then returned to Bookhouse. It was decided that the books should be donated to Fryer, and so they were.

Today not only represents 50 years of Alumni Friends and Book Fair, but also 50 years of a fruitful relationship between Alumni Friends and Fryer.

Most recently, I am pleased to announce, Alumni friends promised \$50,000 to help create a teaching space in the Fryer Library. I would like to invite Mrs Juliet O'Brien, Hon Sec of Alumni Friends, to join me in presenting a cheque for this to Mr Bob Gerrity, University Librarian.

Peter Hadgraft, 10 Jun 2017