



CASE STUDIES

Exclusive Behind the Scenes Stories from Collections WA



CITY OF ARMADALE HISTORY HOUSE

An Interview with Christen Bell

Why did City of Armadale – History House decide to join Collections WA?

The City of Armadale is always on the lookout for different ways to share the collection with as wide an audience as possible. Collections WA provided the opportunity to connect with audiences outside of the City as well as connecting to the popular TROVE website. We also liked the ability to easily create simple virtual exhibitions. This meant we could share stories not told in the museum or stories relating to objects not on display with a global audience at a very affordable cost.

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Above Image: Exhibition view of History House, City of Armadale.

Christen Bell
Curator, History House, City of Armadale

One of your featured items, an Upright Ronisch Piano, has sound as part of the item record, can you elaborate on the process of recording the music on the Upright Ronisch Piano used by the Dumsday and Skeet Families?

A few years ago we did a project funded by a Department of Culture and the Arts Grant, where we invited members of the community to participate in a series of song writing workshops with a professional musicians that culminated in a concert where instruments from the collection were used to accompany their original songs. Part of that project also included money to have the instruments professionally recorded. A sound engineer was hired who set up the equipment, professional musicians were hired and for an afternoon the museum was turned into a recording studio.

For more information about this project click [here](#).



Cathie Travers playing the Upright Ronisch Piano at History House

Above RHS image: Upright Ronisch Piano used by the Dumsday and Skeet Families See the Collections WA story [here](#)



Why did you select “The Maple Leaf Rag” and what technology did you use to capture the sound?

Cathie Travers, who performed the piece on the piano, chose the song. It was chosen because it was well known and importantly out of copyright. The plan was to always publish the performances online so it was important that the music played was not under copyright. The technology used was a high-end multi directional microphone and a small mixing desk that the sound engineer operated. The sound engineer then took the recordings, picked the best one, cleaned up the files and provided us with the recordings. It was important that it was a high quality recording because we wanted to make sure that it sounded clean and professional. If anyone is thinking of doing something similar explore what funding is out there to get in a professional sound engineer with the right equipment, any new strings, reeds, skins or repairs needed and a skilled musician who can make sure the instrument is tuned. I do believe that it's important for projects like this to sound the best that they can to really highlight the amazing sound the instrument can make.

Tell us about the process of adding the sound file to Collections WA. Was it simple and easy to do?

After a little trial and error it was pretty easy. We added the piano to Collections WA as a new record and uploaded the promotional photo and the sound file to the record. We then created the story about the piano and linked the piano record to the story which automatically linked the promotional photo and the sound file. Down the track we intend to add all of the instruments recorded with their sound files.



Editing the sound file for online use.
Listen to the recording on Collections WA [here](#)

"...IT WAS PRETTY EASY. WE ADDED THE PIANO TO COLLECTIONS WA AS A NEW RECORD AND UPLOADED THE PROMOTIONAL PHOTO AND THE SOUND FILE TO THE RECORD."

What is your favourite item on Collections WA?

I like the Sussex Road Board number plates from the Busselton Historical Society. I grew up in Busselton and still have family living there. I remember looking at a map of WA from the late 1800s when I was a child and on it the area around Busselton was called Sussex. I remember thinking this was quite fascinating and its one of those small facts that stayed with me. When I saw the number plates I was like 'SU, why would Busso plates have SU?' followed, not as quickly as I would have liked, by "Oh yeah, the area was called Sussex". So through these number plates I learnt that there was the Municipality of Busselton and the Sussex Road Board. Never knew the Sussex Road Board existed or that it existed up to the 1950s.



Vehicle Registration Plate SU 6
Busselton Historical Society
See Collections WA record [here](#)