

The Cyril W Kett Optometry Museum and Archive

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

Delft “spectacle seller” tile gifted to Museum

Honorary archivist and Fellow of the College, Pamela Sutton, has given the museum a tin-glazed earthenware tile depicting a spectacle seller. She found it when she was visiting Amsterdam last year.

The tile was made in Delft, The Netherlands, about 1650. It is 130 mm square and depicts a spectacle seller in blue on a white glazed background.

Blue and white pottery is made world-wide but Delft Blue was regarded as among the finest, especially in the period 1640 to 1740.

There are series of Delft Blue tiles depicting various occupations, but those depicting spectacle sellers are rare. The Kett Museum has a number of prints from 17th century Dutch etchings that depict spectacle sellers. One is shown here.



Two hundred and fifty years later

Retired optometrist and former member of the College Peter Dwyer OAM is a regular donor of material to the Kett Museum. Late last year he donated a bundle of material connected with the Melbourne optometric practice of E. Wood, which was founded in 1886.



Among the items was a postcard with a tinted photograph of the E. Wood practice at 95 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.

Etching of a door-to-door spectacle seller by Adrian van Ostade mid 17th century held by the BOA Museum. This print made in 1935 is held by the Kett Museum.

The photograph was taken about 1900. The postcard was printed by F. W. Niven & Co a Ballarat based company well known for its fine quality lithographic printing including postcards with photographs of local businesses. His colour postcards of nature, city street scenes and local businesses from around Australia are sought after collectibles.

The Wood family practice continued until the 1960s.

F. W. Niven postcard depicting the Melbourne optometric practice of E. Wood and Co. c 1900. Catalogue No.3164.

E. Wood was a hesitant prescriber of cylindrical lenses for astigmatism

The material donated by Peter Dwyer included a ledger owned by the E. Wood practice that recorded the patients seen and the prescription for their spectacles. The ledger is gold stamped "Wood's spectacle register 1887", the year after it was founded.



In the first year of the records show that many of the patients were prescribed sphero-cylindrical lenses correcting astigmatism. However, not a single cylindrical lens was prescribed in 1888 and 1889, but resume in 1890.

While astigmatism had been identified and measured by Thomas Young in 1801 it was not until 1825 that lenses were made to correct it. Donders, writing in 1864, reported that only 11 cases of correcting astigmatism had been described in the published literature. It would be even longer for the correction of astigmatism to become commonplace.

The first advertisements in Australia of lenses to correct astigmatism began in 1880.

Public exhibition gallery for the Kett Museum

Planning is well underway for a public exhibition gallery for the Kett Optometry Museum. It is expected to be complete and opened to the public in March next year.

It will be a 65 m² space located on the first floor of the ACO building near the Nathan Library. It is a \$180,000 project designed by Thylacine, a highly regarded designer of museum and gallery spaces. It is funded by the Australian College of Optometry and very generous donations made by College members that will cover 70% of the cost.

Planning has been underway for nearly two years, keeping the honorary archivists very busy with design specifications, selecting material for display and writing the backstories for the displayed items.



Donations to the Kett Museum

Thank you to all those thoughtful people who have donated material to the Kett Museum. They come from around Australia, from optometrists and the descendants of optometrists, and sometimes just ordinary members of the public.

Donors in the last six months include Michael Aitken (Vic), Colin Bates (Vic), Ian Bluntish (SA), Barry Cole (Vic), Elizabeth Hatfield (Vic), Robert Kaye (NSW), Lameris Ootech (Netherlands), Wendy Mason-Cox (NSW), Desley Mentha, daughter of Graham Auld (Vic), Peter Moore (NSW), Phillip Morgan (UK), Optometry Australia (NSW/ACT), Robyn Smith (Qld) and Boel Dawsin relative of early Queensland woman optometrist Ella Pink, and Pamela Sutton (Vic).