



Opportunities for Non-Formal Education in a Specialist Museum (‘Where is the museum?’)

Lynn Zelmer, Hon Sr Fellow
Central Queensland University
Lynn@ZelmerOz.com

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*Progress report
on organisational
change.*

*Topdown
bottom up*

*Cool for educator
discovered firsthand
difficulties of both*

Summary...

- Background
- Non-formal education & museums
- Museums and change
- ANGRMS and the Durundur Railway
- An on-going process
- Potential ANGRMS activities
- Progress to date
- Constraints and future developments

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Author a member of the society

Multimedia/adult education

Non-formal education...

- Differs from school or university in that there is little or no external compulsion to keep on if the learning activity isn't satisfying.
- Learners who really become interested in a subject or activity will often expend a good deal of time, effort and money to further their own learning goals.

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No age limits, but age changes interests/needs/abilities

Everyone is a non-formal learner

Anything can be a non-formal learning experience

ANSAMS members may be the most important NF learners.

‘Where is the museum?’

- **ANGRMS:**
Australian Narrow
Gauge Railway
Museum Society
- A ‘living museum’ of
steam locomotives,
etc., from the Qld
sugar industry
- “It’s most
embarrassing to be a
volunteer worker
standing on the
Durundur Railway
platform at Woodford
and have a visitor ask
‘Where is the
museum?’”

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Woodford 1.5 hours north of Brisbane

Timber/agricultural country, not cane fields

Nambour nearest cane system...

Sugar Festival



- Weekly Train operations
- One room museum displays
- Picnic grounds
- Static storage, restoration
- Souvenir sales
- Monthly member newsletter

Traditional museums...

- "A good deal may be done... if the specimens exposed to public view were so selected that the public could learn something from them, instead of being... confused by their multiplicity."
- "...I can conceive that this collection [grand ornithological gallery at the British Museum] might become a great instrument of scientific education."

Lecture delivered at the South Kensington Museum, 1861:
T. H. Huxley (1908). *On the Study of Zoology in Lectures and Essays*, London: Cassell and Company, Ltd, 367.

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Thomas Huxley talking to miners and workers

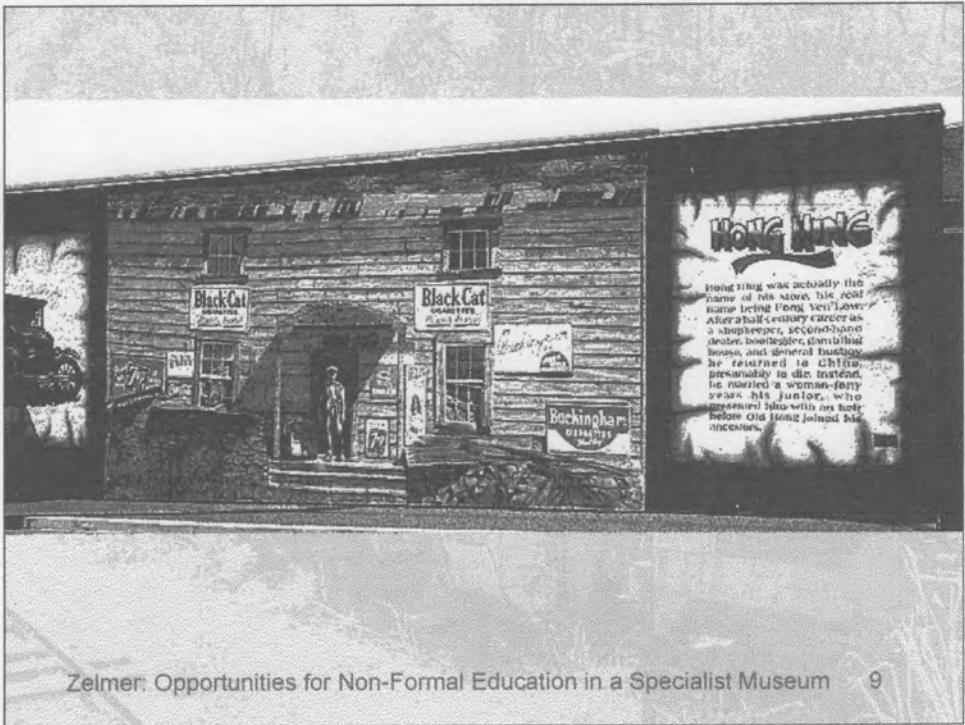
Traditional museums exhibited everything, often without context

‘Walls do not a museum make’

- Theme exhibits and dioramas: Abbey Museum (n. Bribie Island), Stockman’s Hall of Fame, The BushMill (Hobart)
- Interactive [science]: Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart’s Botanical Gardens
- Living museums: Endeavour/Duyfken, Earth Sanctuaries
- Virtual?

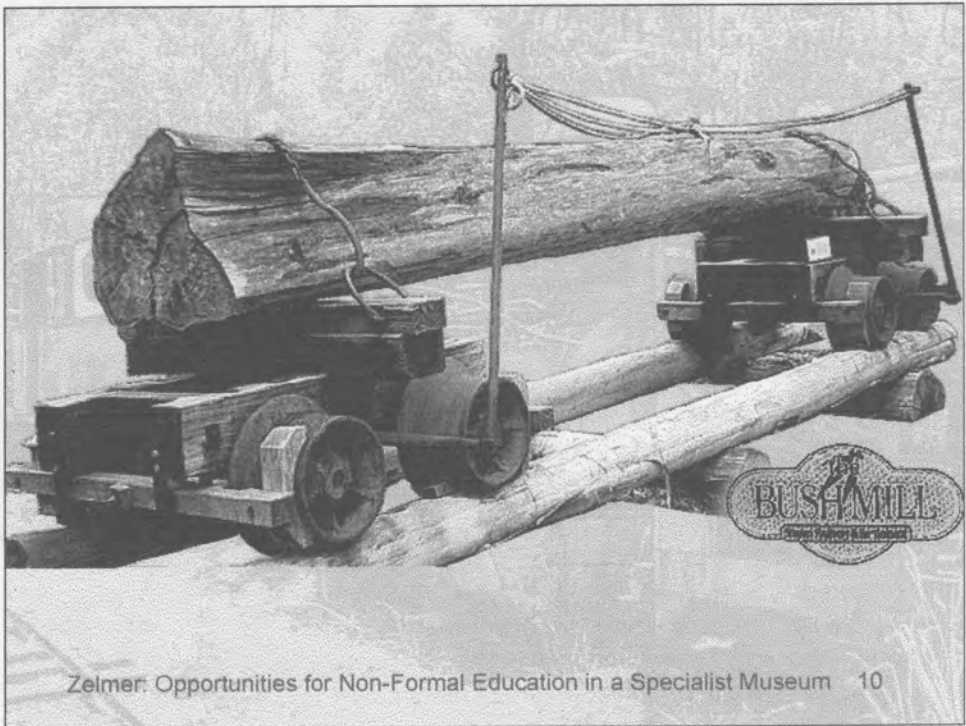
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Describe change and its costs



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Dioramas, context, informative signage



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Isolate and display typical artefacts with appropriate signage, restorations in context, life-size displays

The Australian **T** 59
THE AUSTRALIAN — Tuesday, October 10 2000

Virtual tour of ancient Olympia

If you can't visit Sydney's Powerhouse Museum's exhibition of 1000 years of the Olympic Games, you can download it from the web. Selina Mitchell reports



THE biggest sporting event in the world has spawned the largest virtual exhibition on the Internet. Titled, 1000 Years of the Olympic Games: Treasures from Ancient Greece, the show is an experimental extension of a physical exhibition at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum.

It explores the history of ancient Olympia and its links to the modern games. It is "the first true extension of a physical exhibition", according to executive information officer Tim Hart.

"We wanted to re-create the exhibitor's ambience on the web, and some of the exhibits are actually better viewed online because you can zoom in and out," he says.

Museum executives are not concerned that the virtual exhibition will cut away revenue, despite a \$15 charge for the real thing.

"These things are all about the physical experience," Hart says. "We're social beings — people like coming together, and there's nothing like seeing the real artefacts."

"The website allows people who can't get to the museum to have some of the experience, and others can go back and reread experiences afterwards."

The number of visitors to the site has tripled since the exhibition began, and they are spending an average of 14 minutes each at the site.

"There's a huge movement within museums to get rid of entrance fees. It's important to give people in rural and regional areas and overseas the opportunity to view the exhibition," he says.

The web component of the exhibition was funded by Intel to the tune of about \$100K.

The exhibition includes some of the oldest monuments experienced on the web. It is the first time ancient Olympic artefacts have been given digital form, or been seen outside Greece.

"The Greek government is very protective of its national heritage, and we didn't hold out much hope that we would be allowed to display these online," he says.

But they agreed, and the site took a team of 17 photographers, web developers, designers, archivists, artists, editors, engineers and servers five months to build.

It includes more than 400 photographs of the exhibition, more than 500 photographs of Olympia (ancient and modern) and the pedimental sculptures from the Temple of Zeus. In fact, it took three days to scan the bronze statue of Zeus held by the Athens archaeological museum, Hart says. In all, 300 of digital data underlies the website.

Site users can visit ancient Olympia's gymnasium, stadium, palaestra, wrestling arena and school grounds, the Temple of Zeus and the municipal hall, in a 20m virtual walk of the site.

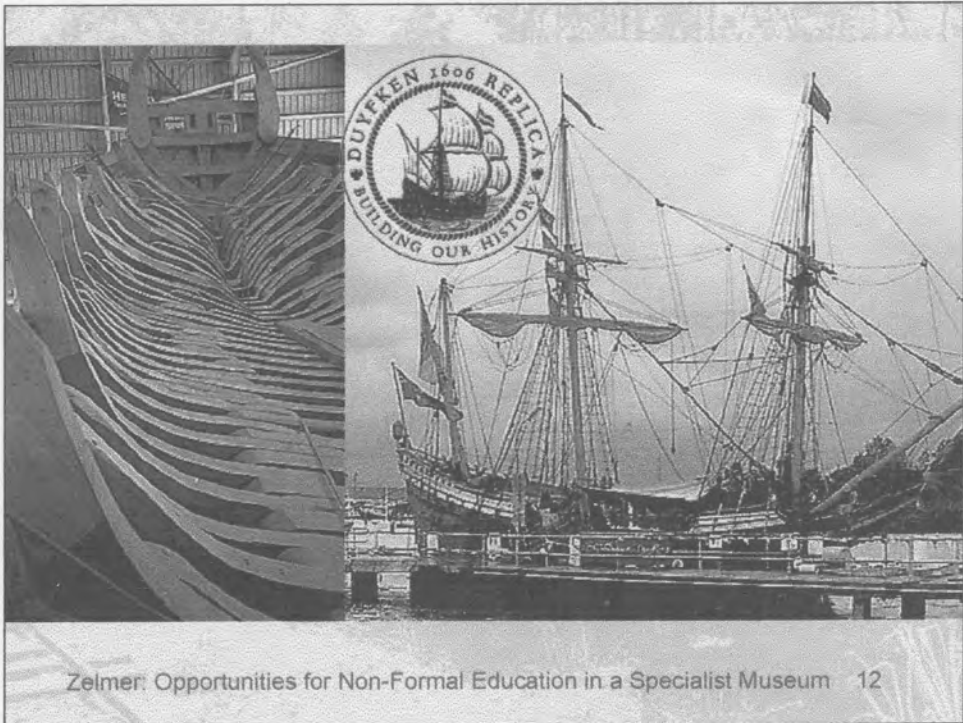
There is a complex family tree containing the ancient Greek gods, an historical timeline from 3000BC to 600AD, essays on Greek mythology, and an education kit for Greek history studies.

Zoom in and web: Dr David Pittford with head of young discus thrower, on display at the Powerhouse Museum

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Virtual exhibits provide depth as well as promotion
 Reduce costs, safe display of hazardous activities
 Repetition without staffing

Expensive to initiate and maintain, inexpensive to operate



Best is a combination

Restoration in context (modern facilities hidden during tours)

Web site, daily operating log

Artisans at work

Participant training



ANGRMS

Static storage... rusting

New storage may hide artefacts

Information locked up in member's heads



ANGRMS

THE AUSTRALIAN NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY MUSEUM SOCIETY

(A.C.N. 009 872 011)

Welcome to the ANGRMS Steam Site

This site introduces you to the Society and its services, including the **Durundur Railway**, which we operate at Woodford Queensland. There is a short written profile about the Society, coupled with some photographs and information about our collection. Then there is our Store and News section plus an open invitation for you to visit ANGRMS one Sunday at our steam site in Margaret Street, Woodford, Queensland, Australia.

About ANGRMS A brief overview
News Current news and events
Open Days When we operate
Collection Thumbnail images provide access to notes and photos

ANGRMS Store Merchandise for sale.
Photo Stop Unreleased photographs
Railpage Railpage Australia links
CaneSIG Modelling cane railways

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Web site recently updated

Display track near entrance

Informative handouts

Virtual tour on web site/CD

CD-ROM/diskette/Screen savers

See (and appreciate) restoration activities

Self-contained static displays

Dioramas and models of museum artefacts

*general
kids activities
collection*

Interactive multimedia... 'walls
do not a museum make'



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New storage building

Dilemma: Virtual tour up-to-date/accurate or representative

A local museum must...

- Attract new visitors & potential members
- Provide a variety of interesting activities
- Provide 'take home' reminders to prompt a return visit, etc.
- Encourage repeat visitors with 'new' activities
- Provide an 'expert' pathway to greater depth

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Promotion

A changing experience for repeat visitors

Get visitors involved?

Remember non-formal education

A local museum needs...

- Competent, friendly staff (volunteer training program)
- Safe, reliable operations
- Informative exhibits (signage++)
- Up-to-date information services & promotion
- Change with stability (ie responsible)
- Quality control
- People orientation

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Small group of people

Managing volunteers without burnout

Quality control is an attitude, as is having a 'people orientation'

A small regional museum like ANGRMS...

- May not be able to compete with the major museums but it must constantly strive to improve its operations and its exhibits, both on-site and virtual .
- Exploit its uniqueness
- Must focus on patron and staff safety, clean and pleasant facilities and an emphasis on the historical context of the railway itself.

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Collaboration with local groups

Joint promotion

Which context: historical locomotives or railway equipment and operations of the cane industry?

Constraints

- Funding/time
- Small membership with diverse interests
- Location and the nature of the collection
- Promotion
- Changing nature of museums and public tastes/interests/needs
- Technology
- Tension between public museum and private interests

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Increasing membership
Increasing participation



In the meantime, all the old activities

- maintenance
- restoration
- operations
- fund raising
- local community involvement
- historical

Must continue