

# FRIENDS◀REVIEW

JULY 2018



WFFM meeting in Madeira / The lady and the unicorn tapestries at AGNSW /  
Faith and Culture in Islam at NMA / HMS Sirius Museum on Norfolk Island

Australian Federation of Friends of Museums

Patron His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd)

[www.affm.org.au](http://www.affm.org.au)



AUSTRALIAN  
FEDERATION  
OF FRIENDS  
OF MUSEUMS

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## REPORT from

# WFFM Madeira

**CAROLYN FOSTER** ELECTED TO LEAD THE WORLD FEDERATION OF FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS AND NEXT YEAR'S INVITATION FOR MEMBERS TO ATTEND MONTREAL RENDEZVOUS IN MAY 2019.

The World Federation of Friends of Museums met in Madeira between 10-14 May after a satellite meeting in Lisbon for Young Friends.

Being within the European Year of Cultural Heritage it was timely for WFFM and ICOM to sign the Declaration of Funchal which sets out the vision for Museums as Social Landmarks

The meeting welcomed seven Australians and delegates from across Europe, South America, North America and the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting endorsed the newly elected WFFM Council to be led

by Carolyn Foster as President. I was honoured to become the WFFM Vice President for Asia Africa and the Pacific and look forward to working with the Executive.

The meeting was in addition an opportunity to visit a location rich in history, with a unique culture, lush vegetation, fabulous architecture and multiple museums ranging from a Museum of Sacred Art to a centre celebrating Cristian Ronaldo, although I suspect I was the only delegate to seek out the latter.

Portugal has a plethora of the expected fine and downright quirky museums.

For me the highlights were the historic buildings of Funchal; the architectural design of Mudas Contemporary Art Museum built from volcanic basalt and hanging from the Madeiran cliffs; in Lisbon the Museum of Pharmacy (with a rather stunning outside cafe/bar); the Casa das Histórias Paula Rego in Cascais, celebrating the work of living artist Dame Paula Rego and perhaps best of all, the Gulbenkian Foundation in expansive gardens and boasting outstanding contemporary and classical art collections within a modern museum complex decked with rooftop wild flower meadows.



New WFFM President Carolyn Forster (centre) and Vice President for Asia Africa and the Pacific, Jane Lomax-Smith (second from left), with WFFM delegates in Madeira in May.

The next location for a Council meeting from 23-26 May 2019 was announced as being “Rendezvous in Montreal”.

This is the second largest French speaking city in the world. It was founded in 1642 and is designated as a City of Design and a City of Museums. The event coincides with Museums Day on 26 May, with 32 museums taking part ([www.cffm-fcam.ca](http://www.cffm-fcam.ca) or email [info@cffm-fcam.ca](mailto:info@cffm-fcam.ca)).

It was decided that the next WFFM Congress will be in Australia in 2020 with location, programme and dates to be announced at a later date.

So finally please consider joining AFFM members and Youth delegates at the Canadian Council meeting in 2019. It is an opportunity to see behind the scenes, have privileged access and meet like-minded Museum Friends.

Jane Lomax-Smith,  
President, AFFM





**Above:** The Pharmacy and Health Museum in Lisbon.

**Below:** Young Friends with WFFM President Carolyn Forster (at right) in Lisbon.

A report on the Young Friends meeting by Australian delegate Frederick MacDonald (back row, sixth from left) will be featured in the next issue of *Friends Review*.

*All photographs supplied by Jane Lomax-Smith*





# NEW EXECUTIVE FOR WORLD FEDERATION OF FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS

The full WFFM Executive is as follows:

**PRESIDENT**

Carolyn Forster, Australia

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

**FOR AFRICA-ASIA-PACIFIC**

Jane Lomax-Smith, Australia

**VICE-PRESIDENT FOR EUROPE**

Italo Scaietta, Italy

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

**FOR NORTH AMERICA**

Bruce Bolton, Canada

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

**FOR SOUTH AMERICA**

Alfredo Corti, Argentina

**SECRETARY-GENERAL**

Sofía Weil de Speroni, Argentina

**TREASURER**

Ronald Stride, Singapore

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

Eliana Zanini, Argentina



Carolyn Forster OAM, President, World Federation of Friends of Museums

## Museums, Social Landmarks - Declaration of Funchal on the European Year of Cultural Heritage by WFFM and ICOM

**A**t the WFFM meeting in Funchal, Madeira, in May 2018, the European Regional Alliance of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM), jointly committed to the development of museums and to the support of their activities, decided to recommend the following guidelines, with the aim of contributing to a better fulfilment of their mission towards society:

1. After years of budget cuts and in a time of economic recovery, public authorities, guardianship institutions and museum trustees shall improve the level of financial support to museums to allow them to better deliver their services to community;
2. Museums are then able to generate significant economic benefits through areas such as jobs, tourism, investment and urban regeneration, and should be seen by public authorities as catalysts for local economic development;
3. Citizens can be made more aware of the cultural importance of museums to their lives and be encouraged to take active participation in their promotion and safeguard;
4. Museums shall take measures to develop community engagement and to improve their role as dynamic inclusive institutions, namely by promoting the establishment of associations of friends of museums;
5. Museums shall work to broaden their audiences with special attention to the engagement of young adults, through a thorough research of their needs and interests';
6. A new agenda of public policies towards museums should focus on networking and include travelling exhibitions, shared services (restoration, inventory, digitalization, insurances, marketing/advertising, etc.), shared resources (researchers, other staff, etc.), wider use of new technologies (especially in the domain of digitalization, mainly 3D registering and Virtual or Augmented Reality).

**Official notice from WFFM and ICOM**

# SAVE THE DATE

## AFFM Annual Meeting in Canberra

Our annual gathering will be held from  
18-20 October 2018 in Canberra.

There'll be special events, guest speakers, and tours to our national institutions as well as excellent opportunities to meet with other members and hear about what's new internationally and nationally.

Our short AGM takes place on the morning of Friday 19 October.

All members, friends and representatives of our members' organisations are warmly invited to participate.



Head resembling Cleopatra, 50-30 BC, limestone, height 280mm, Italy.

©Trustees of the British Museum

One of the key exhibitions on display in Canberra at the time of the annual meeting will be Rome: City and Empire, at the National Museum of Australia. The exhibition, a collaboration between the

National Museum and the British Museum, brings to Canberra more than 200 of the British Museum's most engaging and beautiful Roman objects. They tell the story of how Rome grew from a series of small

villages to become a mighty empire. Its stories and images continue to captivate audiences almost 3000 years after its foundation.



# REVIEW OF 'SO THAT YOU MIGHT KNOW EACH OTHER': FAITH AND CULTURE IN ISLAM

Collections from the Vatican Anima Mundi Museum, the Sharjah Museums Authority and the National Museum of Australia.

This exhibition came about through museum professionals knowing and being aware of each other's collections and is one of several major collaborations being undertaken by the National Museum of Australia.



**Embroidered boots, attributed to Senegal, late 19th – 20th century. Leather embroidered with coloured cotton threads. Vatican Anima Mundi Museum Inv I 11984**

**B**riefly, an exhibition of Islamic art and material culture was held in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates in 2014, which evolved from the Vatican's wish to make its Islamic collection more widely known in the Muslim world and beyond. The Vatican *Anima Mundi* and the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization co-curated an exhibition, and later a similar project was proposed to the National Museum, culminating in a three-way collaboration.

The selection, research and preparation of objects for the Australian show led to lasting trust and friendship between colleagues on three continents.

The Australian exhibition kept the same name as the first title, *'So That You Might Know Each Other'*, inspired by a verse within the Holy Qur'an.

The African collection of the Vatican Anima Mundi Museum (formerly the Vatican Ethnological Museum) comprises approximately 10,000 objects, of which about 2000 come from 'North Africa'.

Many of the objects in the exhibition from the African Islamic world came to the Vatican between 1924 and 1925. Pope Pius XI held the Universal Exposition at the Vatican to demonstrate the attention, respect and openness of the Catholic world towards the arts, culture and religions of the peoples of the world. It opened at the end of 1924 and demonstrated the dignity and the value of non-European artistic and religious expressions. The exhibition lasted a year and was visited by over a million people. Part of the collection remained in Rome and formed the foundations of a new, permanent exhibition.

**Works in Canberra include embroidery, metal jewellery, horse and camel and horse trappings, musical instruments and weapons.**

An impressive necklace in silver, coral, horn and glass beads, collected in Libya, was bequeathed to the Vatican *Anima Mundi* in 1936. Dating from the late 19th to early 20th century, it is over 500 mm long and 425 mm wide. A large central medallion flanked by stylised hand motifs, with colourful stones and tiny crescent

and fish motifs hanging from fine chains were meant to avert the evil eye, and protect and bring good luck to the wearer. It was probably fixed to the wearer's dress by two pins.

A full wedding outfit includes a stunning range of jewellery: a wide necklace, a long beaded necklace resembling a rosary, a bracelet that connects to finger rings by decorative chains, a bangle with prominent cones, and decorative head jewellery. They are worn with an embroidered dress and over-dress both with silver embroidery and a black over-garment or *abaya* made from wool and decorated



**Necklace – silver, coral, horn, glass beads  
late 19th – early 20th century collected  
in Syria  
Vatican Anima Mundi Museum inv. I 12705**



with gold thread. Jewellery frequently represents the wearer's wealth and women were given jewellery as wedding gifts. As in Australia, decorative fabrics were used to make garments for rituals, such as weddings, and were generally reserved for special occasions.

A *Burqua* (face mask) was worn with the outfit. Not what we think of as a 'burqua' today, it was worn to both protect and adorn a woman's face. It is made from a special kind of Indian cotton or linen cloth, dyed with indigo, cut and burnished until golden. Its glow is not unlike burnished metal and I don't believe the exhibited burqua would cover more than the wearer's eyes and nose.

People of Islamic faith made an important contribution to the history of Australia from the 18th to the early 20th centuries. On the north coast of Australia, Makasar traders from Sulawesi, when collecting trepang, developed mutually beneficial trading and working relationships with the local Aboriginal people. Paintings and carvings from the mid-20th century represent the processes of boiling down the trepang collected by the Makasar, and a large 'Kawa' (cauldron) in cast iron – a valuable item from the site – is on display.

The second group of Muslims to arrive in Australia were the cameleers, known as 'Afghans' or 'Ghans'. They came from parts of India and present-day Pakistan. They, and the camels they worked with, were well-equipped to assist in the exploration

and development of inland Australia. Their stories are told through the life of Bejah Dervish, a legendary figure. His descendants still live in parts of Australia and an interesting short documentary focuses on him, the camels and his family.

**Underpinning this impressive show is a fundamental desire for mutual understanding and dialogue between cultures and faiths.**

Through the objects on exhibit we can see that the artists who made them and those who used them are people – just like us. They live, work and love – just as we do. We can admire their skills, their appreciation of fine handcrafts, and their penchant for beautiful objects. Traditional Muslim societies from Africa to China can be seen in the show, and we see the 'ordinary' lives of the people from these countries. Someone commented that this was a brave exhibition for the Museum to be showing; I believe this exhibition could only happen at the National Museum, and at this time.

**At the National Museum of Australia, Lawson Crescent, Acton Peninsula, Canberra until 22 July 2018.  
Open 9am to 5pm daily.  
Free**

**Meredith Hinchliffe**



**Moroccan gimbri or lotar (lute) late 19th-early 20th century. Vatican Anima Mundi Museum, inv. I12093**



THE ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

# THE LADY AND THE UNICORN



Installing *The lady and the unicorn* tapestries at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Created around 1500, *The lady and the unicorn* tapestries have been the subject of literary inspiration, scholarly speculation and wonder ever since.

While little is known of their early years, they were eventually rediscovered in the Château de Boussac, a small castle on Creuse in central France. On seeing them in 1841, Prosper Mérimée, inspector general of historic monuments, recognised the tapestries as exceptional in both originality and quality. Expressing concern over their condition, he recommended they be purchased for the state.

Around the same time, novelist George Sand contributed to their fame by writing about the 'curious enigmatic tapestries' in her 1844 novel *Jeanne*. She adds: "These finely worked scenes are masterpieces and, if I am not mistaken, quite a curious page of history."

After lengthy negotiations, the town of Boussac agreed to sell the tapestries to the state in 1882. They have lived at the Musée de Cluny in Paris from that time.

The lady and the unicorn tapestries were made at the very moment of transition from the Medieval period to the Renaissance, but they continue to reveal a poetic medieval

world of the senses, the spirit, romance, chivalry and morality.

## THE SENSES AND THE SYMBOLS

The precise meaning of these tapestries has given rise to much debate. The most widely accepted interpretation today is that of an allegory of the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

However, there are six tapestries and the mystery remains as to the interpretation of the only one bearing an inscription: 'My sole desire'. This tapestry illustrates a sixth sense, an internal sense close to our idea of the soul, mind or heart.

The millefleur ('thousand flower') backgrounds populated with flowers and animals create a poetic universe. While millefleur was a popular style in the late Middle Ages, the use of the colour red is very unusual.

The unicorn and the lion are shown bearing the coat of arms of the Le Viste family, who

commissioned the tapestry suite to be made. Both animals are highly symbolic. The lion, king of the animals in ancient times, is a symbol of vigilance and loyalty. The unicorn represents purity and chastity – and Christ's incarnation.

## THE ART OF TAPESTRY

Remarkable in its originality, *The lady and the unicorn* is also known for the quality of its execution. The suite is the result of a collaboration between the artist who created the design – known as the Master of Anne of Brittany – and the weavers who skilfully realised it in fabric form.

Many techniques were used with the wool yarn, highlighted by silk, including 'weaving in the form' – where the weaving follows a pattern not necessarily perpendicular to the vertical warp – and the decorative relays resulting from the interruption of the horizontal weft between two warp threads.

*continued next page >*





**My sole desire, from  
The lady and the unicorn tapestries  
from Musée de Cluny, Paris.**

**Members' viewing of  
The lady and the unicorn tapestries.**

*Images courtesy of the Art Gallery  
of New South Wales*



The fine colours and modelling effects were achieved by subtly modulating the weaving and the different tones.

## CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

By the mid 1800s the tapestries were in very poor condition. They were described as lying 'abandoned and rolled into a corner ... where rats and dampness had started attacking the edges'.

Upon their eventual arrival at the Musée de Cluny in 1882, the tapestries needed work. One of the first restorers gave up,

lamenting 'that impossible red hue I was able to find nowhere'.

The tapestries have since been restored several times, most recently in 2012-13.

Though in remarkably good condition, today there are clear colour differences between the front and the back of the tapestries. On the back, the colours are particularly vivid where they have not been exposed to the light. Fragile colours such as the yellows were the most affected, which is why many areas appear blue rather than the original green which was created by over-dying blue with yellow.

## MEMBERSHIP VIEWINGS

The popularity of the exhibition and the limitation of 75 people viewing at any one time meant that the Society held two member evenings as well as an exclusive morning viewing. The exhibition has been extremely well received by all ages with 1594 members attending the free members' viewings.

**Ron Ramsey,  
Art Gallery of New South Wales**





# HMS SIRIUS MUSEUM NORFOLK ISLAND

**Aerial view of the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area.**

*Photograph courtesy of the Norfolk Island Museum*

**E**veryone will know something about Norfolk Island's early troubled history. It is evident in many parts of the island, but most particularly in the area known as the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area (KAVHA).

Each time I visit, I feel a sense of melancholy when in KAVHA. It is kept in terrific condition, green grass always mown, little or no rubbish, the cream buildings are kept well: and two whalers beached on the grass are slowly degrading.

In 1788, only four weeks after the creation of Sydney, HMS *Sirius*, flagship of the First Fleet was wrecked off the reef at Slaughter Bay in Norfolk Island. *Sirius* took two

years to break up and some of it and its cargo are still lying on the reef.

A museum dedicated to the HMS *Sirius* has been created in the old Protestant Chapel, not far from the reef. A comprehensive and informative exhibition is set up on the ground level floor of the original Protestant Chapel and forms the HMS *Sirius* Museum.

*Sirius* had several anchors although it is possible some were used as ballast. In 1905 the NSW government blasted the reef so one anchor could be erected in Macquarie Place, Sydney. Another was retrieved by locals in 1975 and this is on exhibit in the museum. A third was recovered in the 1980s and is on loan to the Australian National Maritime Museum.

As a bicentennial project in 1983, three expeditions were undertaken to explore for artefacts from the wreck. A fourth expedition was undertaken in 2002, and there are now over 6000 objects in the collection, including many building materials showing no signs of wear indicating they would have been in the ship's stores.

Carronades were part of the weaponry on board, two of which are on display. This is a short, smoothbore, cast iron cannon used by the Royal Navy and first produced in 1778. Known as 'smashers', they served as powerful, short-range, anti-ship and anti-crew weapons. After each firing, the barrel was cleaned by a tampion – a wad of tightly bound cotton. A plug was placed in the muzzle while the carronade





The HMS Sirius Museum is in the old Protestant Chapel which was part of the Prisoners Barracks and built into the wall of the Prisoners Compound (the large wall that surrounded the actual Barracks). It is a Second (Penal) Settlement building.

Photograph courtesy of the Norfolk Island Museum



**Above:** The HMS Sirius Museum – carronades and anchor from the HMS Sirius on display.

Photograph courtesy of the Norfolk Island Museum

was not in use and, during removal of concretion from the second carronade, a tampion was found. When removed it revealed a perfectly clean barrel. The carronades on display are apparently only two of four in the world and together with the anchor they form the centre of the exhibition.

There are many naval objects on display, including two important instruments: a brass pantograph and a brass sextant, and various other objects that have survived the ravages of the ocean. Conservators and explorers of the reef and the wreck found medical and pharmaceutical

glassware containers, ceramic tableware and numerous shards of ceramics and glass. It is said that the largest collection of 19th century blue and white ceramics in the southern hemisphere can be found on Norfolk Island.

Through the objects in the small HMS Sirius Museum, viewers can explore Norfolk Island's unsettled and difficult past. Informative wall panels, the different exhibits and excellent photographs complement the other collections housed elsewhere on the Island.

**Meredith Hinchliffe**

**Cover image:** Traditional wedding costume Sharjah, 20th century  
Silk, gold thread, silver thread, cotton, wool, pearls

Sharjah Museums Authority

## Contact list for AFFM members

Here is a list of AFFM representatives who are able to assist with problems, give advice and bring issues to the notice of the Executive Committee.

### President

Jane Lomax-Smith AM  
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### Treasurer

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### Secretary

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### SA State Vice-President

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### TAS State Vice-President

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### WFFM President

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### WFFM Vice President, Africa, Asia, Pacific

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### Friends Review Editor

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### Co-opted Members

#### ACT Representative

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#### VIC Representative

Graham Ryles  
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#### Youth Representative/Social Media

Gina Cameron  
ginacameron97@gmail.com

Please note: The positions of NT Vice-President, QLD State Vice-President, VIC Vice-President and VWA Vice-President are currently vacant.

Nominees may contact the President.