

Exciting Museum News January 2024

An excellent start to the New Year.

The Gulgong Holtermann Museum is proud to announce its association with the BallinStadt Emigration Museum which was brought about by the installation of the new Bernhard Otto Holtermann exhibit in Hamburg in December 2023. This interesting Museum presents the history of German immigration and emigration spanning four eras. (photo and logos below)



Holtermann was born in Hamburg, Germany in April 1838 and died in Australia in April 1885, aged 47. He emigrated to Australia, arriving in Melbourne in 1858 at the age of 20 and went on to become a successful gold miner, businessman, politician, and sponsor of photography. Holtermann's wealth and success was attributed to the gold find that he and his partners unearthed in Hill End in October 1872.

The Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany Sydney

In 2016 the Gulgong Holtermann Museum Project committee applied to the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany Sydney for a grant. This request was made as the committee saw an opportunity for the German Consulate to acknowledge the success and achievements of a German migrant. Mr Lothar Freischlader, Consul General at the time and his Deputy Klaus Steitz showed interest in the concept and made the trip to Gulgong to learn more about Bernhard Otto Holtermann, his 1872 gold find and the Holtermann Collection of

photographs and were accompanied by the official German Correspondent of the Frankfurter Allgemeine newspaper at the time, Dr Christoph Hein. This visit resulted in the ongoing relationship between the Gulgong Holtermann Museum and the German delegates and a grant to purchase touchscreens. In 2019 the Museum was officially opened by the new Consul General Mr Peter Silberberg. (photos below)



Dr Christoph Hein

Christoph Hein's interest in Holtermann's life in Australia during the gold rush grew and his research led to the publishing of his new book, AUSTRALIA 1872. Whilst visiting the Gulgong Holtermann Museum he was introduced to Christopher Dingle's photographic colourisation. Christopher, a photographer, and graphic artist, specialising in the colourising of Holtermann Collection photographs, had originally been commissioned by the Gulgong Holtermann Museum to colourise an 1872 Gulgong mining scene for a permanent display.

Christoph Hein's research took him on to Hill End where he met up with the Hill End and Tamaroora Gathering Group. Christopher Dingle also works closely with this group, and it was suggested by a visiting artist/photographer, Peter Solness, that Christoph contact Christopher Dingle. Having already viewed Christopher's colourisation at the Gulgong Holtermann Museum, Christoph contacted Christopher Dingle which led to a further colourisation commission, this time of Holtermann and his partners in Hill End. This piece is now featured in Christoph Hein's book along with works of Peter Solness who specialises in light painting using Holtermann Collection photographs. Both these artists have exhibited in the Gulgong Holtermann Museum theatre.



Christoph Hein's first visit to the Gulgong Holtermann Museum. Photographed with members of the project committee.

Christoph's new book

Chris Dingle and Christoph Hein's visit to Gulgong in 2023 to promote Christoph's new book, Australia 1872.

In 2023 both Christoph and Christopher visited Gulgong to promote Christoph's newly published book. Christoph took this opportunity to explain to the committee the new exhibition being prepared at the BallinStadt Emigration Museum. He suggested that it could be beneficial to both museums to work together considering their Holtermann connection. (photos above)

The Hamburg BallinStadt Emigration Museum

On returning to Germany, Christoph Hein consulted with Volker Reimers, CEO of the BallinStadt Emigration Museum regarding the installation of their new Holtermann exhibit. These meetings culminated in another coloured commission for Christopher Dingle by the BallinStadt Emigration Museum, this time to be installed in Hamburg. This installation led to the valued alliance between both Museums. Christoph was sent an official invitation to attend the opening of the exhibition and offered to attend as the official representative of the Gulgong Holtermann Museum.

The BallinStadt Exhibition

(photos below)



Exhibition Opening 7th December 2024

To congratulate the BallinStadt Emigration Museum on the launch of their new Holtermann Exhibit, the Gulgong Holtermann Museum committee sent a message to Torben Knye along with a video presentation narrated in German by the committee treasurer Bill Larner. It was a proud moment seeing the Gulgong Holtermann Museum Team and logo, David Warner (Hon. Secretary), Christopher Dingle, and the Hill End and Tambaroora Gathering Group Inc. shared on the screen at the opening in Hamburg. (photo below)



The Holtermann Collection

Holtermann worked with many photographers in the 1870s, however, mostly with Henry Beaufoy Merlin and Charles Bayliss to create the now UNESCO listed Holtermann Collection of photographs. This collection is on permanent display in the Gulgong Holtermann Museum, digitised and authorised for exhibition by the State Library of NSW. Another smaller digitised display is available in Hill End. The original Holtermann wet plate negatives, donated to the State Library of NSW by the Holtermann family in 1952, are stored in the archives of the State Library of NSW. (photo right Bernhart Otto Holtermann)





This is a wonderful story of collaboration between all parties and ensures Bernhard Otto Holtermann is suitably acknowledged for his contribution to the Australian gold rush history and his success as a German migrant. The exhibition in his hometown of Hamburg is most fitting and may his exhibit continue to inspire all who visit the BallinStadt Emigration Museum and the Gulgong Holtermann Museum.

(photo left)
Bernhard Otto Holtermann with the Hill End 1872 gold specimen. State Library NSW Ref Number a2825336

For more information click on the links below.

Links

Gulgong Holtermann Museum <https://holtermann.museum/>

BallinStadt Emigration Museum Hamburg <https://www.ballinstadt.de/en/>

State Library of NSW <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/>

Hill End and Tambaroora Gathering Group <https://www.heatgg.org.au/>



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