

# RESONANCES

Objects, lives, and stories of Liverpool

Liverpool Regional Museum



# Resonances

Objects shape who we are, the people we engage with, our attachment to place, our values and ideas.



Resonances takes you on a journey to discover Liverpool's heritage through its collection of donated objects, unifying diversity in an eclectic assembly of artefacts and oral histories.

We can only speculate about the personal meanings and significance that an object holds for an individual or family; donors provide a trace of their story as a gift for future generations. Resonances combines the collection within six themes:

Home  
Good times  
Hard times  
Community  
Children  
Work

Each theme explores Liverpool's past, through the people and places that shaped its history, culture, society and economic life.

## **Silver Teapot**

Pearce and Learoyd Collection, Liverpool Regional Museum Collection



# HOME

Our everyday objects, often overlooked as trivial, help in exploring the ties between people and places and how these changed over time.

The country defined by the natural boundaries of the Nepean and Georges rivers were home to the Cabrogal and their neighbours the Dharug, Gandangara and Tharawal tribes. Material evidence links the people to the land and can be found in scar trees, place names, rock paintings and the wealth of stories, knowledge and traditions that still lives on in the present.

Back in the early days of Liverpool's foundation in 1810, many European settlers chose these lands as their new home, finding it affordable and suitable for farming.

In 1932 Reverend Canon Hammond established the Hammondville Pioneer Homes Settlement on 13 acres of land at Moorebank near Liverpool to assist families of three or more children, who had been experiencing unemployment and eviction during the great depression. By 1946 over 150 houses had been built, with more than 500 people calling Hammondville their home. In 1960, the NSW Housing Commission developed one of the largest housing schemes in Australia on a 1,500 acres estate at Green Valley. In a decade the population of Liverpool rose from 30,000 to 75,000.

For migrants, refugees and asylum seekers 'home' is a concept that is always negotiated, belonging both to the country they have adopted as their own and their traditional homeland. Liverpool's migration heritage is represented here through the collection donated by Bruna Trimarchi, whose family was one of the first group of Italian immigrants settling in Leppington during the 1930s. Italian migrants commonly established themselves on farms and engaged in the market gardening business. They soon became a large community in Liverpool and as well as the surrounding areas.

## **Flour Sifter**

Trimarchi Collection, Liverpool Regional Museum Collection

# GOOD TIMES



Good times represent a diversion from the working and domestic duties of everyday life, providing a time for social gathering, sport and entertainment. Annual parades, processions, and public celebrations such as Empire Day and the Festival of Progress (first held in 1970) as well as the Liverpool Show during in the 1950s represented extraordinary events. Everyday life, however, was simple and people had to make their own fun whether that be through visiting neighbours, listening to music or even playing cards.

The first record of Liverpool's long tradition of balls and dances is an invitation to a ball issued by Governor Macquarie to the daughter of Mr Eber Bunker, a prominent member of Liverpool colonial society. Dances have been a very popular form of recreation throughout Liverpool's history. Between the 1930s and 1950s, dances were held on a regular basis at local halls such as Albion Hall, Rossmore School Hall, Holdsworth's Hall and Blinman's Hall at Glenfield. Annual balls such as the Orphanage, Ambulance and Saint Luke's Balls were organised by local dance committees. Community singing and concerts were held in the Town Hall and became the main public attraction prior to the Liverpool Picture Palace was opened during WWI.

The Georges River provided clear water for fishing and swimming. A swimming club operated on the river presumably at Hind Park Baths. Weekend and school picnics became popular around the early 1900s, with the most popular destinations for such activities being the Old Paper Mill, Sandy Point and Casula.

One of the first sports clubs established in Liverpool was the Glenfield Cricket Club founded in 1891. This was followed a decade later by a Football Club in 1901. Other early sport clubs include the Liverpool Golf and Tennis Clubs, which were founded in 1911 and 1920 respectively.

## **Jewellery Box**

Bartlett Collection, Liverpool Regional Museum Collection

# HARD TIMES

Hard times allows you to explore personal stories of strength, courage and resistance together with the struggle of the community as a whole when facing the hardships of wars, the isolation of concentration camps, the penury of economic recession and natural disasters that are affecting the area such as the recurring floods and fires.

Liverpool paid a high tribute to Australia's wars sending its young men to serve in the Army abroad, as well as hosting military camps in the region since the early 1900s. Furthermore, economic recession during the Great Depression hit Liverpool hard during the 1930s, leaving large numbers of unemployed people with limited prospects of finding a job.



Liverpool's military tradition can be traced back to when William Learoyd joined the Army as a member of the NSW Army Medical Corps serving in the Sudan Campaign. Even the prominent Ashcroft family would do their part, such as Mac Ashcroft who took part in the Burma Campaign during WWII with the RAAF. War wasn't always on some distant shore, such as when George Cantello of the United States Army Air Forces, died in a plane crash at Hammondville on the 8th of June 1942 while fighting in the defence of Sydney.

In 1914 Liverpool saw the dark side of war when the War Precautions Act stated that each 'enemy subject' was required to report to the military authorities. Enemy subjects were native born Australians of German descent, or other nationality whose countries of origin at war with Australia. Selective internment was organised, with the largest camp for German internees being established at Holdsworthy in 1914. With approximately 5000 inmates at its maximum capacity, the camp became a small German village with a local bakery and theatre. The prisoners were released in 1919.

The Madonna of Lourdes, from the private collection of Bruna Trimarchi, represents the stories of migrants who escaped the aftermath of wars and civil strife in their home countries by coming to Australia. In recent years they have sought safety, education and employment opportunities to make a new start for themselves and their families, often calling Liverpool home.

## **Bakery Keystone**

German Internment Camp Collection, Liverpool Regional Museum Collection

# COMMUNITY



Objects are animated, they possess agency. Reaching out with a larger world they reveal. Beyond the owners who possessed them and cherished them, a gift of history is donated for the future generations which speaks about the community and time they once belonged to.

Discrimination and criticism was experienced by residents at Green Valley, a Housing Commission estate established in the 1960s, which was labelled as 'Dodge City' by sections of the media at the time. It was from Green Valley that Frank Oliveri started his successful career in the transport industry. Migrating from Italy in 1949 in search of his father, Frank started as a bus driver on the Green Valley Route, then established the Oliveri Bus Company. He was the first non-British migrant to become Mayor of Liverpool, and as such Frank's personal story is intertwined with the city's social and economic growth.

Advertising materials from E.J. Ashcroft and Sons, a meat wholesaler and butchery established at Collingwood in 1910, tell a story about a local business renowned for its quality and competitiveness, whose growth and success became a resource for the whole community of Liverpool.

Other local businesses as well as many families in Liverpool supported the community in times of difficulty donating cottages and halls to the Hammondville settlement. Regardless of religious faith and provenance, the Hammondville housing scheme provided the opportunity to purchase a home, offering a new start to hundreds of families. Residents of Hammondville recalled a strong sense of community in the settlement, however discrimination towards children at school and from local shop keepers in Liverpool was often reported as an issue.

## **Frank Oliveri Bus Company Ticketing Machine**

Frank Oliveri Collection, Liverpool Regional Museum Collection

# CHILDREN



Objects, photographs, and oral histories help us travel back to a time when the biggest form of entertainment for children meant swimming at the local swimming hole: the Georges River.

Children often had to walk long distances through the bush to go to school. In the 1930s, many of the schools were overcrowded and could not provide the basic writing equipment needed.

Children who grew up on farms were expected to help their parents by working in the fields and feeding the animals before and after school.

Migrants from other countries brought their music and songs along on their journey to Australia. Record players, old radios, music sheets and children's songs— they all help us tune into the sounds of the past.

With a population of 271 adults and 374 children in the early 1930s, Hammondville appeared to be a town driven by children. Annual baby shows were held in Hammondville where 'champion babies' were voted for in curious categories.

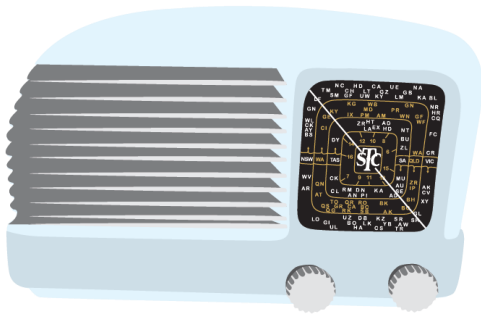
Many of the children portrayed in the photographs on display grew up to be prominent members of the community. An example is Mac Ashcroft, whose family established a leading business in the meat and livestock trade in Liverpool and served as an officer in WWII.

## **Baby Bonnet**

Ashcroft Family Collection, Liverpool Regional Museum Collection



# WORK



Most of the early settlers who moved to Liverpool to work on estates found employment in farming and pastoral activities. Poultry farming, stock grazing, wine making, wheat and fruit growing and market gardening, continued in Liverpool for over two centuries.

Early industries related to rural processing such as wool scours, tanneries and a flour mill were established at Collingwood and Moorebank along the Georges River.

The construction of the railway, modern abattoirs and storage sheds in the mid 1800s created an infrastructure to support the livestock and meat industry, and attract investment in the area, with Pearce and Ashcroft being the leading wholesale and retail butchers.

A paper mill was one of the first industrial plants in Liverpool, which reached a production level of 25 tons of newsprint a week by 1879. In 1910, the challenge Woollen Mills was established on the site of the old paper mill by Henry Bull, whose family had a long tradition in mercantile trade. By 1914, it was one of the largest employers in Liverpool.

In 1948 the company Standard Telephone and Cables (STC) established a large factory in Moorebank. After 10 years it employed over 1300 workers in the production of domestic electric appliances, radio and television equipment. In the 1960s Liverpool experienced a significant expansion of industrial enterprises alongside a rapid population growth and urbanisation.

## **STC Radio**

Standard Telephone and Cable Collection, Liverpool Regional Museum Collection



