
MEDIA RELEASE

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A RARE ARCHITECTURAL FIND OPERA HOUSE HISTORY UP FOR AUCTION AT SYDNEY'S BIGGEST BOOK FAIR Thursday – Sunday, July 13 - 16

Sydney's biggest annual sale of second-hand books is offering a rare gem for auction this month - a book detailing the exceptional, computer-generated design solutions that made the famous shells of the Sydney Opera House possible.

The copy of the so-called *Yellow Book*, being auctioned at Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury's mid-July book fair, is thought to be No. 18 in a small commemorative edition printed for the official opening of the Opera House in 1973.

Architect Jørn Utzon submitted the original *Yellow Book* to the NSW Department of Public Works in 1962.

With its ground-breaking "spherical solution", the book revealed the first detail of the final geometry for Utzon's unique shell design – the enormous concrete ribs, curved roof lines and intricate tiling - which had been deemed structurally impractical.

The book's design modifications not only made the Opera House build a possibility and eventually a reality, it also marked the first time ever computers had been used on a large-scale construction project. It became a game-changer for architects working on construction projects world-wide.

An uncanny coincidence

Fast-forward to the present day, and Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury book fair volunteer and retired engineer, Roy Woodward, was intrigued when he saw the rare donation at the Lindfield book depot – not least because he was one of the hundreds of people who actually helped build the Opera House.

As a young mechanical services engineer in the Government Architect's Branch of the then Department of Public Works, Roy had worked on various aspects of the build from 1966 to 1970.

"I was just a young engineer then, a very small cog with a very minor role," Roy Woodward said.

At that time, his interest in the great building was purely pragmatic. He had not yet developed his passion for opera which has since led him and his wife, Gay Woodward, to become patrons of Opera Australia and sponsors of rising star, Eva Kong, through Opera Australia's Young Artists' Programme.

Gay is also on OA's fundraising Events Committee - while Roy's task at Lifeline is to catalogue collections of classical music CDs donated for sale at Lifeline's popular book fairs.

A star among thousands

While the *Yellow Book* might be the star attraction at Lifeline's upcoming Wahroonga book fair, it will be but one among more than 90,000 titles, including CDs and DVDs, on sale at Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury's book fair held over four days - from Thursday to Sunday, July 13-16, at Knox Grammar School, Wahroonga.

Other rare books for auction are two home-grown copies of *Consider the Lilies: The Story of the Garden of Kepdowrie*. It was self-published in a limited edition of 200 by Wahroonga resident and orthopaedic surgeon, Dr Stuart Scougall, in 1953.

Another is *Australian Chivalry: Reproductions in Colour and Duo-tone of Official War Paintings*. Published in 1933, it is a large-format commemorative book published by the Australian War Memorial, featuring official war artist paintings of World War I.

It is thought to be a promotional item published to support the establishment of the Australian War Memorial, now known as the Australian War Memorial Museum.

Also for auction is a military history tome dating back to 1917. *The All-Australia Memorial – History, Heroes and Helpers: New South Wales edition – A historical record of the National Effort during the Great War* is described by its editor as “the Golden Book of the Anzacs”.

Great quality, excellent value, exceptional range

The Lifeline book fair in July is set to maintain its excellent reputation for the quality and value of its items and the wide range of categories it presents, starting with pop-up books for pre-schoolers, great fiction at a fraction of retail prices, cookery, craft, history, politics, architecture, art, engineering and more.

**The doors will be open from 9 am to 9 pm, Thursday and Friday and
9 am to 5 pm Saturday and Sunday, July 13-16.**

Picture caption 1: Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury book fair volunteer and retired engineer, Roy Woodward, and Lindfield book depot coordinator, Michael Cleary, with the rare Opera House *Yellow Book*.

Picture caption 2: Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury book fair volunteer and retired engineer, Roy Woodward, surveys sketches by Opera House architect, Jørn Utzon, on the *Yellow Book's* back cover.

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Event Photograph



Picture caption:

Lindfield Book Depot volunteer, Roy Woodward, who was an engineer working on the Opera House build in his twenties, and Lindfield Book Depot coordinator, Michael Cleary admire the Book Fair's star attraction, the **Yellow Book** limited edition.

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