
AUSTRALIANA

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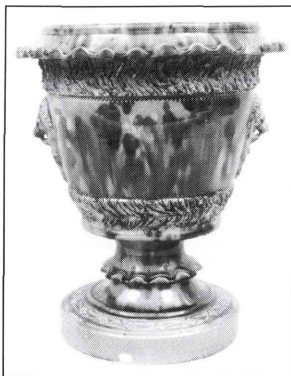




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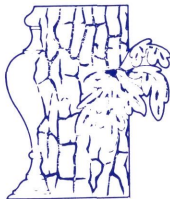
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THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

25 TERRY STREET, BLAKEHURST 2221



— SOCIETY PROGRAMME —

MEETINGS — 1994

THURSDAY,
4 AUGUST

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and "Australiana Showcase"
— "Show and Tell".

THURSDAY,
6 OCTOBER

Guest lecturer Ian Stephenson will speak on "The Reinterpretation of Experiment Farm Cottage" Parramatta. Ian Stephenson is the National Trust Museum curator. Experiment Farm Cottage was the first property of the National Trust of Australia (NSW) opened to public inspections. It contains an important collection of early Australian colonial furniture.

THURSDAY,
1 DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS PARTY.

Society meetings are held at 7.30pm at the Glover Cottage Hall,
124 Kent Street, Sydney. Convenient street parking.
Drinks served 7.30 - 8.00 pm, followed by Australiana Showcase
(bring your Australian treasures for general discussion).
Lectures will commence at 8.30 pm.

Special Announcement

THE POWERHOUSE PRIZE FOR 'AUSTRALIANA'

The Australiana Society and the Powerhouse Museum announce that the POWERHOUSE PRIZE FOR AUSTRALIANA, sponsored by Simpsons Antiques, for 1993 was awarded to Dr Dorothy Erickson for her article, "English and the

Australian Eastern Colonies' Involvement in Jewellery and Silver-smithing in Western Australia", which was published in *Australiana*, Vol 15, No 1 (February 1993).

The overall quality of the articles considered by the judges made their task difficult.

Entries for the 1994 Award

must be submitted prior to 1 December, 1994 and entries are invited from members of the Society as well as non-members.

Articles published in the Society's journal during 1994 will be eligible however previous entries (which might be published in 1994) are excluded.

Rules for Literary Award Prize

1. All entries are to be typed in double spacing; must reach the Editor no later than Thursday, 1 December 1994, and can be submitted by members and non-members (other than judges).
2. To be eligible all entries must be on a subject relating to Australiana and preferably be an item of original research. All illustrations for articles are to be supplied.
3. The authors for all articles submitted for the prize agree that the Society can publish those articles in the Society's journal whether or not a prize is awarded.
4. Articles previously published other than in the Society's journal during 1994, will not be considered.
5. The winning article will receive a prize of \$250 to be presented at the Society's Australia Day Dinner in 1995.
6. The judges will be appointed by the Society's Committee.
7. The judges' decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into. The judges reserve the right not to award the prize if, in their opinion, the entries are not of a sufficiently high standard.
8. Articles received after Thursday, 1 December 1994 will be eligible for the 1995 award.

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President's Report

Kenneth Cavill

It is pleasing to be able to report on progress made by the Society in the past year. Our Australia Day Dinner was held in the grounds of the Mint Museum, Macquarie Street, Sydney. Margaret Betteridge, formerly Curator at the Mint Museum, was our guest speaker. Her thoughtful address appears in the February, 1994 issue of *Australiana*. The Dinner was an outstanding success – socially and financially – thanks to the efforts of David Dolan, Kevin Skelsey and Andrew Simpson. Our sincere thanks to Terence Measham, Director of the Powerhouse Museum, and to senior management for their considerable help. Terence Measham announced the award of the inaugural Powerhouse Prize for

Australiana to Dr Dorothy Erickson of Perth. These events auger well for the future of the *Australiana* Society.

Our regular meetings at Glover Cottage Hall in Kent Street have been well attended. The guest speakers – Judy Birmingham, Ann Bickford and John Ritchie – chose to talk on *Australiana* topics of broad interest. Their addresses were fully appreciated by members and friends. The June meeting was given over to aspects of Furniture Conservation. The panel of speakers – Anne Watson, Julian Bickersteth and Paul Gregson – provided many insights to conservation and restoration. Kevin Fahy convened and chaired the panel discussion, with many questions

being asked of the experts. It was a very successful event.

Our improved financial position is shown in the Financial Statement prepared by the Treasurer (see following page). However, the Society is not yet “out of the woods”! Substantial fund raising is essential to supplement annual subscriptions if the *Australiana* Society is to maintain all of its activities. The publication of *Australiana* is of the highest priority. Increased membership is needed to ensure the future of the Society.

In closing, I would like to thank members of the Committee for their many contributions during an eventful year. A special thank you to Kevin Skelsey, Andrew Simpson and Kevin Fahy.

Secretary's Report

Kevin Skelsey

Having served this year as Honorary Secretary, I pay tribute to my predecessor Graham Cocks and to Ann Cocks who have advised Wendy Skelsey and me during the transition. We have sought to maintain the high standard of activities, meetings and catering set by Graham and Ann. The President and Committee have given stable and clear directions, and this has resulted in the successes of 1993/94.

Despite a grim financial climate and non-renewal of some memberships in January 1994, it is encouraging that, to date, a new body of members has restored the Society

to 1993 strength. Strong promotion, mail outs, leaflet drops and personal approaches have been fruitful. The professional, promotional and high interest journal *Australiana* is a credit to editor Kevin Fahy, his assistant Graham Cocks, and the contributors, and represents the Society well.

The exceptionally successful Australia Day Dinner, and the high profile Guest Speakers at meetings are elements that have energised the Society. I invite all members and associates to be part of this resurgence by encouraging others to join, and by sharing your opinions and interests. A short illustrat-

ed article, or a ‘topic’ letter from those unable to attend meetings would be welcomed for publication in the journal. This would supplement the crossflow of ideas available to those who can participate in the bi-monthly meetings. Consider your contribution now.

I would like to thank those who have been generous with their support and finances which help defray the costs of gifts to Guest Speakers, supper and refreshments at meetings, and raffle items. Thus the annual fee paid by members can be dedicated to maintaining our splendid journal and pursuing the purposes of the Society for all members.

The Australiana Society (Inc.)

Financial Statement

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 1994

JOURNAL INCOME

Sales to Members (as proportion of subscriptions)* — 228 @ 30.00	6,840.00
Other sales, back copies	549.50
Advertising	2,830.00
TOTAL	10,219.50

JOURNAL EXPENDITURE

Production	9,635.52
Postage	524.46
Stationery	143.50
TOTAL	10,303.48

NETT SURPLUS/DEFICIT

-83.98

*Based on 228 Financial Members at 30th June 1993

GENERAL INCOME

Subscriptions less proportion applied to journal	2,154.22
Annual dinner including raffle	4,290.00
Raffles and Donations	77.00
Excursion, House Visits	235.00
Interest Received	124.73
TOTAL	6,880.95

GENERAL EXPENDITURE

Corporate Affairs fee	20.00
Insurance	143.00
Subscriptions to R.A.H.S.	66.00
Postage	224.10
Stationery	7.34
Rent — Glover Cottage	600.00
Annual Dinner Expenses	2,946.99
Excursion Expenses	117.50
Presentations to Speakers	20.00
Government taxes & Bank charges	45.75
TOTAL	4,189.68

NETT SURPLUS/DEFICIT

2,691.27

TOTAL SURPLUS/DEFICIT

2,607.29

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30TH JUNE 1994

ACCUMULATED FUNDS

Balance B/forward 1st July 1993	4,856.51	
Plus surplus	2,607.29	
		7,463.80

These funds are represented by —

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash at Bank	General Account	5,113.90	
	Investment Account	2,249.90	
Deposit	Glover Cottage (Bond)	100.00	
			7,463.80

James Lumsden, Master Cabinetmaker and the 1851 Great Exhibition

Caressa Crouch

James Lumsden can be regarded as one of the major cabinetmakers in Van Diemen's Land, being the proprietor of a cabinetmaking business from the early 1830s until his death in 1880, as well as an exhibitor at the 1851 Great Exhibition in London.

James Lumsden describes himself as a Master Cabinetmaker, carrying on a business which included cabinetmaking, upholstery, undertaking and building¹, filling a need in the rapidly expanding colony. Like all master cabinetmakers James Lumsden had been trained in the skills of cabinetry, a major area of his learning, as well as the speciality areas of building, carpentry, chair-making, carving, upholstery and also undertaking.

One means of distinguishing between local master cabinetmakers in Tasmania, seems to be whether they concentrated their business on the merchandising and warehousing of furniture and furnishings both locally made and imported, or those who concentrated on the manufacturing of furniture, upholstery and undertaking services as part of their furniture business.

Therefore, we have J.W. Woolley, John McLoughlin and William Hamilton including merchandising and warehousing and James Lumsden, Leonard Pearson, William Hill, Robert Bell and James Keating including furniture manufacture and undertaking.

Exactly when James Lumsden arrived in Tasmania, or as it was then known, Van Diemen's Land, is not clear due to a lack of arrival details for free settlers, in the records remaining. It does appear he may have arrived pre-1832, as his two unmarried sisters arrived

free on the *Dickensfield* on 2 December 1832.²

A further confusion for his arrival date, is the arrival of another James Lumsden, a former seaman, aged 23 years old, as a convict, on 13 November 1833, on the *Isabella*, for highway robbery.³ Appointed a constable at New Norfolk this James married Sarah Perkins on 23 February 1835,⁴ and died at New Norfolk in 1885. Although family history has this man as the father of James Lumsden cabinetmaker, the writer's research found it not to be so.

However, James did come out with, or joined his brother John, a bootmaker, and throughout their lives resided in close proximity to each other both in Hobart and later at Green Ponds (Kempton).⁵ John Lumsden was not a cabinetmaker as suggested in the Directory of Cabinet, Chair and Furniture Makers list for Tasmania in *19th Century Australian Furniture*.⁶

It is clear from Lumsden's own advertisements that he had been operating his cabinetmaking business as a principal from 1834. In the *Colonial Times* of 22 September 1846 he thanked "his friends and public generally for the liberal support he has received for the last 12 years" and in Walch's *Literary Intelligencer* on 2 August 1860, stated he was for "25 years a Master Cabinet Maker".

James Lumsden was born in Elgin, Scotland on 31 July 1796,⁷ and died in Hobart on 20 September 1880 aged 84 years.⁸ James married Isabella Stephens at Hobart on 27 June, 1834⁹ and had five children by this marriage, Barbara (1839), Neil (1841), Margaret (1844), George (1847) and Catherine (1850).¹⁰ His wife Isa-

bella died of dysentery on 20 May 1853,¹¹ so James remarried on 3 December 1857 to Sarah Elizabeth Turner¹² having a further three children, Mary Ann (1858), Fanny Ida (1862) and Barbara (1864).¹³ Both sons went into the cabinet-making business with Neil training and operating as a cabinetmaker and George operating the other areas in the business.

James Lumsden carried out his cabinetmaking business from 1834 to 1862 in Hobart, moving to Green Ponds in 1861, operating his cabinetmaking, upholstery, undertaking and building business there.

In 1835-36 James was sharing premises with his brother John at 55 Argyle Street, Hobart.¹⁴ In the 1842 Census James was renting workshops in Murray Street, having a rented residence in Bathurst Street.¹⁵

In 1846 James Lumsden moved to Macquarie Street opposite the Catholic Church and went into partnership with the cabinetmaker Joseph Keen "recently arrived from England"¹⁶ presumably an expedient way of keeping up with the latest trends in fashion and style from England, and giving a competitive edge against his contemporaries J.W. Woolley, Leonard Pearson, John McLoughlin and William Hamilton, to name a few.

The situation of these premises on Macquarie Street, described as being "one of the finest streets in Australia",¹⁷ gives an indication of the status of the business at that time, by moving away from the artisan section of town to a very select and up-market street. Remarkably this showroom and residence can be seen in T. Bluett's lithograph of St Joseph's Church,

Macquarie Street, Hobart Town of 1844 drawn by T.E. Chapman, on the right hand side of the street, opposite the church.¹⁸

These larger premises which contained a residence above, were rented off the cabinetmaker Joseph William Woolley (1797-1880). J.W. Woolley operated presumably here from 1831 to 1837,¹⁹ moving to Liverpool Street, formerly occupied by the cabinetmaker Mr Burton, as advertised in the *Colonial Times* of 4 February 1840, then returning to Macquarie Street by 1855.

Unfortunately, this partnership with Joseph Keen was not successful, but even so James Lumsden was able to advertise in the *Colonial Times* of 23 February 1846 that he was able to settle all debts due from the partnership.

In the 1848 Census, James Lumsden was still living at the Macquarie Street shop and residence until moving to Brisbane Street. On 13 December 1851 he purchased his own premises at Brisbane Street of 13 perches, being 37½ft by 128ft,²⁰ formerly belonging and occupied by Thomas Hood. Thomas Lloyd Hood appears to have been a cabinetmaker, and was the son of Robin V. Hood.²¹

It seems likely that after sending off a Loo Table to the Great Exhibition, James Lumsden left Tasmania feeling lucky enough to close his business and go to Victoria. No departure records are available for this date.

Returning on 19 May 1852 on the *Gold Seeker* from Port Phillip,²² whether from trying the Victorian goldfields or to look at starting a business in gold booming Melbourne we do not know.

In the *Colonial Times* of 17 August 1852 he advised his public "Cabinetmaking. The Undersigned, having returned from Victoria, begs leave to express his thanks to those friends who have favoured him with their patronage formerly and hopes, by strict attention, to merit a continuance of their favours. He begs also to assure them that no

efforts shall be spared on his behalf to produce substantial articles made from well-seasoned timber and good workmanship. N.B. Two or three workmen wanted. The highest wages in town will be given. Funerals will be attended to with punctuality and dispatch. James Lumsden. Brisbane St. August 10th."

It can be presumed from being able to pay the highest wages in town, the trip was a financial success. His sons, Neil at 11 years old and George at 5 years were still too young to be involved in the business.

In 1860 James Lumsden moved with his family, excluding Neil, to Green Ponds, now Kempton. On 2 August 1860 James Lumsden advertised in Walch's *Literary Intelligencer* that "James Lumsden. For 25 years Master Cabinet Maker in Hobart Town begs to inform the inhabitants of Green Ponds and the surrounding districts, that he has removed the whole of his business to Green Ponds where he will carry it on in the following branches - Cabinetmaking, upholstery, undertaking and building. From his long experience in the above departments James Lumsden feels confident that he will give every satisfaction. Funerals will be conducted after the best Town Style, with every requisite, and at Moderate Prices. James Lumsden would also invite inspection of the Large Stock of the Best Colonial Furniture, which he has on hand, and which may be seen at his establishment, Kent Cottage nearly opposite St Mary's Church, Green Ponds."

Neil Lumsden, now at 19, a cabinetmaker stayed carrying on the business at their premises at 76 Brisbane Street until these were let in 1862, as we can see from the Mercury notice on 17 June 1862. "To Let. Lumsden's Cabinet Manufactory 76 Brisbane Street. The above well known and spacious premises are complete in every respect, and filled with the requirements of any manufactory business. Rent moderate. Possession immedi-

ate, apply to Neil Lumsden, 46 Brisbane St. 14th June 1862."

On first moving to Green Ponds they rented a house and shop "nearly opposite St Mary's Church", which is still standing, from John Picken, but by 1862 had moved and purchased a house and shop.²³ This is the building now known as the "Ellis Store". Although still standing, but boarded up, it was tragically damaged by fire in 1992.²⁴ Built in 1833 of brick and stone it was owned by the James Lumsden estate for 54 years when it was sold by the trustees on 5 December 1916 to E. Ellis Son Ltd.²⁵

By 1874 James Lumsden expanded his family business to include a further house and shop in Green Ponds, rented from the estate of Joseph Johnson and John Perkins, with son George living in the first house and shop.²⁶ It appears with the early death at 33 years of his eldest son Neil in 1874, the cabinetmaking side of the business also finished, with George and his uncle John forming a business arrangement.

James Lumsden died in Hobart in 1880 at 84 years.²⁷

Furniture known to be made by James Lumsden is in private ownership in Tasmania, although to date no labelled pieces are known, as with most Tasmanian furniture.

Possibly the reason for the lack of labelled Tasmanian furniture and the scarcity of advertisements particularly for cabinetmakers living and working outside Hobart and Launceston, lies in the small population numbers of Tasmania compared to NSW and Victoria.

In a very close knit and stratified society, word of mouth advertising is of more importance, and later government legislation for Chinese cabinetmakers was not necessary, when the general population in an area knew all the cabinetmakers working in their town or city.

This can be seen in James Lumsden's case. Although the quality of the furniture produced is mentioned, the main purpose of each advertisement/notice is to advise of moving to new premises and the form-

ing of a partnership in 1846, and then the legal requirement of notifying the dissolving of the partnership and calling in all debts due in 1847, the arrival back from interstate in 1852 (a sign in the shop window would have sufficed for departure), and the removal of the business to Green Ponds in 1860.

So James Lumsden operated in Hobart for 25 years and needed to advertise his wares four times, as far as we can discover in the present indexing of documentation for the period.

A similar pattern in advertising content can also be noticed for the other master cabinetmakers with a greater need to inform the public by those who warehoused and imported furniture such as W.J. Woolley and William Hamilton.

An excellent example of James Lumsden's work, known through family descent are five Huon Pine Trafalgar back dining chairs. The back splat have a rolled edge with a decorative bird's-eye veneer front-piece, as does the carved scrolled mid-splat. The front seal rail is of moulded solid bird's-eye Huon Pine. The legs are turned and octagonally chamfered. Particularly unusual for Australian made chairs are the three finely turned spindles of the back, finished with turned finials, showing a further attribute of Huon Pine, as being an excellent wood turning timber.

The octagonal chamfered legs, a dominant feature in Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (1833), and combined with the spindled infill, as illustrated in Thomas King's *The Modern Style of Cabinet Work Exemplified* of 1829, and the improved 1835 edition²⁸ suggests a date of the mid- to late 1830s and the use of these pattern books by Lumsden. Original light green Cotton Rep upholstery remains with horsehair stuffing which is attached to the frame.

Chairs in Huon Pine are extremely rare, the above being the second set known. These chairs

came by descent through the youngest of James Lumsden's daughters. The sixth chair was damaged and discarded in the early 1970s.

We also know that James Lumsden exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition in London a Huon Pine Loo Table, described in the *Courier* on 3 September 1950 as a "superb piece of furniture made entirely of Huon Pine of the finest character and marking". The table was given the number 148 by the Royal Society of Tasmania organisers²⁹ although in the *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations 1851*, the table is listed as Number 145, Loo-table of Huon Pine, and Number 146, Pedestal for the table, with nothing listed for the Numbers 147-148.³⁰

In the article, "A Champion Table", by Anne Watson, *Australiana* Vol. 15, No. 4 (1993), reference No. 13 is noted as "This table No. 148 was submitted by Governor Denison". Sir W.T. Denison's table was Number 149 Loo-table top, dogwood and Number 150, pedestal for the same.³¹

James Lumsden's table along with all the other furniture and wood products and samples were exhibited to show off the richly coloured, grained and figured timbers found in Van Diemen's Land, such as Huon Pine, Blackwood, Myrtle, Musk, Dogwood, etc.

To exhibit in the 1851 Exhibition suggests a social position and financial standing as a master cabinetmaker which enabled James Lumsden to make an item of furniture without expecting immediate financial gain from its sale.

It is apparent that the exhibits attracted considerable interest, which would have enhanced the reputations of those exhibiting, when put on show in the Exhibition Room at Hobart's Government House. As reported in the *Colonial Times and Tasmanian* of 29 November 1850, 2,000 people visited to look at the exhibits to be sent overseas, a very large number for

Hobart.

Apparently, the exhibitors and officials were under the expectation that these items would be sold after the exhibition as "Nothing can excel the Huon Pine, Dog or Musk Woods for beauty, lightness and durability. We have no doubt that the tables, chairs and sideboards made of them will realise high prices in London, no less from their novelty than general appearance". The official prizes were also to be of a monetary nature, but the rules were changed and only medals were given.

Representing the Royal Society of Tasmania in London was the Tasmanian commissioner Charles McLauchlan. The Royal Society numbered and listed each item, along with the name of the person each item was consigned to, and how they were to be handled after the exhibition.³² A few went to family and friends but the majority, as was James Lumsden's, were consigned to Charles McLauchlan Esq. "to be sold and proceeds remitted".³³

From letters written by Charles McLauchlan to the Royal Society we can gauge his impatience and even contempt for his task of handling and disposing of the exhibition items. We only have on record the official letters written. What may have been written to the individual exhibitors, by Charles McLauchlan can only be presumed, from the tone in the official letters.³³

I propose that it was the treatment by Charles McLauchlan towards James Lumsden and other exhibitors, that caused a dissatisfaction and disappointment to develop, towards sending exhibits overseas.

On 1 November 1851 he wrote explaining, "the Royal Commissioners have changed their first design, and no money reward will be granted, medals will be given instead. I send in a separate cover the awards of the prizes, which have given great dissatisfaction to many parties, so much so that the commissioners regret granting any mark of distinction at all".

On 9 January 1852 he wrote that only two items were sold after the exhibition, one of those being James Lumsden's Loo table, Number 148, for £5 along with a small Huon Pine inlaid table, No. 311, for £1 5s which he noted "the prices obtained are very small but there was no use in keeping them". Item Number 311 was submitted by F. Lipscomb, a small round table, of Huon Pine, inlaid, which is listed in the Official Catalogue as Number 308.

In a further letter he stated that as he was not able to get any offer for the other furniture sent he returned it to the parties who owned it. Presumably, this extra shipping cost would have been borne by the exhibitors, another cause of complaint. Further stating "I have now closed this (to me) very troublesome matter in which there has been a great deal of work with but little thanks from any quarter".

Even the sale in London of the two tables, way under value, would have caused great dissatisfaction to both James Lumsden and F. Lipscomb, as well as to the other cabinetmakers, who knew the value of the goods sold, even though they had their goods returned.

Only the two exhibitors who were awarded a Prize Medal for their exhibits of wood samples, Mr A.M. Naughton, Nos. 96-102,, muskwood samples, and R.V. Hood, No. 111, timber of silver wattle with one side polished,³⁴ exhibited again in the 1855 Paris Universal Exhibition. It is interesting to note that Robin V. Hood was quite specific in his instructions about how his frames were disposed after this exhibition, being consigned to F.A. Ducroz Esq., the Tasmanian representative, and "sold, subject to a reserve price of £15. In the event of not fetching this they are to be returned to Mr Hood, Liverpool St. Hobart Town. V.D.L."³⁵

If James Lumsden's Loo Table

only sold for £5 and the small table for £1 5s, it can be seen that R.V. Hood did not want the same thing to happen to his series of picture frames manufactured of Tasmanian woods, having mouldings gilded with Tasmanian gold, thereby setting a reserve price of £15.

Except for the cabinetmaker W.J. Woolley who exhibited a table, round star top of myrtle, it appears the other items of furniture exhibited in Paris in 1855, had been obtained from cabinetmakers but sent for exhibition by the owners or the Executive Committee. For example, the Executive Committee sent over a Loo table of blackwood, tabletop a star pattern with border of the same wood, and another smaller one, a Lady's trinket box of fancy woods, a small round table of Myrtle with basket of Huon Pine for lady's work and a lady's work table of muskwood, etc.

The Mayor of Hobart Town, Mr W.G. Elliston, sent a sofa table, inlaid with a variety of colonial woods, a chess board being in the middle; Mr George Strutt, a lady's work table with lyre stand of Musk, top of Blackwood, with border of Musk, the inside and top and the fittings of the interior of inlaid work of Huon Pine, Blackwood, Myrtle and Musk as an example of the items sent by owners.³⁶

It is also interesting to note that most of the exhibits were consigned to family and friends instead of the Tasmanian representative, F.A. Ducroz Esq., who had consigned all the Executive Committee items, plus a frame to be sold on the proceeds given to the Patriotic War Fund as well as the Robin V. Hood frames.

Present day assumptions by Australian buffs presume that the best tradesmen put their wares in exhibitions. However, I believe the 1851 Great Exhibition in London was a major cause of tradesmen not putting their goods in future exhibitions, from the way they were treated and the goods cheaply sold off, and the additional expense of re-

turning unsold goods to Tasmania. The small and tightly-knit group of Tasmanian cabinetmakers would not easily forget this treatment received, nor would their sons who followed in their footsteps.

From then on for over 45 years Tasmanian cabinetmakers were noticeably absent in placing items in exhibitions, instead only private individuals and skilled amateurs entered their work. Maybe their was a perceived slight or insult felt with wealthy skilled amateurs participating.

Also, we can see the high handed treatment of the 1851 Commissioner Charles McLauchlan being echoed by later organisers in following years. The *Mercury* of 31 August 1866, seems to suggest this. "We have been informed by many of our leading tradesmen, complain that they have never been asked by the Intercolonial or Parisian Exhibition Commissioners to contribute specimens of their workmanship to these exhibitions.

We think there must be some grave misapprehension at the bottom of this complaint. We understood that the Secretary of the Commissions was directed to forward a circular to all our leading tradesmen likely to become exhibitors, and we have always been under the impression that this was done. Under any circumstances full publicity was given to the proceedings in reference to the commission and its objects, in these columns, and exhibits were freely invited by advertisement. Surely our tradesmen did not expect the members to visit them individually, hat in hand, to request our tradesmen to endeavour, as far as possible, to outstrip those of other countries in the articles they produce, and their business instincts should have induced them to prepare without waiting for a special invitation, if they had any idea that exhibiting would be advantageous to them. We fear that the complaint now made at the eleventh hour is to be traced to Tasmanian apathy. We

venture to assert that no tradesmen in any other country would ever have thought of waiting for an invitation before moving in a matter so important to themselves."

An article surely to add insult to injury. One fact is clear, the solidarity of Tasmanian cabinetmakers not to enter in exhibitions.

From a state which produces highly figured woods which lend themselves to exhibition wares, it is indeed exceedingly unfortunate, local cabinetmakers, and also James Lumsden did not exhibit again.

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OBITUARY:

Marjorie Graham (1924-1994)

Kevin Fahy

The recent and sudden death of Marjorie Graham is a major loss for all collectors and students of Australiana.

An Honorary Associate of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney she (with the able assistance of her late husband Donald Graham's photographs) was the author of two definitive publications – *Australian Pottery of the 19th & Early 20th Century* (1979), and *Australian Glass of the 19th & Early 20th Century* (1981). Neither have yet been equalled in their scope and scholarship.

She was a contributor to *Australiana* from its inception, and to the *Australian Antique Collector* with articles and her regular

'Patchwork' column.

Her extraordinary memory and encyclopaedic knowledge of Australiana minutiae endeared her to readers and many correspondents. Her death is a dreadful blow to all her friends and acquaintances with whom she willingly shared the results of her extensive researches. I regard myself fortunate in our long-term friendship. Marjorie was divinely eccentric, a keen devotee to lengthy telephone calls. A lady of rare style and quality, the like of which we can never hope to again encounter.

Her scrupulous attention to academic detail was often to curb my wildest enthusiasms. I once pub-

lished a list of early NSW potters of the 19th century. I drew their names from sundry contemporary newspapers and directories. Marjorie was to later casually enquire as to whether I had double checked several directory entries. To my eternal embarrassment, as a result of directory misprints, I found I had listed several poulterers as potters! She gently taught me a basic requirement for all serious researchers – the printed word is not always what it seems – double check, and even then, the printed word may well immortalise fiction.

As many, I will miss her greatly, but whatever I write in future I suspect she will be looking over my shoulder.

EXHIBITION: Martha Berkeley & Theresa Walker

FRIDAY 5 AUGUST – SUNDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 1994 • ADMISSION: FREE
GALLERY: 7, ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The sisters Martha Berkeley and Theresa Walker arrived in South Australia in February 1837 and became two of Australia's most important colonial artists. They were South Australia's first professional artists and Theresa Walker was Australia's first woman sculptor. The exhibition *Martha Berkeley & Theresa Walker* focuses for the first time on the work of these two major artists.

Theresa Walker travelled extensively throughout Australia living in various cities, and made wax medallion portraits of important citizens in Adelaide, Melbourne, Hobart, Launceston and Sydney. These included images of governors and clergymen from every colony she lived in, as well as portraits of outstanding citizens, such as the explorers Burke and Wills and Ludwig Leichhardt.

Two of her most significant portraits, those of the South Austral-

ian Aborigines Encounter Bay Bob and his wife, will also be included in this important exhibition. Walker is represented in numerous public collections around Australia and in the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the United States as well as in the Art Gallery of South Australia. A number of Australian institutions have lent works for this exhibition to supplement those in this collection.

Martha Berkeley spent the first fifteen years of her career in Adelaide, and during that time produced watercolour paintings of the developing township, as well as important colonial events, such as *The first dinner given to the Aborigines* in 1838. In addition Berkeley made a number of extremely fine miniatures of Adelaide citizens, and outstanding among these is *Mrs Andrew with a harp* c1840.

Until quite recently only a very small number of works by Martha Berkeley were known, all of South Australian subjects and most of them in the Art Gallery of South Australia's collection. Because of this, little was known of her life after she left South Australia around 1852.

A collection of over forty of her works recently acquired by the Gallery from a family descendant shed light on her later life. Included in this collection are a fine group of watercolours depicting a rural property in Victoria, known to be part-owned by Berkeley. She was reputed to have worked in oils, but none had ever been traced until this descendant's collection was discovered. There are five oil paintings. These outstanding portraits are of her sister Theresa,

Theresa's husband John Walker, her own husband, Charles Berkeley and a self portrait, as well as a delightful group portrait of her three daughters, *Georgina, Augusta Rose and Emily*, which is part of the M.J.M. Carter Collection. They place Martha Berkeley as South Australia's leading portrait painter of the 1840s and one of the finest in Australia at that time.



Martha Berkeley, Australia, 1813-1899, Mrs Andrews with a harp, c1840, Adelaide, watercolour on paper, 16.5 x 13.5 cm; Gift of Barbara Rennie in memory of her parents P.H. and F.A.B. Andrews 1987



Theresa Walker, Australia, 1807-1876, Aboriginal woman, 1838, Adelaide, wax medallion with metal, velvet and carved wood frame, frame: 19.8 x 19.8 cm, medallion: 9.2 cm diameter; Bequest of Sir Samuel Way 1916

The exhibition of landscapes and portraits in oils and watercolours by Martha Berkeley and wax portraits by Theresa Walker will be held in Gallery 7. An accompanying full-colour publication will document the lives of both artists and has attracted funding assistance from the Women's Suffrage Centenary Steering Committee. [Reprinted from Art Gallery of South Australia News, June-July 1994.]

The Broughton Travelling Writing Desk

J.B. Hawkins

Published in 1888, 'Garryowen's' *Chronicles of Early Melbourne* is a wonderful compendium of life in that city by the journalist Edmund Finn in the period between 1835 and 1852. He notes that the Victorian Industrial Society's first exhibition held at St Patrick's Hall, Bourke Street on January 29 and 30, 1851 was a result of its formation the previous year at the Melbourne Mechanics' Institute.

At this exhibition, the travelling writing desk illustrated on the opposite page was shown and drew the following comments from 'Garryowen': "The gem of the exhibition was ... a marvel of ingenious handicraft by Mr William Broughton, a Collingwood mechanic. This was a writing desk composed of the following 18 colonial woods:— Heoak, tartarra, honeysuckle, sassafras, Murray pine, Huon pine, forest oak, blackwood, box, teak, musk, tulip-wood, silk-wood, redgum, dog-wood, Cypress pine, cherry-tree and myall. It was purchased by Mr Henry Moor as a Melbourne curio, and sent to England."¹ Broughton was awarded a large silver medal for the exhibition.²

The survival of this labelled and documented piece of furniture with its contemporary hand-written list of colloquially named timbers is a major discovery for the furniture historian. It brooks no argument as to contemporary timber descriptions, their sources and the practicality of their use. As an example of pre-goldrush Melbourne cabinet-making, it is a key survivor.

H.W. Broughton has so far proved to be something of an enigma. He arrived in Melbourne on January 9, 1846 from Launceston, Tasmania on the 'Swan'³ the same vessel that 10 weeks earlier had brought the watchmaker David Hamilton Fleming from Laun-

ceston to later work with Charles Brentani. This Launceston/Tasmanian connection may well prove important to both furniture and silver historians. Broughton's skill and knowledge of timbers, as evidenced by this example, may be the key to the complicated parquetry cabinet work produced in Tasmania prior to 1850, finally resulting in the important Tasmanian exhibits forwarded to the London Exhibition of 1851. Broughton is listed in the Directories at Victoria Parade, Collingwood in 1851, at 116 Russell Street in 1861-62 and 118 Lonsdale Street in 1870-72, the large gaps between addresses tend to point to an employee rather than an employer.

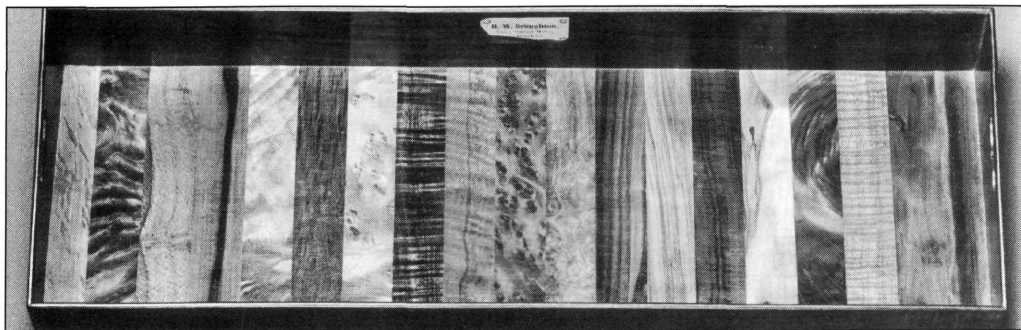
His source of woods may well have been Crooks Furniture Warehouse who advertised "Fancy woods. The public are invited to an inspection of some of the finest specimens of Van Diemen's Land, Port Phillip and Moreton Bay woods, at Crooks Furniture Warehouse, where Picture Frames and every other description of Cabinet work, from the above woods are made. Gentlemen requiring samples, for the purpose of sending to England, &c., can be supplied."⁴ It should be noted that Samuel Crook advertised "the availability of Australian Furniture of every description and hand-made to order of the best cedar, Blackwood, Huon pine, Cypress, etc., etc."⁵ Maybe the cabinet maker behind this sudden interest was none other than Broughton.

Henry Moor, the purchaser of the writing desk, was a Melbourne lawyer who had arrived there in 1842. He was Melbourne's second Lord Mayor and was considering a return to England at the time of purchase, the result of his disappointment over a libel suit in March 1851 against the proprietors

of the *Argus* who had called him a "double faced and unprincipled schemer". He won the verdict but was only awarded a farthing in damages. He finally left in January 1852, presumably taking the desk with him.

I purchased the writing desk at Olympia in 1993 and so its return marks a gap of 142 years out of Australia. I would suggest that the wooden travelling case for the Sugden silver box of 1848/9, also made from native timbers of a similar geometric format and now in the Australian National Gallery is also a product of Broughton's workshop.⁶ I would also suggest that as with the Packer Cabinet, sold by J.B. Hawkins Antiques to Old Government House, Parramatta, 20 years ago, the H.W. Broughton exhibition travelling writing desk will be the key to pre-1850 Melbourne and Tasmanian furniture. Pre-gold rush Victoria had a population of approximately 12,500 married couples of which about 6,000 lived in Melbourne and the chances of the "Gem of the Exhibition" being made, much less surviving to be correctly identified, must be considered extremely small.

Henry Broughton died at Sandhurst in the colony of Victoria on February 16, 1881.⁷ His death certificate states him to be a cabinet maker aged 75 years, name of parents unknown, born in London, England, was married in England and buried in the White Hills Cemetery: "nothing else known". Broughton died a pauper and at the Coronial Enquiry into his death⁸ his next door neighbour in Echuca. Mary Ann Neeson stated that, "he was a cabinet maker by trade but for some time unable to do much work. He was a native of London and a very old colonist ... lived alone ... been receiving relief from



A secret tray of wood containing 20 different woods

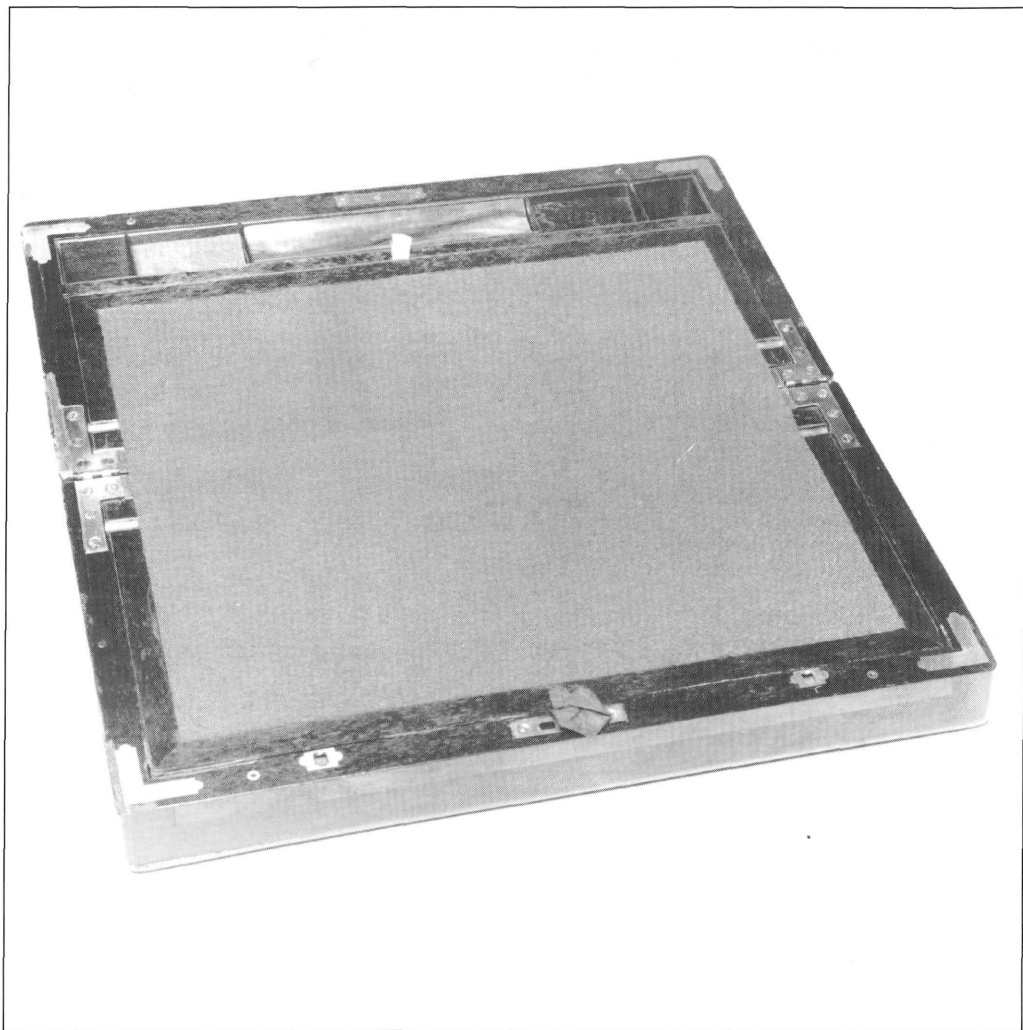
Number	Name of wood	Origin
1	Myrtle	Indigenous to Victoria
2	Santana	New Zealand
3	Honey suckle	Victoria & N.H. Land
4	Sassafras	Victoria
5	Native Pine	do
6	Forest oak	do
7	Acorn Pine	do
8	Black wood	Victoria & N.H. Land
9	Box or PP Middle	Victoria
10	Roach	New Zealand
11	Musk	2 varieties, Victoria & N.H. Land
12	Jalpa	Porton Bay, New Zealand
13	Jalpa work	Victoria
14	Koipum	do
15	Box wood	do
16	Cypress Pine	Porton Bay
17	Box	Victoria
18	Cherry Tree	do
19	Iron Bark	do
20	As Mania	unknown
21	Apple	Victoria & N.H. Land
22	The oak	do
23	PP oak	do
24	Huckle	do
25	Redwood	South Island
26	Lytle	New Zealand
27	do	Victoria & N.H. Land

The 2 unknown I believe New Holland
 2 N.H. Land only
 2 New Zealand
 21 New Holland but the same woods as named are to be found in N.H. Land

H. W. Broughton,
 Fancy Cabinet Maker,
 MELBOURNE.

Label from the above tray.

The removable tray to the inside of the desk is made up of 20 various woods whose origins when known are given, a total of 27 woods being used in its construction.



The desk shown open: 'Brass inside corners, flush bolts, hinge sockets, all colonial brass, leather and springs.'

the Ladies Benevolent Society ... confined to bed ... determined to send the deceased to the Sandhurst Hospital. A ticket was obtained from The Rev. Mr Garlick ... left by train ... in charge of the guard ... his cab fare was provided ... he appeared strong enough for the journey". Archibald Colquhoun, the hospital doctor stated, "death was accelerated by removal, deceased was not in a fit state to leave

his bed in Echuca". A sad end for a man whom time may prove to be Australia's equivalent to New Zealand's Anton Seuffert.

Notes

1. *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne 1835-52*, p437 and *Melbourne Morning Herald* 30 Jan 1851, p2.
"The most unique article in the place ... purchased by Mr Moor M.L.C. for exportation to England ...

2. The Argus 1 Feb 1851.
3. P.R.O.V. V.P.R.S. 22 Unit 29 Passenger Arrivals 1846-47 to Port Phillip.
4. Port Phillip Directory 1847 Advertisements.
5. Kerr's Melbourne Almanac and Directory, 1842.
6. Nineteenth Century Australian Silver by J.B. Hawkins Vol. II plate 465.
7. Death Certificate Schedule B, no. 13465, District of Sandhurst, 1881.
8. Coroner's Inquest 18 Feb 1881, P.R.O.V. V.P.R.S. 24 Unit 418.

Forthcoming Australian-American Walter & Marion Griffin Exhibition

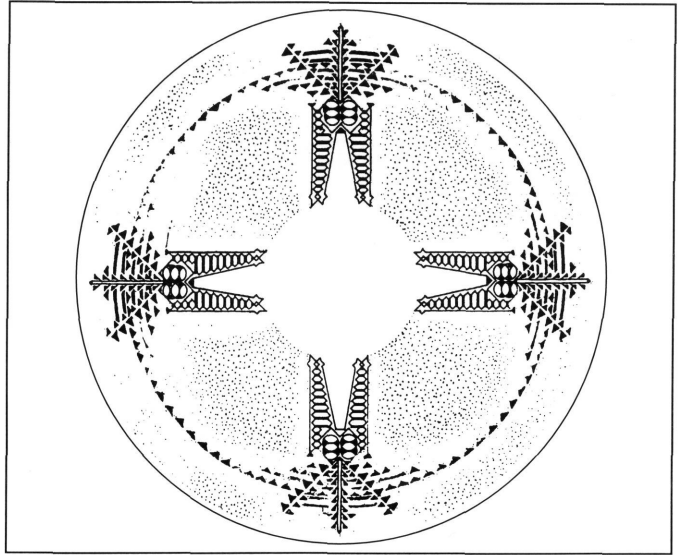
David Dolan, Senior Curator, Powerhouse Museum

During the northern hemisphere winter of 1993 I travelled to the USA to study Griffin buildings in the Chicago area, and take part in meetings of the Griffin Exchange Program at the University of Illinois. The costs were met by the Australian Embassy in Washington, and the purpose was to link the research of the Griffin Exchange Program, which also involves the University of Melbourne, with an international touring Griffin exhibition being developed by the Powerhouse Museum for 1996-7.

The main aim of the exhibition is to increase public awareness of the Griffins, in order to create a climate of opinion which will ensure that their remaining buildings here and in the USA are preserved and protected. We believe that if enough people understand the importance of their work, further demolition and unsympathetic alteration would be socially and politically unacceptable.

Never before has there been sufficient funding for a Griffin exhibition on this scale, and it is unlikely that comparable funding will become available again in the foreseeable future. The 1996-7 exhibition can therefore be regarded as the definitive Griffin exhibition for our times, and we are hoping for unanimous co-operation so we can get it right.

Funding for the exhibition has come from the Council of the City of Sydney, in the context of the demolition of the Pymont Incinerator—the same source which topped up State Government funds to enable the Historic Houses Trust to purchase “Dwelling number one” at Castlecrag. Following con-



A design for dinner china (Cafe Australia) Melbourne. [Published by D. Van Zanen 1970.]

serva- tion work and council approval of a plan for sympathetic extensions, that house is to be sold for private occupation. Early in 1994, one of three original light fittings Griffin designed for “Dwelling number one” was purchased by the Powerhouse for permanent retention as a design resource. In addition to acquiring the remnants of the Pymont Incinerator, the Powerhouse has received the perspective drawing, and house and garden plan, for the 1933 Cameron House at Killara in two separate gifts from members of Griffin’s client’s family.

Anne Watson and myself, the curators assigned to the Griffin project, are eager to avoid an exhibition consisting only of architectural plans, drawings, and models. The Griffins designed a wide range of

domestic fittings, furniture, and even ceramics for particular buildings, and we are keen to include as many examples as possible in the exhibition. We are also interested in objects which were not necessarily designed by them but which are associated with them personally or with events and organisations (eg: anthroposophy) which they were involved.

Members of the Australian Society who have any information which may be relevant can assist by contacting me on 217 0280, to tell me of any items of interest they may be aware of, especially if they might be available for loan to the exhibition, or could be acquired by the Museum for documentation, conservation and permanent safe keeping.

Panel Discussion on Furniture Conservation and Restoration

Following is an abridged version of the panel discussion on furniture conservation and restoration held at The Glover Cottage, Sydney on June 2, 1994. Guest speakers were Paul Gregson, Director of Gregson's Conservation of Antique Furniture, Thornleigh, NSW; Julian Bickersteth, Managing Director of International Conservation Services, Chatswood, NSW; and Anne Watson Curator of Decorative Arts and Design, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney; convened and chaired by Kevin Fahy.

Kevin Fahy: Tonight we are going to have a panel discussion on furniture conservation and restoration and we are fortunate to have with us Paul Gregson, Julian Bickersteth and Anne Watson, who will each speak for 15 minutes and afterwards we will be asking for questions from the floor. So I will ask Paul Gregson to give us a starter on the role of furniture conservation and restoration.

Paul Gregson: I think something like this is quite good to let people know what we do in our workshops, and behind the doors, and the study needed, etc. But basically the role of restorers and conservators is that we are serving the community. It is nothing more and nothing less, than people to knock on the door, if they have something broken, bent and twisted and they want it repaired. Now there is an educated way of saying, that it is best if it still looks two hundred years old, but we will present it in such a way, so you can still use it.

For example I have brought along an eighteenth century dressing stool and this is how it came through the door, with a leg loose. It has a drop-in seat and the lady has had it for 15 years in that con-

dition, and now wants to put a cover on it. So, you have to be able to explain that what you are dealing with is something pretty special. So you show them all the salient points, then you show them the missing tenons in the side of the legs, and let them know that there was a frieze around that and it would have been fretcut. At this point we sit down and say that's the story of the piece of furniture, and make a decision, but we won't redesign the fret work because we don't know what it would have been like, but we will dismantle it and put a false tenon in the leg to make it sound, clean it only and upholster it. And I think at that point there is no reason to go any further than that.

Basically the role for me is to maintain and advise people on their collections, and with that we can understand the crafts of the last two hundred years of 'modern' furniture. But when we pick something up, we have to understand the craft from one hundred, two hundred years ago and be able to duplicate it. There is not point in saying there was a tenon used, but we won't repair that, but close it up and put a bit of glue in there. There is no point in doing that, it won't be strong enough – you may as well take it apart and do it properly.

So in effect, what we are doing is preserving not only furniture, but we are preserving the crafts in the community as well. E.g. if marquetry has missing pieces you have to sit down and duplicate it. (A series of slides plus some items brought along for discussion were shown.)

How far should restoration go to repair cracks, gouges, burn marks,

water stains, glass replacement, etc. Well, if you have a secretaire bookcase standing there and someone has put a foot through the glass, then there is no question that you replace the glass (sad but true). There is not much point in saying, oh well, that is the history of this piece of furniture, we'll leave it like that, or a chair has fallen over and smashed to smithereens; you put it back the best way you can.

As for cracks, this is the worst year I have seen for cracks. The bushfires in January created enormous moisture losses.

We still have a very low humidity period at the moment so for people who have homes with the silly Architecture that we build in Australia – lots of glass and eaves, all you are doing is creating a disaster area for wooden furniture. Hopefully, humidifiers can be introduced into private dwellings, as they are sufficient to keep the moisture content up.

Furniture doesn't get hungry, contrary to popular belief and old wives tales, and contrary to what you may find on supermarket shelves to feed your furniture. It never gets hungry, it never loses its oils, otherwise every carpet in every house would have black marks everywhere if this was the case. The only thing that timber survives on is water. It lets it in, and lets it out. So for now I'll let someone else take over and answer some questions later on.

Kevin Fahy: Well thanks Paul, and I will now ask Julian to continue the discussion.

Julian Bickersteth: Conservation versus restoration, it would be a bit boring if the subject didn't exist I think, if everything was cut and dried in terms of what you conserve

and when you restore, and I think I would have given up long ago if every issue that came through our doors was self explanatory in what to do. I think the best thing to do is to show you how I would approach various pieces that we have worked on.

There is a very interesting, one could say, a most unholy row going on in the conservation profession at the moment. Largely, if not entirely, started by Professor James Beck at the New York University, who has basically written a book criticising the conservation profession for over-cleaning, specifically pointing to paintings. I think it has been particularly brought to the attention of the public by the Sistine Chapel, which I am sure you all are aware, which is largely controversial in terms of the original parts of the Michelangelo painting work having been removed.

And although the conservation profession is united in terms of condemning Professor Beck, being basically uninformed, I think what it has proved once again, is that these issues are always ongoing, and I think that from our point of view as conservators we should be constantly assessing and reassessing.

Let me now show you some slides. (Note. Only one series are discussed here.)

These are cedar panels, almost certainly 1820s, built for the original pulpit of St James' Church, King Street, Sydney. The church layout was revamped in the 1890s and these were removed and put up into the attic in pieces. Our challenge was to create from them a unified and recognisable pulpit. All we have done is brought it all together, held together with brass 'table forks' and cleaned and waxed it, but you can still see the large cracks inside, and no mouldings have been replaced and no damage particularly around the bottom has been interfered with. You could say that we have disturbed the original fabric by introducing the brass 'table forks' and screws, but in this

case we thought it worth it for the minor amount of damage, to create a uniform whole which was interpretable.

Kevin Fahy: Thank you Julian for your comments regarding the process of conservation. Perhaps Anne will now enter the fray.

Anne Watson: Well I'm not a furniture conservator, I'm a curator and we are quite different people, I can tell you now. Quite often we in fact differ at the museum in what type of approach we might take in restoration or conservation on a piece of furniture. We, in fact, at the Powerhouse, don't have a furniture conservator, we used to have Julian. Most of the conservation people we have are multi-media specialists, except for our textile specialists.

So my job is to recommend acquisitions, and once they come into the Museum, I then liaise with our conservation staff about the most appropriate treatment to use. But normally, it is a very conservative kind of treatment, we like to retain original finishes and we don't like to fiddle around with damaged areas too much.

I guess where my attitude differs from the non-furniture trained conservators at the Museum is, I have a much more historical consciousness of the way furniture would have looked, and the way it possibly could look, as well as picking up alterations and additions to a piece of furniture that obviously are not original. And so these can lead to debate, differences of opinion, and there are a couple of projects in fact at the moment where nothing has happened, because we haven't been able to come to agreement on their conservation approach.

The areas that prove to be very difficult at the moment have a lot to do with upholstery conservation, and as Julian alluded to, there is a lot of debate about what to do with upholstery, whether you retain what's there as part of the history of the piece, despite the fact that it is

totally inappropriate, or in fact, do you dismantled the fabric that is there, trying to determine if there is original fabric underneath. There are a whole range of scenarios, and I will go through them now to show you the various options that may relate to the debate on upholstery. These are listed in descending range of desirability.

The first and most desirable is that the original fabric is there and that it is in good condition. This hardly ever happens.

Secondly, the original intact fabric is found after the removal of the outer layers. Now this is a bit of a gamble, as once you start to interfere with the framework of the piece, you may cause quite a bit of damage depending on how the fabric has been fixed to the framework. Retaining the layers as documentation of the piece is important.

Thirdly, you find scraps of original fabric and similar reproduction upholstery fabric is still available, such as horsehair.

Fourthly, there are scraps of fabric found, maybe only threads, but there is no equivalent available today. Then you are really in trouble.

Fifthly, there is no original fabric found but there is good documentation about what type of fabric might have been on it and colours that were used, etc. This was certainly the case with the Thomas Hope chairs.

(Slides and discussion followed, one item discussed here.)

Now this is an Australian sofa, some of you will recognise it as it was on display at the Mint for several years, by John Mason, a turn-of-the-century Queensland cabinetmaker. Acquired in 1980, it was my first acquisition. It came from the National Gallery of Victoria's "Kangaroo in the Decorative Arts" Exhibition. It has a very restrained, very neutral fabric, obviously not the original, but the line of thinking then was that if you didn't

know what was on it, you went for something that was very bland and didn't conflict with the piece, and shows up the intricate inlay on the back and sides, etc, of the sofa.

But interestingly enough, the research we did after we acquired it turned up a contemporary photograph of the sofa taken about 1900, which showed a strong floral late 19th Century chintz on it, which to modern thinking looked terrible. We are now faced with the dilemma of whether we should go and find a similar chintz, or even have one made, to replace what is very bland upholstery. So that is one piece that is waiting for someone to come to a decision.

Kevin Fahy: Perhaps now we could have some questions from the audience.

QUESTION: I just seem to get the point, that the difference between conserving something for private use and conserving something for a museum, that in private use, if it has a use, like the Rocking horse, it's got to go back to being a rocking horse and being used, whereas if it was in a museum, no one is going to jump on it, it doesn't really need meticulous work to bring it back to full working order. At home we had a bookcase that had adjustable shelves that started to drop, and it reached a point where you really had to do something about it, otherwise it couldn't hold any books, so we had to get it fixed.

I'd just like to ask one point about the chair, that if there is no evidence of joining or mitring, do you leave it up to records or precedent?

Paul Gregson: Precedent, knowledge, experience and a hunch. I think that everyone should be quite pleased that we are all so consistent in firstly our problems and our solutions to them. Look, someone may come along and say we are doing it totally incorrectly in ten years time, or maybe say we want it like the French. They say that their cabinetmakers have put a lot of work in this marquetry, and we

want to enjoy it, not have a cloudy old finish over it, but have it repolished.

I couldn't give an across-the-board assessment of how we go about restoring, as every one is assessed on its merits, but clients know that, even in their own collections they are going to have different assessments on different pieces, we'll do that on that piece, but I know I'm not going to do that on this piece for example.

QUESTION: With all the pieces of furniture that were highly polished in the '80s, when most dealers said they couldn't sell them unless they were polished, is there anything that can be done to undo the damage that has been done?

Paul Gregson: Yes they can.

QUESTION: What about polyurethane on dining tables; can they be turned back?

Paul Gregson: Yes. All those surface coatings can be removed without abrasion, to the surface and all surfaces are preserved as much as possible.

Julian Bickersteth: It is a question I suppose of what we mean by "can be rectified", I mean you can never recover original patination.

Paul Gregson: Original patination is an interesting thing. When you see real patination on a piece of timber it is in the years of surface fibres being consolidated and compacted down by rubbing, etc. You can throw anything at that finish, metho or petrol and it will not change it. All you need to do is dry it and buff it, and it will return. The only way that it will be distorted is by altering the pH on the surface.

Kevin Fahy: I think when we say original finish, it is the very first finish that the item has had, but I think the term really means an early finish.

Paul Gregson: Well, there is no doubt that you can come across pieces that have original finishes, and there are pieces of furniture that duplicate it in their own right, and they will be more valuable

pieces. Original finishes, if it is there, great, but if it has been refinished a hundred years ago, then its an early finish, and sometimes it can't be decided whether it is original or repolished.

QUESTION: I'm a bit confused about original finish. How does an original finish survive a hundred years? Isn't there going to be all sorts of things put over it – waxes and dirt – and if you remove these waxes, what state do you go down to?

Julian Bickersteth: My interpretation of that is that as long as nobody has ever gone back to the original timber surface, to the timber grain if you like, you still have the original finish under there. Paul and I clean furniture, and what we are doing, as Anne said, is cleaning the excretions, particularly of wax that has built up over the years and dirt that has got trapped in that, but as long as it has never been physically stripped back to the original timber, then its original finish is still there.

QUESTION: Does furniture need to be polished and waxed to fee the timber?

Paul Gregson: No, as I said before, wood doesn't need to be fed.

Julian Bickersteth: Feeding is one of the great myths.

Paul Gregson: Timber doesn't lose its oils, particularly if it doesn't have any essential oils in it to start with, timber objects only survive on moisture gain and moisture loss. The only reason the surface coating is there, is that when the cabinetmaker made the piece, he put a coating on it to enhance the timber in the piece, to protect it from the elements and to preserve it or shut out moisture content.

QUESTION: What about the use of silicon based polishes?

Paul Gregson: If there has to be refinishing done at a future date, heaven help the polisher, as you can't get it out successfully.

QUESTION: Should a wax polish be applied to furniture regularly?

Paul Gregson: Not regularly, all

that happens in my opinion, is that you become a slave to your furniture. It's there for you to use, but if you get a whim or a free day off, run around with a good wax – which is hard to find now.

Generally with furniture, all you need to do is keep the dust off it. That's good housekeeping. So use a damp chamois – not wet – pick up the dust and buff it with a dry cloth. If you have got a residue of wax on there, it will buff up brightly by itself, you will not need to put another layer on. Most of the wax mediums around at the moment are virtually liquids. You put them on, then you wipe them off again. But you feel good because of the nice aromatic smell that they leave.

QUESTION: I'm quite fascinated on the debate on upholstery as a subject, and I'm quite interested in what to do about upholstery, especially when so much 19th Century furniture has been incorrectly re-upholstered, especially in style, and I would like to ask both Paul and Julian what they would do for example on the Sly couch that Anne showed in the slides, how they would advise a client and how they would advise a major institution, just on the upholstery and nothing else.

Paul Gregson: From the institution's point of view, it is there and has to be allowed to be displaced to

the public on what has been done. But with a client, I would sit down and weigh up the options which include that we redo it and make the bolsters. On the day I'd get a pencil out and say this is how it was and I would draw it, or show a drawing from a pattern book.

Julian Bickersteth: Yes, like it or not we are never immune from our own feelings on this. I look at the leather and see a lovely old worn look.

QUESTION: So it is a pretty rare example, to be done in leather, most of them are not normally done in leather?

Julian Bickersteth: But ultimately it is horses for courses, and ultimately I would push very hard for the upholstery to be kept in a private situation, but if a client wants a fabric that is more fashionable, because upholstery is very fashionable, and changes as fashions change. I think I would try very hard to try and maintain evidence of that underneath in some form if you can.

I think one of the problems that you can see at the moment, and you can see it more broadly in the way that houses are conserved, is we tend to rush back to its earliest state, without leaving evidence of later states as we do so.

Kevin Fahy: Now it is perfectly obvious that we will be here till the

wee hours of the morning, and I think we should sign our speakers up for a return visit, if they are willing. I really enjoyed our panelists tonight, sharing their expertise and while they did show many facets of the restoration craft, I think they did pretty well sing the one song. I was more than impressed with the slides, but the frightening thing is, that they reminded me of the emergency wing of a public hospital. I tend to look at pieces in their finished condition in a museum or shop, and I have forgotten what those pieces have obviously gone through, in many cases, so this was an eye-opener. On behalf of all of us here tonight I would like to thank Paul, Julian and Anne for giving up their time and speaking to us.

[Transcriber's Note: Due to each speaker showing slides and discussing individual pieces of furniture, plus the problem of the length of the transcription, I have attempted to reduce the panelists' off-the-cuff discussions, and questions from the audience, while attempting to give a taste of an Australiana Society meeting, as requested by our interstate and out-of-town members, who cannot attend Sydney meetings. The Letters to the Editor section of the Journal is a marvellous way to continue the discussion. Caressa Crouch.]

Exhibition: 'Australiana Folk Art' —

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The collection of 184 items, all for sale, encompasses a wide range, from robust to whimsical. The smaller items, including boxes, picture frames, games and toys, are particularly intriguing.

Empire of the South

Michael Bogle

In 1952, Mr C.B. Darley and D.F.W. Darley of Brisbane, Queensland donated an unusual circular bronze relief to Vaucluse House. Once the home of William Charles and Sarah Wentworth, Vaucluse House was managed during in the 1950s by the honorary Vaucluse-Nielsen Park Trust. The Darleys' gift to the Trust entitled "Empire of the South" was displayed for many years as the emblem of the Australian Patriotic Association. This was a 19th century organisation that boasted William Charles Wentworth as a key member.

The "Empire of the South" has not been on display for over a decade. At least, not since the management of the property was transferred to the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales in 1981. Then early last year, we resurrected the relief again and it was re-hung in our new Vaucluse House shop noting its alleged associations with the Patriotic Association. But a sceptical comment from a noted art historian on the Historic Houses Trust Board caused us to begin to question its attribution.

In truth, the relief's finish was too fine for an early colonial date of the Australian Patriotic Association; the drawing was exceptionally confident and its title "Empire of the South" carried political undertones more in keeping with the mood of the later 19th century.

Then, a chance re-read of Margaret Betteridge's *Australian Flora in Art* (Sun Academy, 1979) provided a clue to the medallion's creator. In any discussion of Australian flora, the French exile Lucien Henry (1850-96) must play a part and Ms Betteridge's essay mentions that he exhibited a bronze medallion, "The Empire of the South" in the Sydney International Exhibition of 1879. Where was the source of her information? It has been suggested that

Mr Henry arrived in mid-1879 from New Caledonia. If so, how could he have managed to work so quickly; the International Exhibition had only opened in September? Could Lucien Henry be the artist of the Historic Houses Trust's "Empire of the South"?

The title was not enough to verify the relief's origin and a search was begun at the Mitchell Library for additional information. *The Official Catalogue of the Art Gallery* (1879) said nothing of Henry's work. The list of official awards from the Exhibition was also silent. Could it have been confused with Simonetti's "Venus of the South" from the same exhibition? Then the two volume Exhibition scrap-book of 1879-80 news cuttings from the Sydney newspapers gave the first clue.

An anonymous art critic writing in the 8 January 1880 *Sydney Morning Herald* says, "We may notice before quitting the art gallery a bust of Mr Justice Windeyer which has just been placed there. [Note that the *Official Art Gallery Catalogue* published earlier said nothing of Henry.] It is considered by his friends an excellent likeness and is the work of M. Henry, a young French sculptor who has recently arrived in the colony." The Herald's nameless critic confidently states in a later 27 January edition that "M. Henry represents a good school ...".

This January review suggests that Henry's work was very late in arriving at the exhibition. An appropriate conclusion if he only arrived in Sydney in June/July 1879. But where is the medallion? *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 19 April 1880 finally comes to the rescue when they publish the Arts Committee report that one of its prize-winners in the "non-European Sculpture (class 400, NSW) chosen in their 27 March 1880 meeting was an Honourable Mention "... of a bronze

medallion by Mons. Henry entitled "Empire of the South". Too late for the official catalogue but not too late for a prize.

The primary sources now insure that there was a Lucien Henry work entitled "Empire of the South". Could it have been documented in the volumes of photographs of the 1879 exhibition? A methodical page-by-page search finally located Mr Henry's relief in the New South Wales Court, hanging low; suggesting unofficial approval of the work. It still retains the original timber frame from the photograph of the 1879 display.

The discovery of the Lucien Henry medallion "Empire of the South" in the Vaucluse House collections gives us an example of one of his earliest Australian works. While I have not been able to establish with certainty the date of Henry's arrival from the convict colony of New Caledonia, the exhibition opening in September 1879 would have only given him weeks to prepare work for display. His speed in assimilation is extraordinary as the title "Empire of the South" suggests that he was quick to sense the mood of 1879 and the excitement of this new Nation-in-the-Making.

Michael Bogle is a curator with the Historic House Trust of NSW.



Lucien Henry (1850-96). Empire of the South. Bronze.



New South Wales Court. Sydney International Exhibition Photographic Album. 1879-80. Three volumes, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales. The Lucien Henry medallion is hanging in the lower left section of the photograph. (Q 606/s.)

From the Editor's Desk

CLIFFORD CRAIG
(1896-1986)

During a National Trust of Australia (NSW) tour of Tasmania in 1964 I first met Dr Clifford Craig. My visit was prompted by the hope of seeing a wealth of Australian early colonial furniture for which Tasmania has been long renowned. My disappointment at its paucity in the several Tasmanian historical houses visited flared into audible comment at Franklin House, Launceston.

I received a gentle tap on the shoulder from a total stranger who enquired 'are you interested in colonial furni-

ture?' My affirmative answer resulted in an invitation to visit his home in High Street, Launceston.

My search was over. Here was a superb collection, gathered over 40 years. No wonder I saw little of relevant interest in the historic houses I visited.

For some time I had researched colonial furniture in New South Wales. I soon found out that Cliff was similarly occupied in a study of the colonial furniture of Tasmania. We quickly realised the virtue of combining the results of both our researches, which with the magnificent photographs of E. Graeme Robertson resulted in the seminal study

of early Australian furniture – *Early Colonial Furniture in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, (Georgian House, Melbourne 1972).

As the surviving member of this trinity I only hope that in the dispersal of his major collection of early Australian colonial furniture its many significant items find an appreciative home, but remain within a historical record of Australia's early colonial heritage.

The sale will be held by Sotheby's in Launceston on Saturday 19 November 1994. Viewing of the collection will be the previous Wednesday to Friday and the morning of the sale.

An Early Sydney Antique Dealer

Eighty years ago, Sydney boasted some dozen fine art dealers and galleries. Several such as James Tyrell, Angus and Robertson, Anthony Hordern & Son and R.T. Carter included a wide range of antiques in the stock they carried. The antique market in Sydney during the early 19th century is described in Terry Ingram's *A Question of Polish: The Antique Market in Australia* (Sydney 1979).


An interesting letterhead of Antiques Ltd, Sydney dated 22

January 1913 was recently shown to the Editor. The business was listed in Sands' *Sydney Directory* in 1912 and 1913 at 88 Hunter Street. Walter C. Astley was its director and proprietor. In 1914 it had moved to 29a Elizabeth Street and in 1915 to 80 Hunter Street where it was known as Astley's Antiques. The business appears to have closed about that date and Mr Astley retired to his residence at Gore Hill.

The letterhead described at some

length the variety of stock carried and has the logo of a hanging shop sign captioned 'Ye Olde Silversmithe'. It includes particulars of the vendors and purchaser of a number of pieces of 'Old Scotch' table silver of the period of George III and priced at an average £1 each. Mostly undated one might wonder if the dealer has confused 'Old Scotch' marks with pseudo Scottish marks used by some early Sydney silversmiths?

22 January 1913



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Walter C. Astley Director

RECENT MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS OF AUSTRALIANA: Art Gallery of South Australian Acquires an Outstanding Example of Cabinet-Makers Art

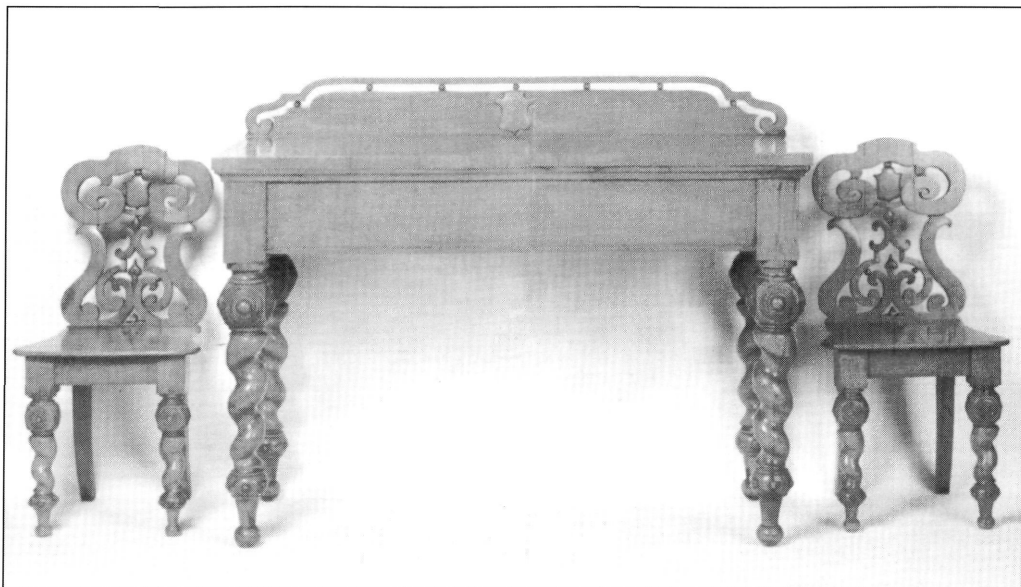
George Debney (c 1819-1895) was one of Adelaide's most prominent cabinet-makers during the nineteenth century and operated his business in Rundle Street from 1847 to 1875. The Hall table and two chairs is an outstanding example of his work. Made of English oak on an Australian cedar frame, it is highly crafted and finished. The extravagant cork-screw legs, decorative carved backs of the chairs and highly quality of the veneers indicate the skill of the workmanship of this cabinetmaker. A concealed drawer is fitted in the

right hand end of the table. Unusually for nineteenth century Australian furniture, the table and chairs retain their original maker's labels.

Hall furniture is often imposing, formal and usually designed to be viewed from the front. Its primary function is often decorative. Tables flanked by pairs of un-upholstered solid wood chairs were popular around the middle of the nineteenth century in Britain and Australia. Related designs for hall tables and chairs with applied shields appear in English pattern

books of the 1850s and '60s. Historical revivals in furniture were a feature of nineteenth century design and stylistically the design of the chair backs derives from what was considered an Elizabethan style. Corkscrew legs were a feature of seventeenth century furniture. Similar furniture was often in a Gothic style. The *Hall table and two chairs* are on display in the Elder Wing.

[Reprinted from Art Gallery of South Australia News, June-July 1994.]



G.R. Debney, Australia, 1847-1875, *Hall table and two chairs*, c 1860-65, Adelaide, English oak, veneers of English oak on cedar (*Toona australis*), table 103.0 x 136.0 x 59.0 cm; A.E. Scott O.B.E., Bequest Fund 1994.



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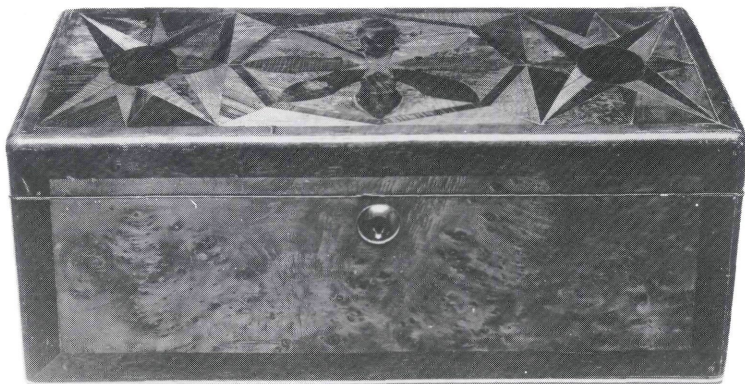
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A remarkable Travelling Writing Desk by Henry Broughton, exhibited at the first Victorian Industrial Society Exhibition, January 1851, with the original list of all the local timbers employed in its construction.