

## Newsletter March 2017

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### The Cyril W Kett Optometry Museum and Archive

AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY CNR CARDIGAN AND KEPPEL STREETS CARLTON VICTORIA 3053 AUSTRALIA

The Kett Optometry Museum acquires and preserves historically important books, ophthalmic equipment, spectacles and lenses, photographs, archival papers and ephemera. It is a member of Museums Victoria.

Donation of your old stuff that may have archival or historical are very welcome. See [the Kett Museum's web site](#) for how to contact us.

#### Efron contact lens library now on the shelves

Immediate past president of the ACO, Professor Nathan Efron AC and his optometrist partner Suzanne Efron, donated their library of contact lens books to the Kett Optometry Museum in September last year. The Library has now been catalogued and is on the shelves in the entry to the Nathan Library.

If you want a book on contact lenses whether it be very old or the latest you will find it in the Efron Library. There are 205 books in the collection. Members can borrow the books.

The last book added is the third edition of Nathan Efron's Contact Lens Practice (Elsevier, January 2017), which is hot off the presses.

If you want the oldest book in the collection then look for Adolf Fick's book Diseases of the Eye and Ophthalmoscopy. A Handbook for Physicians, Opticians, and Students, the authorised English translation published in 1902. It was published in German in 1894 and is the first text book to mention contact lenses, and of course the reader will know that Adolf Gaston Eugen Fick was the first to fabricate and fit a scleral contact lens to correct irregularities of the cornea in 1888.

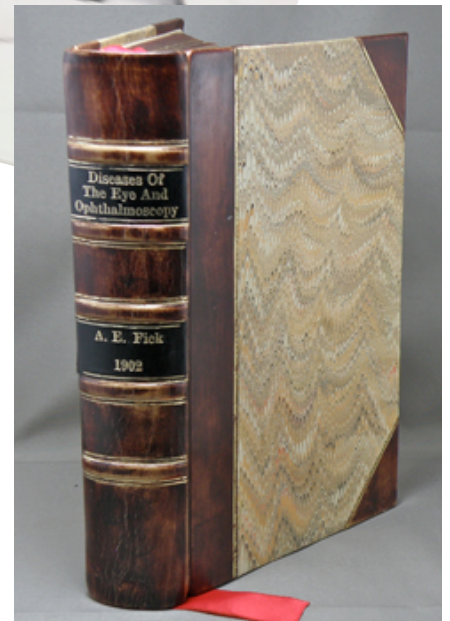
The Library is not quite complete. There are some books that should be in it and no doubt other gaps will be found. Nathan and Suzanne Efron have created a fund to be used to buy missing older books and books on contact lenses yet to be published.

We are presently searching for the several editions of one of the first textbooks devoted entirely to contact lens practice written by the little known US optometrist Lester Beacher. The self-published first edition was published in 1941 and was quickly followed in the same year by the commercially published 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Now forgotten, it was much in demand 60 years ago and there were revised editions in 1944 and 1974.

Browse the Efron Collection online. [Go to the Museum website](#) and search for category 'Book' and sub-category 'Efron Collection'. This will display all 201 items in the Efron library with brief details of each with a thumbnail picture.

#### History of contact lenses in one book

If you want to learn the history of contact lenses from one easy to read book rather than read 200 books from the Efron Library, then go to the [Hewett Collection in the Nathan Library](#) and



find Timothy Bowden's book "[Contact lenses: the story](#) (2009). You can browse it the library or borrow it. Australia's contribution to the development of contact lenses gets a good account.

### Cataract surgery 16<sup>th</sup> C style

Readers of MiVision may have noticed the article by Joe Reich 29 January 2017 headed Barber Surgery and Ophthalmology: Practising in the 16th century. Missed it? [Then read it online](#). It is well worth a read.

Joe Reich's story is about the first text book on ophthalmology published in 1583. It was written by George Bartisch (1535 – 1607), a German barber and ophthalmic surgeon. The book is [Ophthalmodouleia. That is in the service of the eyes](#).

You can read the real thing. It's in the Hewett Collection. Look for *Ophthalmodouleia. That is in the service of the eyes*. It was originally published German but the book in the Hewett Collection is a facsimile published in 1996, with English translations.

It is worth a browse, (it has 92 woodcuts) or maybe even a read. Optometry and ophthalmology have come a long way since 1583.



### Helmholtz's book is on the shelves



Last year we reported that honorary archivist, Pam Sutton, had bought a first edition of *Handbuch der Physiologischen Optik* 1867 for a bargain basement price for a book of this value.

The cover was a bit knocked about so we sent it off to the book hospital from which it has now been returned. It looks great. So you German readers can read the original word of Helmholtz, and those who cannot, will enjoy just holding it. It is under lock and key in the Aitken Collection in The Nathan Library but accessible by arrangement with the Librarian or one of the archivists.

This is a very rare and valuable book held by few libraries around the world. It is nice that the ACO, an optometric institution, is now a custodian of a book that did so much to lay down the scientific foundations for optometry.

The book is in German but there is an English translation of the 3rd edition originally published in 1910. The English translation was published in 1925. The Kett Museum holds two copies of the 1925 English edition and there is also a modern reprint of the three volumes in the Hewett Collection that can be borrowed.

And just for the record: the ACO is also custodian of a companion foundation book – the Latin edition of Isaac Newton's *Optice* published in 1706. It's in the Aitken Collection.

The third great foundation book of the science of optometry is Franciscus Cornelius Donders' book *On the anomalies of accommodation and refraction of the eye* published (in English) in 1864. This date could be taken as the starting point of modern optometry. The Kett Museum has three copies of the original book and a facsimile copy published in 1952. The facsimile copy is in the Hewett Collection and can be freely browsed and borrowed.