

## A Memorable Visit from Dr John Vallance



We were honoured to welcome Dr John Vallance, the recently retired Chief Librarian of the Mitchell Library, accompanied by Stephen Hannan, for an in-depth tour of the Penrith Museum of Printing, organised by James Cryer.

Dr Vallance enjoyed a nostalgic journey, experiencing firsthand the rich history of printing. He even set his name using techniques reminiscent of Gutenberg's era in the 1450s and printed a certificate on our 1864 Albion press. The highlight of his visit was witnessing the living demonstrations of our historical equipment, particularly the 1841 Columbian press, the same brand that printed the Sydney Morning Herald from 1830 to 1852. This press, restored by John Fairfax in 1976, was saved from being scrapped and has a storied history, including printing the Carcoar Chronicle from 1872 until 1939. Restored by apprentices at the Broadway plant in Sydney, it was displayed in Fairfax foyers until the Pymont days and then generously donated to our museum.

Dr Vallance spent many hours marvelling at the various pieces of equipment on display and in operation. He was particularly captivated by the Intertype line casting machine, invented in the 1880s, and the Ludlow headline machine, which delivered hot metal lines right before his eyes. Additionally, the Dorrigo press, which printed the last letterpress newspaper in Australia as recently as July 2023, and the Wharfdale 1890, which marked the beginning of our museum, were also in full operation. It was truly a memorable day for all, filled with history, innovation, and a deep appreciation for the art of printing.