



Histories, HAUNTINGS & HEROES



Happy Halloween! It seems a good time to be thinking about ghosts, whether in the form of the mysterious unexplained 'presence' or in terms of the great names of the past. In the following pages you will read about both, plus some great projects capturing and sharing history via our libraries, combining the power of technology and ingenuity to deliver real value to their communities.

Perhaps the greatest challenge when delving into history is not falling victim to the notion that the past is just that – past – and has nothing to teach us. Not so. Elsewhere in this issue Sue Reynolds has made the case

for library history and in our feature pages this month you will read about some great heroes who still reach out across the decades, and even centuries, to help library and information professionals today carry out our daily roles. We hope you enjoy reading about how this thread of history touches us every day and how we ourselves may end up contributing to it as time moves on.

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HEROES KEEP OUR

Imagine a dusty old attic with winter sunlight spilling in from a gabled skylight, illuminating an old cherished chest filled with mysteries and histories, and you have an idea of what Our Digital Island is - a digital treasure trove of stories and facts that come together to express so beautifully the social, historical, political, and eventful fabric that makes up Tasmania's past and present, and stores, in perpetuity, our heritage for future generations.

Our Digital Island (ODI) (odi.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/), is the Tasmanian cousin to the National Library of Australia's Pandora. From the Myer Fire in 2007, caught in images and news stories and mobile phone video clips of fire fighters valiantly attempting to bring under control the out of control, to the gruesome and hauntingly beautiful story that is Port Arthur, as depicted on the Port Arthur historic site, to the Beaconsfield Mine collapse in 2006 with its coronial findings, the fairytale history of Mary's wedding, and the digital historical online narration of state, local, and federal elections, this wonderful little database is an amazing resource just waiting to be explored.

The database has grown from unassuming beginnings, and from one man's realisation of the value of sometimes short-lived websites and web pages. Lloyd Sokvitne, State Librarian of Tasmania, championed the collection of these fleeting moments and now ODI has captured the evolution of the Tasmanian web.

Another man of his time - or before his time - was Luther H. Evans, a librarian of Congress, who said in 1952, "Our

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cultural heritage finds its expression in the common, every-day activities which are the sum and substance of our character as a people and a nation. We must not lose this heritage, and we must understand it. Knowledge of the antecedents of this heritage is the keystone of any conscious effort to achieve meaningful goals for ourselves as individuals and as a people. In order to obtain and secure such knowledge and understanding we must protect and preserve the

cultural treasures that are the physical remainders of our past".

Now we must add to this the digital remainders of our past. Preserving and making available our histories

and our hauntings will be achieved by our current and future heroes. We entrust these responsibilities to those individuals who understand and appreciate what the loss of these treasures would mean.

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