

# *Places Of The Heart*

**OBJECTS AND PERSONAL MEMORY**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts from the University of Technology, Sydney.**

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# *Certificate*

I certify that the work in this thesis has not been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged in the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition I certify that all information and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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**Sue Georgevits**

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# Contents

<i>Certificate</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Illustrations</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Introduction: Remembering, Forgetting and Constructing a Shared Personal History</i>	<i>1 – 10</i>
1    Nearness of You: Celebration, Commemoration and Life Passages	11 – 28
2    Loss, Mourning and Memorialising in Families	29 – 46
3    Life of an Object: To Jean From Bill	47 – 77
4    The Storykeepers: Museums and the Changing Uses of Material Culture and Memory	79 – 105
5    Stitching Lives Together: Migration, Memory, Cultural Identity and Traditions in Families	106 – 126
<i>Conclusion: To Have and To Hold: Sharing Memories and Making the Invisible Visible</i>	<i>127 – 131</i>
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	<i>132 – 144</i>

# *list of illustrations*

David's Camera Collection	1.1
Mrs Smithurst's Cup	1.2
Fiona's Locket Showing the Sealed Chamber	2.1
Oscar's Box Open Displaying his Ashes	2.2
The Top of Oscar's Box	2.3
Oscar's Box	2.4
Tubb, Self and Gussie	3.1
Shell Wrecked Building, Strazelle France	3.2
The Goalie (Bill)	3.3
Chateau Montigny, Flanders	3.4
Front Line Hill 60	3.5
No Mans Land – Hill 60 France	3.6
O.P. Hill 60	3.7
Swank	3.8
Spello	3.9
Paddy and Dave in Bed	3.10
1 <sup>st</sup> Brigade Sports, France	3.11
Bill's Tourist Photographs	3.12
The Cover of the Album made by Bill and Dedicated to Jean	3.13
Private Bill Russell 56 <sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF, April 1916	3.14
Bill and Jean circa 1966	3.15

# *Abstract*

This thesis focuses on individual memory and personally held objects as an essential source of orientation and coherence in history. The primary theoretical aim of this thesis is to interrogate the contention that conventional public forms of history do not always reflect how individuals negotiate with the past publicly or privately. Through the use of oral testimony to explore the memories attached to the material culture people keep I will consider why particular objects become sites of memory for individuals, how their significance changes as succeeding generations inscribe them with new meanings and speculate on the ways in which the materiality of the objects can contribute to how different generations construct their own sense of the past. Using the interrelationship between the objects and memories which emerge from the interviews I will discuss the establishment of family and cultural traditions, why people invest objects with particular meanings, the role of gender in the keeping of objects and raise issues regarding the place of personal memory and privately held objects in public history and museology.