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Exploring the life of Griffith Taylor

The controversial life and colourful times of explorer, visionary and environmentalist Thomas Griffith Taylor will go on show at the National Library of Australia from 21 November.

Thomas Griffith Taylor: Prophet and Pariah, looks at how, as one of the 20th century's leading geographers, Taylor's treks not only took him far and wide but almost always into controversy.

The display will feature over 100 items, ranging from never-before-displayed medals to the ice axe and wind helmet he used in the Antarctic.

Coinciding with the exhibition is the new book *Griffith Taylor: Visionary, Environmentalist, Explorer*, by Carolyn Strange and Alison Bashford, published by the National Library. The authors tell how one of Taylor's colleagues from the University of Toronto described him as a "cyclone". Not only was it an apt portrayal of an academic who studied the relationship of humans to their environment, but it was also the perfect way to describe a person always on the move, leaving others in his wake.

After studying geology at the University of Sydney, Taylor earned himself a place on Captain Scott's Antarctic expedition of 1910-1913. And for the next 50 years he continued to explore, mainly as a geographer, earning both praise and scorn for his views.

Dr Strange, who is guest curator for the display, said she suspected there was a story in Taylor's work but it was not until she began researching him that she realised there was so much more. "We only had to open one box about him at the National Library before we knew that it wasn't just a story – it was a book."

Now Taylor's life comes alive through an equally fascinating exhibition.

Display Details:
***Thomas Griffith Taylor: Prophet and Pariah*, 21 November 2008 – 22 March 2009, Visitor Centre. Open daily. Free.**

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