

15 July 2008

Preserving the Memory 100 years on Sir Donald Bradman 1908 - 2008

The State Library of South Australia has been the custodian of Sir Donald Bradman's personal collection of cricketing memorabilia, since the early 1960s when he gave the first items from his valuable collection.

Beginning with the creation of 52 scrapbooks, a substantial archive grew as more items were donated leading up to the opening of the Bradman Collection at the State Library on 29 January 1998.

"A number of years ago I donated a quantity of cricket memorabilia to the State Library of South Australia. Part of this has been on permanent display in the Mortlock Library of South Australia. A Special exhibition of the collection is now being arranged. This will be of interest to cricket lovers and hopefully to a wide cross section of viewers. I commend the Library for its work in connection with this project" said Sir Don prior to the opening of the Exhibition.

Indeed since that time over 320,000 cricket lovers and visitors have viewed the bats, balls, trophies, clothing, and gifts which had been used and presented to Bradman during his career.

In 2007 negotiations with the Libraries Board of South Australia, the Bradman family and the SA Government resulted in the Libraries Board agreeing to loan a selection of Bradman collection items to the Adelaide Oval. The South Australian Cricket Association, with Government support, are planning to open a dedicated cricketing museum at the Oval in the near future.

Preserving the memory by ensuring all of the items which Bradman donated to the State Library, including fragile paper documents and records, tape recordings, clothing, porcelain and precious metals is of paramount importance to the State Library and its responsibility to Bradman, his family and the citizens of South Australia.

Before the chosen items are installed in their new home at the Oval, each item is being meticulously inspected, cleaned, conserved and protected.

This is a time consuming process and is currently underway at Artlab Australia.

With most items now removed from the Institute Building exhibition, the State Library will close the Exhibition in preparation for the move to the Oval.

Sunday 20 July is the last day the exhibition will be open at the State Library, Institute building. The Director, Mr Alan Smith said *"The State Library is considering a range of options for future use of the Bradman Exhibition room"*.

As the custodian of the Bradman memory the State Library will continue to exhibit items from their collection, in The Treasures Wall, This Sporting Life Bay in the Mortlock Wing exhibitions, through the State Library's Bradman Digital Library which forms part of the Library's SA Memory suite of websites, and the Bradman Trail. A prominent feature of the exhibition, the lenticular wall will be re-located to the Spence Wing, close to the Treasures Wall

The State Library's Bradman archive remains the ultimate research source covering his illustrious career from 1925 to 1948. The Library will continue to provide a research service and access to information and images for the public.

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