AUSTRALIANA

AUGUST 1990

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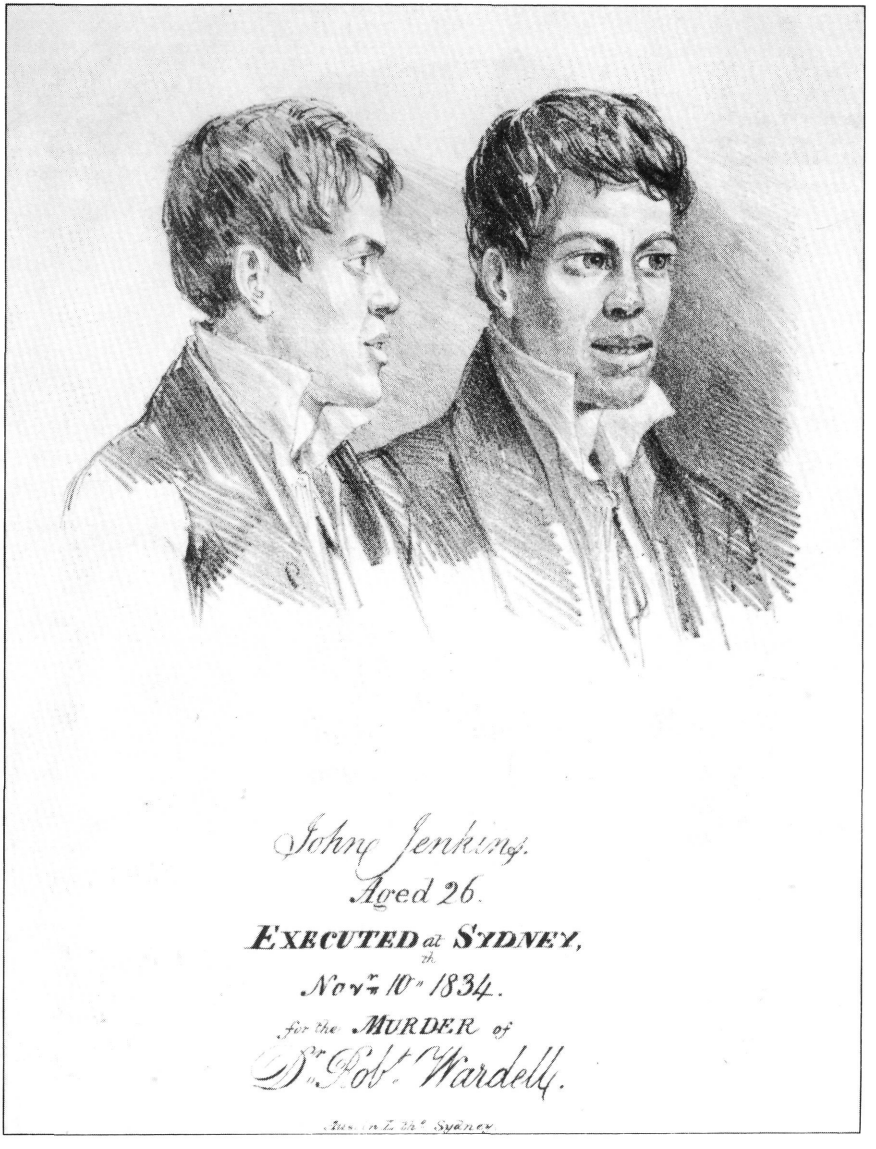

AUSTRALIANA
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To simplify the process of written communication with the Society the committee has agreed to maintain only a single address for all correspondence, including the submission of material for publication in *Australiana*.

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THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

PO BOX 322, ROSEVILLE 2069

SOCIETY PROGRAMME

MEETINGS

1990

THURSDAY, 4 OCTOBER

GUEST SPEAKER
JIM MARTIN
The Enjoyment of Australian Furniture

THURSDAY, 6 DECEMBER

GUEST SPEAKER
KEN CAVILL
Australian Jewellers, Gold and Silversmiths – Makers and their Marks.
Followed by a Christmas Party

EXCURSION SUNDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2pm

A unique opportunity to visit the studio of Brian Hirst, Australia's foremost exponent of blown and moulded glass and see a demonstration of his craft. Examples of his work will be available for purchase. Afternoon tea will be provided.

Society meetings are held at
7.30pm at the Glover Cottage Hall, 124 Kent Street, Sydney.
Convenient street parking.

The Australiana Society Incorporated

Financial Statements of Receipts and Expenditure

for the Year Ended 30th June 1990

General Account

Receipts		$	Expenditure	$
Opening Balance 1.7.89		4,253.72	Insurance	298.96
			Subscription RAHS	50.00
Subscriptions		6,792.00	Government Taxes	29.35
Donations		605.00	Postage	1,023.85
Grant to the Society from allocation of funds to the RAHS by the Ministry for Arts, NSW		250.00	Stationery	170.50
			Advertising	598.25
Bank Interest		97.82		
Auction Receipts		2,107.00	Auction Payments	1,900.80
Annual Dinner / Raffle		2,218.50	Annual Dinner Expenses	2,339.42
Excursions		382.00	Excursions Expenses	218.00
Sale of Kozminsky Catalogues		133.00	Transfer of funds to State Maximiser Account	1,000.00
Australiana Journal			*Australiana Journal*	
Sales of Back Issues	644.00		Production Costs	9,888.37
Advertising	3,388.00	4,032.00	Closing Balance 30.6.90	3,353.54
		20,871.04		20,871.04

Sydney Account

Opening Balance 1.7.89	927.63	Refreshments / Raffle Prizes	171.14
		Rent	600.00
Raffles	74.00	Government Taxes	5.36
Bank Interest	33.06	Closing Balance 30.6.909	258.19
	1,034.69		1,034.69

Investment Account – State Maximiser

Opening Balance 1.7.89	3,793.53	Government Taxes	.59
Transfer of funds from General Acct	1,000.00		
New Life Member	500.00		
Bank Interest	500.07	Closing Balance 30.6.90	5,793.01
	5,793.60		5,793.60

Current Assets as at 30.6.90

Cash at Bank	General Account	3,353.54	
	Sydney Account	258.19	
	Investment Account	5,793.01	9,404.74
Deposit	Glover Cottage Hall (Bond)		100.00
			9,504.74

G.W.K. Cavill
Hon Treasurer

The President's Report

The Society is now well established at Glover Cottage in Kent Street for its bi-monthly meetings. The Cottage is ideal – the right size, good facilities, a nineteenth century ambiance, central yet quiet, and with easy parking. Yet meeting attendances are at a significantly lower level than those obtained at Lawsons. Your Committee has so far been unable to suggest any changes in the format which might restore the members. Members' thoughts on this we sought, and we urge those who have not sampled the delights of Glover Cottage to join us there.

Two 'new' faces joined your Committee for 1989-90, John Morris and Les Carlisle. For 1990-91 not only were there no fresh nominees, but Robert Hutchinson, one of the founding members, stepped down. We thank him for his considerable efforts for the Society.

However, as we proceed into the new and last decade of the millenium I believe that new blood is needed on the Committee. But a renewed interest is also needed from members. A plateauing due to the harder times and the fading of bicentennial euphoria is not unexpected, but these factors alone do not, I believe, explain the poor attendances.

Society membership conveys three benefits – the Meeting, the Journal *Australiana* and enhanced opportunities for furthering one's knowledge and contact with others with like interests. I urge members to help us, your Committee, to help you to more fully realise these benefits.

Mike Darlow

Secretary's Report

What's new?

I would have to be honest and comment ... not very much is new!

The membership is static in numbers but we are replacing those who drop out with new members as a result of our membership drive through advertisement in Antique Journals.

The journal, *Australiana*, in its new format has encouraged people to write articles for us – we are actually four pages larger than last year, with less advertisements. Our advertisers have cut back on space and cost, as they consider their options to make every advertising dollar work. We do appreciate their support for the Society by continuing their advertisements when the return on their outlay is miniscule.

Our Annual Dinner at The Darling Mills Restaurant was very well attended and comments on the location and our Guest Speaker, John Wade, were complimentary in the extreme.

Our members enjoyed themselves at our outgoings to The Tank Stream and The Laperouse Museum. We don't make much money, but it is all a lot of fun!

So really nothing new, our usual high standard of articles in the journal, good speakers at our meetings which we all enjoy – the only thing we lack is more members – so bring a new member and double the enjoyment of it all!

Graham Cocks

Treasurer's Report

Financial Statements for the Year ended 30th June, 1990 are given on page 61. A change in format and additional economies introduced during the year, with the Committee's approval, have enabled the Society to hold publication costs for the Journal at $10,000 (approx.), that is at $2,500 per issue. However, postage costs have increased sharply. Your subscriptions represent only a little above 60% of the cost of publication and distribution of the Journal, the 'life-blood' of the Society.

Importantly, advertising and donations have enabled the Society to balance its General Account. The generosity of our advertisers and sponsors is greatly appreciated. It is also pleasing to note increased sales of back issues of *Australiana*.

The smaller non-subscription funded Sydney Account which meets the expenses of our Meetings at Glover Cottage shows a decline of some $650. Specific donations to the Sydney Account to help defray the rental of the Hall ($600 p.a.) would be most welcome.

Ken Cavill

Printmaking in Sydney 1800-1850

Richard Neville

For many Australians Conrad Martens is colonial art, a picturesque vision which does not capture the 'essence of the Australian landscape'. While Martens' Australia is seen as representative of colonial society as a whole, few Australians would have viewed his art because it could only be found in the homes of his patrons – the colonial elite.

Rather, particularly after 1830, most Sydneysiders would have been considerably more familiar with the work of Sydney printmakers whose images of the diversity of Sydney life were readily available in local bookshops.

Nearly all colonial artists, whether artisans like John Carmichael or sophisticated painters such as Martens, published – for most it was a major source of income. Sydney simply could not support an artist specialising in 'high art' work. Henry Carmichael's summation of the position of artists in Sydney is particularly apposite: 'the fine arts must evidently be practised here by men who depend for their support on the useful rather than the ornamental branches of labour.'[1]

This article will look at printmaking in Sydney between 1800 and 1850. It will offer only an overview of the large range of material produced, most of which now rests in the Mitchell Library and less extensively in the National Library in Canberra. The focus will be on the 1830s and 1840s, which is a poorly documented, but prolific period, of colonial printmaking.[2]

There are two distinct periods of print production in Sydney before 1850.

Before 1825 printmaking technology and the print market was limited: subject matter did not go beyond natural history illustration and topographical views. Prints were expensive and marketed at the colonial elite. After 1825, however, all kinds of new technologies began arriving in Sydney which allowed the quick and easy production of prints. They were generally cheap, often – though by no means always – comparatively unsophisticated, and covered a wide range of subjects, mostly to do with urban events and affairs. Yet they are not the 'workers art' for all classes of society seem to have bought these prints, and indeed some would have been too expensive for many colonists.

Until 1800, when natural history artist and engraver John Lewin emigrated to Sydney, it was impossible to have a pictorial image engraved in the colony. It was only marginally easier after his arrival. Lewin came to New South Wales intending to publish in the colony his own drawings of its natural history. He bought out etching implements and presumably a press and proceeded to etch a number of plates for his two books *Prodromus Entomology* (1805) and *Birds of New Holland* (1808). Both of these, however, were published in England because Lewin found the colonial printing technology too limiting and primitive. On the voyage out his ink was destroyed (he had to concoct his own formula from local materials), he was troubled by a lack of paper and he soon ran out of the copper plates he had brought with him from England.[3]

Although there were a number of letterpress printers working in Sydney in the early 1800s there was no technical infrastructure to support a pictorial printer. Lewin had abandoned his etching by as early as 1804 but he continued to sell his fine natural history watercolours, often, like so many other colonial artists who had no means of reproducing their work graphically, making multiple copies of the same design. In 1813 he managed to publish locally *Birds of New South Wales*, compiled, it would seem, from trial or cast-off pulls taken in New South Wales of the plates of his 1808 *Birds...* and from plates not used in the first edition. The letterpress, naive and scientifically unsatisfactory, for *Birds of New South Wales* was pleasingly printed by George Howe, the Government Printer. Lewin's ambitions, interweaving natural history and printmaking, were frustrated as much by the difficulties of printmaking here, as they were by the slump in the natural history market in Europe.

The first colonial publications depended upon the personal initative of their publishers to organise their issue. There was no infrastructure or technical support available to publishers and therefore it was a constant struggle to find the materials and people to actually produce and engrave a publication. The colony was small, and still principally a convict settlement and while there were nearly as many jailors as jailed the market was obviously small; though not disinterested, in 1805 for instance Lewin managed to attract 55 Sydney subscribers to his *Birds of New Holland*. But it was for this audience, rather than the general populace, that these prints were aimed.

While Lewin prepared *Birds of New Holland*, Absalom West, an emancipist brewer, was organising *Views in New South Wales*, issued over a two year period from 1812 to 1814. West arranged for the eman-

cipist John Eyre, convict Richard Browne and the free Lewin to provide a number of topographical drawings of Sydney and its satellite settlements such as Windsor, the Hawkesbury and Newcastle. The plates were engraved by the convict engravers Philip Slaeger and William Preston. The images took the viewer on a grand tour which revealed the sites of British enterprise in the new land. They were very much about the transformation of 'unoccupied' land into a productive resource.

Although apparently a successful publication, *Views in New South Wales* was by no means cheap: West charged nine pounds for the eventual 22 plates which clearly placed them above the reach of the 'average' wage earner.

Nor was its production without difficulties: The *Sydney Gazette* claimed, possibly exaggerating, that the press used in the production of the *Views*.. had to be made in the colony by someone who had never before seen such a machine.[4] It was certainly not the only copperplate press in the colony for John Lewin owned one, which he advertised for sale in 1810.[5]

The next publication actually compiled in the colony, Captain James Wallis' *An Historical Account of the Colony of New South Wales*, was first conceived in 1817 but not published in Sydney until 1819. Again a collection of views, *An Historical Account* consisted of twelve plates – six large and six small. The large plates, although it is by no means certain, were probably the work of the artist Joseph Lycett, in spite of the legend on the plates which attributes them to Wallis. Wallis, who had been Commandant of the convict settlement at Newcastle and consequently the jailor of both Lycett and the engraver of the plates (said to have been made from ships copper) William Preston, included a number of views of that settlement which revealed the benefits of his extensive public works program and benign administration.

The plates, without legend or letterpress, were advertised in the *Sydney Gazette* in January 1819 at £4 a set. Soon afterwards Wallis left for England with the plates where they were republished by Rudolph Ackerman with a letterpress.

The topographical works of West and Wallis are very much traditional eighteenth century publications. The choice of subjects, the composition of the drawings and the very engraving techniques were all derived from similar English late eighteenth century topographical publications.

Augustus Earle's lithographed *Views in Australia* of 1826 was much more of the ninteenth century. Showing considerable prescience, in 1822 Governor Brisbane had brought out two lithographic presses for his astronomers. One of these came into Earle's hands. Before he left Sydney in 1828 Augustus Earle tried to sell the press to the Colonial Government but Thomas Mitchell vetoed the idea, wondering at its practicality because 'success in Lithography is precarious without a lithographic printer' – the implication being that such person could not be found in the colony.[6]

Earle's ambitious, but ultimately unsuccessful, use of lithography was particularly adventurous because the medium only gained widespread acceptance in England since 1820. As Earle was unfamiliar with the process, and was unable to call on expert printers to help him, he abandoned his idea of a series of views after he had printed only four.

Because of the weakness of the printed impression, his lithographs relied on watercolour washes to bring out the image. Earle's first pictorial offering with the new technique was a portrait print, after his own small oil portrait, of the well known Aborigine Bungaree which sold for five shillings.[7] This was the first of numerous images of Bungaree published in Sydney – his likeness circulated amongst Sydney printmakers for at least 15 years after his death in 1830.

The late 1820s saw the broadening of the capabilities of the local printing industry. *Sydney Gazette* readers were reminded in 1829 that there are several good painters and engravers in Sydney, and that bank plates, shop bills, silver plate, arms, lettering, cards, &c, and all that is technically named job work may be executed here with as much beauty and accuracy as in any provincial town in Britain.[8]

Certainly new emigrants, such as William Wilson, Gregory Hazard or the deaf and dumb John Carmichael, allowed for a wider provision of services yet these were principally limited to copperplate, commercial work. The exception to this was Carmichael's *Select Views in Sydney* of 1829, a series views of the town of Sydney. Carmichael intended to follow *Select Views*.. with another series on the picturesque spots of the colony, but as this did not eventuate and given that by the end of the year he was applying for a position in the Surveying Department, one must assume that the publication was not a success.

Printmaking in the 1830s and 1840s was a very different proposition. By then the whole economic structure of the colony had changed; between 1821 and 1850 130,000 people amongst them skilled artists, engravers and printers – disembarked at Sydney. Between 1834 and 1836 for example important printmakers and entrepreneurs such as John Austin, William Baker, Edward Barlow, William Fernyhough and William Nicholas all arrived in Sydney.[9] Their fellow emigrants provided the other ingredient for growth – a greatly expanded market.

Similarly the flow of capital into

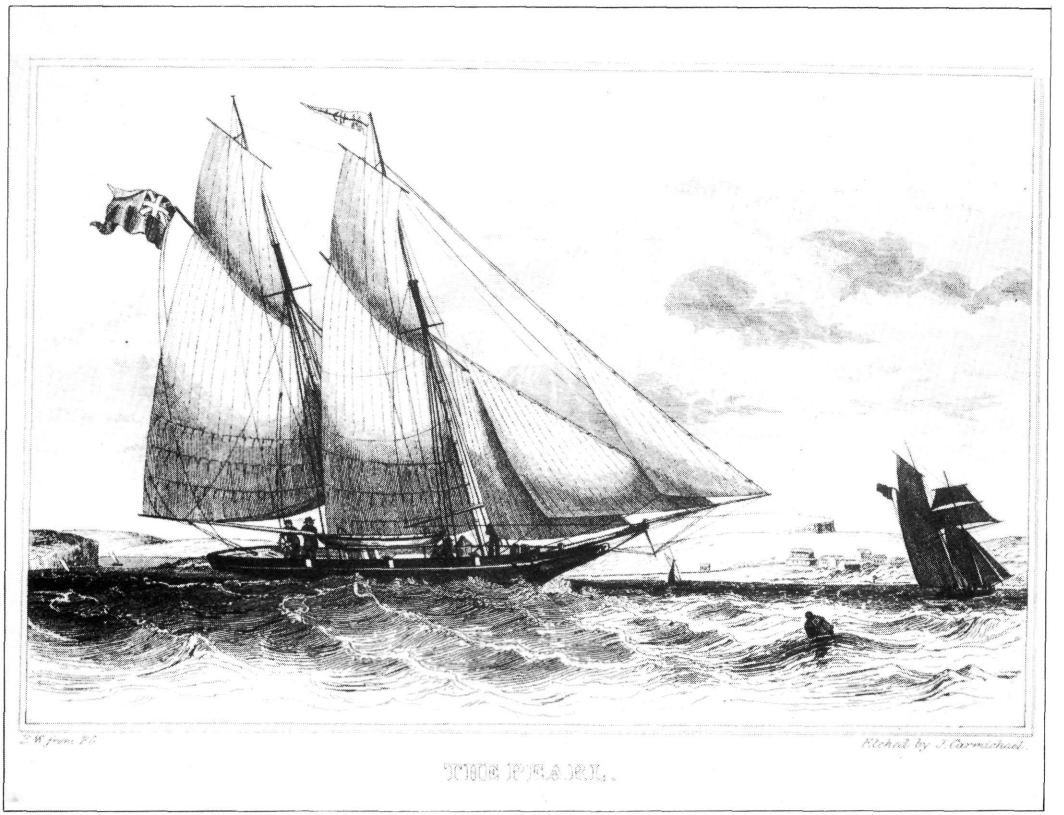
Membership ticket Mechanics School of Arts, etching 1837. John Carmichael – Engraver. Courtesy Mitchell Library.

the colony enabled new printing technology – both in terms of equipment and technique – to be imported.

The effect was twofold. Now a printing industry could be established which centered on actual printing businesses rather than individuals with initiative. This meant that prints could be much more readily produced on the new presses and therefore a wide range of material – not just simply the occasional topographical publication – could be published.

Sydney artists could now respond to local events almost as soon as they happened. In 1834 for instance the death of the popular Jamaican water bailiff Billy Blue drew three quick portrait engravings – one lithograph, one etching and one wood cut. Ten years earlier that would have been impossible. Prints produced in Sydney generally illustrated contemporary events, such as murders, sporting feats, heros, disasters, salacious gossip, portraits of aborigines or simply general views of Sydney, its public buildings and the Harbour. They either appeared as single sheets, in collections loosely bound together within a cover or from the 1840s onwards in illustrated newspapers such as *Bells Life in Sydney, New South Wales Sporting Magazine* or *Australian Sportsman*. Many of these images were intended only to respond to contemporary events and, having little relevence after the event had passed, were often just simply thrown away.

As I suggested above nearly all Sydney artists and artisans were involved in some sort of printmaking. To survive in Sydney meant being able to offer a diverse range of artistic services. Although trained as an engraver, Carmichael also advertised his willingness to take miniatures (from two to five guineas), paint transparent window blinds to order, copy landscapes and execute all kinds of fancy work.[10] Yet during his long career in Sydney Carmichael was known

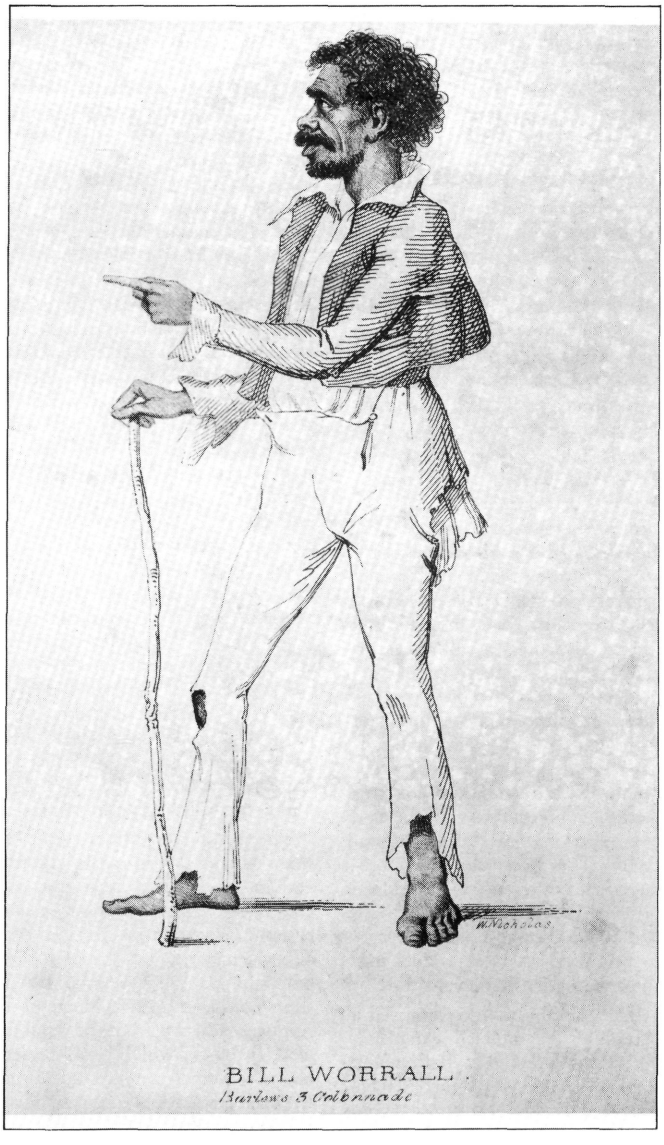


The Pearl after Frederick Garling. John Carmichael – Engraver and Edward Winstanley, October 1948. Etching from New South Wales Sporting Magazine. Courtesy Mitchell Library.

as one of the town's foremost engravers. Probably one of his principal sources of income was the composition and execution of bill heads, trade cards and general designs for institutions such as the Mechanics School of Arts.

While Carmichael is considered an artisan, an artist like the colonially trained animal painter Edward Winstanley, who contributed works to the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts Exhibitions, also appears to have supplemented his income by providing the illustrations for the *New South Wales Sporting Magazine.* Interestingly in the 1847 exhibition catalogue Winstanley's address was given as J.T. Grocott's, whose gallery was perhaps the major promoter of colonial art in Sydney in the later half of the 1840s. For Martens the publication of a number of pencil sketches (which he sold individually at 10s each) in *Sketches in the Environs of Sydney* relieved the pressure induced by the collapse of the market for his paintings. He wrote in 1850, 'I am indeed much disheartened about painting. There is no sale for anything in that way. Small drawings and lithographs and teaching have been of late the only way of raising a little cash.'[11]

William Nicholas, now better known for his finely rendered watercolour portraits of bourgeois colonists, was probably trained as a lithographic draughtsman. In 1838 he published lithographed portraits of Governor Bourke, an actress, and Mary, an aboriginal woman. Before his bankruptcy in 1843 he appears to have been planning a series of portraits of Aborigines.



Bill Worrall. Lithograph – William Nicholas c1840. Courtesy National Library of Australia.

An entrepreneurial artist could quickly capitalise upon a newsworthy event. Only a number of days after the trial of John Jenkins for the murder of Dr. Wardell in November 1834, Charles Rodius had a profile portrait drawing of Jenkins ready for publication.[12]

Others, like the wood engraver Thomas Clayton, appear to have worked solely providing the designs (often copied from English magazines) and wood engravings for papers like the *Australian Sportsman* and *Bell's Life in Sydney*. Robert Russell, who provided the drawings for Austin's *A Series of Lithographic Drawings of Sydney*, was an architect and surveyor by training, and clearly had no intention of abandoning that career. Thomas Balcombe, who made a number of prints and was considered a professional artist, spent nearly all his working life as a full time employee of the Surveyor-Generals Department. It can be seen, therefore, that a wide range of people, from artists to artisans to skilled amateurs, were involved, for quite disparate reasons, in the production of prints in Sydney.

'High art' engravings were all imported, and it was generally considered, because Sydney was a provincial town with a provincial taste, that these were the provenance of European printmakers. Indeed Sydney printmakers simply did not have the facilities to match the finest work of their European counterparts. By the 1830s 'high art' European paintings and engravings were readily available in the city's auction houses and book stores: respectable housholds would have had at least some European engravings on their walls. Apart from the more sophisticated such as Prout's *Sydney Illustrated* (although issued in four parts, it was supposed to be bound), locally produced prints were most likely kept, if kept at all, separate and loose, or pasted into a scrap book.

The stimulus for the expansion of printmaking, which effectively means lithography, in Sydney was the printer John G. Austin who emigrated here in 1834. He was a printer, versed in the art of lithography, rather than a printmaker. It was after Austin imported at least one lithographic press (probably more), and the knowledge of how to use it, that colonial artists were able to take full advantage of the system. Austin published Charles

Rodius' series of portraits of Aborigines (1834), Robert Russell's *A Series of Lithographic Drawings of Sydney and its Environs* (1836) and Fernyhough's *A Series of Twelve Profile Portraits of the Aborigines* and *Military and Editorial Sketches* (both 1836). Austin also acted as an agent for the work produced on his presses. Lithography soon became the most important reproductive medium in the colony. Austin was quick to engage knowledgeable people: soon after William Fernyhough arrived in Sydney in 1836 he was working for Austin. Austin capitalised on Fernyhough's familiarity with zincography, adding that technique to his list of services.

Austin's firm, which was taken over by Edward Barlow in 1837, provided a whole range of services. No entrepreneurial printer/publisher – William Baker or Raphael Clint are other examples – issued just pictorial images: this kind of work was always a segment of broader commercial job work such as bill heads [13] and straight letter press printing. Austin's advertisement from the *Sydney Times* of 10 December 1836 best reveals the scope of his business:

'J G Austin & Co Engravers, Zincographic, Lithographic and Copperplate Printers. Printsellers, Publishers and Stationers. No 12 Bridge Street. Drawings, Maps, Plans of Estates, Circular Letters, Facsimiles, Bill heads, Cards, Law terms, Labels, etc etc., Engraved, Lithographed or Zincographed. Picture Frames made, Prints, Maps etc., coloured, mounted and varnished. Door Plates engraved.

Profiles taken at the following charges viz:

Full length	(bronzed)	£1.0.0
	(tinted in white)	15.0
Half Length	"	5.0
	(bronzed)	7.6

Persons desirous of furnishing their Friends with a rememberance can have them drawn in stone (in other words lithographed) full length £1, half length 10s 6d and as many copies as they may require at 1s each. On hand:

Forms of all kinds etc.

Sixteen views of Sydney in cover, coloured £1.10s, plain 10s.

Twelve Profile Portraits of the Aborigines, drawn from life in cover 10s 6d.

Those who wish to send their friends at home a triffle characteristic of the colony will find both the views and Profiles (from their correctness) are acceptable presents.

A variety of Profiles of Sydney characters 1s each.'

It is evident that Austin, and Barlow too, were trying to cater to the broad community, both in terms of views and portraiture. Profiles were perhaps the cheapest form of portraiture available. Samuel Clayton, an engraver better known as a silversmith, was, in 1817, the first to advertise his willingness to take profiles.[14] Fernyhough's particular skill was in profile portraiture – his lithographed profiles of Aborigines and of prominent Sydney men was a logical, but unusual, fusion of the simplicity of this method of portraiture with the ease of production occasioned by lithography. The vastly improved productivity of the newly developed printing technologies of the 1820s and 1830s allowed printing images to penetrate far more widely into the community than ever before.

The printing industry enjoyed a period of unparalleled expansion during the late 1830s. Barlow and Raphael Clint both claimed to have imported lithographic printers from England to cope with the demand.[15] In 1839 Clint advertised that he had engaged 'at his establishment, the services of MR JOHN CARMICHAEL, so long known as a first rate Copperplate Engraver.'[16] Much of this business was commercial, yet the expanding base of the industry can have only helped the printmakers.

The optimism of the late 1830s evaporated with the onset of the depression of the 1840s. Both Nicholas and Fernyhough went bankrupt in the early 1840s, while Clint – although still active in the first half of the decade – was declared insolvent in 1847. Barlow appears to have left Sydney by 1844. The momentum established by the activities of the mid-1830s well and truly dissipated. Of course lithographs still appeard, both as single prints and major productions such as *Sydney Illustrated.* What was missing was the bombast and confidence of the 1830s. Now complaints were heard about the difficulties of making good lithographic prints in Sydney. In 1842 Prout, for instance, despaired of ever receiving proper lithographic printing paper for his *Sydney Illustrated,* compromising, he thought, the quality of his work. In 1850 Martens wrote 'Unfortunately there is no good printer in Sydney and much work remains to be done by me afterwards in order to hide his clumsiness.'[17] Martens' printer was John Allan, who had served his apprenticeship with Clint, and presumably was one of the first colonially trained lithographic printers.

The tentative introduction of wood engravings into the colony perhaps reflects the uncertainty of an industry so distant from its parent infrastructure in Europe. Wood engraving was, like lithography, a graphic technique with a short European history. Huge print runs were possible from the durable wooden blocks which could be set amongst formes of type – ideal for the mass circulation European illustrated newspapers that began to utilise the idea in the 1830s.

Wood engravings had appeared very occasionally in the *Sydney Gazette* during the 1830s: a concerted attempt, however, to establish illustrated newspapers in Sydney was not made until the early 1840s. At first magazines such as the *Weekly Register* and *Arden's Syd-*

Ombres Fantastiques. Lithograph – William Fernyhough c1836. Courtesy Mitchell Library.

ney Magazine simply published often crude portrait engravings of prominent Sydney identities.

The crudity of the engravings highlighted a major problem: a lack of trained wood engravers. *Arden's Sydney Magazine* engaged an engraver named Sheppard to cut Nicholas' 'faithful likeness' of Benjamin Boyd. Sheppard, it was alleged, was 'a self-educated wood cutter',from whom of course, neither a finished nor a very good engraving is to be expected.'[18] The proprietor of the *Weekly Register* abandoned his illustrated 'Heads of the Australian People' series because of the difficulties of procuring good wood engravers.[19] The most proficient wood engraver in Sydney was Thomas Clayton. When the *Spectator* noted his engraving of Winstanley's drawing of the racehorse Jorrocks in 1846, it commented:

'In adverting to this engraving we cannot but express our regret that an artist of Mr Clayton's merit should meet with so small of public patronage as falls to his lot. It is seldom that we see specimens of his art published in Sydney, although we have no hesitation in saying that his wood-cuts will bear honourable comparison with those of London artists of celebrity.'[20]

From about this time onwards Clayton was regularly employed by illustrated newspapers. William Baker used Clayton's services throughout the publication of his *Heads of the People* of 1847-48, which also drew on the work of Nicholas (he drew most of the 'heads'), Rodius, Carmichael and Balcombe. Clayton also provided many of the engravings for the *Australian Sportsman* as well as sporadically working for *Bells Life in Sydney*. From the late 1840s papers could be reasonably expected to be illustrated with wood engravings.

Thus far this account has dwelt on the mechanics of printmaking in Sydney. This history, however, does not exist separately from the images themselves. As I suggested at the beginning of this article these prints were probably (for how can such a concept be acccurately quantified?) the means by which most Sydney-siders were engaged with the visual documentation of their environment.

Because a society is a complex community the aspirations of its constituents will always have different representations. When Martens arrived in Sydney in 1835 the *Australian* excitedly commented that he was looking for the picturesque: from his ready acceptance by the colonial elite one assumes they shared his enthusiasm.[21] Yet at the same time Robert Russsell's dramatic lithographs, mediaevalising the few gothic structures he could locate in the colony, were being published by Austin, while most of the 43 plates in James Macelhose's *Picture of Sydney and Strangers Guide to New South Wales* (1838-39) painted a literal brick by brick picture of the town's most important and substantial buildings. Each of the three was working towards a different clientele. Martens' niche was the colonial elite, Macelhose's the emigrant wanting a literal depiction – suggesting its worth – of their new town and Russell's the general view market. Printed images, therefore, suggest the various nuances – often overlooked – of colonial visual culture. Like all images, prints were part of the way Sydney expressed itself, and circulated ideas about current issues. In broad terms there were two types of prints made in Sydney. On the one hand were topographical and very popular ethnographic publications which were supposed to reveal to an imagined European audience the improvements, progress and situation of the colony. These were 'serious' productions, often attracting considered reviews in the local press. On the other hand were prints which depicted solely local affairs such as murders, sporting occasions or topical events. They did not have a currency much beyond the event to which they immediately referred – such images often go under the generic name of ephemeral prints.

I will now briefly look at both broad categories of prints. The truism – that a picture is worth a thousand words – was a colonial truism as much as a twentieth century one. When Alexander Riley wrote to his brother from England in 1820 that 'It has long been a subject of our conversation in this country that a Panorama exhibited in London of the town of Sydney and surrounding Scenery would create much public interest and ultimately be of service to the Colony by drawing towards it public consideration and attention.'[22]

He was expressing the *raison d'être* of nearly all colonially published views. Riley's concern to enlighten the English was one shared by many colonials. Press reviews of colonial publications, and the publishers themselves, made it clear that the works were intended as much for the family and friends 'at home' as they were for local consumption. Most colonists did not feel alienated from England – on the contrary, for many aspirations and futures were closely linked with the promotion of New South Wales. Through-out colonial society permeated a dual patriotism: for Australia and for the British stock which had settled the land.

Carmichael suggested that his *Select Views of Sydney* of 1829 would provide English people who still persisted with the notion that Sydney was 'little better than a vast prison for the very outcasts of society' with a 'reasonable idea of the actual state of the colony'. Colonists felt deeply that their adopted land and its future were wrongly associated with the indignity in its origins as a convict settlement. This was the nexus that colonial printmakers were arguing against. Whereas the views of West and Wallis had shown readers Sydney and its satellite settlements, the publications of the 1830s and 1840s tended to concentrate solely on Sydney, and more particularly on its more substantial public buildings. Colonists appear to have equated bricks and mortar with moral worth: a well built Sydney was the most obvious indicator of a flourishing town. This attitude can most clearly be seen in the intricate delineation of Sydney buildings in Joseph Fowles' *Sydney in 1848*. Fowles considered facts and figures the most accurate rebuttal of English slander. Such a philosophy can be seen also in the numerous single prints published of the much admired gothic grandeur of the new Government House.

Not all colonial artists were as single minded as Fowles. Prout's *Sydney Illustrated,* issued in four parts between 1842 and 1844, was received not simply as a topographical publication, although the element was recognised, but was elevated to the higher realms of a 'work of art'. A more elaborate, and consequently more expensive, publication, *Sydney Illustrated* was widely discussed in the press. The *New South Wales Examiner,* for instance, felt that which ever way the book was regarded 'whether as publishing to strangers, the beauties of our adopted country, or as showing them the high state of the arts among us – or as simply furnishing our drawing room tables with a series of beautiful lithographic drawings of the land we live in, it is well deserving of support.'[23]

Prout eschewed the literal approach, and instead made the harbour the focus of his illustration, presenting for the first time in local publication, the landscape as a site of pleasure and relaxation. Indeed the ubiquitous grass, trees and Aboriginal figures, so much a fea-

ture of earlier images, were often displaced in these drawings by a picturesque goat or a gothic fence post. The fact that Sydney could be moulded into a picturesque beauty spot was a matter of pride for colonists, proving that Sydney was 'something more than a congregation of wooden houses in the midst of scrub and brush.'[24]

Aborigines, dispossessed from Prout's lithographs, were the most numerous and recurrent subject matter for colonial printmakers. Since first contact Europeans had keenly recorded Aboriginal culture, and most books about Australia devoted considerable text to discussions about Aborigines. By the 1830s Aborigines, no longer any threat but most obvious through incidences of wildly dissolute behaviour, became a curiosity to a whole new class of emigrants. Although the local press often discussed the 'Aboriginal Question' – debating, for example, the question of landrights – there is little doubt that most Europeans, even if not outright hostile, were certain of their own cultural (and in most cases physical) superiority. A sense of cultural infallibility can be just as dangerous as pure hatred. Despite this there was still a strong vestige of ethnographic interest in the Aborigines.

As mentioned above the first portrait print published in Australia was Earle's lithograph of Bungaree. Bungaree, like so many black men in England, turned to humour as a method of survival in Sydney. It is interesting to note that the famous contemporary black English beggar Billy Waters, 'the King of the Beggars', was also given cast-off uniforms by military officers. Possibly the Sydney military cast Bungaree into the same mould.

Rodius also chose to illustrate Bungaree in his first lithograph of 1830 (now in the Mitchell Library). However Rodius is better known for his particularly fine series of seven lithographic portraits published in 1834.

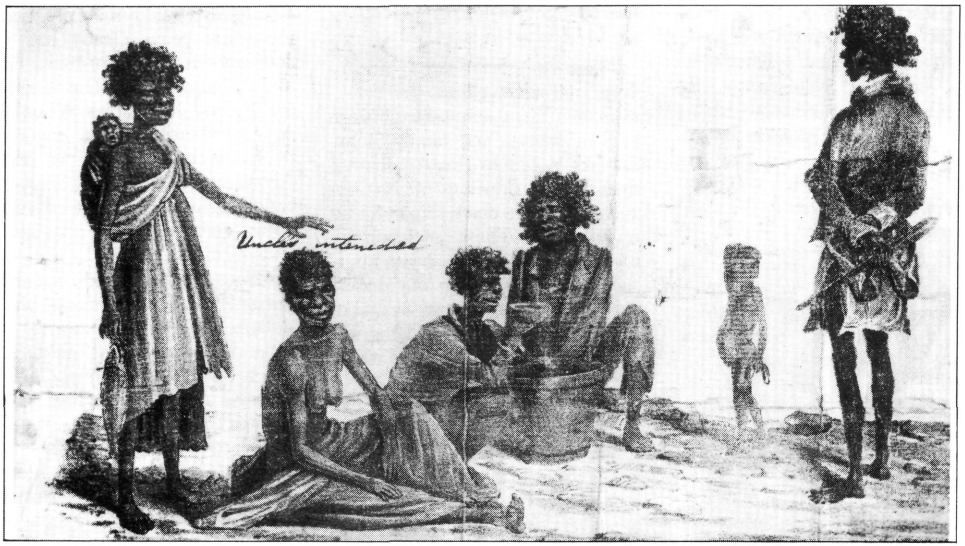
These expertly rendered portraits were well received by the press, who sited them as suitable gifts for English friends and family. John Lhotsky noted in the *Art Journal* that Rodius' drawings of 'Natives and scenery are much sought for by travellers.'[25] These melancholic (an emotion engendered with hindsight?) lithographs jar our understanding of black history as one of dissolution – possibly Rodius was suggesting the potential of these healthy Aboriginal people to be 'civilised'. Similar sentiments can be read into Nicholas' 1842 series of Aboriginal portraits. Here the poses confront the viewer in a way that his fairly insipid European sitters never did.

By far the most enduring images were Fernyhough's *A Series of Twelve Profile Portraits of the Aborigines* which were published first in 1836, but were republished well into the 1840s on numerous occasions, sometimes in reworked editions such as Nicholas' reinterpretation of *Bill Worrall* for Barlow, as well as being used as illustrations in some travel books. They were not caricatures, but rather pseudo-scientific explorations of phrenological character, seen by the press as striking likenesses eminently suitable to be sent home to England. I have no doubt that Fernyhough intended the work as a serious – within the confines of phrenological science – record of Aboriginal people. It was then widely believed that the size and shape of various parts of the brain determined an individual's character. The formation of the brain was revealed on the cranium and hence it was possible to read a person's character simply through looking at the contours of the skull. For any one of the thousands of people familiar with this popular science Fernyhough's lithographs would have enabled them to read the skull – and probably conclude that Aborigines could not be 'civilised'. Some Europeans clearly had no doubts about the flow of civilisation to Aboriginal people. The design of the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts membership ticket, engraved by Carmichael, shows two adult Aborigines, in an attitude of supplication, before Britannia who is supported on either side by a kangaroo and an emu.

Opposed to this pseudo-scientific documentation were images which did not hide their distaste for the more dissolute asspects of Aboriginal behaviour, implying that this was the norm. These lithographs such as *Uncles Intended* or *Scene on the Streets of Sydney*, published first by Austin and later Barlow, had no identifying text but simply relied on the basic image of Aborigines drinking and fighting (the source for the composition of many of these images was a plate in Earle's 1830 plate book *Views in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*) to arouse hostility. Because of their simplicity they could become a focus for all arguments of a white and racist Australia.

This type of lithograph was probably intended for local circulation. Many other prints were also published for this market, yet few were as basic. Most dealt with themes already established by popular English prints.

Sensational murders in Sydney generated a number of prints. Rodius' double portrait of the convicted murderer John Jenkins was published soon after the trial had ended. Unlike the crude English catchpenny murder sheet in which accuracy of the image was irrelevant (the same image could be used for any number of murderers), Rodius has provided the viewer with a profile of Jenkins which he no doubt expected to be read in the way that Fernyhough assumed his lithographs of Aborigines would be approached. More than likely colonists would have been tempted to deduce the cast of the criminal



Uncle's Intended. Charles Rodius, lithograph c1834. Courtesy National Library of Australia.

mind from this image. Rodius made other lithographs of murderers: his print of John Knatchbull was published by Baker in 1844.

Sport caused a number of images to be published, again very much in the precedents established by English printmaking. Noting Winstanley's *A Hunting Scene* in the 1847 Society for the Promotion of Fine Arts Exhibition one critic commented that the painting was executed in the style of coloured engravings of similar subjects in England. Given that Winstanley's art education was entirely Australian this is hardly surprising. The quality of sporting prints, and their sophistication varied enormously. Illustrated newspapers were content to use generalised images which only implied the event being depicted, rather than suggesting a literal depiction of the actual scene. On the other hand Balcombe and Winstanley's four lithograph *The Five Dock Grand Steeple-Chase, 1844* claims to be a truthful depiction of actual events. Winstanley was also involved in the production of the engraving of *The Pearl* which appeared in the *New South Wales Sporting Magazine*. The drawing from which engraving, by Carmichael, was taken was made by Frederick Garling.

A vast range of other material – satirical cartoons, billheads etc, too numerous to list, issued from Sydney presses. Many portraits of prominent men were published, for instance, such as politicians, governors and explorers. Some were elaborate productions; others, such as Fernyhough's *Military and Editorial Sketches,* were cheap (1s) profile portraits, similar to those of the Aborigines, but which were intended solely for local audience. Unlike his Aboriginal portraits, Fernyhough did not identify these prints, forcing the reader to make the association. They were not intended to bear the same scrutiny as the Aboriginal portraits. Another unusual project initiated by Fernyhough were his two lithographs of profile vignettes of local scenes, which were published under the name of *Ombres Fantastiques.* Possibly he hoped these would reveal his skills as a profile artist – it is interesting that in this format Fernyhough feels comfortable in introducing a convict chain gang. It was only in a cheap print that he could mention the stigma of convicts.

I have given a brief outline, skirting over the range and depth of material published – of some of the main issues in early Sydney printmaking. Yet it is important that the subject itself be not ignored for printmaking was a vital part – oil paintings, watercolours and drawings should be also recalled here – of the visual culture of colonial Sydney. Indeed colonial printmakers were central to the creation of ideas amongst colonists as to the identity of Sydney and their response to its landscape and indigenous peoples. These prints are no more inherently truthful than Martens, however, simply because they lack his artifice. Printmakers were operating in a visual culture which provided its own systems of readings and signifiers. Colonial printmakers did not simply mirror colonial society, but were rather actively engaged in the creation of its myths.

References

1. *New South Wales Magazine*, March 1834, p.214.
2. For a more substantial discussion see my Masters thesis *Printmakers in Colonial Sydney 1800-1850*, Sydney University, 1988. The complete biographical and bibliographic history of this period has yet to be written. Jonathan Wantrup's *Australian Rare Books*, Hordern House 1987, also provides good bibliographic histories, even if some of his detail is not not always accurate.
3. For Lewin's own description of his problems see his letters to Dru Drury 1801-1803. Copies of the letters, owned by the British Museum, are held by the Mitchell Library ML MSS A-358-1.
4. *Sydney Gazette*, 28 March 1812.
5. *Sydney Gazette*, 27/10/1810.
6. Eve Buscombe, *Artists in Early Australia and their Portraits*, Sydney 1979, p.67.
7. See the *Sydney Gazette* 23/8/1826 p.2; *Sydney Monitor* 11/8/1826 p.98. Copies of the lithograph can be found in the Mitchell Library at P 2/4 and Dixon Library at Pe 11.
8. *Sydney Gazette*, 27 July 1829.
9. Biographies of the first four can be found in Joan Kerr ed., *Dictionary of Australian Artists*, 1984. Roger Butler, of the Australian National Gallery, has established links between this John Austin and the earlier convict engraver John Austin.
10. *Sydney Gazette*, 10/12/1828.
11. Martens to his brother Henry, 13/9/1850, Dixon Library MSS 142 p.124-26.
12. *Sydney Gazette*, 13/11/1834.
13. For billheads see James Broadbent, 'Early Australian Trade Cards', *Australian Antique Collector*, 20th ed., 1980.
14. *Sydney Gazette*, 4/1/1817.
15. *Australian* 20/4/1838; 24/4/1838 p.3; 4/5/1838 p.3.
16. *Sydney Standard*, 17/6/1839 p.1.
17. Martens *Correspondence* DL MSS 144, transcript p.5.
18. *Sydney Record*, 7/10/1843 p.4.
19. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30/10/1843 p.3.
20. *Spectator*, 24/10/1846.
21. *Australian*, 4/8/1835 p.3.
22. Riley Papers, Mitchell Library, A110 p.15.
23. *New South Wales Examiner*, 29/7/1842.
24. *Australian*, 3/8/1841 p.2.
25. See Bernard Smith, *Documents on Art and Taste in Australia*, 1975, p74.

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Book Review

Ninteenth Century Australian Silver
By J. B. Hawkins Antique Collectors' Club Ltd, Suffolk, 1990. $295

John Hawkins earlier book: "Australian Silver, 1800-1900" was produced in 1973 with the co-operation of Kevin Fahy and Marjorie Graham as biographers, and with access to the records of the late F.N. Hodges on Victorian silversmiths. The co-operative venture, published by the National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) provided information on fifty Australian silversmiths, largely from New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Sixty black and white illustrations, plus a list of hand drawn marks representing over fifty makers were included. The book became a reference volume for collectors and dealers alike.

The book also served as a catalogue – the price was only $3.00 – for an exhibition of close on 200 items of Australian silver, held in Sydney at "Lindesay" in 1973. Interest was certainly aroused in 19th century colonial silver.

"Australian Silver, 1800-1900" was preceded by, and complemented, the 1969 publication: "19th Century Australian Gold and Silver Smiths" by Kurt Albrecht, which had provided a trained silversmith's insight into our colonial makers and their *modus operandi*. Both publications have been out-of-print for some years.

The major task that John Hawkins began shortly after the publication of his earlier book has come to fruition with the publication of "Ninteenth Century Australian Silver".

The two volumes comprise 600 pages of text and verbatum descriptions of 19th century presentation silverware, as printed and illustrated in Australian newspapers and journals of the day, together with 529 black and white, and 85 colour plates. Further the appendicies on Engravers, on Ninteenth Century Exhibitions containing Australian Silver, and an index of Silversmith's Marks – in all some 130 pages – complete the second volume.

The volumes contain an extraordinary wealth of information gleaned by the author and his researchers. Data are now available on more than 150 silversmiths, predominantly from N.S.W., Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. During the 1980s much research on the early silversmiths of N.S.W. and Tasmania was published in *Australiana* (formerly the *Australiana Society Newsletter*), and in the *Australian Antique Collector*.

These contributions by Kevin Fahy, John Houstone, J. Warwick James, Peter Mercer, B. Y. O'Driscoll and others, have been incorporated in the text.

Tasmania's convict silversmiths have been given the attention they clearly deserve. The author's hypothesis that Joseph Forrester, transported to Tasmania in 1829, was the maker of an intriguing group of snuff boxes, presented in the 1830s and 1840s, is tenable.

The chapter on South Australian silversmiths is noteworthy, and the author has acknowledged the outstanding contribution of Dick Phillips in this area.

John Hawkins' proposition that Schomburgk collaborated with Wendt, and Firnhaber with Steiner, in the production of important items of South Australian presentation silverware will no doubt stimulate further research. Little had been published on Julius Schomburgk prior to the present account of this gifted silversmith.

One silversmith has been described from Queensland, namely Charles A. Brown, and none from Western Australia. The majority of makers in Western Australia are likely to belong to the 20th rather than the 19th century, even so information is emerging on early makers in Western Australia (see recent articles by Dorothy Erickson in *Australiana*).

It is pleasing to note the comprehensive biographies presented for William Edwards of Melbourne and London, Edward Fischer of Geelong and Ernest Leviny of Castlemaine. A more extensive account of C.L. Qwist has been given than in the past. That Qwist had worked in Bendigo from 1854 to 1860, that is prior to his becoming established in Sydney, is a significant discovery.

Following on the attention given to Geelong, Castlemaine and Bendigo, the absence of text relating to Ballarat is puzzling.

Regrettably there are instances where presentation can be irritating. For example, the presentation of text and an interesting newspaper report of 1884 on P. Falk and Company's new warehouse and manufactory in Melbourne is scattered through thirty pages of illustrations and photographs that do not relate to P. Falk and Co., but to William Edwards, and additionally include two colour plates for a third maker, Phillip Blaski! Many of the colour plates (cross-referenced) are remote from relevant text. Were a number of the colour plates better positioned in relation to text, then at least some black and white duplicates could be eliminated.

The use of extensive newspaper descriptions and illustrations of presentation silverware has provided

the reader with informative "century-old" accounts of individual items, and often an insight to social events of the period.

"Ninteenth Century Australian Silver" encompasses the breadth of silverware produced from the early flatware of Alexander Dick, and selected items of ecclesiastical silver, to the Australiana wares of the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s that were produced by many makers – mounted emu-egg claret jugs, vases and inkstands, plus elaborate presentation caskets and table centrepieces decorated with Australian motifs. Late 19th century silverware became less pretentious. Finally a magnificent array of individually designed sporting trophies, in silver and gold, have been described.

The index of marks includes those of some sixty 19th century silversmiths, yet the index to silversmiths has over 150 Australian entries. There is still the possibility of a windfall!

"Ninteenth Century Australian Silver" by J. B. Hawkins will be sought by serious collectors, reference librarians, and members of the antique trade.

This unique collection of text, reports, illustrations and photographs will prove a valuable database for future research workers.

Kenneth Cavill

S.H. Ervin Gallery
Painted Ships, Painted Oceans

The National Trust's S.H. Ervin Gallery in Sydney will host the first showing of the new Australian National Maritime Museum collection, from September 14 to October 14, 1990.

"Painted Ships, Painted Oceans" will highlight the paintings and lithographs which form part of the National Maritime Collection. Curators began assembling the collection only four years ago – a collection which is not just about the sea, but about its strong and continuing influence on our history, culture, trade and defence.

To Europeans, Australia emerged from myth and fable because of voyages of discovery. As 18th century sailors came in search of territories and scientific knowledge, they recorded and illustrated their discoveries in books and journals such as Eden's prematurely titled *History of New Holland* (1787), one of many fine books displayed.

Aboriginal Australians' connection with the sea goes back much further, possibly to the first human voyagers. The deep roots of their ancient attachment to the surounding sea, as much as to the land, is evident in a series of contemporary sculptures and paintings with mythological and totemic overtones.

The sea, the only link with the outside world, was immensely important in the European settlement of Australia. Our earliest governors, explorers and administrators were often officers of the Royal Navy, whose traditions were passed down through the Australasian Auxiliary Squadron, the colonial navies, and finally the Royal Australian Navy. Warship models will be complemented by paintings and personal mementoes illustrating the length and strength of the naval tradition.

After dumping their convict cargo in Sydney, several transports of the Second Fleet went whaling off the south-east coast, and whaling became Australia's first major industry. Sir Oswald Brierly's watercolour of *"Amateur Whaling"* – displayed in a Sydney art show in 1847 – shows how evenly matched the protagonists were, with the whaleboat about to be splintered by the tail of a wounded leviathan.

Yankee clippers of the 1850s were fast, sleek and stylish. Captains and owners of these vessels with proud names like *Sovereign of the Seas, Lightning* or *Young Australia* briefly earned huge profits from the fast passages they made to and from the goldfields of Australia and California.

Artists revelled in painting the sharp bows cutting the waves, driven by clouds of sail. Thomas Robertson painted a trio of famous clippers – the *Lightning, James Baines* and *Red Jacket* – in Hobson's Bay, Melbourne, calmly swinging at anchor as though resting from their exertions.

Posters – with their strong and simple images, bold colours and clear messages exhorted travellers and immigrants to come to Australia.

While the National Maritime Collection is much wider than the selection of art and small objects on display at the S.H. Ervin Gallery – it includes working warships, a lighthouse, curios and curiosities large and small – "Painted Ships, Painted Oceans" previews the new Australian National Maritime Museum.

Curators from the museum will give a series of gallery lectures each Thursday evening. Education staff will run a series of programs for children and other visitors on Sunday afternoons.

The Jewellery of Aronson and Company, Melbourne

Kenneth Cavill

Collectors of Ausraliana fossicking in antique centres, or inspecting gold jewellery in auction rooms, would have observed the marking of a "Flag", accompanied by the guarantee marks of the Manufacturing Jewellers' Association of Victoria. While the latter indicated the gold standard – 9 or 15, less frequently 12 or 18 carat – the "Flag" was the registered trade Mark used by Aronson and Company Pty. Ltd. for close on forty years (see plate 1).

The twentieth century firm of Aronson and Co. Pty. Ltd. was the successor of Rosenthal, Aronson and Company founded 1878. David Rosenthal, taking advantage of the opportunities that were to flow from the gold discoveries in Victoria in 1851, had built up a considerable wholesale jewellery and importing business in Melbourne during the 1860s and 1870s. In 1874 David Rosenthal's business became David Rosenthal and Company, of 15 Collins St.W. Evidently the "and Co." was Saul Philip Aronson who was listed as a partner in 1876.[1] During his early years in Melbourne Saul Aronson aquired a substantial working knowledge of the colonial jewellery trade.

The next step was taken in 1878 when George Alfred Aronson joined the partnership. The firm then became Rosenthal, Aronson and Company, general merchants and manufacturing jewellers. Evidently George Aronson was responsible for the manufactory. In the same year Saul Aronson returned to England where he and David Rosenthal established the London office of Rosenthal, Aronson and Co at 28 Camomile Street E.C. [1], [2] George Aronson remained in Melbourne from 1878 until the turn of the century.

Rosenthal, Aronson and Co had taken over the premises formerly occupied by David Rosenthal at 15 Little Collins St.W. Then from 1889 to 1892 they were listed at 362 Little Collins Street. The firm continued to trade as wholesale and

Plate 1. Advertisement for Aronson and Co. Pty. Ltd., 1906.

manufacturing jewellers, merchants and importers. David Rosenthal had retired by 1889; whether his departure and the company's move to 362 Little Collins Street were inter-related is not known. In 1893 Rosenthal, Aronson and Co made a further move to 275-281 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne where they were listed as general merchants and importers. In the same year they moved their London office to 26 Fore Street, E.C.[1]

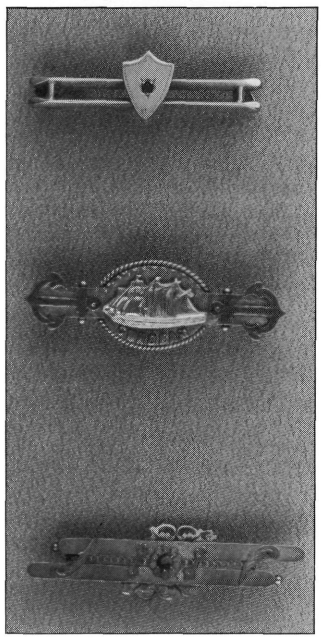

Plate 2. Jewellery of Rosenthal, Aronson and Company, circa 1880-1900.

Saul Aronson remained in London, making the voyage to Australia on many occasions.

Two gold brooches marked for Rosenthal, Aronson and Company are shown in plate 2, (a) and (c). These late Victorian wares are complemented by a brooch of registered design, commemorating the sailing-ship "Sunbeam", plate 2(b). It was manufactured by George A. Aronson in 1895. The marks for

Plate 3. Late Victorian mark of Rosenthal, Aronson and Co. on (a) & (c). Note use of Manufacturing Jewellers' Association of Victoria stamp by G.A. Aronson in 1895 on (b).

these items are illustrated (see plate 3). Saul Aronson entered the mark "S P A" in the London registry in 1889.[2] This stamp is likely to be found in conjunction with London hallmarks.

In 1884 Frederick Aronson, the third brother, became a partner in the firm of Lazarus and Aronson, wholesale jewellers, of 86 Pitt Street, Sydney.

The Sydney partnership was soon expanded with the formation of Lazarus, Aronson and Company in 1886. No doubt Saul, George and Frederick Aronson were involved in the formation of this company (cf. Culme [2]). By 1899 Lazarus, Aronson and Co had become F. Aronson and Co, trading at 3 Wynyard Street, Sydney.[1] Rosenthal, Aronson and Co traded in Perth from 1897 to 1905, that is during Western Australia's golden age. Rosenthal, Aronson and Co were also listed in Brisbane from 1887 to 1893. Apparently wholesaling operations in Brisbane were then taken over by V. Rosenthal, and this firm continued to trade until the turn of the century.[1] Coincidentally Rosenthal, Aronson and Co had moved premises in Melbourne, and in London, during 1893 which was a period of considerable economic difficulty in the eastern colonies. However by 1898 Aronson Brothers were trading at 97 Queen Street, Brisbane.[1] Allowing that Saul and George Aronson were the senior partners of Aronson Bros, Norman Aronson was given the task of managing the new company. Norman, the fourth brother, had joined Rosenthal, Aronson and Co. in Melbourne in the 1880s as a youth. In 1907 Norman Aronson assumed control of the Sydney establishment, by then part of Aronson and Co. Pty. Ltd.

The wholesaling and importing activities of Rosenthal, Aronson and Co, Lasarus, Aronson and Co – subsequently F. Aronson and Co,

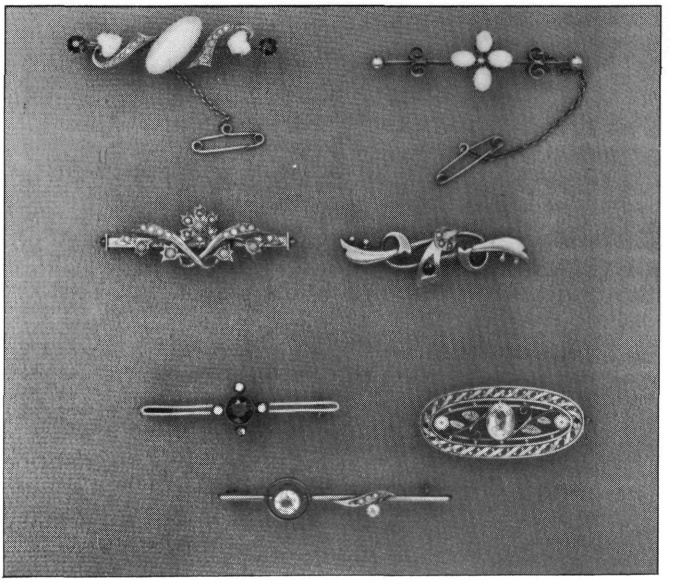

Plate 4. Brooches by Aronson and Company, 9 and 15 ct, set with opal, ruby, sapphire, seed pearls, turquoise and/or brilliants.

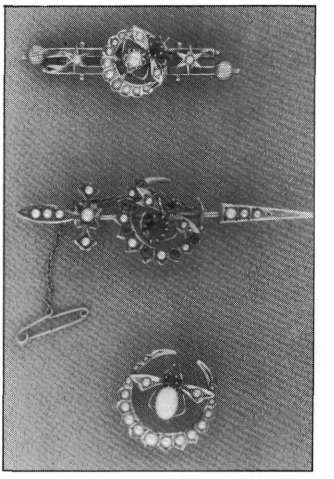

Plate 5. Insect brooches by Aronson and Company.

and Aronson Brothers through the last quarter of the nineteenth century were not dissimilar to those of T. Willis and Co. With the coming of Federation in 1901 not only Willis and Sons, but also several of their competitors including Aronson and Co, were to expand their manufacturing activities in Australia.

In 1900 the various partnership arrangements involving Saul Aronson in London, George in Melbourne and Frederick in Sydney were dissolved. Evidently George Aronson then left the businesses.[2] By 1902 the Australian operations were incorporated as Aronson and Company Pty. Ltd. at 297-299 Little Collins Street, Melbourne. The newly formed company advertised as manufacturing jewellers and importers (see plate 1). Their well established wholesaling operations in Sydney and Brisbane were continued, while a branch was opened in Adelaide in 1912.[1]

Saul Aronson in London traded as Rosenthal, Aronson and Co. until 1915. In 1916 the London firm became Aronson and Co., then located at 5 Finsbury Square, E.C.2.[2] Saul Aronson's last visit to Australia was in 1925: some fifty years had passed since his first visit. It was announced that the "Grand Old Man of the Jewellery Trade", Mr. S.P. Aronson, head of the firm of Aronson and Company, would arrive in Melbourne early in March of that year.[3] Saul Aronson died in London in 1931 aged 87.

Aronson and Company's jewellery is illustrated in plates 4 to 14. The enormous range of gold brooches produced, of late Victorian and Edwardian designs, were intended for the rapidly growing "middle class" market. The wares were set with gemstones or imitations of same. A selection of their quality brooches is shown (plate 4). Insect jewellery was popular. The head was usually a small gemstone – ruby or sapphire, and the body opal,

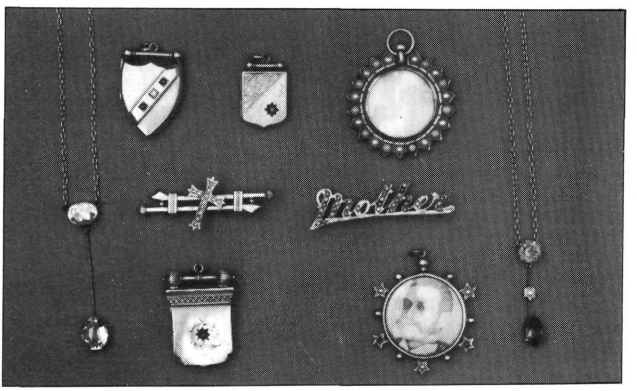

Plate 6. Pendants, lockets and brooches. "Mother" brooch is set with seed pearls and turquoise.

Plate 7. Fine gold bracelets by Aronson and Co.

pearl or a large imitation stone (see plate 5).

Examples of their pendants, stone-set lockets, photo-lockets, a cross and the ever popular "Mother" brooch are shown (plate 6). Two fine gold bracelets, circa 1914, complete this group of illustrations (plate 7).

Aronson and Co. made a substantial range of stone-set finger rings, many in 18ct gold (see plate 8). A selection of their cuff links, tie clips, and dress studs are also shown (plate 9).

Not surprisingly their Australiana items (plate 10) were comparable to those of Willis and Sons,[4] and other manufacturers of the period. In 1915 Aronson and Co. produced a "Dardanelles" brooch – a green enamelled leaf set in 18ct gold – to the design of H.E. Sparkes (plate 11). A contemporary leaf brooch, inscribed "Gallipoli", was made by Willis and Sons.

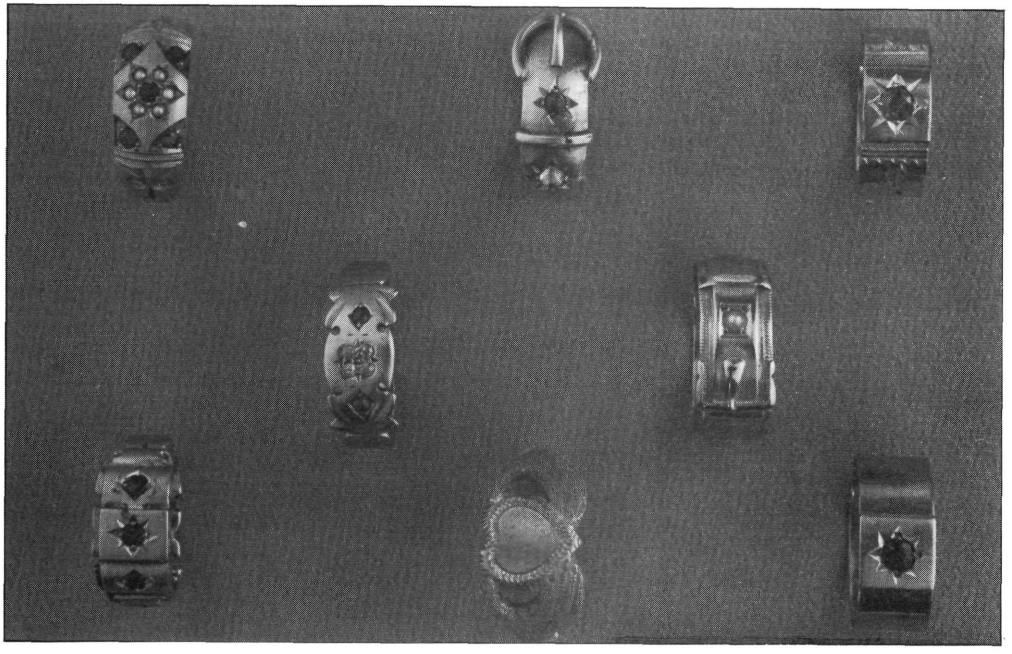

Plate 8. Stone-set finger rings.

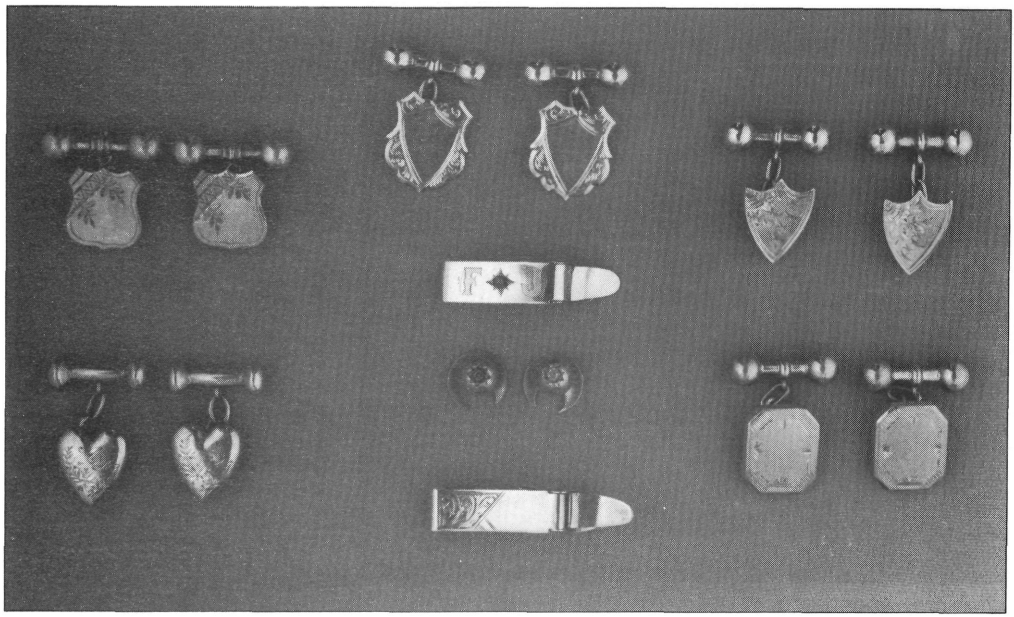

Plate 9. Gold cuff links, tie clips and dress studs.

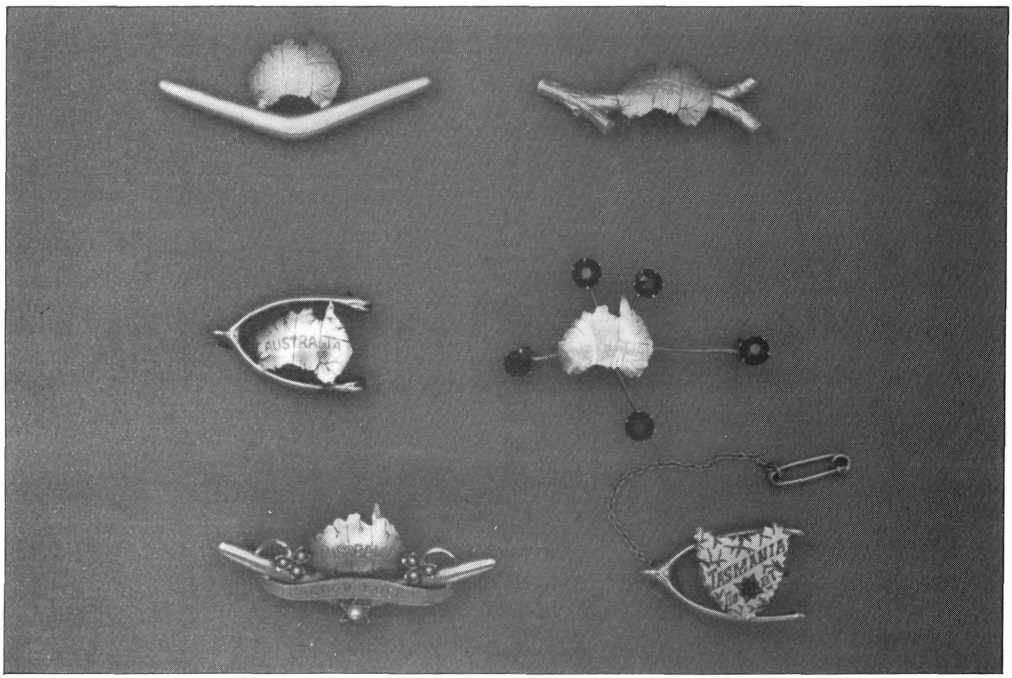

Plate 10. Australiana brooches.

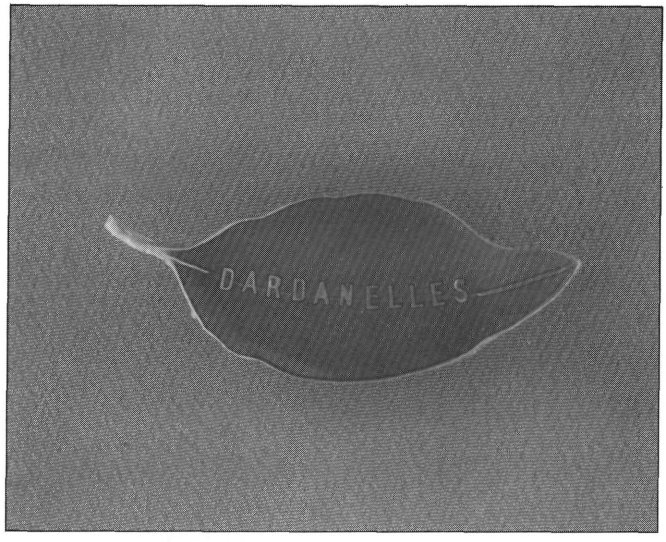

Plate 11. The "Dardanelles" brooch, 1915.

During the 1914-1918 War the manufacture of non-essential goods continued in Australia without restriction. Jewellery was still produced in quantity. At the conclusion of hostilities Australian makers were well placed to meet local demand, imports were scarce with supplies from Great Britain and Europe still disrupted.

Aronson and Co. produced a vast range of gold medalets and fobs: they included medalets for presentation to members of the forces, battalion colours, friendship emblems, and so on (see plate 12). A further selection of emblems, worn as fobs, is shown in plate 13. Prior to World War 1 sporting fobs and medalets were very popular.

Plate 12. Representative gold medalets and fobs, 9 and 15 ct, for presentation to members of the forces.

Certainly demand for these items had not diminished in the 1920s despite increasing costs. Aronson and Co. designed and produced a range of medalets with interchangeable centre discs for cricket, football, tennis, cycling, swimming, athletics, golf, rifle shooting, boxing, and so on. The required disc, or for a team the many discs, could be pressed onto the obverse (face), after the reverse (back) of the medalet had been engraved with the event and recipient's name (see plate 14). Moreover a suburban or country jeweller could supply his customer's requirements off-the-shelf. Within a decade even mass-produced gold medalets were too expensive for presentation to local sporting teams, and production of these items gradually ceased.

Photographic illustrations of Aronson and Company's marks, taken from the considerable range of jewellery available, are shown in plate 15. Their trade mark, the "Flag", may appear to the left or right. Additional production stamps, E1, H2, S3 etc., are to be found on some items.

Changing fashions in jewllery usually followed overseas trends, and in the post World War 1 era Aronson and Co. were increasingly involved in the production of diamond jewellery. An advertisement circa 1925 featured their diamond rings, including Art Deco styles (see plate 16). In the same period they were manufacturing "Grecian" armlets, in rolled gold, for the popular trade under their "Flag" brand. The armlets were stamped "9 CT (O.13 mm) STERLING SILVER LINED".

Aronson and Co. Pty. Ltd. were one of the major jewellery manufacturers in Melbourne throughout the first quarter of the 20th century. They were to close their manufactory in the midst of the Great Depression in 1930. The firm continued to operate as wholesalers and importers in Sydney until 1947[1].

Plate 13. Fobs: (a) Map of Australia, (b) Emblem of Victoria, (c) Masonic emblem, (d) Emblem of Commonwealth of Australia.

Plate 14. Sporting medalets with interchangeable centre discs for cricket, football, tennis, sculling and rifle shooting.

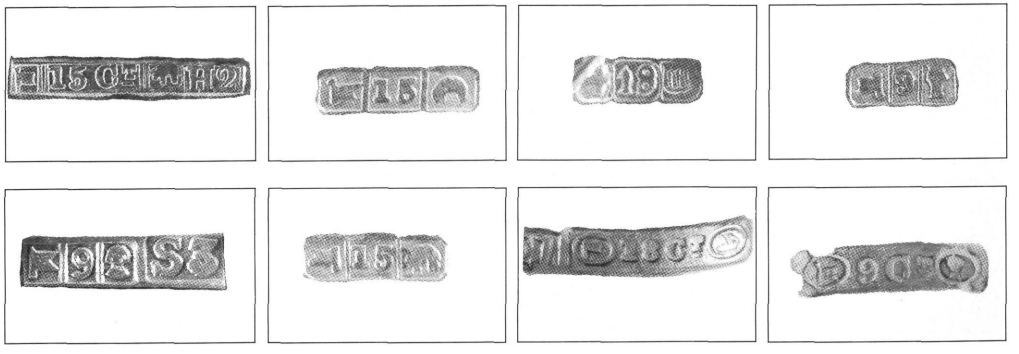

Plate 15. Marks of Aronson and Co. Pty. Ltd., circa 1900-1930.

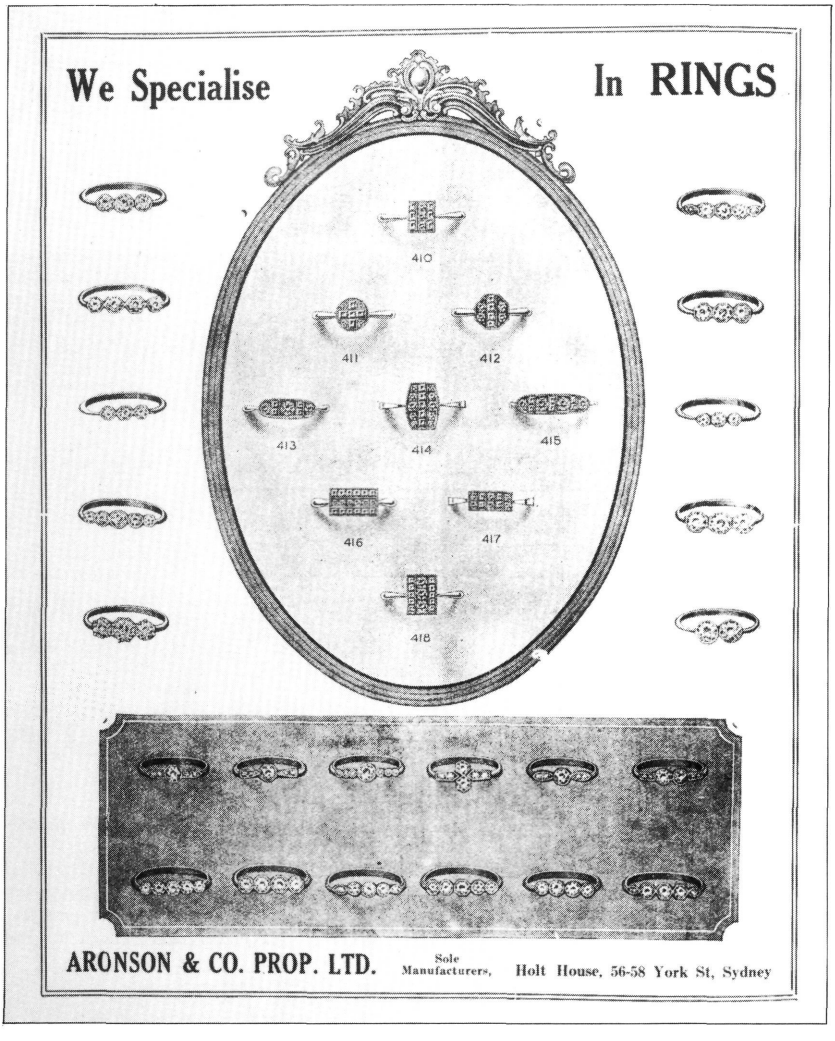

Plate 16. Advertisement for Aronson and Company's diamond rings, circa 1925.

Acknowledgments
The assistance of owners of the many pieces of jewellery has been greatly appreciated.

References and Footnotes:

1. Sands', Sands and MacDougall's, Pugh's and Wise's P.O. Directories should be consulted for details on the listing of David Rosenthal, Rosenthal, Aronson and Co., and Aronson and Company Pty. Ltd., also for details of Lazarus, Aronson and Co., and Aronson Brothers.
2. John Culme, "The Directory of Gold and Silversmiths, Jewellers and Allied Traders, 1838-1914" Vol.I, p. 392 (Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge, Suffolk).
3. *The Australian Manufacturing Jewellers, Watchmakers' Opticians Gazette*, 1925, March 23, p.51.
4. Kenneth Cavill, "The Jewellery of Willis and Sons of Melbourne", *Australiana*, 1988, *Vol. 10, No. 1*, pp. 13-18.

19th CENTURY AUSTRALIAN SILVER

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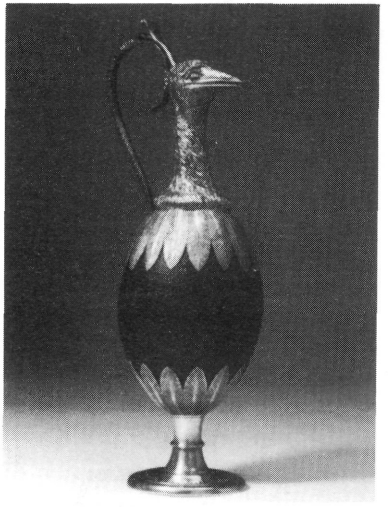

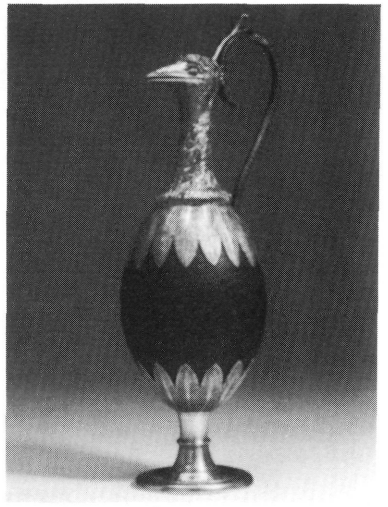

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