

MCG's hidden history revealed at the National Sports Museum

Ever wondered what's hidden behind-the-scenes at the Melbourne Cricket Ground? On Monday August 22, the National Sports Museum will launch the *Hidden History of the MCG* exhibition, uncovering many secrets of this famous venue.

This extraordinary exhibition will bring the MCG to life like never before - revealing stories that have remained untold in our sporting history with a display of historic items, some of which are rarely available for public viewing.

Alongside tales of births and deaths in the stands, visitors will hear about the 1956 Olympic Games and the ground's role as a war-time military base.

Some visitors may have personal recollections of the scoreboard that burst into flames as footballers ran onto the ground in 1999. *Hidden History of the MCG* captures a variety of personal stories from staff, players, umpires and fans. Visitors are invited to share their own stories of the MCG; the museum will collect these anecdotes and some may become part of the permanent exhibition.

Other highlights include:

- A brass bell from the 19th century ship *Lysander* which was used to sound out football quarters as late as 1956.
- A receipt for a motorised lawnmower used on the hallowed turf as far back as 1917.
- An angry letter from an unnamed media personality, frustrated at not getting a good seat in the media box (1961).
- Rare photographs of the MCG in use by American troops during World War II.
- Programs for early events on the MCG, including high school athletics carnivals from 1870, lacrosse (1959) and baseball (1908), even a touring cricket team from Fiji in 1907-08.

General Manager of the National Sports Museum, Margaret Birtley said: "We are excited to be able to share a different side of the MCG. This exhibition really shows that the ground is much more than a sporting venue. I'm sure visitors will be

surprised by what they discover! We also look forward to people sharing their own memories with us, and widening our knowledge of the hidden history of the MCG. ”

Ms Birtley advised that people can record their MCG memories for the National Sports Museum by phoning (03) 9657 5594, or by sending an email to: mcgstories@mcg.org.au.

The exhibition will be the location for “Secrets of the MCG”, a special evening forum on Thursday August 25 at 6pm. Exhibition curator Helen Walpole will be one of the guest speakers, and will share some of her experiences from the making of *Hidden History of the MCG*. Bookings essential by phone: (03) 9657 5502.

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Hidden History of the MCG

ISS Exhibitions Gallery, National Sports Museum, Gate 3 – MCG

Launches Monday August 22, 2011

Entry is included in general museum admission. Open from 10am to 5pm daily, but please check website www.nsm.org.au for match-day variations.

QUICK LINKS

Website: www.nsm.org.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/nationalsportsmuseum

Twitter: www.twitter.com/NSMNews

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