

Television Premiere Thursday 6 August 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

Australia's Heritage

NATIONAL TREASURES

with Chris Taylor

Take a voyage of discovery with Chris Taylor as he reveals the secrets behind a fascinating mix of treasures from Australia's National Heritage List.

Presenter	Chris Taylor
Series Producer	Hugh Piper
Writer/Director	Matthew Thomason
Executive Producer	Penny Robins
Duration	10 x 5 minutes

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For images please visit <http://abc.net.au/tvpublicity>

Series of mini-documentaries for television
www.screenaustralia.gov.au/showcases/heritage

**Television series and Digital Learning website will be launched by
The Hon. Peter Garrett MP, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts
on Tuesday 4 August.**

Australia's Heritage – National Treasures is a Screen Australia National Documentary Program produced in association with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and made with the assistance of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. © 2009 Screen Australia.



SCREEN
AUSTRALIA



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

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Series synopses

One line

Take a voyage of discovery with Chris Taylor as he reveals the secrets behind a fascinating mix of treasures from Australia's National Heritage List.

One paragraph

Take a voyage of discovery with Chris Taylor as he reveals the secrets behind a fascinating mix of treasures from Australia's National Heritage List. In the third season of five-minute mini-documentaries in the *National Treasures* series, Chris travels around Australia delivering historical snapshots of places from the National Heritage List.

One page

Take a voyage of discovery with Chris Taylor as he reveals the secrets behind a fascinating mix of treasures from Australia's National Heritage List.

In the third season of five-minute mini-documentaries in the *National Treasures* series, Chris travels around Australia delivering historical snapshots of places from the National Heritage List.

He talks with experts and enthusiasts, revealing fascinating insights into our famous and not-so-famous past.

Visiting objects and places of significance, including Fremantle Prison and the ruins of the Dutch merchant ship *Batavia* in Western Australia, the Eureka flag and the Melbourne Cricket Ground in Victoria, Francis De Groot's sword in NSW and the Naracoorte Caves Fossil Mammal site in South Australia, Chris Taylor's enthusiasm shines a welcome spotlight on the sometimes forgotten gems that are an irreplaceable part of our national story.

Established by the Australian Government in 2004, the National Heritage List is a collection of places that contribute to Australia's national identity.

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Episode Synopses

Eureka Flag

Thursday 6 August 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

One line

Since it fluttered above a group of rebellious gold miners at the 1854 Eureka Stockade, the flag of the Southern Cross has become a symbol of democracy and defiance.

One paragraph

Since it fluttered above a group of rebellious gold miners at the 1854 Eureka Stockade, the flag of the Southern Cross has become a symbol of democracy and defiance. Now carefully preserved at the Art Gallery of Ballarat in Victoria, the flag, and the National Heritage-listed Eureka Stockade Gardens, remain potent symbols of Australia's only revolution – a battle that was over in less than half an hour and claimed 38 lives. Whether the revolution is interpreted as the birth of Australian democracy or a middle-class tax revolt, it was without doubt a defining moment in Australia's history.

Francis De Groot's Sword

Thursday 13 August 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

One line

When right-wing agitator Francis De Groot upstaged the 1932 opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and sliced through the ceremonial ribbon, the antique sword he wielded cemented its place as an Australian national treasure.

One paragraph

When right-wing agitator Francis De Groot upstaged the 1932 opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and sliced through the ceremonial ribbon, the antique sword he wielded cemented its place as an Australian national treasure. Part of a monarchist militia called the New Guard, Irish-born De Groot was protesting about a perceived communist push led by working-class hero and nationalist NSW Premier Jack Lang. The ribbon was retied and cut by Lang, but the story didn't end there. A lengthy court battle followed, which resulted in De Groot being found guilty and fined £5 for trespassing. He immediately counter-sued for wrongful arrest and was awarded compensation. The legal battle established that De Groot, not Lang, had legally opened the bridge, which is now included in the National Heritage List. His sword is held by a private collector.

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Batavia Shipwreck Ruins

Thursday 20 August 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

One line

Stone ruins on Western Australia's remote West Wallabi Island are the oldest structures built by Europeans in Australia and tell a tale of mutiny and murder.

One paragraph

Stone ruins on Western Australia's remote West Wallabi Island are the oldest structures built by Europeans in Australia and tell a tale of mutiny and murder. Built as a fort in 1629 by survivors of the shipwrecked Dutch merchant ship *Batavia*, the National Heritage-listed shipwreck site provides a lasting memorial to the treachery of under-merchant Jeronimus Cornelisz, who had conspired to mutiny and steal the treasure-laden ship before it struck a reef. The mutineers murdered more than 120 shipwreck survivors before most were captured, tried and hanged for their crimes. The *Batavia* was found in 1963 and is now on display at the Western Australian Maritime Museum. The wreck convinced the Dutch East India Company to make accurate charts of the coastline, putting Australia on the world map.

Fremantle Prison

Thursday 27 August 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

One line

Built by convicts in the 1850s, Fremantle Prison is the best-preserved convict-built prison in Australia and is part of the earliest phase of European settlement in Western Australia.

One paragraph

Built by convicts in the 1850s, Fremantle Prison is the best-preserved convict-built prison in Australia and is part of the earliest phase of European settlement in Western Australia. One of the last remaining links to the days of transportation, the prison was notorious for harsh conditions, including isolation in tiny cells. The conditions triggered wild riots in 1988 and the prison was decommissioned in 1991. Evidence of the hardships remains in the National Heritage-listed prison, including a flogging post, gallows and tunnels carved into its limestone foundations by prisoners.

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Wattie Creek

Thursday 3 September 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

One line

Wattie Creek entered Australian folklore as the birthplace of the Aboriginal land-rights movement when Prime Minister Gough Whitlam visited the Gurindji people to grant them deeds to their land.

One paragraph

Wattie Creek entered Australian folklore as the birthplace of the Aboriginal land-rights movement when Prime Minister Gough Whitlam visited the Gurindji people to grant them deeds to their land. The Gurindji rose to national prominence in 1966 when, led by stockman Vincent Lingiari, 200 Aboriginal employees quit slave-labour conditions at Wave Hill cattle station and walked the now National Heritage-listed Wave Hill Walk-off Route to set up a community at Wattie Creek, which they renamed Daguragu. The walk-off began a nine-year labour strike that ended with a win for Indigenous land rights.

Naracoorte Fossil Mammal Site

Thursday 10 September 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

One line

The extraordinary build-up of fossils in South Australia's World and National Heritage-listed Naracoorte Caves spans at least 350,000 years and provides rare evidence of Australia's distinctive fauna and the way it has evolved.

One paragraph

The extraordinary build-up of fossils in South Australia's World and National Heritage-listed Naracoorte Caves spans at least 350,000 years and provides rare evidence of Australia's distinctive fauna and the way it has evolved. Discovered in 1969, the site covers 300 hectares and gives scientists a snapshot of Pleistocene life in south-east Australia. Only four per cent of the site has been excavated and already scientists have discovered 100 species, a quarter of them extinct, including the marsupial lion, a giant kangaroo and a wombat-like animal the size of a four-wheel drive.

Television Premiere Thursday 6 August 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

Royal Exhibition Building

Thursday 17 September 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

One line

During the 19th century, Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building was an architectural masterpiece which showcased Australia's arrival on the world stage as an economic powerhouse.

One paragraph

During the 19th century, Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building was an architectural masterpiece which showcased Australia's arrival on the world stage as an economic powerhouse. It was 1888, the golden age of exhibitions, and Victoria, initially fuelled by the gold rush, boasted the largest exhibition building in the world with its annexes combining to cover 14 hectares. Some two million attended the centenary exhibition, nearly twice Victoria's population. The National and World Heritage-listed Royal Exhibition Building was used for the opening of the first Australian Federal Parliament in 1901, and subsequently served as a hospital, an army training centre and a wrestling venue during the 1956 Olympics. It is the only exhibition building from that period remaining in the world.

Rules of AFL

Thursday 24 September 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

One line

Ten hand-written rules displayed in a museum in the heart of the National Heritage-listed Melbourne Cricket Ground hold the key to a great Australian sport.

One paragraph

Ten hand-written rules displayed in a museum in the heart of the National Heritage-listed Melbourne Cricket Ground hold the key to a great Australian sport. If Australian Rules football was a religion, these rules would be its bible. Driven by champion sportsman and sporting administrator Tom Wills in 1859, the rules established a football code to help cricketers keep fit in the off-season. While several rules remain the same today, some such as allowing defenders to trip a man in possession of the ball have been scrapped. The Australian Football League is now a multi-million dollar business and one of the most popular sports in Australia.

Television Premiere Thursday 6 August 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

Bonegilla Migrant Camp

Thursday 1 October 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

One line

More than 300,000 migrants had their first taste of Australian life at the Bonegilla Migrant Camp in Victoria before moving out to transform Australia socially and culturally.

One paragraph

More than 300,000 migrants had their first taste of Australian life at the Bonegilla Migrant Camp in Victoria before moving out to transform Australia socially and culturally. Established in 1947 to house post-war immigrants, the National Heritage-listed property was a spartan former army camp with the most basic facilities. Isolated and primitive, it was freezing in winter, hot in summer, had shared bathrooms and laundries, and pit latrines. Riots erupted in 1952 after the suicide of three young residents triggered widespread dissatisfaction with the standard of living. Conditions improved soon afterwards and the camp continued operating until 1971. Today, Block 19 is all that remains of 28 blocks.

Ned Kelly's Armour

Thursday 8 October 2009 at 6:50pm on ABC1

One line

From violent cop killer to a champion of the working class, bushranger Ned Kelly is a solid gold Australian icon and folk hero.

One paragraph

From violent cop killer to a champion of the working class, bushranger Ned Kelly is a solid gold Australian icon and folk hero. By the time Kelly was captured in June 1880 after the famous siege at Glenrowan – a precinct included on the National Heritage List – the bearded bushranger had won the hearts of Victorians. When he was sentenced to hang five months later for the murder of three policemen at Stringybark Creek, 30,000 people signed a petition demanding clemency. The iron armour that saved – or some might say cost him – his life is preserved as a national treasure in the State Library of Victoria.

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Interview with presenter Chris Taylor

At first blush his latest job sounds like a breeze – travelling around Australia filming five-minute documentaries for *Australia's Heritage – National Treasures* but as Chris Taylor quickly discovered, not all is as it seems.

“We were doing a story about the Naracoorte fossil caves in South Australia and the producers were determined to film a piece with me down the bottom of a very deep hole, looking back up at the camera,” Chris says. “I had to abseil about 30 metres down into this spider-infested hole. We did about 15 takes as all these spiders and mice were nipping at my feet before the director finally said, ‘You know what, I don’t think the shot works. You can climb back up.’”

Though best known for his role with *The Chaser*, Chris says the experience of filming the series felt like a “wormhole” into his previous life as a reporter for the ABC television news. He was approached to take on the role by Screen Australia’s executive producer Penny Robins. *Australia's Heritage – National Treasures* is a joint-project between Screen Australia and the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, which administers the National Heritage List.

“The *National Treasures* offer just happened to coincide with a period of dicey unemployment, so I decided to say yes to keep the wolf from the door,” he jokes. “God knows why they thought of me to replace Warren Brown! If they were looking for another cartoonist, they definitely had the wrong guy. I can’t even doodle while on the phone, let alone draw convincing caricatures of our former prime ministers.”

A keen student of history at school and university, his interests were diverted by the bloodthirsty revolutions of Russia and France.

“The more we shot, the more chastened I felt about how little I knew of Australian history. I knew the broad brushstrokes of stories such as the Eureka stockade and the *Batavia* mutiny, but filming this series helped me colour in a lot of the detail ... It turns out the *Batavia* wasn’t skipped by Tony Bullimore at all!

“The big surprise for me was the Francis De Groot story. Most people know De Groot as the guy who gatecrashed the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge by slashing the ribbon with his sword. But the story doesn’t actually end there. The court case that followed the incident is absolutely hilarious. And afterwards De Groot filed a counter-suit against the cops for unlawfully arresting him – and he won! So De Groot actually ended up having the last laugh.”

Chris’s favourite story is that of Aboriginal stockman Vincent Lingiari who led the walk-off from Northern Territory’s Wave Hill Station, starting a strike that lasted for nine years, winning widespread national support and a victory for Indigenous land rights.

“It’s a brilliant story about an underclass standing up to authority, fighting for what they believe in and refusing to cave in until they got what they wanted,” he says.

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“It was also just a beautiful place to film.... We were treated to some spectacular monsoonal storms each night as we sat in the local Kalkarindji beer garden, drinking and dancing with the local blackfellas. If I had to choose somewhere for my last beer before I die, this would be the place.”

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About the making of the series

Now in its third season, Screen Australia's *National Treasures* first screened on the ABC in late 2004, telling small but significant historical stories in an entertaining five-minute documentary format.

The first series, hosted by cartoonist Warren Brown, focused on Australia's national treasures. The second series, which screened in 2007, looked at treasures linked to Australian prime ministers.

Australia's Heritage – National Treasures looks at some of the places and items from the National Heritage List. And it has a new host, Chris Taylor from *The Chaser's War on Everything*.

"It looks deceptively simple but it's a really tricky format to pull off," says executive producer Penny Robins.

"Warren wasn't available and we were looking around for a different approach to presenting. Chris is one of Australia's charismatic new presenters and brings a younger, more contemporary appeal. This series combines all the elements that work well in a five-minute format."

Co-funded by Screen Australia and the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, which administers the National Heritage List, the new series was written and directed by Matthew Thomason, who has worked on all three series of *National Treasures*.

"I came up with a list of treasures through the National Heritage List that had a good story attached to them, including some that people might know about and some that were not so well known," Thomason says.

"I was looking for stories that told us something about Australia; a bigger-picture story. For example, with the Bonegilla Migrant Camp in Victoria you've got the story of this little army camp but that camp represented the most significant social phenomena of the 20th century. Post-war migration fundamentally changed Australian society.

"Some treasures, such as Ned Kelly's armour, are not specifically named on the National Heritage List, but the Glenrowan Heritage Precinct is. It's the same with the Eureka flag and the Eureka Stockade Gardens. These are national treasures that are linked to heritage sites and we have told the story through the treasure."

Not all of the stories made it to the screen.

"We prepared a whole story on Albert Namatjira then ran into difficulties because we couldn't get the rights to show his paintings," says series producer Hugh Piper.

And then there were logistical difficulties, such as filming during the wet season at the Northern Territory's Wattie Creek.

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“We took a big risk to get a film crew into Wattie Creek and then had them sitting in a tin shed waiting for the rain to pass. We didn’t know whether they would be able to get out and about because once you leave the bitumen you can get stuck. But that was an important story and we took a chance and it all worked out well.”

Each story also has a contemporary link, so viewers can see how the past is relevant to the present. So while business might now use the internet to sell itself to the world, once it relied on international exhibitions held in architectural masterpieces such as the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne.

“I hope people will be entertained by these and in the process of being entertained that they find, either consciously or unconsciously, that they’ve been educated,” Thomason says.

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Background to the National Heritage List

Australia's National Heritage List comprises exceptional natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places that contribute to Australia's national identity. National heritage defines the critical moments in our development as a nation and reflects achievements, joys and sorrows in the lives of Australians. It also encompasses those places that reveal the richness of Australia's extraordinarily diverse natural heritage.

The National Heritage List has been established to list places of outstanding national heritage value to the Australian nation.

Anyone can nominate a place for inclusion in the National Heritage List. The Australian Heritage Council assesses the values of nominated places against set criteria and makes recommendations to the Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts who makes the final decision on listing.

There are currently over 100 places on the National Heritage List. Places on the List are protected through the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Australia's 17 World Heritage places are also included on the National Heritage List.

View the full National Heritage List at www.heritage.gov.au

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About the presenter – Chris Taylor

Chris Taylor is best known as a writer and performer for The Chaser team, responsible for award-winning comedy programs such as *The Chaser's War on Everything*, *CNNNN* and *The Chaser Decides* on ABC Television. He worked as a journalist for five years before joining *The Chaser* newspaper as its senior writer. Highlights from the newspaper have been turned into several bestselling books. For two years, Chris co-hosted the popular drive time radio show *Today Today* on Triple J, and in 2007 he wrote the hit musical comedy *Dead Caesar* for the Sydney Theatre Company. More recently he's co-hosted a series of live arts broadcasts on ABC2, and he also wrote and presented the satirical radio program *The Race Race*, which covered the US Presidential election, and which quickly became the number one podcast in the country. He's been a guest on *Newstopia*, *Good News Week*, *The Glass House*, *The Panel* and *First Tuesday Book Club*, and appeared as a panelist on *My Favourite Book* and *My Favourite Film*.

About the writer/director – Matthew Thomason

Since entering the television industry as a copywriter in Canberra in the mid 1980s, Matthew Thomason has worked as a segment producer, writer/director and series producer with credits including *35 Years of Television* and *Getaway* for the Nine Network. He was writer/director on documentary series including *Deadly Australians* and *Salute – Australians at War*, as well as various science and sporting programs. In 2000, he began working at Grundy Television, writing, producing and directing entertainment pilots and retrospectives, and in 2003 was senior producer on Network Ten's *Australian Idol*. Matthew first worked with Film Australia in 2004, as co-writer/director on *National Treasures*, presented by Warren Brown. This 15-part series of mini documentaries was produced for ABC Television's *Rewind*, and also ran in the five-minute slot prior to the Sunday news bulletin. Matthew was co-writer/director on *The Prime Ministers' National Treasures*, a co-production with Old Parliament House, Film Australia and the ABC, and on the award-winning *Captain Cook – Obsession and Discovery*, an international co-production with New Zealand and Canada. In September 2007, he worked on the development of *Infamous Victory – Ben Chifley's Battle for Coal*, on which he also worked as senior researcher and first assistant director.

About the producer – Hugh Piper

Hugh Piper makes his producing debut on *Australia's Heritage – National Treasures* after establishing himself as a writer and director. Hugh's credits include the three-part *Cracking the Colour Code* for ARTE and SBS Television, a multi-disciplinary journey through the science of colour. Recent work includes *Crime Scene Bangkok* about flamboyant personality Dr Porntip Rojanasunan and her quest to reform the Thai forensic system; a six-part series for SBS, *Submariners*, about a four-month journey on the newest of Australia's controversial Collins Class submarines; and *A Case for the Coroner*, a six-part series for ABC Television about the work of the NSW State Coroner. His credits also include *Happiness*, about a Tibetan monk described as the happiest man on earth, and *The Post*, a film about the reporters on Cambodia's leading English language newspaper *The Phnom Penh Post*.

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About the executive producer – Penny Robins

Penny Robins was an executive producer with Screen Australia (formerly Film Australia) from mid-2003 until early 2009 where she worked with production teams across the country to deliver a slate of productions. Penny was formerly an independent producer and has extensive experience in documentary and factual-program making. She has been executive producer of a varied production slate, including science, history and contemporary programming. Her credits as executive producer include: *Bombora*, a two-part series on the story of Australian surfing for ABC Television, the six-part Australian series *Who Do You Think You Are?* for SBS; the Logie-nominated cross-platform longitudinal *Life* series; *Nerves of Steel* (winner Mention D'Honneur Olympic Spirit category at the Sport Movies & TV 22nd International Festival 2006); *Troubled Minds – the Lithium Revolution* (winner Main Prize Vega Science Awards for Excellence in Scientific Broadcasting); the Logie-nominated series *Divorce Stories* (winner of the *Sydney Morning Herald* Couch Potato Awards); the four-part series *Policing The Pacific* and *Mr Patterns* (winner Hawaii International Film Festival Golden Maile Award, Best Documentary Film Critics Circle of Australia Awards).

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Links

Australia's Heritage - National Treasures website

www.screenaustralia.gov.au/showcases/heritage/

Investigating National Treasures

www.nationaltreasures.com.au

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

www.environment.gov.au

National Heritage List

www.heritage.gov.au