

Back to Merbein

Blandowski returns

By Hannah Knight

BLANDOWSKI will set up camp in Merbein for the Merbein Centenary.

To mark the 150th anniversary of William Blandowski's expedition to the Murray River, a collection of his work will be on display at Hill Corner Gardens for Merbein's 100th birthday bash.

Blandowski, the first Victorian Government zoologist/curator of the National Museum of Victoria, set up camp at Merbein's Chaffey Landing in 1857.

Spending eight months in the area, he collected and compiled a list of more than 17,000 birds, mammals and fish.

Blandowski, who died in 1878, is believed to have documented one of the first recorded displays of Aussie Rules Football.

Observing a group of six Aboriginal children who were playing on the Merbein riverbank in 1857, Blandowski

wrote: "There were three children at each end and they kicked and caught a ball made from typha, or bullrush roots ... the ball is kicked up in to the air with the foot."

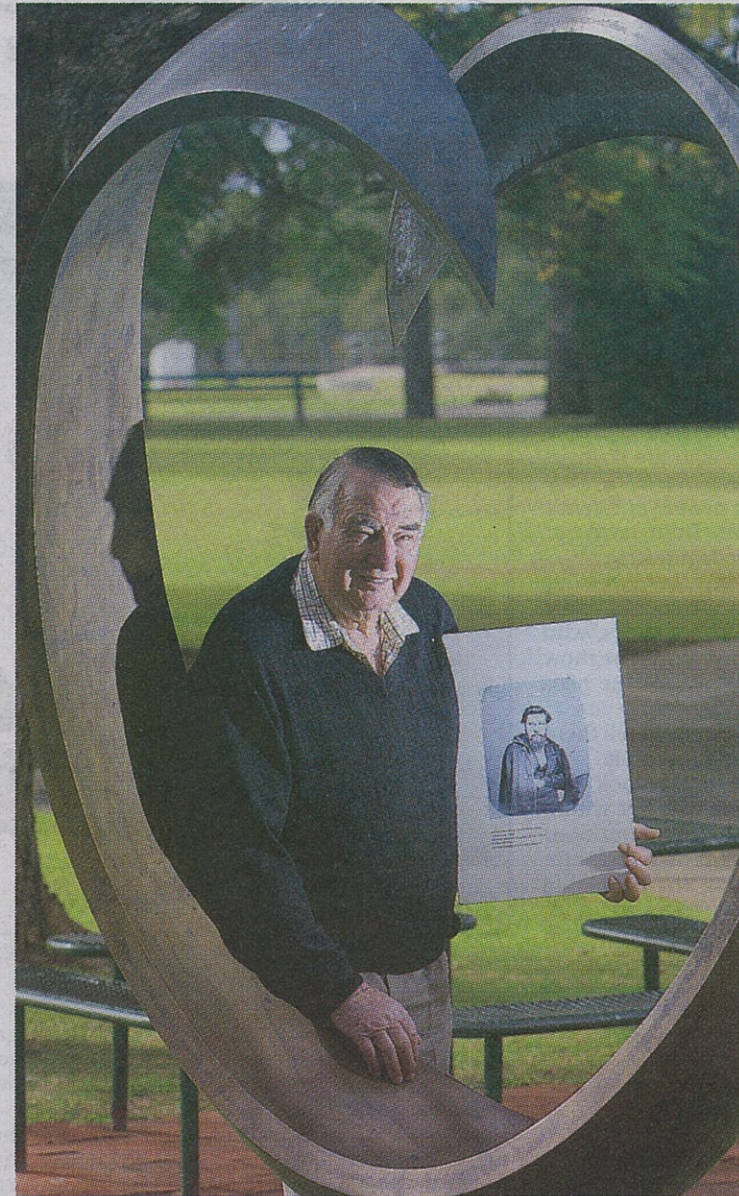
Max Whiting, Merbein Centenary Committee member and Merbein District Historical Society member, said it would be fantastic to have the exhibition in town.

"Thanks to Museum Victoria, an exhibition of the Blandowski expedition to the Murray River will be on display during the Merbein Centenary celebrations," he said.

"We also thank the generous co-operation of Lynnette Rattray of Hill Corner Gardens and the Mildura Arts Centre for making this possible."

The exhibition will open at Hill Corner Gardens on August 17.

After a stint at the Merbein Centenary, the exhibition will then open at Mildura Arts Centre on September 21.



HISTORIC: Max Whiting, Merbein Centenary Committee member, with a photograph of William Blandowski. Picture: Stacey Merlin