

Unravelling a tale of love in Port Fairy



Port Fairy glass artists Freya Marriott and Robert Gatt are behind an exhibition being prepared for Whale Bone Gallery on the fantastical lives of Peregrine Devereux and Katherine Wakefield.

A love story quite unlike any other will be captured in a new exhibition at Port Fairy's Whale Bone Gallery next month.

The romantic story of 19th century English scientist Peregrine Devereaux and his adventurous lover, Katherine (Kitty) Wakefield, an English explorer, is being slowly pieced together by Port Fairy artists **Robert Gatt** and **Freya Marriott** who have become entranced by the couple – and they are not alone.

People are invited to follow the unfolding story around the couple on [Facebook under the page Project_R1000](#), which Robert also used to document progress on his installation, *Alien Crash Site!*, that he created and exhibited with his son, **Hugh**, on Port Fairy's Civic Green late last year.

Then, as now, Robert has immersed his latest project in mystery and intrigue, and the full story will only be revealed when *The Third Expedition of Kitty Wakefield* opens at the Whale Bone Gallery on the weekend of September 5-7.

The exhibition will feature a range of artefacts that Robert and Freya already have in their possession which relate to Peregrine and Kitty's story, in particular to events in the early 1880s when the couple was exploring and travelling through Africa.

"The idea is to take (the viewer) on a journey...and to explore the idea of storytelling," says Robert.

"It looks at where we get our information from and the facts we gather to tell a story," he adds.



A pocket-sized brass travelling

microscope is one of the artefacts that will appear in the exhibition next month.

[dropcap style="color: #dc943c;"] A [/dropcap]t the time of writing, Robert had six more Kitty and Peregrine artefacts to photograph and post on the Project_R1000 page, to add to the three that have already been revealed.

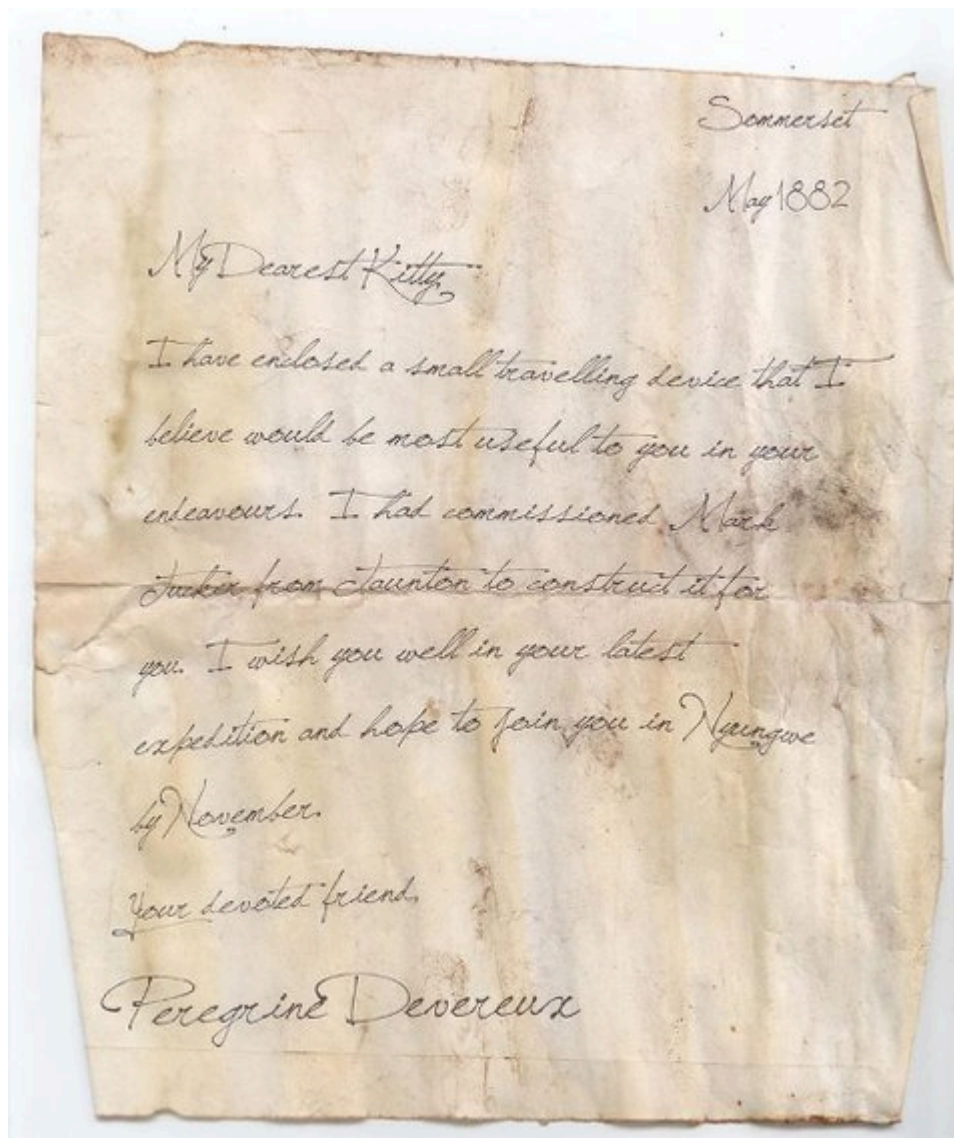
These include a gorgeous antique travelling microscope, made of brass, that is only 10cm tall and perfect for the pocket of an explorer like Kitty who, in Robert's mind, represents all of the early female explorers whose names have been lost to time.

Another artefact is a beautifully hand-crafted and romantic letter from Peregrine to Kitty, dated May 1882, that was stuffed inside the barrel of the microscope and reveals that the instrument was gift between the pair.

Robert has also posted an image of a marriage certificate detailing the union between Peregrine, at the age of 36, and Kitty, aged 31, on October 26, 1887. The certificate, which Robert describes as "gold to me", came about as a result of his spending many hours on his computer.

By the time the exhibition opens, Robert and Freya will have accumulated more artefacts, including three sets of glass objects from Kitty's collection, and a rather unusual piece linked to Peregrine, called a "plasmic resonance detector" that, as a scientist, he was keen to test in the field.

What a plasmic resonance detector looks like – and if it worked – will be one of many intriguing elements revealed next month. In the meantime, you can follow the project's progress on the [Facebook page here.](#)



[box] **The Whale Bone Gallery is at 39a Bank St, Port Fairy.**
Ph: (03) 5568 2855[/box]

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