

# Australiana

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# SIMPSON'S ANTIQUES

FINE AUSTRALIAN ANTIQUES



*A rare Australian cedar Chiffonier with Tasmanian Huon pine panels in the doors and back, the drawer front veneered with Tasmanian Musk. A similar example (plate 235) is illustrated in **Australian Furniture Pictorial History and Dictionary** by Kevin Fahy and Andrew Simpson, revived 19th century patina circa 1850.*

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[www.australiana.org.au](http://www.australiana.org.au)

[info@australiana.org.au](mailto:info@australiana.org.au)

ABN 13 402 033 474

Australiana

PO Box 2335

BONDI JUNCTION NSW 1355

Tel 02 8239 2225 or 0404 051 999

[info@australiana.org.au](mailto:info@australiana.org.au)

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# A legend in her lifetime: Flora Landells, painter and potter

Flora Landells is the best known of Western Australia's early potters and china painters. Encouraged and supported by her engineer husband Reg, her skill, her many exhibitions, her pioneering representation in the Art Gallery of Western Australia, her teaching and her inspirational personality ensured that she had a significant influence on the development of art in Western Australia.

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## Dorothy Erickson

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**F**lora Annie Margaret Landells née Le Cornu (1888–1981) was born in Adelaide to gardener John Le Cornu and his wife Emma Trephena, née Cole. The family arrived in Western Australia in 1896 at the height of the gold rushes and lived in Guildford in the Swan Valley until 1905, when they moved to a farm in the country.

However, the determined 17-year-old Flora remained to study and earn her living as a 'teacher of painting'. This began a career as an artist and teacher spanning over 60 years. Flora became Western Australia's first studio potter and one of the earliest in Australia to undertake the entire process from digging clay to firing. She was also a successful career woman with a considerable public profile. She taught at Midland Junction Technical School from 1909–1930, Methodist Ladies College from 1909–1950 and at

her own Maylands School of Art. She relieved J W R Linton at Perth Technical School when necessary. Students included Muriel Southern, Joan Robison, Amy Harvey, Marina Shaw and according to the family Rolf Harris.

In 1903, when she was 15, Flora began studying art under James W R Linton at the Perth Technical School. She quickly showed herself as an outstanding student achieving first-class passes and winning scholarships that paid the fees. A beautiful oil painting from this time confirms her skill (**plate 1**). In these classes she had her first experience of clay modelling, as part of a sculpture course.

Flora joined the West Australian Society of Arts in 1904 and exhibited regularly, winning the Open Competition and the Hackett Prize for Drawing in 1906. She was one of the Perth Technical School students who exhibited at the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition at Wembley, winning the Grand Prix and a Diploma of Honour. In 1909 she commenced teaching at the newly opened Methodist Ladies College,



1 Flora Landells (1888–1981),  
*Still Life with Geraniums*,  
oil on canvas, 495 x 745 mm, 1905.  
Courtesy the late Arthur Dall



and was asked to begin classes at the Midland Junction Campus of Perth Technical School. She was a patient and inspiring teacher, as comments from her MLC class of 1921 attest. 'Mrs Landells is the best tempered person we know', they wrote in the school magazine *The Collegian*. Almost 30 years later she was still calm and entertaining as I can attest, for she was my art teacher too.

After World War I she did not rejoin the WA Society of Arts, as the exhibitors were often her students. Instead she held solo exhibitions at Newspaper House Gallery (**plate 2**), the Claude Hotchin Art Gallery and her Maylands Art Studio (**plate 3**), the final one being at Pastoral House in 1960. At these events she exhibited drawings, paintings, china painting and pottery. Her later work featured naturalistically rendered Western Australian flora but earlier work was much bolder. Flora continued practising and teaching china painting almost up to her death in 1981, aged 93.

In 1913 Flora married Reginald Burns Landells, an engineer and chemist. They built a home at 34 Tenth Avenue, Maylands where in 1925 she set up the Maylands School of Art. After setting up the school, Flora and Reg read

everything they could about pottery and in January 1926 drove their car across the Nullabor to Melbourne where she enrolled at £1 an hour to learn from Merric Boyd. This was not a success. There were too many interruptions, and she left poorer and not much wiser.

She learnt instead to throw pottery from Royal Doulton-trained Frederick Piercy, owner of Westralian Pottery Co Ltd and about 1929 established the Landells Studio Pottery. Reg's engineering and chemical knowledge was used to good effect in setting up and supplying the pottery (**plate 4**). This was a small experimental venture at first. Flora made hand-built coiled pots, and incised, pierced and painted them with metallic oxides (**plates 5-6**). Jugs, vases and bowls were the major shapes. Some had three-dimensional applied decoration; some were simple, others deliberately asymmetric, with decoration ranging from restrained to 'lumpen' (**plate 7**).

Her pots reflected the aesthetic of the Omega Workshops in London, various French artists' interest in carving and later the renewed interest in medieval styles inspired by the centenary of William Morris's birth, in 1933. A large pot she gave to the Art Gallery of Western Australia,

2 An exhibition at Newspaper House Galleries, 1947.  
Courtesy the late Arthur Dall

3 Flora at an exhibition in her Maylands Studio, 1940s.  
Courtesy the late Arthur Dall

*Jardiniere with Poinsettia decoration*, is an example of the handmade style seen worldwide from the 1910s until after the Second World War - the philosophy being that a handmade object should look handmade.

This pot is incised, painted and overglazed with a design featuring poinsettias. Made c 1933, it was a favourite piece of hers. It has some affinity with a medieval pot in the Art Gallery of WA presented by the City of London about this time. Others in the same vein are in family collections and the National Gallery of Australia. She carved a peacock on one, and incised flowers on others. She incised 'Landells, Perth' on the base (**plate 8**).



4 Reg crushing clay in 1944 as illustrated in *Pix* magazine. Courtesy the late Arthur Dall

5 Flora coil building in 1944 as illustrated in *Pix* magazine. Courtesy the late Arthur Dall

Flora enjoyed considerable success. In an exhibition about 1939 the art critic Charles Hamilton wrote:

Their work possesses the best qualities of peasant craftsmanship, being simple and pleasing in form, decorated with reticence and a due appreciation of the fact that decoration must not obscure structure or impair usefulness. ... Some interesting experiments and results in clay-mixing, the use of glazes, incised pattern and underpainting, give piquancy to the exhibition.<sup>1</sup>

That year, the Art Gallery of Western Australia purchased its first piece of local studio pottery – by Flora Landells.

The combination of Reg and Flora Landells was fortuitous. They were the perfect foils for each other in pioneering such a venture. Most of what they used, such as the minerals feldspar and quartz, was sourced in Western Australia. Clay was dug from

pits at Kalamunda, Collie, Pinjarra or Popanyinning. It was left to weather in heaps beside the studio. Special samples were stored in bags under the studio until Reg prepared the clay in the crusher, rollers and filter press. He then wedged it and undertook some throwing and glazing (plate 9). He developed glazes to suit the high (1,100° C) firing temperatures they used. Reg built much of their equipment and prepared all their clays and glazes.

The project grew, becoming an essential industry during World War II when Landells changed the major thrust of her work from hand-built art-works to jigger and jolly slip-cast-ware. The war had cut off supplies of imported china and for the duration their production changed to a mass-market range for the Western Australian retailer Harris Scarfe & Sandover. These were simple utilitarian wares of a modern shape coloured with slip. The plain glazing was a joint affair. A set of six cups and saucers is in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia. A niece has a set too; she was given one piece at a time (plate 10).

In 1947 Flora mounted a major exhibition with over 200 catalogue entries at the Newspaper House Art Gallery. The range of work covered

was quite remarkable – bowls, vases, jugs, paperweights, cups and saucers – and mostly decorative objects rather than wartime utilitarian wares. By this time, she was favouring trailed slip decoration in her work. Her catalogue used quotations from the Persian poet Omar Khayyam interspersed among the rather idiosyncratic descriptions. For instance, under Item 148, an oval bowl, *Windswept Trees* (plate 2), she added:

... But after Silence Spake  
A vessel of a more ungainly make;  
‘They sneer at me for leaning  
all awry;  
What! Did the Hand then of the  
Potter shake?’

Her work now showed evidence of her interest in Chinese wares, particularly simple forms and the Chun glaze. Robert Campbell, the newly appointed director of the Art Gallery, was quite lavish in his praise of Flora Landells, saying that he had

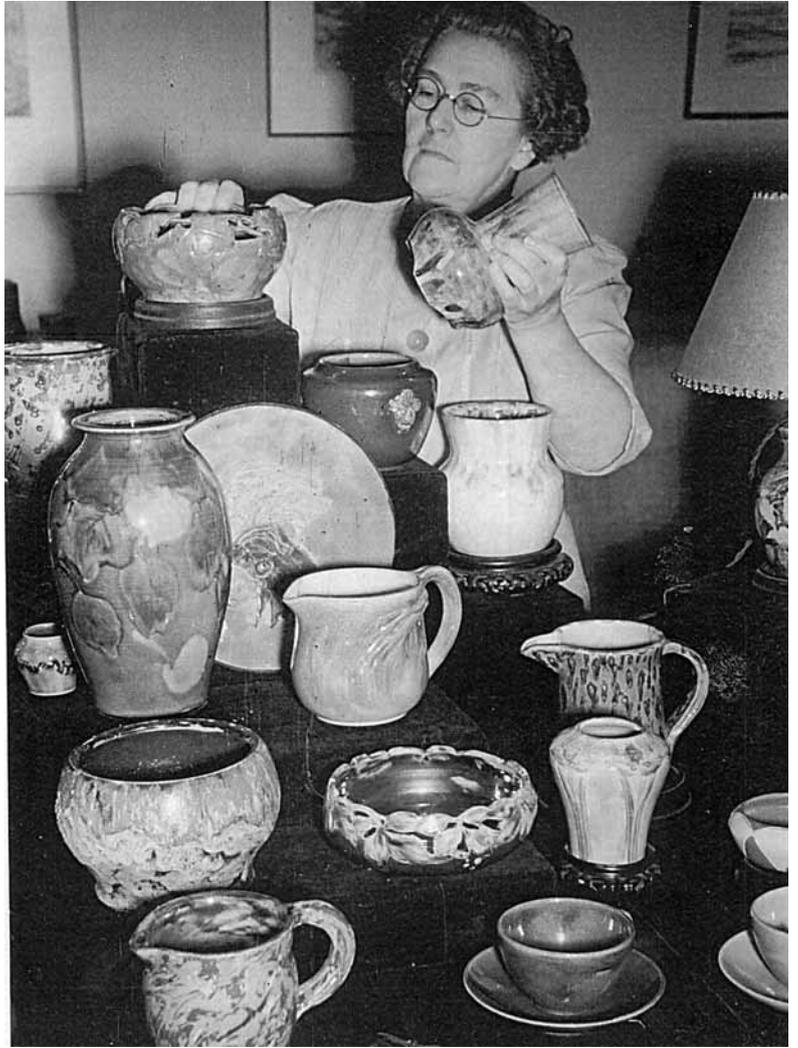
... seen pottery in many countries and places and felt that Perth should be proud of her ability. The pieces were of simple and beautiful form, and the coloured glazes were excellent.<sup>2</sup>



6 Flora carving a leather-hard vase, as illustrated in *Pix* magazine. Courtesy the late Arthur Dall

7 Flora arranging an exhibition as illustrated in *Pix* magazine. Courtesy the late Arthur Dall

8 Flora Landells (1888–1981), peacock vase c 1933, coil-built, incised and glazed. Family collection



The forms were indeed simple and elegant and the glazing restrained. This style of work continued into the 1950s. An elegant small vase in this style is in the collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia (**plate 11**). Deep greens and browns evocative of the forests are also seen at this time of the revival of the craft movement worldwide (**plate 12**).

When Reg died in 1960, Flora closed the pottery and gave the potter's wheels, mill and some other equipment to Perth Technical College.

It is almost certain that Flora learnt china-painting, which she commenced about 1912 painting pieces for her trousseau, from the Misses Creeth, Helen and May, who had an art school in Perth from 1896 until about 1930. The Misses Creeth had trained at the South Kensington Art Schools in London – now the Royal College of Art – and from 1906 were





in the Colonial Mutual Chambers in St George's Terrace, Perth, where they worked, taught and sold china-painting supplies. They fired Flora's work until she imported a kiln from America in the 1920s.

A bowl painted with beautiful roses is thought to be one of the earliest pieces she painted and dates from the early years of her marriage. It utilises a delicate and feminine colour scheme, which is atypical of her work. The misty duck-egg-blue ground, framed with gilt, acts as a foil for the regularly-placed pink 'Glasgow Roses' – a motif seen in domestic art in Western Australia from about 1904 (plate 13).

Flora's early work often incorporates geometric elements.<sup>3</sup>

The National Gallery of Australia has a fine teapot with Sturt's Desert Pea painted in hemispherical lunettes (plate 14). The piece has affinities – the strong black band, small touches of gold and native flora – with the *Handenbergia* vase of Helen Creeth in the collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia. It is said that Flora considered the teapot the first good thing she had painted. Another strong piece is a vase painted with nasturtiums (plate 15).

In a 1931 exhibition held in the Industries Hall in Barrack Street, Perth, she exhibited watercolour paintings and china featuring lustres and swirling forms reminiscent of the Rozenburg porcelain from Holland in the collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia. These early pieces differ markedly from the post-World War II work, widely copied by her students, which generally featured realistically painted wildflowers on a broken ground (plate 16).

Flora Landells did much to encourage an interest in pottery in Perth. Hers was an energetic and engaging personality. A number of her former pupils found her encouragement and example inspirational as a role model. She was in demand as a speaker at clubs and societies where she showed an 8mm film of her work made in 1952 by the Amateur Movie and Cine Film Society. She said at one



9 Flora adding a handle and Reg centring a lump of clay in 1944

10 Flora Landells (1888–1981), harlequin set from 1945 on, owned by a niece who was given a piece a year. Family collection

11 Flora Landells (1888–1981), sang-de-boeuf glazed pot 1947–50. Family collection



Much of the glamour of the potter's art is associated with the potter's wheel. Poets have sung its praise, artists have delighted in the rhythmic motion. It has been referred to in the Bible. ... It will always be a question among potters as to how much or how little decoration should be added - Art Appreciation is a very subtle thing and none can dictate to his neighbour what he should or should not admire.<sup>4</sup>

When Reg died in 1960, Flora completed one last firing and then restricted herself to painting and china painting. Flora died on 30 July 1981. The following year Methodist Ladies College named its new art centre the Flora Landells Art Centre in her honour. Her work is found in public and private collections around Australia. She made a substantial contribution to the artistic life of the nation as an exhibitor for some 70 years, as a teacher for over 40 years, and, with her husband Reg, as the pioneer in studio pottery in Western Australia.

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- Dorothy Erickson, in Joan Kerr (ed.), *Heritage: The National Women's Art Book*. Sydney, Craftsman House, 1995
- 12 Flora Landells (1888–1981), green-glazed bowl 1950s. Late Hazel Nash collection
- 13 Flora Landells (1888–1981), bowl painted with 'Glasgow roses', 25 cm diam., c 1914. Family collection
- 14 Flora Landells (1888–1981), teapot painted with Sturt's Desert Pea. National Gallery of Australia





15 Flora Landells (1888–1981),  
nasturtium vase 1920s-30s.  
Family collection

16 Flora Landells (1888–1981),  
leschenaultia plate painted in the  
1970s. Family collection

- Marjorie Graham, *Australian Pottery of the 19th and Early 20th Century*. Sydney: David Ell Press/National Trust, 1979
- John McPhee, *Australian Decorative Arts in the Australian National Gallery*. Canberra, ANG, 1982, 1986
- Teddy Letham, 'Flora and Reg Landells', *Craft Australia* vol 3 no 1, 1973
- 'Old Time Pottery Craft as Hobby', *Pix* magazine 24 June 1944 p 11
- *The Women's Weekly*, undated cutting 1947
- Charles Hamilton, 'Exhibition of Pottery', *West Australian* 3 Oct 1939, 8 May 1947, p 11
- 'Death of Pottery Pioneer', *West Australian* 1 August 1981 p 25



Dr Dorothy Erickson is a well-known researcher of the arts in Western Australia, and a practising contemporary jeweller with an international reputation.

#### NOTES

- 1 'Exhibition of Pottery' *West Australian*, 3 Oct 1939
- 2 *West Australian*, 6 May 1947
- 3 Flora Landells' lecture notes, held by Arthur Dall
- 4 *Ibid*

# Suggestion for an electronic 'Dictionary' of Australian colonial furniture-makers 1788-1901

David Kelly

In 1986, the Furniture History Society (with W S Maney) published Geoffrey Beard's and Christopher Gilbert's *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660-1840*. There is nothing quite like it in Australia.

Information about colonial furniture-makers is scattered. Valuable work has been done, but it is incomplete. The lack of a detailed and transparent database is a nightmare for all who those work in the field.

The most comprehensive listing, in Fahy, Simpson and Simpson's *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture (NCAF)*, is a fine achievement considering the difficulty at the time of readily accessing the information. But it is incomplete. Much more information is now available, and more is becoming available, particularly through the NLA's *Newspaper Digitisation Project*, and the Old Bailey online website, than could have been readily accessed by Fahy, Simpson and Simpson. Moreover, the book suffers from its lack of referencing to the particular sources relied on by the authors.

It would probably be far too expensive to publish an equivalent to the *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660-1840*. But an internet publication would be possible at relatively low cost. All that is needed is the co-operation of furniture historians, who already possess a great

How many of us knew about this Chinese cabinet-maker working in Hobart before now? See *Colonial Times* (Hobart) 30 September 1834 p 2; and 7 October 1834 p 2

deal of information that was not available to Fahy, Simpson and Simpson; and the willingness of a body like the Australian Society, possibly with the Furniture History Society, to sponsor the project, to give it credibility, and to encourage co-operation from furniture historians.

An internet publication, freely available to everyone, would have an enormous advantage over hard copy. It would be much more readily searchable; would be an on-going project; would be readily correctable; and could incorporate not only all source material, but also references in journals, and even suggestions of possible doubts and lines of further inquiry.

Numerous issues arise in respect of this suggestion. They include:

- What types of information should be put on the web?
- What quality control should be exercised before particular information is put there?

## **Elegant Furniture, New Norfolk**

BY MR. T. Y. LOWES,

On the premises of Mr. Chow, cabinet-maker, on Saturday, 11th October next, at 12 o'clock precisely, and positively without reserve,

**T**HE whole of the Stock-in-Trade of Mr. John Chow, cabinet maker, proceeding to China, consisting of—

Round, oval, and square tables

Two very large dining do.

Elegant sofas, Grecian couches, stuffed chairs, side boards, book cases, chests of drawers, bedsteads, wash-hand stands, writing desks, work boxes, night chairs, window sashes, kitchen tables and chairs, and an immense assortment, too numerous for insertion.

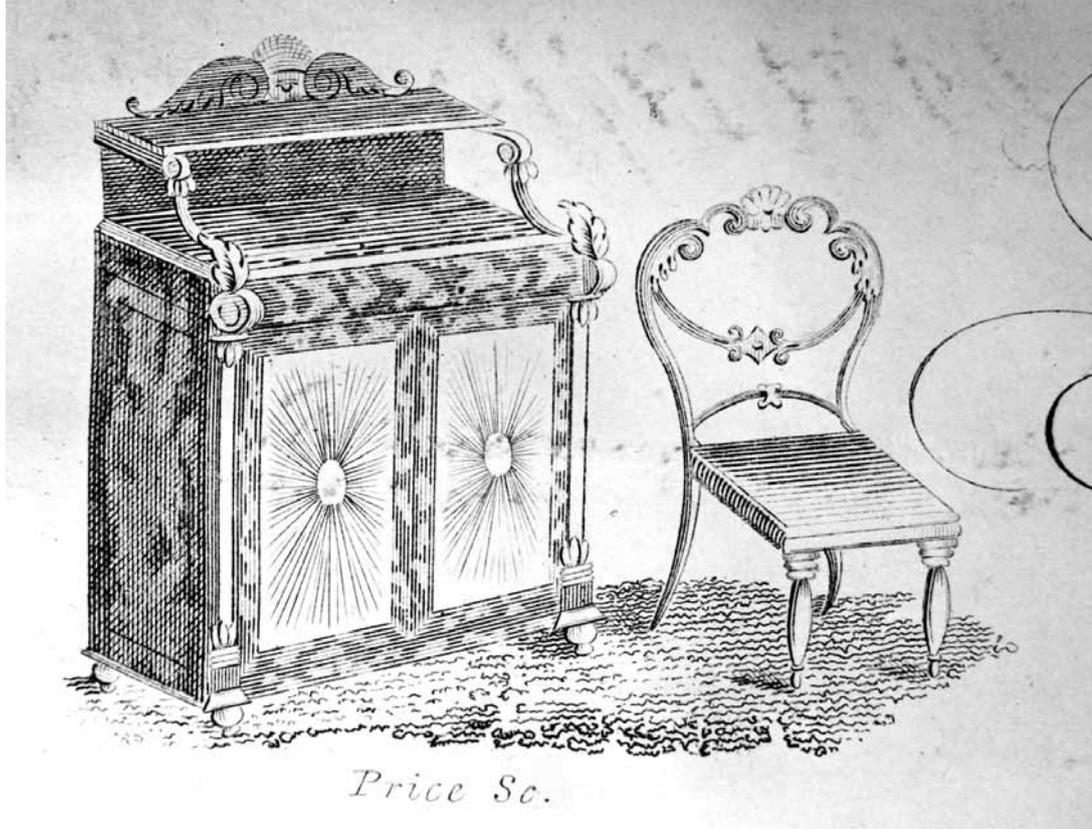
N. B.—Mr. Lowes particularly invites the public to inspect this truly valuable and elegant Furniture, as he feels confident that such a collection and variety were never offered in this Colony.

Terms—Three months credit above £20. [3790]

- In what format, and on what program, should it appear?
- Should it commence from scratch, or should the approval of the copyright owners of *NCAF* be sought to include their material as an invaluable starting point?
- Should 'authorship' of the originators of entries be included?

Clearly, if there is any interest in the suggestion, a steering committee would have to be appointed to consider these and many other issues (including costs, of course) that would arise in relation to such a project.

Readers are invited to comment on the feasibility of David Kelly's suggestion, whether it should be extended to other crafts, and whether it can be incorporated into existing dictionaries, such as the *Dictionary of Australian Artists Online* ([www.daa0.org.au](http://www.daa0.org.au)).



Detail of sideboard and chair from the billhead of M. Castle, probably Morris or Maurice Castle, Sydney, c. 1840. Collection: Mitchell Library

# Morris Castle, cabinet-maker of London and Sydney

Gillows is widely regarded as one of the most important names in the history of English cabinet-making of the 18th and 19th century. David Kelly uncovers an Australian link to the firm established in Lancaster, and later London. It may set collectors hunting for Gillows' influences in early Australian furniture.

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David Kelly

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Susan E Stuart's superb new two volume publication, *Gillows of Lancashire and London, 1730-1840*, Antique Collectors' Club, London, 2009, will add significantly to the appreciation, both in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, of the quality of furniture made by the English firm Gillows.

Australian writers have discussed a number of connections between Gillows and the Australian colonies (eg, T Lane and J Searle, *Australians at Home*, p 32;

J Hawkins, 'The Botany Bay Wood in English Furniture (Pt 2)', *Australian Antique Collector*, 48th ed, July-Dec 1994, p 65; J Hawkins, 'The 1839 Gillows commission to furnish *Woolmers* in Tasmania for Thomas and Susannah Archer', *Australiana*, Vol 24, No 1, February 2002, p 1). Gillows was clearly a supplier of high quality furniture to a number of leading families in the colonies during the 19th century.

None of these discussions has proven a direct link between Gillows and cabinet-making in the early colonies. However, the Gillows

connection appears to be established by an advertisement in the *Sydney Gazette* on 25 February 1830 (**plate 1**):<sup>1</sup>

MORRIS CASTLE, Upholsterer, Cabinet, Chair and Sofa Manufacturer, from Giller's, Oxford-street, London, begs to announce to the inhabitants of Sydney and the Public in general, that he has recently arrived in this colony per *Deveron*, and has opened a Manufactory of the above description, at 118 Pitt-street, next door to Mr. DAWES Store, where he trust [sic] from his

NOTICE.

**MORRIS CASTLE**, Upholsterer, Cabinet, Chair, and Sofa Manufacturer, from Giller's, Oxford-street, London, begs to announce to the inhabitants of Sydney and the Public in general, that he has recently arrived in this Colony per *Deveron*, and has opened a Manufactory of the above description, at No. 118, Pitt-street, next door to Mr. Dawes' Stores, where he trust from his experience in the trade and his anxious desire to use every degree of assiduity and attention, to merit a share of the public patronage, 118, Pitt-street, Feb. 25, 1830.

experience in the trade, and his anxious desire to use every degree of assiduity and attention, to merit a share of the public patronage, 118, Pitt-street, Feb. 25, 1830

Advertisement for Morris Castle *Sydney Gazette*, Thursday 25 February 1830, p 3 col 5

'Giller's' is almost certainly a reference to Gillows, which operated originally in Lancaster, and later, from c 1770, in Oxford Street, London, as well. Morris Castle does not appear in the list of Gillows' workers compiled by Susan Stuart in her recent publication. But that is no cause for concern about the reliability of the advertisement in the *Sydney Gazette*. Susan Stuart's list of workers is based on the records of the Lancaster business. Records of the London enterprise are minimal, and there are none for the relevant period just before 1830.

Morris Castle came free to Sydney, from London via Hobart, as a passenger on the *Deveron*, arriving on 9 February 1830.<sup>2</sup> The NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages<sup>3</sup> records a marriage between Morris Castle and Elizabeth Humphreys (or Humphrys) at St Andrew's Scots Church, Sydney, in 1836.<sup>4</sup> It also records three children of the marriage: Andrew, born in 1838;<sup>5</sup> William, born in 1841;<sup>6</sup> and Maurice,

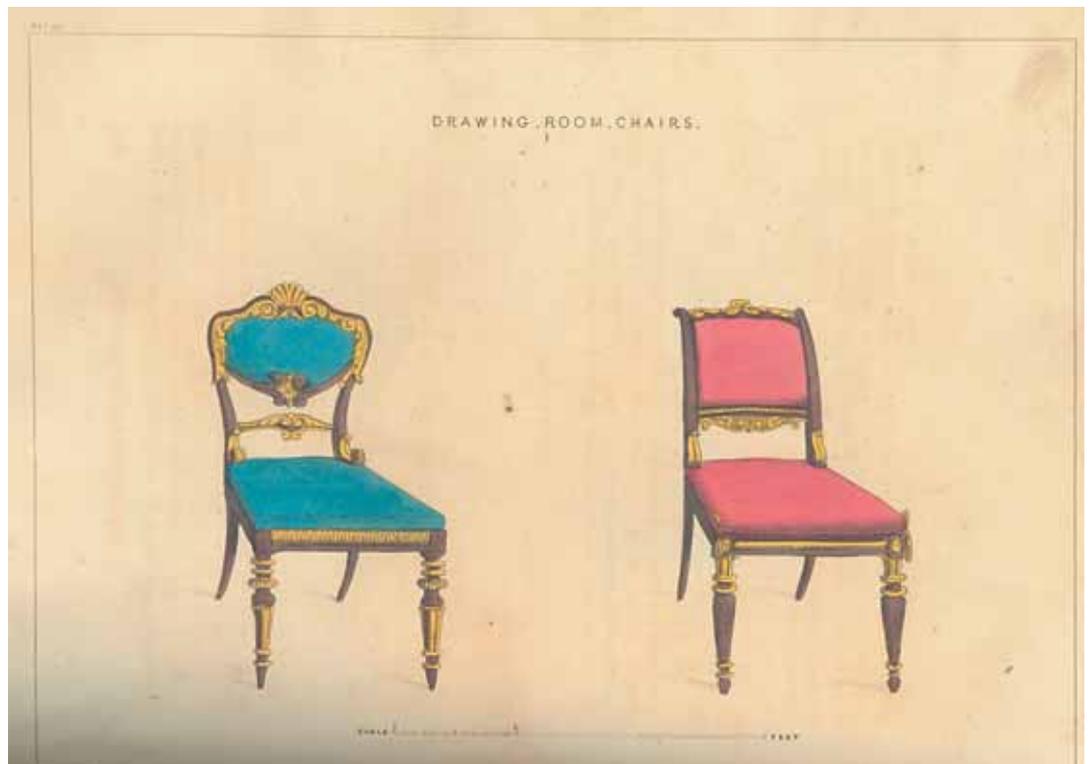
born 1843.<sup>7</sup> A Morris Castle died, aged 54, at Sydney in 1863, and an Elizabeth Castle is recorded as having died in the Balmain district in 1869.<sup>8</sup>

We do not know a great deal about him, but his name is by no means unknown. Indeed, from what has been unearthed so far, Castle appears to have been one of the most prominent Sydney cabinet-makers in the 1830s, and possibly the 1840s as well.

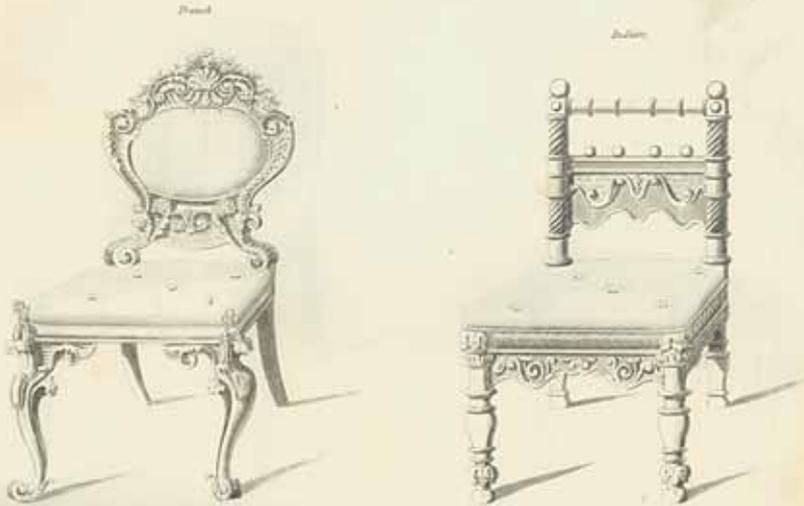
Castle was certainly one of the most significant employers of assigned convicts in the 1830s. In his 1994 article, 'Furniture making in Sydney 1832-1839;

Assigned Convict Artisans', R A Crosbie recorded both the employment of assigned convicts, and their absconding.<sup>9</sup> He based his study on a number of archival sources: on the *New South Wales Government Gazette* 1832 onwards; and on the *New South Wales Calendar and General Post Office Directory*, 1832-1837. Castle was recorded at three additional addresses during the period covered: 85 Pitt St (1833-35); Cambridge Street (1835); and Parramatta Rd (1835-37).<sup>10</sup>

Because some names and occupations are missing in the source records, it is not possible to be certain about the exact



George Smith, *The Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, London 1826, 'Drawing Room Chairs'. Collection: Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Caroline Simpson Library & Research Centre



George Smith, *The Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, London 1826, 'Antique Chairs'. Collection: Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Caroline Simpson Library & Research Centre

not mentioned in the text or in the notes to the plates, and we cannot be certain that the 'M Castle' was our Morris Castle. John Earnshaw lists a 'Castle, Morris or Maurice' as a cabinet-maker at three addresses, including 348 Pitt-street in 1847.<sup>15</sup> While we cannot be certain of the identifications of 'Maurice' with 'Morris', or of 'M.' with either, it appears likely that 'Morris' and 'Maurice' referred to the same person, and that 'M Castle' is, indeed, our Morris Castle from 'Giller's'.

Thirdly, a billhead of his has survived. Dated c. 1840, it is held by the Mitchell Library (plate 2) and is noted by K Fahy, C Simpson and A Simpson, *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*, at p 50. The items of furniture illustrated in that billhead are unusual in design: the chiffonier mainly because of the shelf 'supports'; the chair because of the shape of its front legs and the structure of its back. These somewhat fanciful drawings may be based on Castle's own designs, or on designs he copied or adapted from Gillows, or they may be rather free interpretations by the engraver, who signed himself 'Price Sc' (possibly John or George Price, both working as engravers in the 1840s). However, the chair design may be an amalgam of designs, for instance from chairs illustrated in George Smith's *The Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, published in 1826 (plates 3 & 4).<sup>16</sup>

So far as I am aware, no item of furniture has yet been attributed to Morris Castle. He may well not have marked or labelled the furniture he made in New South Wales. Given the lack of records for Gillows in London for the relevant period, we may be unlikely to discover much about Castle's work before he emigrated to New South Wales. But we can certainly be more confident about discovering information about his Sydney operations. Probably our best hope lies in

number of convicts employed. Nor does one know for how long they were employed. But, between 1832 and 1839, Castle is recorded as having eight convicts assigned to him: three chair makers; a cabinet-maker; a 'fancy work box maker'; a brass finisher; a chair carver; and a turner.<sup>11</sup>

Like Edward Hunt and other NSW cabinet-makers of the time, Castle had significant problems with his assigned convicts absconding. Six are recorded as having absconded during the period, one of them on his 'second run'. Crosbie's list of absconding convicts indicates that Castle actually employed more convicts than recorded during the stated period. For example, the named absconders include a turner and *four* chair-makers (not *three*, as recorded above);<sup>12</sup> and he also had a 'chair carver' who absconded during that period.

A few other pieces of information complete our present, rather limited, picture of Morris Castle. Firstly, he was the plaintiff in a case brought against a constable and a private watchman in 1834, apparently for assault. *The Sydney Gazette* records the details of the allegations, but not the final outcome:

**Castle versus Kelly and Keenan. —**  
The defendants, John Kelly, a constable in the Sydney Police, and Neill Keenan, a private watchman, appeared on a summons, which had

been granted to Mr. Morris Castle, a respectable cabinet-maker, residing in Pitt-street. From the statement of Mr C., it appeared that, some evenings back, his brother was accosted in Market-street by the defendants, under a mistaken notion that he was a prisoner at large, and followed to his own door, where the dispute became so violent, as to attract the complainant. Naturally solicitous to know for what reason his brother had been taken into custody, Mr. C. interfered for that purpose, when he was called a "sly thief", threatened that a staff should be shoved down his throat and finally dragged with his relative to the watch-house, where he was detained some time, and then turned out by the shoulders. On the way home, too, the defendant Keenan again met and insulted him. The following morning, the brother was brought before the Bench and discharged; and Mr. Castle now brought this complaint for the conduct of defendants to himself. The Bench, considering the case insufficient against Kelly, discharged him, and committed Keenan for trial.<sup>13</sup>

Secondly, the name 'M Castle' appears on the facade of a substantial building in Pitt Street in plate 40B of Joseph Fowles's *Sydney in 1848*.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, Castle is

the completion in due course of the Australian Newspapers Digitisation Program, run by the National Library of Australia in collaboration with the Australian state and territory libraries. Of the Sydney newspapers of the period, the NLA 'beta' site displays, at this stage, only the *Sydney Gazette* and a few years of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Hopefully, the other Sydney newspapers of the time will contain some additional information.

If anyone already has further information about Morris (or Maurice) Castle, I would be very grateful if he or she could contact me:  
colonial@colonialhill.com

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks to Alan Davies, Richard Neville and Michael Lech for help with providing information and the illustrations.

#### NOTES

- 1 P 3, repeated 27 February & 2 March 1830
- 2 *Sydney Gazette* 11 Feb 1830 p 2 col 1
- 3 www.bdm.nsw.gov.au
- 4 V18362896 74A/1836; V1836185 75/1836.  
Elizabeth was the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Humphreys
- 5 V1838580 25A/1838
- 6 V1841581 25A/1841
- 7 V18432502 27A/1843
- 8 1585/1869
- 9 *Australiana*, Vol 16 No 1, February 1994, p22
- 10 Similarly, Fahy, Simpson & Simpson, *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*, p 535
- 11 Crosbie, p 25
- 12 In 1837, James Smith, assigned to Morris Castle, was sent to the treadmill for two months for drunkenness and refusal to leave the premises of the 'Crooked Billet' at the corner of George and Hunter Streets. Smith is not named among the absconders, though it is possible that he was one of the unnamed assigned convicts. *Sydney Gazette* 27 July 1837, p 3
- 13 *Sydney Gazette* 13 March 1834, p 2 col 4
- 14 Facsimile ed, Ure Smith in association with the National Trust of Australia (NSW), 1973
- 15 From *Low's Directory of the City and District of Sydney*. However, Fahy Simpson & Simpson record only 'Maurice' Castle at that address
- 16 I am grateful to Michael Lech and John Wade for drawing attention to the Smith designs and providing a copy for publication.

# More on Butler

Barbara Butler and David Kelly expand on their article 'Lawrence Butler' in the February 2009 issue of *Australiana*, Vol 33 No 1, p 10, adding two more items of information.

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## Barbara Butler & David St L Kelly

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The first, relatively minor addition, is that Butler was a juror at the inquest held on 15 December 1817 into the death of a young child. The child, Charles Thomas, had been run over by a horse and cart. The jury recorded death by accident, with the cart driver not to blame. The Coroner was J W Lewin (*HRA*, Series 1, Vol IX, p 737).

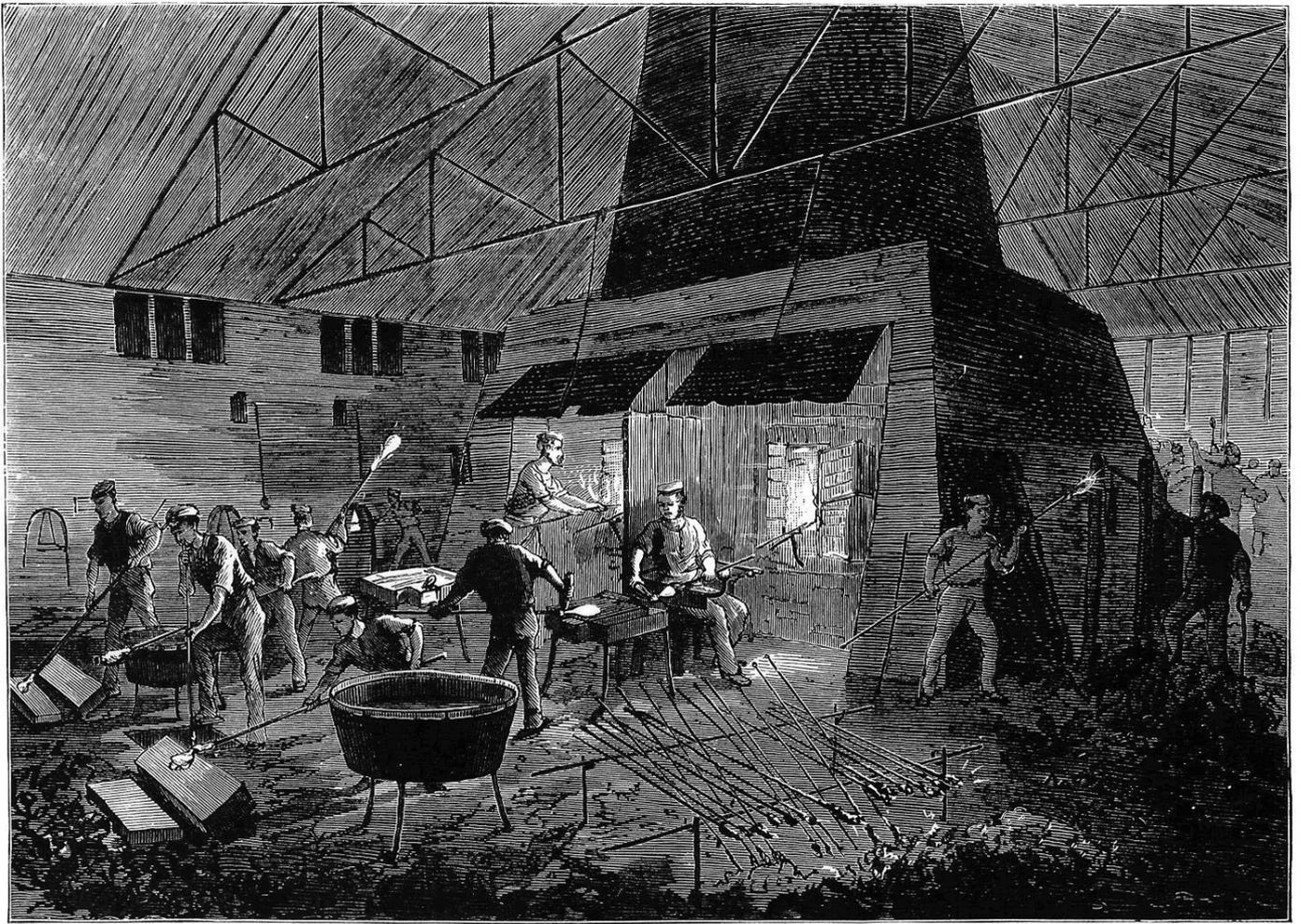
Secondly, and of much greater significance, Butler was one of about 75 signatories to a memorial to Governor Macquarie dated 19 November 1818, in which the memorialists sought relief from the consequences of a decision by the British government to forbid the importation of goods on convict transports to Sydney (*HRA*, Series 1, Vol X, p 21). The reasons given by Lord Bathurst were that the importation of goods on transports restricted the amount of space available to the convicts, and that it had a damaging effect on the interest of local merchants (*HRA*, Vol IX, p 557; Despatch 101, 12 December 1817).

Macquarie himself initially gave effect to Bathurst's order. However, on receiving the memorial, he decided that the order should not be enforced until Bathurst had confirmed it. He sent a despatch to Bathurst, strongly supporting the memorial, and attaching a copy of it. In his despatch, Macquarie attributed Bathurst's decision to self-interested lobbying in London by the merchant firm of Riley & Jones, whom he described as a 'Selfish, Sordid Firm'; and as 'a sordid, Rapacious House', and which he claimed to be the only

alternative source of goods from England (*HRA*, Vol X, p 18; Despatch 2 of 1819, 1 March 1819).

Although the memorialists queried whether convicts had been much inconvenienced by the practice of importing goods on convict transports, they did not actually argue for Bathurst's decision to be reversed. They emphasised how difficult it was to get goods from Britain, owing to the very small number of 'Mercantile Houses' in the colony. They also sought a lifting of the ban on vessels of over 350 tons trading between London and Sydney - a ban which had been retained when the East India Company's monopoly was ended in 1813. They proposed a reduction in the prescribed tonnage from 350 to 150. The following year, Bathurst informed Macquarie that the ban had been lifted entirely, irrespective of tonnage (*HRA*, Vol X, p 196).

Of most significance in relation to Butler is the fact that the people signing the memorial were, in Macquarie's own words, 'a great majority of the most respectable Inhabitants of the Colony'. The other signatories included such notables as John Macarthur, William Gore, Simeon Lord, Mary Reiby, Rowland Hassall and Charles Throsby. Macquarie's description, and the numerous important signatories with whom Butler was associated, provide clear support for the proposition that Butler was well known and widely respected in the commercial community at the time, and alert us to the existence of a broader range of possible clients of both his cabinet-making and retail businesses.



THE MELBOURNE GLASS BOTTLE COMPANY, THE BEACH, EMERALD-HILL.

# Reflections on Glass part 2:

## HOW GLASS MAKING CAME TO AUSTRALIA

The original Melbourne Glass Bottle Works, which was opened by Felton & Grimwade in 1872, was located in Graham Street South Melbourne. Its first employees were 12 glass blowers brought from England to establish the business both by plying their craft and teaching it to local youths and boys. The first Works Manager, Boyd, seems to have had little control over his team and Alfred Felton was led to comment 'the skilled workforce imported were found to be mutinous and intemperate to a fearful degree.' A new manager, the Canadian Lambton Le Breton Mount, was given the time and resources to make the business work. This sketch from *The Illustrated Australian* of 12 June 1876 ably demonstrates the heat and working conditions which no doubt contributed to the glass workers' intemperance. Courtesy State Library of Victoria

### Mal Harrop

One of the benefits of the so-called 'tyranny of distance' is to encourage self-reliance and innovation and this is admirably illustrated by the way glass making came to Australia. Commercial manufacture of glass came in response to the needs of other industries. Bottles and jars were made initially to provide packaging for manufacturing pharmacists and grew as a preferred package for beer and wine. Window glass was not made in Australia until 1931 when the combined needs of the fast growing building and motor industries made local manufacture viable. The production of optical glass in Sydney

is one of the great stories of how Australian ingenuity and determination responded to wartime isolation.

More attention will be given to collectible glass and glassware in the final of this three part series but there were many early attempts to make glass predominantly melted in crucibles, which were small by international standards, and then drawn or blown to shape.

The first to try to make glass commercially in Australia was the convict entrepreneur Simeon Lord. The *Sydney Gazette* reported on 2 May 1812 that a 'glass manufactory having opened at Sydney, a situation offers to a select number of Glass Blowers.'<sup>1</sup> However, as a Royal Commission would hear almost a century later in 1906, life was not so

simple. 'You cannot get glass-blowers as you can get any ordinary labour. You cannot advertise for them one day and expect to get them on the following day', the Commissioners were told by William McNeilage, the first Managing Director of the newly formed Australian Glass Manufacturers.<sup>2</sup> Despite the *Sydney Gazette's* further report that 'the manufacture of Colonial Glass has commenced' and that this 'useful branch of manufacture' was being conducted by 'Hutchinson under an engagement from the house of Lord and Williams', their Pymont glass works failed.<sup>3</sup>

Simeon Lord enjoyed success and prosperity as a retailer, auctioneer, sealer, pastoralist, timber merchant and manufacturer but his glass-making attempt proved unprofitable. It was alleged that John Hutchinson, the Yorkshire-born chemist transported on forgery charges who was Lord's glass expert, 'may have claimed abilities he did not possess', and Australia's first attempt to make glass foundered in litigation.<sup>4</sup> In fact the Pymont glass works is believed to have produced a gross of tumblers in 12 months and in fairness this suggests that while Hutchinson may have known the basic chemistry to make glass, neither he nor any of his associates knew how to draw and blow other than the most basic shape.

Some 60 years would pass before enough glass blowers were brought from overseas to build what would become a significant Australian industry. Marjorie Graham admirably records a number of earlier attempts to make glass locally but these were largely stillborn.<sup>5</sup> She records that some glassware was made from Australian raw materials in 1832. but this was not locally made glass. James King, who made wine and operated the Irrawang Pottery near Raymond Terrace in the Hunter River district of New South Wales, decided to send some Sydney sand to the Falcon Glassworks of Apsley Pellatt & Co. of London. The English glass-makers produced a range of cut glass tableware from this which King received in 1833. He kept some pieces for himself and friends and even presented



The Spotswood glass works in 1921. This site was selected for the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works in 1890. Australian Glass Manufacturers continued to develop the plant close to the river. Development after 1921, including today's glass works owned and operated by Owens-Illinois Asia Pacific, occurred on the land on which a single small shed can be seen. One reason for moving manufacture progressively inland was a change in transport for both raw materials and finished products from river barge to rail, with a rail spur built into the plant from Spotswood station

two pieces of 'Irrawang Glass' to the Governor of New South Wales. The rest was presumably sold along with other imported English and Scottish crystal.

Other early attempts to make glassware - drinking glasses, jugs, decanters, bowls, vases, lamps, lamp chimneys and the like - failed often because of lack of skill or capital but also in the battle with European imported products. An English glass blower with 13 years' experience behind him, Joseph Young, arrived in Melbourne in 1854. However, he spent 14 relatively unproductive years in the Victorian goldfields before returning to his trade to help to establish what he claimed to be the first glassworks in the colony 'that ever made sale for market'.<sup>6</sup> This was the Thomas Brothers' Victoria Flint Glass Works in North Melbourne. The use of the word 'Flint' in the title emphasises that this was again an enterprise based on producing glassware. Attempts to produce Australian made glassware would continue well into the

20th century but despite generous colonial and later national tariff protection companies like the Australian Glass Company and Floyd & Green simply could not make their businesses pay.

The answer to creating a stable Australian glass industry lay in another direction. Perhaps not surprisingly given our national character the solution lay in the bottle! Sydney claims Joseph Ross as the 'founder' of the Australian glass industry. Ross who was born at Sunderland in England in 1832 and died in the Sydney suburb of Erskineville in 1909 has several claims to fame. He emigrated to Australia in 1865 but finding his initial port of call, Rockhampton, too warm for glass making, a craft with which he 'had been involved in his youth', he moved to Sydney. Here his first move was to convince Professor Pell of the University of Sydney that good glass could be made locally. Armed with this academic support, Ross found a backer in Sydney

businessman, James A Brown. The first pot of glass Ross made for Brown was poured on 18 August 1866 in premises at Kersey's Wharf, Darling Harbour.<sup>7</sup>

By 1867 Ross had apparently found new backers and had established the Perseverance Glass Bottle Works at Camperdown. The name was significant both for the inclusion of the word 'Bottle' and for the fact that the works had to be rebuilt several times as a result of fires. Ross continued to make 'every description of glass bottles and jars' for some 50 years, initially at Camperdown and later at Erskineville.<sup>8</sup> His company was eventually absorbed by the dominant national Australian Glass Manufacturers (AGM).<sup>9</sup>

Yet Ross was right to see the need for bottles. There was a growing consumer demand fuelled by headaches, stomach cramps, arthritis, rheumatism and the desire to drink treated or untainted water. Wholesale pharmacy became big business in the Australian colonies and the leading drug houses – Elliott Brothers in Sydney, FH Faulding and William Bickford in Adelaide and Felton & Grimwade in Melbourne – needed soda glass bottles and jars in bulk rather than one-off flint glass decorative ware. They were inadequately served by imports. There was a ready market for Holloway's Pills, Steadman's Powders, Chlorodyne, Bickford's Cordial, Bayley's Sarsaparilla and Felton's Quinine Champagne. John Poynter notes in his recent biography of Alfred Felton that the early Victorian 'colonists would have found life harsh indeed without the £30,000 of pain killers sold to them each year.'<sup>10</sup>

In Felton & Grimwade's case another factor was the potential to sell one of Australia's first manufactured export products, eucalyptus oil, to New Zealand and Europe. Bickford's interest in glass packaging was shared by South Australian wine makers such as Seppelt, Hardy and Reynell. Within the space of a couple of years glass works were established in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.

William Bickford's consortium sought and received support from the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce to start a bottle-

making venture in 1873. Bickford was commissioned to obtain the necessary plant, materials and people and his consortium received further incentive from the South Australian Government with the Legislative Assembly offering a substantial cash award to the first company to produce 5,000 dozen glass bottles for the wine industry.<sup>11</sup> The South Australian Bottle Factory was launched with expectations as high as its 65-foot chimney which dominated the Croydon skyline. Despite some early promise the company failed. It appears that insufficient saleable bottles were made quickly enough and the consortium had neither the pockets nor the patience of its Melbourne counterpart.

In Sydney, Elliott Brothers are believed to have opened a glass works close to the site of their Iron Cove, Balmain chemical works in 1873.<sup>12</sup> This date is based on the appearance of vases on the list of their pharmaceutical products for sale in Queensland, which also suggests that they probably tried to operate a mixed glass works producing both bottles and decorative ware. Elliotts' Sydney glass venture failed in part because there were a number of small competing glass makers in Sydney but more significantly because they were less willing than their interstate competitors to invest in the people and technology necessary to succeed and survive as glassmakers.

In Melbourne, however, Alfred Felton and Frederick Sheppard Grimwade proved to be shrewd investors with both vision and the patience to wait for a return on their capital. Their Melbourne Glass Bottle Works (MGBW) opened in Graham Street South Melbourne in 1872 with a team of 12 glass workers specially imported from England. Felton, who is perhaps better remembered as the principal benefactor of the National Gallery of Victoria, and Grimwade, whose family would contribute to the industry for several generations, have a substantial claim to be the real founders of glass making in Australia.

The story of how Felton and Grimwade progressed from a chance meeting when they shared the same lodgings in St Kilda

to build a network of successful businesses and to create the foundation on which the Australian glass industry was formed is the subject of my recent history *Good Things Came From Glass*.<sup>13</sup> Suffice it to summarise here that one of the greatest achievements of Felton and Grimwade and their successors was to identify three extraordinary chief executives for their glass business in Mount (c. 1874–1898), McNeilage (1898–1922) and WJ Smith (1922–1956), three men with clear vision and exceptional energy.

Lambton LeBreton Mount was an energetic Canadian engineer who is credited with bringing the sport of lacrosse to Australia. His most significant achievement in the development of glass making was to help to design and build a glass plant on a new green-fields site at Spotswood in Victoria. The scale of Felton and Grimwade's investment and of Mount's construction set the MGBW way ahead of its competitors. With five tanks each with its own warehouse, access to the river to bring in raw materials and ship out finished product and an increasing number of imported European glass blowers, Mount's Spotswood set a new standard for Australian glass works. The decision to select and develop this site was more than vindicated by the fact that it remains the home of one of the world's most modern glass container plants with a record of 119 years continuous production. Sadly Mount proved less efficient at managing the plant which he had done so much to create but in a last significant service he appointed his successor, a 30 year old Scots glass blower, William McNeilage, to be the Spotswood Works Manager.

McNeilage was an ideal choice as he combined traditional Scottish thrift with a vision for the future that accepted that glass making could not stand still. He resolved differences about the difficulty of blowing new products by blowing them himself but, at the same time as he showed his craft skill, he kept a close eye on international glass making developments. In the period just before and during the First World War,

McNeilage oversaw the transformation of bottle making in Australia from a hand-craft to a largely machine-made industry.

It was an industrial revolution which was achieved with some pain, as it became apparent that the formerly undisputed king pins of the industry, the glass blowers and gatherers, were being replaced by machine handlers. McNeilage's answer was to import not only glass-making machines from the USA but also to persuade enough American glass workers 'to come to a country about which they knew very little to work for a company about which they knew even less.'<sup>14</sup>

The practice of bringing in overseas experts to train local workers was already well established in the local glass industry and McNeilage was confident in his reply when asked whether there had been any complaints from the men about the introduction of overseas experts. 'No', he said, 'they were very glad to have them come, because it has increased that part of the business and consequently has increased the men's wages.'<sup>15</sup>

Federation created another opportunity for McNeilage and the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works. As the 1906 Royal Commission would hear, more than £100,000 had been invested in local glass-making. There was a proliferation of low budget operations, ten in Sydney, nine in Melbourne and three in Adelaide. The total investment in all the Sydney glass works was £25,000. Against this MGBW had invested almost two-thirds of the industry total, with £67,000 committed to the Spotswood development.<sup>16</sup>

McNeilage saw and seized the opportunity for the Melbourne company to move interstate and under his stewardship it established operations in Adelaide and Sydney which quickly absorbed other smaller and less efficient glass works in these locations. McNeilage's choice to consolidate operations in both locations was a former secretary of the glass blowers' union, WJ or 'Bill' Smith.

During his time in Adelaide, Smith earned the nicknames by which he became better known - 'Knock Out' or



Australia imported all its window glass until 1931 and no high quality flat glass was made locally until 1974. This pallet of Australian-made float glass clearly reflects the water tower at Pilkington ACI's Dandenong plant. Wolfgang Sievers' magnificent photograph was one of a series used to promote the end of 'the wavy window', reflecting on the distortion inherent in the sheet glass which was the only previously made Australian clear window glass

'Gunboat'. Both nicknames can be ascribed to a brawl, with the latter being a media play on the fact that Ed 'Gunboat' Smith was an American heavyweight hope of the time so named by *Ring* magazine because of his ability to strike quickly from long range.

As war approached, Bill Smith and a young driver from the glass works objected to some locals of German extraction goose-stepping with broomsticks outside a pub. The drill rapidly degenerated into fisticuffs and half a dozen Germans went down with one requiring hospital treatment. Smith

was summonsed for disturbing the peace but was complimented and released by a patriotic magistrate.<sup>17</sup> A legend was born and Smith never hesitated to use his reputation to browbeat competitors.

William McNeilage possibly did not appreciate the dynamic energy of the genie which he had released from the bottle in promoting Smith until the AGM board was faced with the need to choose between the two men. The 'young bull' won and Smith's appointment as managing director of AGM ushered in a remarkable new chapter of Australian glass making history.



W J – ‘Knock Out’ or ‘Gunboat’ – Smith. Bill Smith started work at Spotswood in 1894 as a 12-year-old ‘spare boy’. He became Secretary of the first Australian Glass Blowers’ Union while still an apprentice. He had a tumultuous relationship with his managing director William McNeilage, who used Smith’s persuasive talents to help to create Australia’s first national glassmaker. Smith broke away to establish a rival bottle company in Sydney. The directors of Australian Glass Manufacturers bought him out and he replaced his old boss. Under Smith, AGM became Australian Consolidated Industries (ACI) making glass bottles in Australasia and South East Asia and diversifying into many other areas of manufacturing including windows and automotive glass, plastics, hand tools and engineering. Smith also found time to become one of the country’s leading breeders of thoroughbred racehorses and was an energetic and effective wartime Director of Gun Ammunition. He was ousted as Managing Director of ACI in 1957 at the age of 75. He is widely regarded as one of Australia’s greatest industrial figures

It would be easy to be diverted by Smith’s range of achievements. In his spare time, he became one of Australia’s leading thoroughbred trainers, pioneering the sale of horses to wealthy owners in the USA from his St Aubin’s stud at Scone NSW.<sup>18</sup> He invented new glass making technology.<sup>19</sup> He almost became the father of the Australian motor car after reaching agreement with Prime Minister Menzies to the *Motor Vehicle*

*Agreement Act* of 1940 which gave Smith’s company a 5-year exclusive right to be the country’s sole car maker.<sup>20</sup> This is a story of considerable interest, as the high point of protectionism for local industry. History reveals how the dream of an Australian car unravelled.

Smith was also an effective Director of Gun Ammunition during the Second World War, working under BHP’s Essington Lewis to convert public and private manufacturing industries to produce much-needed war materials.<sup>21</sup> However, Smith’s greatest achievement was to take a bottle maker with works in three states – NSW, South Australia and Victoria – and convert it into the multinational conglomerate Australian Consolidated Industries (ACI). There were operations in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Singapore and Thailand as well as in all states of Australia.

ACI was in structural engineering, cartons and boxes, plastics, metal fabrication and cork insulation but, most significant to the story of how glass making came to Australia, it diversified over time into virtually every aspect of commercial glass manufacture. In this, Smith’s ‘glass octopus’ was unique in world terms with most major manufacturers like Pilkington of the UK, Pittsburgh Plate Glass, or Murano sticking to window and safety glass or glassware.

Smith’s first expansion was into glassware. He acquired the last significant independent flint and lead glass makers in the Crown Glass Company and later the Australian Crystal Glass Company in Sydney as well as Dott & Co. in Melbourne. Based on evidence to several Royal Commissions, this glassware sector of the industry was never able to sustain profits despite receiving increased levels of protection. One reason for this was that the volume of tumblers, vases, jelly moulds, and lamp chimneys needed by the domestic market was both small and geographically hard to service.

The Sydney operations were combined to become Crown Crystal Glass. By the mid 1920s Crown Crystal operated two Sydney plants, making pressed glass at

Bourke Street Waterloo and blown flint and lead glass at Wyndham Street Alexandria.<sup>22</sup> The ‘Wyndham’ and ‘Grimwade’ cut crystal ranges of glassware enjoyed some popularity but when the Second World War broke out, the 400 workers involved in Crown’s crystal production were rapidly switched to munitions manufacture and the section was never re-opened.

The Dott brothers in Melbourne were similarly struggling despite significant tariff support to sustain a business based on making hand-blown flint glass lamp cylinders and lighting. Smith’s immediate response on taking over the company was to extend the product range to include large petrol cylinders, carboys and opal lighting ware. More significantly the plant was modernised to make some of its products mechanically with a feeder and machine capable of handling short-run bottle orders when Spotswood was short of capacity. This may be the clue to Smith’s interest in such marginally profitable businesses. They had the knowledge, but neither the capital, experience nor machinery to make bottles and Smith may well have moved more to block potential competition than to increase the AGM product range. While Crown would continue through a series of highs and lows, the Dott operation was closed in 1957.

Regardless of the reason for the glassware acquisitions, Smith’s next glass diversification was extraordinary enough to have international repercussions. Prior to 1931 all Australia’s flat glass for windows, mirrors or other purposes was imported, predominantly from the UK and Belgium. The Sydney glass merchant Fred Erhard reflected general opinion when he told the Royal Commission into tariffs of 1914 that ‘No sheet glass will be made here in 100 years.’<sup>23</sup> Indeed the glass merchants were largely comfortable in their relationships with the traditional European sources from whom they imported sheets of glass to mirror, decorate or simply cut to size for the building and furniture industries.

For a bottle maker to decide to make sheet glass was more than unexpected. In

world glass making terms it was unprecedented. Smith started the ball rolling when he cabled his directors from Europe on 23 July 1923 to advise them that he had secured the rights to the Belgian Fourcault process to make sheet glass in Australia.<sup>24</sup> He won support from his Board to invest the equivalent of \$19 million in acquiring the new process, a very large sum given that the company's total paid up capital (using the Reserve Bank of Australia's inflation converter) equated to about \$126 million. It took nearly eight years for the first locally produced sheet and figured rolled glass to come off production lines at Alexandria in Sydney.

Apart from glass merchant reticence to give up traditional suppliers to buy window glass from a bottle maker, other larger forces were at play. Belgium threatened to stop buying barley for its brewing industry from South Australia unless their glass makers were guaranteed continuing access and Smith found himself fighting the combined lobbying forces of the Belgian and South Australian governments. The end result was the Belgian Trade Agreement of 1934 in which Belgium withdrew a restriction it had imposed on the purchase of frozen Australian meat and the threat to place a similar embargo on barley and other cereals in return for a guaranteed percentage of the sheet glass market. Based on an estimated annual Australian window glass demand of 7.5 million square feet, the treaty stipulated that 60% would be locally made, 10% British made, 28.7% Belgian made and 1.3% for the rest.<sup>25</sup>

UK glass makers Chance and Pilkington took a more subtle approach. Suddenly relatively obscure members of Federal Parliament became expert on the Fourcault method of sheet glass production and its alleged deficiencies.

However, there was a bigger consideration for Pilkington. A new industry was starting to emerge in Australia and with it the requirement for safety glass windscreens for the vehicles which were being assembled in greater and greater numbers. Pilkington

proposed to establish three safety glass plants to service the motor industry at Beverley in South Australia, Geelong in Victoria and Villawood in NSW.

Smith's decision to acquire a license to make safety glass led to productive and secret discussions with senior Pilkington executives. The result shaped the future of both the window and safety glass industries. In public, there were technical agreements reached but there was also a private marketing agreement in which Pilkington agreed not to compete in the local market with Australian Window Glass (AWG) for sales of sheet and patterned glass while AWG would receive a commission for selling other Pilkington products, initially mainly Polished Plate Glass and later the Pilkington-invented Float Glass which was to become the world process for making quality flat glass.

Over time Pilkington Brothers Australia and AWG took cross shareholdings in each other's operations, culminating in the merging of interests to establish a joint venture company in Pilkington ACI. This was the vehicle used to build and operate the first float glass plant in the Southern Hemisphere at Dandenong in Victoria. When this opened in 1974, it meant that for the first time quality distortion-free window glass was locally made. Bill Smith's decision to bring this branch of glass making 'down under', the protracted development process, the public negotiation and the private deals seemed well vindicated.

It appears that 'Knock Out' and his most trusted lieutenant, his brother AE Smith, shared the belief that if anything was to be made in glass in Australia, their company would control its manufacture. A.E. Smith was quieter and more studious and has some claim to being the first business leader in this country to appreciate the value of research and development and to invest in it. With their headquarters established in Sydney, the brothers successfully persuaded the Melbourne-based majority of the ACI board to invest in a diverse range of businesses including the first time manufacture in Australia of respectively



Stan Garnsworthy – The man known as 'Mr Glass'. He started work as an office boy at the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works in Spotswood, Victoria in 1901 and retired some 60 years later as a director and company secretary of ACI. He was an indefatigable note taker and his notebooks together with his unpublished history of ACI provide an invaluable resource for research into the development of Australian glass making history

light bulbs and neon tubes in 1940 and of fibreglass insulation and reinforcement. While these were moderately successful, two other forms of glass making – Pyrex and optical glass – illustrate their drive and determination better.

Pyrex had first been covered by patent in Australia by Corning of the USA in 1916. They subsequently assigned the Australian rights to Pyrex to James Jobling & Co. of the United Kingdom, and by 1924 Jobling was making Pyrex ovenware and exporting it for sale in Australia. However, the patent expired on 24 June 1931 and when Corning and Jobling sought to renew their Australian rights, they received unexpected opposition. AGM argued successfully that

there were grounds to deregister the Pyrex trademark on the basis that the name had become synonymous with a particular composition of glass.

AGM duly produced its own AGEE brand of heat-resistant borosilicate glass ovenware. When the retailer, James McEwan, offered this for sale, Jobling initiated an action for trademark infringement. 'Knock Out' Smith and AGM took over the defence. Justice Mann found for the defendants, ruling 'Pyrex' to be a descriptive term and that it was impossible to distinguish ovenware made by Jobling from similar products made by others. He ordered Pyrex to be removed from the Patents Register.<sup>26</sup> This situation appears to have been unique to Australia, with Pyrex remaining a registered trademark in the USA, the UK and several other countries until well into the 20th century.

The introduction of optical glass manufacture to Australia is even more remarkable and illustrates the importance of a capable manufacturing sector at a time of national crisis. Smith and his team received strong government support to develop what was seen as a vital war resource. Hitherto, all optical glass used in applications like prisms and lenses for lighthouses had been imported primarily from Chance Brothers of the UK. In war time the optical glass demand was increased by the need for war materials such as periscopes, sights, searchlights and mine antennae.

With traditional supplies either cut off or needed for home consumption, could Australia make its own optical glass? Initial requests for help to Chance Brothers proved unrewarding. The UK specialists told the Australian High Commissioner that making optical glass in Australia would be wasteful of the war effort and 'would probably take four years before a successful production could be achieved and the cost would probably be a million pounds.'<sup>27</sup>

Requests for information from American optical glass specialists proved equally unrewarding. However, the US National Bureau of Standards was less commercially oriented and

considerably more forthcoming. They knew the formulae for making optical glass and had published copious papers on the subject.

As a result, a well designed optical glass furnace was built as a wartime annexe at Australian Window Glass in Sydney and a team of refractory and furnace technicians and mixing and forming specialists was drawn from AGM's container and window glass divisions. Their challenge was to produce light flint, dense flint, extra dense flint, borosilicate and medium barium optical glass to micrometer accuracy, which was flawless in the highest scientific sense. The first Australian optical glass was made on 21 September 1941. Remarkably, development had taken just 10 months rather than the four years predicted by Chance while development costs were £60,000 rather than the estimated million.<sup>28</sup> Local manufacture of optical glass stopped as quickly as it started with the return to peacetime.

As with crystal glassware, the demand for optical glass in a market geographically divorced from other world manufacturing centres proved unsustainable when trade routes were restored. However, significant quantities of virtually every type of commercial glass were made here at some time. That has created significant opportunities for collectors of Australiana who research the many products made locally from glass. Some of these will be identified and discussed in the final article of this special three part series.

**Dr Mal Harrop OAM PhD** worked as an employee in and consultant to the Australian glass industry for over 35 years. The interest which he developed over these years culminated in his embarking on four years full time study when he retired. His doctoral thesis at Melbourne's La Trobe University, *Good Things Came from Glass - A History of Glass making in Australia from 1812-1987*, is published by Melbourne University Press.

## NOTES

- 1 *Sydney Gazette* 2 May 1812
- 2 Royal Commission 1906 Vol V, McNeilage evidence, p 1485
- 3 *Sydney Gazette* 6 June 1812
- 4 D R Hainsworth, 'Simeon Lord' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 2 1788-1850, 1967 pp 129-131
- 5 Marjorie Graham, *Australian Glass of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, David Ell Press, Sydney, 1981; John Wade, 'Some early Australian glass', *Australasian Antique Collector* vol. 17, 1976 pp 104-106
- 6 *Victoria Papers Presented To Parliament*, 2nd Session, 1883, Legislative Assembly, Vol. IV, Evidence to Royal Commission on Tariff, pp 924-925
- 7 Graham *op cit* pp 19-20
- 8 *Ibid*
- 9 Malcolm Harrop, *Good Things Came From Glass*, Melbourne UP, Melbourne, 2008, pp 68-69
- 10 John Poynter, *Mr Felton's Bequests*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2004, p 30
- 11 J G R Linge, *Industrial Awakening: A Geography of Australian Manufacturing 1788 - 1900*
- 12 Graham, *op cit*, p 21
- 13 Melbourne UP, 2008. Available from the author - malh@bigpond.net.au or (03) 9439 1696
- 14 S G Garnsworthy, *History of ACI*, unpublished, University of Melbourne, Harrop Archives, p 20
- 15 Royal Commission 1906, Vol V, McNeilage evidence, p 1485
- 16 *Ibid*, p 237
- 17 The story is taken from Garnsworthy but was also reported in a range of contemporary and later newspapers
- 18 Harrop, *op cit*, p 98
- 19 Harrop, *op cit*, pp 100, 136 & 147
- 20 Harrop, Corio 1940 - Triumph for John Curtin but stillbirth for an Australian Motor Car', *Labour History* No. 91, November 2006, pp 131-149
- 21 Harrop, *op cit*, pp 132 & 143
- 22 Garnsworthy, *op cit*, p 67
- 23 Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers; Royal Commission 1914 - 1917, Vol VI, p 1259
- 24 Garnsworthy, *op cit*, p 61
- 25 Trade Agreement with Belgium, Australian Treaty Series, 1934
- 26 Garnsworthy, *op cit*, p 77
- 27 D P Mellor, *Australia in the War of 1939 - 1945 ; The Role of Science and Industry*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1958, p 253
- 28 Mellor, *op cit*, pp 255-6, note 36

# Two important South Australian Gold Cups

The Art Gallery of South Australia has recently acquired two significant gold cups<sup>1</sup> both by the celebrated Adelaide gold- and silver-smith Henry Steiner (1835-1914), who worked in Australia between about 1860 and 1884, when he returned to Germany.<sup>2</sup> These cups are a major addition to the Gallery's collection and have been recognised since their manufacture as the pinnacle of 19th-century Australian goldsmithing. Steiner exhibited them at the Sydney International Exhibition in 1879-80 and the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880-81. More recently, they appeared in Melbourne at the 1988 Kozminsky Bicentennial Exhibition of Australian silver, gold and jewellery. They are of great cultural and historical importance and, in addition, are artistically significant and perhaps the finest ever made in Australia.

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Robert Reason  
& Gary Morgan

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The two cups are presentation trophies for the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870* and the *Adelaide Cup 1879*, both races being won by Mr Robert Barr Smith, the first with his horse *Unknown* and the second with the horse *Banter*. Sir Thomas Elder, Robert Barr Smith's brother-in-law, presented the 1879 cup, while there is no inscription recording the presentation of the earlier cup. At the time, these two men were reputed

to be the wealthiest in Australia with fortunes built on sheep and mining interests.

These cups are probably the finest examples of Australian goldsmith's work of the 19th century and are two of only nine such gold cups recorded as being made in South Australia during that time. Both cups are made of 20-carat gold, which is an unusual refining standard; unfortunately it is not known where Steiner sourced the gold for these cups.

During the late 1860s and early 1870s, there were a number of significant gold discoveries in South



H. STEINER, Adelaide, Australia, c.1860 – 1884, *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870*, 1870s, Adelaide. Gold, 31.5 x 12.5 x 15.8 cm. Purchased with the assistance of the Australian Government through the National Cultural Heritage Account assisted by the J. C. Earl Bequest Fund and the Lillemor Andersen Bequest Fund 2008. Collection: Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide [20086A110A]



H. STEINER, Adelaide, Australia, c.1860 – 1884, *The Adelaide Cup 1879*, 1879, Adelaide. Gold, 30.7 x 9.4 x 12.2 cm. J.C. Earl Bequest Fund and the Lillemor Andersen Bequest Fund 2008. Collection: Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide [20086A111A]

Australia<sup>3</sup> with the production from these mines helping in rescuing South Australia from a period of depression and de-population in 1870/71. Since mined gold is often around 20 carats in refinement (often in the form of the naturally occurring ‘electrum’ where it is alloyed with silver), one possibility is that Steiner used this new source of locally produced gold for these two cups. Metallurgical analysis of the gold from which these cups are made and comparisons with locally produced gold from the mines that were operating in the 1870s may shed light on this possibility.

Intriguingly, the circumstances surrounding the presentation and even manufacture of these two cups are quite different with one, *The Adelaide Cup 1879* having a well-documented history while the other, *The Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870* is more mysterious.

#### THE ADELAIDE CUP 1879

The Adelaide Cup was run on Tuesday, 15 April 1879 and Robert Barr Smith’s horse *Banter*,<sup>4</sup> considered a rank outsider by most experts, won the Cup by six lengths in record time. The owner was presented with ‘a purse of 500 sovereigns and Sir Thomas Elder presented a gold cup (value 100 sovereigns).’<sup>5</sup> The relatively modest value attributed to the cup is partly explained by its weight (644 gm or about 20.8 troy ounces) and also by the value of gold in the 1870s. The gold price at the time was regulated, so as to serve as a guarantee for the value of national currencies (the so-called ‘gold standard’) and in 1870 was approximately \$US24 per oz. This artificially low value, brought about by the regulation of the gold price, is demonstrated by the fact that, in 1870, the silver/gold price ratio was approximately 1:16 whereas now, in a free market, it is around 1:210.

Despite his success in the Adelaide Cup, Robert Barr Smith, ever the businessman and preparing for a trip to Europe, sold his horse almost immediately, surely for a large profit, to C L McDonald. The horse rewarded its new owner by winning the *Queen’s*

*Birthday Cup* on 5 June 1879. Another gold cup, this time manufactured by Steiner's competitor, J M Wendt, was given as part of that prize.

Steiner's *Adelaide Cup 1879*, for which a contemporary description exists,<sup>7</sup> stands 30.7 cm tall, weighs 644 gm and is of a neo-classical design with a slender, tapering form enhanced by a straight handle with applied foliate and rosette decoration. The surface is finely engraved with fruiting vines and decorative framing panels enclosing repeat flowering foliate patterns. This design very much reflected the international taste for neo-classicism at the time and, over the next few years, Steiner produced similar examples in silver, one of which, *The Adelaide Hunt Club Cup* of 1883, is also in the Art Gallery's collection. The cup is marked on the base with a crown, a lion passant, 'H. Steiner', a queen's head and twice marked '20.C'. It also bears an engraved inscription on the body of the cup:

THE ADELAIDE CUP 1879  
PRESENTED BY  
SIR THOMAS ELDER  
WON BY R. BARR SMITH'S  
BANTER.

Distance, 2 miles Weight. 6 Stone  
12 lbs Time. 3 min. 35 Sec

A few months after winning the race, Robert Barr Smith evidently lent the cup for display since it was included as part of Steiner's display in the Sydney International Exhibition in late 1879<sup>8</sup> and also in the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880-81.<sup>9</sup>

The cup, together with the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870*, then appears in a photograph of c. 1882 *in situ* in the dining room of Robert Barr Smith's Adelaide house, Torrens Park<sup>10</sup> before passing by descent through the Barr Smith family.

### THE ADELAIDE HUNT CLUB CUP 1870 – THE 'CUP' WITHOUT A CUP

The history of the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870*,<sup>11</sup> which is another extremely

fine example of colonial goldsmith's work in the Renaissance revival style, is more intriguing.

In 1869/71, Adelaide was in the grip of a severe depression that saw, among other things, financial hardship for the Government and citizens, mass unemployment, civil unrest and significant de-population of rural areas. The Adelaide Hunt Club, which had been formed in the 1840s, was not immune to this severe downturn and was, by 1869, in financial difficulties.<sup>12</sup>

However, the Adelaide Hunt Club Committee decided to go ahead with the end-of-season Hunt Club race meeting at the 'Old Adelaide Racecourse, East Parklands' (i.e. Victoria Park) in 1870. The program included the second running of the Hunt Club Cup, a 4-mile steeplechase for horses that had been hunted during the year, with the first Hunt Club Cup having been run the previous year in 1869.

The race meeting was advertised in the local press<sup>13</sup> but, interestingly, no mention was made of a cup being part of the prize for the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup*, although silver cups for other races in the meeting were mentioned.

The race, run on 15 October 1870, was won by Robert Barr Smith's horse, *Unknown*. The owner was apparently so overwhelmed at the win that he immediately offered the jockey, Arthur Malcolm, who was Robert's godson, a large purse or the horse.<sup>14</sup> Malcolm, who later became Master of the Hunt and an outstanding all-round sportsman, took the horse!

At the 'settlement' of prizes the following week,<sup>15</sup> Robert received the purse of £52-10-0 although, again, there is no mention of a gold cup despite silver trophies for other races at the same meeting being mentioned. It therefore appears that, although the race was called the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup*, there was no actual cup to present!

The following years were no better financially for the Hunt Club. During the period 1871 to 1877, the race was a 'sweepstakes' and no cup or trophy



Detail, H. STEINER, Adelaide, Australia, c.1860 – 1884, *The Adelaide Cup 1879*, 1879, Adelaide. Gold, 30.7 x 9.4 x 12.2 cm. J.C. Earl Bequest Fund and the Lillemor Andersen Bequest Fund 2008. Collection: Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide [20086A111A]

was presented<sup>16</sup> apart from a whip in 1876 and 'a handsome piece of plate' in 1873,<sup>17</sup> but there is no record of what this 'piece of plate' was.

However, in 1878, the Adelaide Hunt Club Cup seems to have acquired its cup for the first time with the race, run on 21 September, having a prize of a sweepstakes and 'A Gold Cup, value 100 sov.'<sup>18</sup> Importantly, the cup was not only presented by Robert Barr Smith but was also acknowledged as 'Mr. R. B. Smith's handsome gift'. A description of the gold *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1878* was published in the *South Australian Register* on 17 September 1878,<sup>19</sup> when it was on display at Steiner's shop. From that description, it is clear that the 1878 Cup was different to the 1870 Cup.

### EXHIBITIONS AND ROBERT BARR SMITH

So, when and under what circumstances did Steiner make the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870* and when and how did Robert Barr Smith acquire it?



There are several clues to the sequence of events but, unfortunately, no definitive, documented answers.

The first positive identification of the cup is at the Sydney International Exhibition, which opened on 17 September 1879, although it is not known if it was engraved with the presentation inscription at that time. Intriguingly, the report of the cup at this exhibition states that one cup was ‘in connection with the Adelaide Hunt Club Cup of 1870’ while the other was the Adelaide cup presented ‘at the Adelaide races of 1879’ (emphasis added).<sup>20</sup> Both cups were certainly in Robert Barr Smith’s home at Torrens Park by c. 1882,<sup>21</sup> so Robert had acquired both cups by this time.

*The Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870* must have been made and been acquired by Robert Barr Smith sometime between the running of the race in October 1870 and late 1879, but when exactly? There seem to be two possibilities.

The first possibility is that the Cup was commissioned by Governor Fergusson around 1870 but, for some reason, was never presented. In 1870, as noted, the Adelaide Hunt Club was in financial difficulties<sup>22</sup> and had to solicit additional payments from its members to stay solvent and even to run the 1870 race meeting. Given this dire situation, as well as the depression in South Australia at the time, it is highly unlikely that the Club could afford to commission a gold cup from Steiner for presentation at the 1870 race meeting. Contemporary reports make no mention of a cup ever having been presented.<sup>23</sup>

However, in a report of the 1872 Adelaide Hunt Club race meeting,<sup>24</sup> there is a reference to the ‘valuable trophy donated by Governor Fergusson’ being ‘on display’ at the 1872 meeting, although no cup or other trophy was actually presented for that race.

Then in May 1873, the Hunt Club drank a toast to Governor Fergusson who ‘donated a valuable cup (The Governor’s Cup) for the Adelaide Hunt Club, now on the table’ but again, no trophy worthy of detailed mention was actually presented apart from a mention of a ‘handsome piece of plate’. This ‘handsome piece of plate’ could possibly have been the ‘valuable cup’ referred to although this appears unlikely since, if the valuable ‘Governor’s Cup’ were presented for the race, it would probably have been referred to in the press in terms other than just ‘a handsome piece of plate’. Also, it is not known whether the cup referred to as being ‘now on the table’ was the same as the ‘valuable trophy’ that was ‘on display’ in 1872 although, since no cup or other trophy was presented in 1872, this seems likely.

Unfortunately, there are no records for the Adelaide Hunt Club meetings from 1876 to 1883 in the SA State Library archives and so it is not known whether there are further mentions of the ‘Governor’s Cup’.

Extensive searches of the correspondence and accounts of the SA Governors from 1870 to 1880 in the SA State Records unfortunately reveal large gaps in the records. Of those that remain, there are no recorded commissions for a gold cup from Steiner or other suggestions that Governor Fergusson was in any way involved in the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870*.<sup>25</sup> However, the letters<sup>26</sup> for the period after 1869 are missing as are the account books for 1871-1878.<sup>27</sup> Searches of the letters of Robert Barr Smith reveal no mention of the cup, although again, frustratingly, letters from the crucial period 1871-73 are missing.

However, by 1879, Lieutenant Fergusson, the Deputy Governor (possibly a relative of Governor Fergusson) and a member of the Adelaide Hunt Club, was quoted as saying that he ‘is going to send a gold trophy in the form of a cup’ to the Sydney exhibition<sup>28</sup> later that year. It is not known whether this cup was one of the gold cups that Steiner exhibited at the Sydney Exhibition although, since there were no South Australian gold cups exhibited apart from Steiner’s and Wendt’s, it is highly likely.

The second possibility is that Robert Barr Smith had the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870* commissioned around 1878 for himself, possibly as a memento and perhaps at the same time he commissioned Steiner to manufacture the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1878*, the first to be actually presented. The Renaissance revival form of the 1870 Cup and the finely engraved decoration, which is strikingly similar to the *Adelaide Cup 1879*,<sup>29</sup> support this later date although no documentation can be located to confirm the commission.

## SUMMARY

In summary, it is clear that the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870* was not presented to Robert Barr Smith at the race meeting of the same name in October 1870.<sup>30</sup> Given the two alternative scenarios for the Cup’s history, it appears

likely that he did not acquire the Cup until the late 1870s. However, as Barr Smith's *Adelaide Cup 1879* was exhibited alongside the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870* by Steiner at the Sydney International Exhibition, it is likely that both cups were by this stage owned by Robert Barr Smith.

From the records, it is conceivable that Governor Fergusson commissioned the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870* from Steiner as a gesture of support for the Hunt Club during the difficult years of the early 1870s. If correct, this commission must have been prior to October 1872 when the 'valuable trophy donated by Governor Fergusson' (i.e. 'The Governor's Cup') was on display, and may have been a gesture to the Club on his departure from Adelaide in December 1872.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, if this cup was the same as the 'gold trophy in the form of a cup' that was mentioned by the Deputy Governor as being sent by him to the Sydney International Exhibition in 1879<sup>32</sup>, then Robert Barr Smith could not have acquired the cup until that time.

Alternatively, based on the style of the cup and its chased decoration, it is perhaps more conceivable that Robert Barr Smith commissioned the cup himself, probably around 1878 when he also commissioned and presented the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1878* from Steiner although there are no records that can be located of such a commission.<sup>33</sup>

Unfortunately, unless additional records come to light, it may not be possible to fully elucidate the early history of this impressive monument to the 19th-century Adelaide goldsmith's art.

**Robert Reason** is Curator of Australian and European Decorative Arts, Art Gallery of South Australia & Gary Morgan is a Research Assistant, Art Gallery of South Australia. Robert Reason can be contacted at the Art Gallery of South Australia, North Terrace Adelaide SA 5000, telephone 08 8207 7000.



Above & left: detail, H. STEINER, Adelaide, Australia, c.1860 – 1884, *The Adelaide Cup 1879*, 1879, Adelaide. Gold, 30.7 x 9.4 x 12.2 cm. J.C. Earl Bequest Fund and the Lillemor Andersen Bequest Fund 2008. Collection: Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide [20086A111A]

#### NOTES

- 1 The acquisition of the *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870* and the *Adelaide Cup, 1879* was made possible with a special grant from the Australian Government through the National Cultural Heritage Account, the J.C. Earl Bequest Fund and the Lillemor Andersen Bequest Fund.
- 2 Although he did return to Adelaide briefly
- 3 At Jupiter Creek in 1868, Birdwood (1869), the Barossa Valley (1868), Waukaranga (1873) and others
- 4 Robert Barr Smith, a keen race-goer and horseman, had recently purchased the horse from a Mr Crozier for £300 on 4 April
- 5 *South Australian Register*, *passim*.
- 6 For a description of Wendt's gold cup, see the *SA Register*, 10 May 1879, p 5
- 7 A description of the cup, which was on display at Steiner's shop, was published in the *SA Register*, 25 March 1879, p 5
- 8 Reported in the *SA Register*, 6 October 1879, p. 5. This report mentions another gold cup which, from a photograph elsewhere, is Steiner's *Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870*
- 9 The cup, together with the Adelaide Hunt Club Cup 1870 appears in a photograph of Steiner's Melbourne International Exhibition exhibit, Henry Steiner portfolio, Art Gallery of South Australia
- 10 Reproduced in K Preiss & Pamela Oborn, *The Torrens Park Estate*, published by the authors, Adelaide, 1991, p 93
- 11 The cup is 31.5cm high, weighs 647 gm and is in the shape of a ewer with an inverted pear-shaped body, curved spout and scroll handle. The body is finely engraved with fruiting vines, scrolled festoons and other decorative designs and is stamped on the base of the handle 'H. STEINER', '[crown]', '[lion passant]', '20.C' and also impressed on a shield attached to the underside base '[crown]', 'H. STEINER', '[Queen's head]', '[lion passant]', '20.C'. It is engraved with an inscription 'ADELAIDE HUNT CLUB CUP, 1870. Won by R. Barr-Smith's Unknown. Ridden by Mr. A. R. Malcolm. Steeplechase of 4 miles Webster Weights for age'
- 12 Adelaide Hunt Club Kennel Records, 1848-85 and correspondence 1874 onwards, State Library of SA, SRG 61 and Daley, John (1982) *A history of the Adelaide Hunt Club, 1840-1981*, Adelaide Hunt Club, Adelaide. According to the AHC records (State Library of SA, SRG61) The Master of the Hunt, Mr. Blackmore and 'others' of the AHC met with Governor Fergusson in 1869, who promised 'support to continue'
- 13 See, for example, *SA Register*, 8 October 1870, p 5
- 14 The incident is reported in John Daley, *A history of the Adelaide Hunt Club, 1840-1981*, Adelaide Hunt Club, Adelaide, (1982) Chapter 2
- 15 Reported in *SA Register*, 21 October 1879, p 5
- 16 In 1871, the race was run on 14 October with only four horses entered. No purse or other trophy was presented and the race was changed to a 'sweepstakes' with the winner taking £39-15-0. In 1872, a field of 8 horses entered for the race on 19 October but once again, the race was a 'sweepstakes' with no purse or prize presented. By 1874, the race, now referred to variously as the Adelaide Hunt Club Cup and the Adelaide Hunt Club Steeplechase, was run on

- 19 September and, again no cup was presented to the winner, only the sweepstakes purse of £40. In 1876, the AHC and the SA Jockey Club held a combined meeting over several days with the Adelaide Hunt Club Cup being run on 23 September at Morphettville racecourse. In 1877, the race was run on 6 October and, interestingly, the horse 'Unknown' which won the 1870 cup for Robert Barr Smith is mentioned as being in attendance as a hack for the starter (*SA Register*, 8 October 1877, p 6)
- 17 *SA Register*, 21 October 1873, p 5. The race this year attracted a field of only three starters. Interestingly, the horse 'Unknown' again won the race as it had done for Robert Barr Smith in 1870 although by now it had a new owner, Robert's godson Arthur Malcolm 1 *SA Register*, 23 September 1878, p 6
- 18 *SA Register*, 23 September 1878, p 6
- 19 It is described (on page 5) as '*...in the form of a handsomely chased gold claret jug, 12 inches in height. The upper portion is in the fashion of the time of Louis Quartorse [sic]. The bowl looks very well, the chasing being in imitation of the small heads of a peacock's feathers. The 'lip' is ornamented with filigree work. There is a shield on either side of the bowl. In front of one are a hunting cup, a horn and a whip and the other is left for the inscription. With the stand, which is of dark wood, the cup is 19 inches high and is a very nice gift*'
- 20 *SA Register*, 6 October 1879, p 5
- 21 Photograph of the dining room showing both gold cups *in situ*. Reproduced in K Preiss & Pamela Oborn *op cit*, p 93
- 22 Robert Barr Smith and other members of the Adelaide Hunt Club had met Governor Fergusson on 21 November 1870 (Adelaide Hunt Club Records, 1848-85 and 1874 onwards, State Library of SA, SRG 61) although there is no record of what was discussed. However, in 1869, the Master of the AHC, Mr Blackmore and 'others' had been to see Governor Fergusson about the plight of the AHC who, according to the AHC records, 'provided support to continue'
- 23 There are no accounts in the local press in 1870 of any display of the cup in Steiner's shop, which were usually reported for major commissions and events
- 24 Adelaide Hunt Club Records, 1848-85 and 1874 onwards, State Library of SA, SRG 61
- 25 Many of the records related to Governor Fergusson's tenure as Governor are missing from the State Records
- 26 SA State records, GRG2/39
- 27 SA State records, GRG2/43
- 28 *South Australian Register*, 21 August 1879, p 4
- 29 Barr Smith's brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Elder, commissioned the 1879 cup from Steiner, which suggests a family connection to Steiner since Robert Barr Smith also commissioned other works from Steiner.
- 30 This is further supported by there being no mention of who presented the cup on the inscription, which would normally be present
- 31 Although he continued formally in the post of Governor until 1873
- 32 Noting that no gold cups were actually presented for the Hunt Club Cup until 1878
- 33 Steiner's records of commissions have not been located and there is no mention of a commission in the Barr Smith correspondence of the period (State Library of SA). However, most of the extant correspondence is personal in nature and it therefore not surprising that there is no mention of such a commission

# Scheduling Berry Fine Art

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**Thomas Woolner (1825-1892)**

**Portrait medallion of William Charles Wentworth, c 1854  
copper, black paint, 19.7 cm diameter**

W. C. Wentworth is often cited as the father of Australian self-government. Thomas Woolner is possibly the most renowned artist to visit and work in Australia in the 19th century. Other castings of this work by Woolner are in public collections. It is rare for one to be offered for sale.



Stephen Scheduling and Jim Berry have been buying, researching and selling Australian art for over thirty years. To join our subscription list please email [berry@schedulingberry.com](mailto:berry@schedulingberry.com). To view our online galleries, please visit our website. Or you may contact **Jim Berry: 0417 225 873**

# Tasmanian furniture history sources: some updates

Robyn Lake



For those researching and writing articles, the task of negotiating your way through the different layers of sources is time-consuming and often frustrating. These updates, relating to the article on the table with provenance to Colonel William Thomas Champ,<sup>1</sup> provide an opportunity to take a broader look at the pitfalls that can occur when using information both from earlier contemporary sources such as obituaries and from recent publications.

## 1. THE POSSIBILITY THAT WILLIAM CHAMP ACQUIRED A COPY OF THE 1826 EDITION OF GEORGE SMITH'S *CABINETMAKER AND UPHOLSTERER'S GUIDE* IN 1836

Ruth Dwyer observes that the design of the myrtle table made for Colonel William Thomas Champ had been 'adapted from that of a library table in George Smith's publication of 1826, *The Cabinetmaker and Upholsterers' Guide*:

A copy of Smith's guide was in Van Diemen's Land in 1836, as it was listed in the probate papers of the deceased cabinetmaker Alexander Watson. The valuation given was £2. 6s. The auction of what may have been Watson's stock of furniture 'A QUANTITY of very valuable

**CABINET MAKERS' TOOLS.**

On Monday the 22nd inst. at 12 o'clock precisely,  
**MR. STRACEY,**  
**WILL SELL BY PUBLIC AUCTION,**  
**On the premises of Mr. Wooley, in Macquarie st.**  
**By order of the Administrators.**

**A** very extensive and valuable collection of Tools, embracing every article necessary for the best workmen,—Also, 2 iron cramps, a turning lathe, a quantity of wearing apparel, two watches, with other miscellaneous property. The tools are all nearly new, were selected by an experienced mechanic for his own use, and will be found such as are not otherwise to be obtained here.

Plate 1. *Hobart Town Courier*, 19 October 1832. As the court-appointed administrator of 'the goods, chattels, rights, credits and effects' of Alexander Watson, Hobart cabinet-maker Joseph Woolley arranged for the sale by auction of the deceased cabinet-maker's effects

2 Blankets	12 00
4 lots of sundries	1 3 6
Cabinet Guide	2 6 0
Slate & paper	6 6
Sundries	4 0
Price Book	2 5 0
100 Quills	4 4
Hat Box	2 6
White Hat	18 0
Mattrap	1 2 0
Beams & Weights	1 2 0
Saw & Mine	9 0
Diamond &c	15 0
Tool Chest	2 5 0
2 Cloths Boxes	1 1 6
2 Trunks	1 8 0

Plate 2. Alexander Watson probate papers, Archives Office of Tasmania, AE242/1/1, no 44 (detail). The copy of auctioneer John Stracey's account, which forms part of Alexander Watson's probate papers, simply describes a 'Cabinet Guide' and 'Price Book', offering no clue to the author or publisher of either. Each book fetched a price comparable to Alexander Watson's tool chest, indicating their value at the time

Household Furniture, nearly all new ...' appeared in the *Hobart Mercury* on 23 September 1836, an appropriate interval having been allowed for the administration of the estate to be granted. Smith's reference book, considered then to be of minor importance, was not listed for sale in this brief advertisement. As will become more evident, Champ had reason to purchase this guide.<sup>2</sup>

Her source for the information about Alexander Watson is the late Caressa Crouch's 1996 article 'Master cabinet-maker Alexander Watson of Van Diemen's Land and his tools.'<sup>3</sup> The 1996 article is written on the premise that Alexander Watson died in Hobart on 8 August 1836. In fact, Alexander Watson arrived in Hobart aboard the *Medway* on

31 May 1832 and was buried there less than ten weeks later, on 8 August 1832. A full updated account of Alexander Watson's story will be published soon in *Australiana*.

Alexander Watson's effects were auctioned on 22 October 1832 (plate 1). In the two-page 'Account of sale of goods' of Alexander Watson's effects, which forms part of his probate papers, the design book he brought to Van Diemen's Land is listed only as 'Cabinet Guide' (plate 2). Ms Crouch has merely assumed that it was the 1826 edition of George Smith's *The Cabinetmaker and Upholsterers' Guide*.

The 23 September 1836 'Household Furniture' auction advertisement has no connection with Watson, while the actual source is the *Hobart Town Courier*, not the *Hobart Mercury*.

## 2. CONVICTS 'GEORGE WILKIN ALIAS WILLIAMS AND ROBERT GAHAM'

Mrs Dwyer attributes two extant pieces of furniture bearing the KTY mark to two convicts identified as 'George Wilkin, alias Williams and Robert Gaham'. The question of attribution of these pieces is outside the theme of these updates, which concerns furniture history sources.

Referring to the cedar and native cherry desk 'made at the [King's Yard] ostensibly for Governor George Arthur' which bears a pencil inscription, she notes that:

This cedar and native cherry desk also bears the mark of the KTY and carries the signatures of Robert Gaham and George Wilkin.<sup>5</sup>

This writing table is now on display at the National Trust of Australia (Tasmania) property Runnymede in Hobart. In house manager Gemma Webberley's words, 'there is great difficulty now in reading this inscription'<sup>6</sup> but the black lead pencil inscription on the back left-hand drawer of this desk appears to read:

George Wilkin and Robert Graham  
Makers December 11th, 1835

A search of convict records held by the Archives Office of Tasmania indicates that the two most likely prisoners are 'George Wilkins, alias Williams', a London house carpenter and joiner by trade who arrived in Hobart aboard the convict transport *Thames* in November 1829 (plate 3) and Scottish cabinet-maker Robert Graham, who arrived aboard the convict transport *Norfolk* in August 1835 (plate 4).

Robert Graham's surname is spelt as 'Gaham' in his actual conduct record, while the correct spelling of 'Graham' (rather than Robert Graham as in the current text) is in both the description list and the appropriation list.

The conduct records of Robert Graham and George Wilkins alias Williams (which can be viewed on-line at

www.archives.tas.gov.au) provide an insight into their different circumstances in the months leading up to the decision to record their names on the desk. While Robert Graham's only punishment had been a reprimand for being drunk, two instances of being out after hours in June 1835 culminated in George Wilkins alias Williams being sentenced to three months working at his trade in irons. Then on 24 July he had received a sentence of 50 lashes for 'Having the rivets taken out of his Irons and screw rivets substituted'.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. WILLIAM HAMILTON'S BIOGRAPHY

Mrs Dwyer did not intend to provide a full account of William Hamilton's business activities. Much of her information is based on William Hamilton's obituary, which appeared in the *Hobart Mercury* on 29 July 1885. My purpose here is to provide some brief updated information on two aspects of William Hamilton's business activities, not to address the question of who made the table.

The first reference relates to William Hamilton's business relationship with James Whitesides and John McLoughlin:

In 1834, Hamilton opened what was to become a very successful business as a cabinet-maker, upholsterer and furnishing undertaker, in early times in partnership with McLoughlin and then Whitesides.

As is well documented, Irish cabinet-makers William Hamilton, John McLoughlin and James Whitesides arrived in Hobart aboard the *Lindsays* in June 1832. Trading under the name 'Hamilton & Co.' the three men were in partnership together in Argyle Street, Hobart until October 1839. The trade label on a surviving piece of furniture reads 'Hamilton & Co./ Cabinet, Chair and upholstery Manufactory,/ No 8 Argyle Street Hobart Town'. An advertisement in the *Hobart Town Courier* of 15 December 1837 is headed 'Messrs. Hamilton & Co.'

Two advertisements on the front page of *The Austral-Asiatic Review* of 15 October

#### Convict Details

##### Wilkins, George

**Convict No:** 76009  
**Extra Identifier:**  
**SEE Surname:**  
**SEE Given Names:**  
**Voyage Ship:** Thames  
**Voyage No:** 68  
**Arrival Date:** 20 Nov 1829  
**Departure Date:** 31 Jul 1829  
**Departure Port:** London  
**Conduct Record:** CON31/1/45  
**Muster Roll:**  
**Appropriation List:** CON27/1/4  
**Other Records:**  
**Indent:**  
**Description List:** CON18/1/21, CON23/1/3  
**Remarks:**

1839 announce the formal end of the partnership (plate 5). Dated 9 October 1839, a 'Public Notice' announces that William Hamilton and John McLoughlin 'Late of the firm of Hamilton, & Co.' will commence a new partnership in the business of 'Cabinet Makers, Joiners and Undertakers'.

The partnership between William Hamilton and John McLoughlin continued for less than a year. The official notice of the 'Dissolution of Partnership' between the two men, dated 5 September 1840, appeared on the front page of the *Trumpeter* on 11 September 1840.

Immediately below this, a second notice placed by 'John McLoughlin, Cabinet-maker &c.' gives notice that he 'continues to carry on business in his own account, on part of the premises in Argyle-street, lately occupied by *Hamilton & Co.*, ...'.

James Whitesides, in his advertisement informing 'Friends and the public' that he intends to carry on business on his own account in his 'Cabinet and Upholstery Warerooms', makes clear where he saw his future in the town's furniture trade.

The second reference in the *Champ* article relates to William Hamilton's retirement from business in 1852 and his 1857 overseas trip:

In 1852, Hamilton retired from business. In 1857 he visited his homeland. Upon his return Hamilton once again opened 'to establish his Sons in the business', the firm henceforth becoming known as Wm Hamilton and Sons ...

#### Convict Details

##### Graham, Robert

**Convict No:** 27831  
**Extra Identifier:**  
**SEE Surname:**  
**SEE Given Names:**  
**Voyage Ship:** Norfolk  
**Voyage No:** 126  
**Arrival Date:** 28 Aug 1835  
**Departure Date:** 14 May 1835  
**Departure Port:** Sheerness  
**Conduct Record:** CON31/1/16  
**Muster Roll:**  
**Appropriation List:** CSO1/1/820 p40  
**Other Records:**  
**Indent:**  
**Description List:** CON18/1/18, CON23/1/2  
**Remarks:**

Plate 3. (left) Archives Office of Tasmania, Name Indexes, Tasmanian Convicts, George Wilkins

Plate 4. (right) Archives Office of Tasmania, Name Indexes, Tasmanian Convicts, Robert Graham

The source of this information is William Hamilton's obituary, which appeared in the *Hobart Mercury* on 29 July 1885. However, as the obituary also refers to 'the active cravings of his industrious proclivities, which made inactivity unendurable.' it is not surprising that William Hamilton did not retire completely from business in 1852. At the end of that year William Hamilton did cease trading at his Elizabeth Street premises, which were subsequently leased to merchants Edward Casper and Henry Wolff, but there had been no 'closing down sale' of either his plant and equipment nor stock.

While listing Hamilton as an 'upholsterer' in Elizabeth Street Hobart in the 1852 *Hobart Town Directory and General Guide*, the directory adds a second entry for him. In a separate section of the directory listing those residents of the District of Buckingham who were qualified to vote in the Legislative Council electors, his entry reads 'Hamilton, William, f[freeholder] cabinetmaker, O'Brien's Bridge'. O'Brien's Bridge is now part of the northern Hobart suburb of Glenorchy. Land transaction records indicate that in 1850 William Hamilton purchased a 42-acre property in the area.

Evidence of William Hamilton's continued involvement in Hobart's

# THE AUSTRAL-ASIATIC REVIEW,

TASMANIAN AND AUSTRALIAN ADVERTISER.

OPEN TO ALL PARTIES—INFLUENCED BY NONE.

<p>Vol. X] HOBART TOWN, TUESDAY MORNING OCTOBER 15, 1839. [No. 591</p> <p><b>First Ship for London.</b>  <b>THE</b> <i>St. John</i> bark  <i>Windsor</i>, C. E. &amp; Co. Sailors,          Commander, 310 tons register, sailing          on the 15th inst. will her dead weight ready on the          wharf, and a great portion of her between          decks engaged by the Government, has room only          for a few bales of wool, and will sail on the 1st          November, has excellent accommodation for pas-          sengers, and carries an experienced surgeon.          For freight of wool or passage, apply to the          commander on board, or to          WILKIN, GARRATT, &amp; Co.          or to          JOHN BOWEN.          New Wharf, Aug. 22.</p> <p><b>For Port Phillip.</b>  <b>THE</b> <i>brig</i> <i>Comet</i>, E. Woodin,          Commander, 200 tons burthen,          will commence loading about the 20th          instant. For Freight or Passage, ap-          ply to the Undersigned,</p>	<p><b>PUBLIC NOTICE.</b>  <b>WILLIAM HAMILTON,</b>          and  <b>JOHN McLOUGHLIN,</b>          Late of the firm of  <b>HAMILTON, &amp; Co.,</b>          BEG to return thanks for the liberal support          their late firm has experienced, and at the          same time to acquaint their friends and the pub-          lic that they have this day commenced a new          Partnership under which they will continue to          carry on the business of  <b>CABINET MAKERS,          JOINERS AND UNDERTAKERS.</b>          Under the Style and Firm of  <b>"Hamilton and Company,"</b>          15 GENERAL,          N. B.—W. H. and J. M. L. will shortly re-          move from their present residence to their new          premises, in Macquarie-street, adjoining the Bank          of Van Diemen's Land, of which due notice will          be given.          WILKIN HAMILTON,          JOHN McLOUGHLIN,          Argyle-street, Oct. 9, 1839.</p> <p><b>NOTICE.</b></p>	<p><b>SELLING OFF!</b>          Commercial House.  <b>J. THOMAS &amp; CO.,</b>          Wholesale Retail Warehousemen,          Are now selling off the following articles:—          CRICKET bats, cotton tops and feet, black and          white silk hose, coloured and black silk          shawls, ribbons, blond laces, gloves, nets, Dun-          stable bonnets, silk and Tuxton bonnets, bridle          bonnet and dress caps, fancy flowers, window          sashes, lawn, Irish linen, book, small, jaconet,          muslin, white and coloured counterpanes, cotton          and worsted caps, table cloths, do covers, nap-          kins, d'oyles, English and French merinoes, Man-          chester, Scotch and London prints of the newest          chawl patterns, fancy muslins, duck, Fortif          socks, Tarpaulins, Woolpacks, crash cotton,          union and linen ticks, combs, brushes, drags, per-          fumery, China chess men, crash bonnets, cotton          needles, worsted, bonnet shapes, men's and boy's          hats, men's and youth's caps various, men's shoes          and slippers, ladies' boots, shoes, and slippers,          baby's caps, bonnets, socks, &amp;c. &amp;c. &amp;c.          Fustian, cord, and cloth clothing, with an          immense quantity of other goods, the naming          of which would more than fill the space allowed for          advertisement.          Oct. 11, 1839.</p>	<p><b>CABINET AND UPHOLSTERY          WAREHOUSES,</b>          Argyle-street, near the Bridge.  <b>J. WHITESIDES</b>          BEG to inform his Friends and the public          that having withdrawn from the late firm          of HAMILTON and Co., it is his intention to          carry on business in the above line on his own          account, and in his own name; and trusts that          those Friends who so liberally supported the late          firm will extend to him a continuance of those          favors for which he now begs to return thanks—          at the same time J. W. hopes by strict attention          to each order as may be given to him to merit a          share of public patronage.          J. W. has now on sale—a variety of Oil Cloth          for Table Covers, of various widths; Hair Cloth,          19, 20, 22, 24, and 26 inches wide; Curled          Hair; Morocco Skins—saddle, crimson, cream,          maroon, and purple, with silk and worsted groups          to match; together with numerous articles of  <b>FURNITURE,</b>          which will be disposed of on the most reasonable          terms.          October 9, 1839. J. WHITESIDES.</p> <p><b>Van Diemen's Land          FIRE AND MARINE INSURANCE</b></p>
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Plate 5. *The Austral-Asiatic Review*, 15 October 1839. The partnership between William Hamilton, James Whitesides and John McLoughlin in the firm of Hamilton, & Co. was dissolved in early October 1839

and all sort of little ridiculous disasters take place in consequence. About three weeks ago, I broke the little gold chain to which my eyeglass is fastened, and it remains unattended to this day. Our nurserymaid has been for above a month sleeping on a mattress on the floor, because something was amiss with the sacking of her iron bedstead, and the upholsterer to whom it was sent, though he declared it would only be half an hour's job, could not get it done.

**Robyn Lake** is a Launceston-based furniture researcher. She has been compiling information particularly on Tasmania's convicts with skills associated with furniture-making.

## NOTES

- Ruth Dwyer, 'A 'champ' of a library table by William Hamilton', *Australiana*, vol 30 no 4, November 2008, pp 15-19
- Op cit* p 16
- Caressa Crouch, 'Master Cabinetmaker Alexander Watson of Van Diemen's Land and his tools. A detailed description', *Australiana*, vol 18 no 3, 1996, pp 68-75
- Alexander Watson probate papers, Archives Office of Tasmania, AE242/1/1 No 44.
- Dwyer, *op cit* p 17
- Gemma Webberley, Runnymede, National Trust of Australia (Tasmania). Personal communication with author, 25 Sep 2009
- Archives Office of Tasmania, Robert Graham per Norfolk. Conduct record : CON31/1/16, prisoner number 1110; George Wilkins, alias Williams, conduct record CON31/1/45, prisoner number 967
- Dwyer *op cit* p 18
- Ibid*
- Colonial Times*, 30 Jun 1853 p 3, *Colonial Times* 3 Sep 1853, p 4
- Sir William Denison, *Varieties of vice-regal life*, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1870, p184

furniture trade comes in an advertisement he placed in the Hobart *Courier* of 13 January 1853. Dated 24 December 1852, the notice announces:

that a Co-partnership had been entered into between Mr James Whitesides and himself as Cabinetmakers, Upholsterers and Furnishing Undertakers, to take effect from 1st January, under the firm of "Hamilton & Whitesides" in the shop and Premises now occupied by the latter in Liverpool street.

An advertisement dated 27 June 1853 in the *Colonial Times* in June and again in September 1853<sup>10</sup> gives the firm's name not as 'Hamilton & Whitesides', but as 'J. Whitesides & Co.' The focus of the advertisement is 'Elegant and Handsome Furniture of the best English Manufacture', but the final section of this advertisement contains an important clue why William Hamilton had decided to close his own Elizabeth Street business in December 1852. The firm was shorthanded and the advertisement reads:

**WANTED,** - Several cabinetmakers and Chairmakers; a French Polisher and a pair of Sawyers. To competent workmen, regular employment is offered, at the highest current rate of wages. Enquire of J. Whitesides and Co.

Two factors caused the serious shortage of labour of all types in Van Diemen's Land during the early 1850s. Transportation, which had provided the

owners of Hobart's cabinet manufacturers with a skilled cheap labour workforce during much of the previous decade, was drawing to a close, and the lure of the Victorian goldfields saw thousands leave the colony.

The co-partnership between William Hamilton and his brother-in-law James Whitesides lasted a year. Dated 29 December 1853, the notice announcing the dissolution of the partnership appeared in the Hobart *Courier* of 26 January 1854, the firm being referred to 'Whitesides and Company', not 'Hamilton and Whitesides' as in the original announcement.

To date much of our view of Tasmania's furniture history has come from contemporary newspapers and directories. A fitting way to end this look at furniture history sources is with a first-hand account which captures succinctly the situation facing Hobart's furniture trade during the early 1850s.

Headed 'Hobart Town, January 25, 1852', Lady Denison, wife of the then Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land Sir William Denison, wrote in her journal:<sup>11</sup>

Dearest Mammy, - The gold at Port Phillip is bringing things into a strange state. Such numbers are gone to the diggings, that it now becomes scarcely possible to get anything done here: if you happen to break or injure your goods and chattels, broken they must remain, for there is nobody left in upholsterers shops to mend them;

# Carl Gonsalves

(1950-2009)

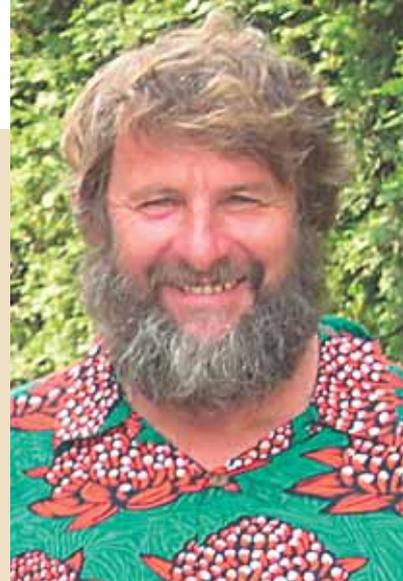
Carl Gonsalves stood out in a crowd. Big and bearded, he was renowned for wearing brightly patterned Hawaiian or Mambo shirts, or baggy, woolly jumpers. But he had a flair for collecting, combining a great eye with a capacity to pick up or negotiate a bargain. If you met him at an antique fair, an irrepressible grin and twinkling eyes would reveal that he'd just bagged a new treasure. But no more, for Carl died peacefully and unexpectedly in his sleep on the night of Saturday 24 October.

Carl and his wife Caressa Crouch operated the Palm Beach boatshed. Their hillside house set in bushland displayed natural materials, stone and wood. Visitors, laughing children and yapping dogs were drawn to the long, deep shady verandah with magnificent views over Pittwater. Carl and Caressa loved the water, loved the wildlife, and

campaigned to preserve Palm Beach. It may be a suburb of the wealthy, but everyone can enjoy its relaxed village feel and traditional friendliness.

They built up a serious collection of Australiana, covering a wide range and some of it salt-encrusted with a strong maritime flavour. They loved Tasmania, collected whaling memorabilia and sailed a Huon pine yacht named *Van Diemen*, where Carl demonstrated his woodworking skills. Their magnificent joint collection ranged from an 1820s cedar sideboard to fake kangaroo teapots. They had a curiosity for how things were made and the people who made them.

Few collector couples shared the collecting experience as thoroughly, or complemented their skills better. Both enjoyed the hunt and the exhilaration of capturing the prize. Caressa was a devoted contributor as a writer and committee member of the Australiana



Society and Carl supported her unreservedly. They were always generous with their knowledge and their collection; photographs of many pieces have illustrated articles on a wide range of subjects.

When Caressa died of cancer in December 2007 at the age of 53, they had been together almost 40 years. Now Carl too has departed, farewelled by about 400 at the village church. We will miss them, and offer our sympathy to their two wonderful children, also named Carl and Caressa.

JW

## Tasmanian tour

September saw seventeen Australiana Society members gather in Tasmania for what proved to be an exciting and highly enjoyable tour of our island state. Over eight nights and nine days, our members toured from Evandale in the north to Hobart in the south, and during that time bonded as a group in appreciation of Tasmania's beauty and history. Everyone on the tour was glad to have the opportunity to meet Tasmanian members and to view some of their wonderful houses and collections.

Committee member Marcia Rackham is preparing a detailed report for our February 2010 edition of *Australiana*, but in the meantime suffice it to say that we are still receiving thank you letters from members of the touring party, who are quite determined that a repeat performance be organised. On this note, there are already some ideas in the pipeline and they are being actively considered. The success of the event has had the added bonus of providing us with a now tested template with which to plan any future tour and this is most welcome to the committee, as such events need careful planning.

LG

# John Austin, forger and silversmith

Thanks to his habit of losing his possessions and the appearance of Australia's first newspaper, we know that Irish convict engraver John Austin was already established in Sydney as a working silversmith in 1803.



1 Silver fiddle pattern sauce ladle attributed to John Austin, Sydney, c 1810. Private collection

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## John Houstone and John Wade

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**I**rish seal engraver John Austin (b. c.1761, arrived Sydney 1800, died 1837) became a Freeman of the Company of Goldsmiths of Dublin in 1789. He was listed at 9 Ross Lane 1792-96, and at 43 Fishamble Street, Dublin in 1797-98.<sup>1</sup>

John Austin and the Frenchman Ferdinand Meurant were both convicted of forgery of bank notes in Dublin in 1798 and sentenced to transportation for life. They arrived at Sydney on the *Minerva* on 11 January 1800. Governor King pardoned Meurant on King George III's Birthday on 4 June 1803, and Austin received a conditional pardon the same day.<sup>2</sup> So did George Howe, printer of Australia's first newspaper, *The Sydney Gazette and*

*New South Wales Advertiser*, which began to appear weekly on 5 March 1803.

Before he received his conditional pardon, Austin was already in business as a silversmith. In April 1803, he advertises a half-guinea reward for the person finding a lost 'gold breast pin, set with a large topaz' and bringing it to John Austin at the Governor's Wharf.<sup>3</sup>

A few weeks later, he offers two dollars reward for a steel plate lost near the Guard House, 'about 6 inches long, and 30 holes pierced thro' it, for the purpose of Wire-drawing ... of much utility to the owner',<sup>4</sup> again to be brought to 'John Austin, near the Governor's Wharf'. This is highly significant; it was clearly one of his own silversmith's tools, for drawing silver and gold wire, and shows that he was a practising jeweller and silversmith, not just an engraver, in 1803.

Three years later he lost a £3 bill drawn on Simeon Lord. He offered one guinea reward for its return to 'John Austin, jeweller, at the Government Wharf'.<sup>5</sup>

Even before his conditional pardon was granted and the notice published in the *Sydney Gazette*, on Monday 16 May 1803 'Mr. Austin, watchmaker and engraver' had set off for Parramatta 'in his own sailing-boat, accompanied by a man-servant.' In the early afternoon, the pair headed out into Port Jackson, but as they were off Bradley's Head, a sudden squall overturned their boat they were hurled into the rough water. The servant managed to cling to an oar and reach the overturned boat, where he was luckily rescued by a boat from the *Lady Nelson*.

Austin, then aged about 40, was evidently a strong swimmer, as he

managed to swim, exhausted, some distance to the northern shore, though he 'had in his pockets 3 watches and many other weighty articles by which his progress was much impeded.'<sup>6</sup> A boat from the *Glatton* picked him up. Unfortunately, he lost a fowling piece when his boat capsized. He was clearly doing good business to have his own boat, servant and gun as well as considerable stock in trade.

Austin and the Frenchman Meurant, a jeweller, were alleged to have made jewellery for Governor King's wife Anna in about 1805. The claim is embodied in a letter dated 28 May 1806 from an Irish political convict, William Maum, to Secretary of State Viscount Castlereagh written from Norfolk Island. The letter makes the unlikely allegation that Austin and Meurant were solely employed making jewellery and trinkets for Mrs King and that Meurant obtained a free pardon in consideration for providing the jewellery.<sup>7</sup>

William Maum claimed that Austin had received a pardon in consideration of work done for Mrs. King including 'making spoons'. In the 1806 muster, Austin is shown as being self-employed in Sydney as 'engraver, jeweller, etc.' and in an 1811 advertisement he describes himself as 'goldsmith, jeweller and watchmaker.' In the 1822 muster he was described as a jeweller.

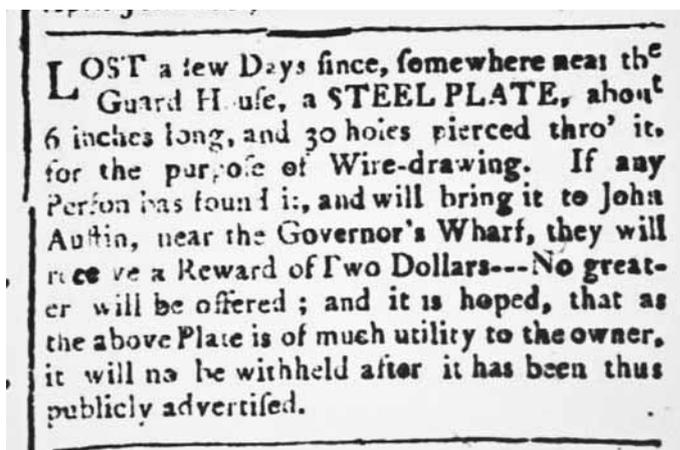
On Henry Lane's death in 1815, John Austin was appointed keeper of the town clock, an office he held until 1819, when replaced by James Oatley. In 1815, newly arrived convict Walter Harley, a silversmith, was assigned to him. In 1818 the Bank of New South Wales resolved to employ him as copper plate printer and engraver. He continued engraving work for the bank until the early 1830s. Austin died at his O'Connell Street home on 27 March 1837 in his 77th year.

Austin was probably the principal jeweller and silversmith working in Sydney prior to the arrival of the



2 Punch marks on the silver ladle: IA, beehive, castle. Private collection

3 *Sydney Gazette* 1 May 1803 p1c



convict Walter Harley (1815), who was assigned first to Austin, and then to Jacob Josephson (1816).

A silver fiddle pattern sauce ladle is attributed to John Austin. The mark consists of initials IA, a beehive and a castle. Walter Harley, who was assigned to Austin, also used a beehive symbol. This ladle could date to the first decade of the 19th century and could possibly be the earliest surviving marked piece of Australian silver yet discovered.

An unmarked piece of seemingly Australian manufacture is a gold-mounted turbo shell snuffbox in the collection of the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney. The lid is engraved 'Walter Stevenson Davidson to his honored father N. SO. Wales 1808.' The box bears an engraved image of a kangaroo, looking backwards as in engravings after the painting Sir Joseph Banks commissioned from George Stubbs (1724-1806), first published in 1773 as an engraving in the account of Cook's first voyage. Powerhouse Museum curator Eva Czernis-Ryl has attributed this to Meurant as maker, and Austin as engraver, although the evidence is circumstantial.<sup>8</sup>

**John Houstone** is a retired solicitor with an interest in researching early Australian silver and its makers. **John Wade**, the editor of *Australiana* magazine, has written many articles on aspects of Australian decorative arts. He runs a hotel at Murrumburrah in country NSW. Both are foundation members of the Australiana Society.

## NOTES

- 1 Douglas Bennett, *Irish Georgian Silver* p. 294; J. Warwick James, 'No Hope for Harley', *Australian Antique Collector*, 26th ed., June-December 1983, pp. 78-80.
- 2 *Sydney Gazette* 19 June 1803 p. 4b-c.
- 3 *Sydney Gazette* 10 April 1803 p. 4a.
- 4 *Sydney Gazette* 1 May 1803, p. 1c
- 5 *Sydney Gazette* 13 April 1806, p. 3b
- 6 *Sydney Gazette* 22 May 1803, p. 2c
- 7 *Historical Records of Australia* Series 1 Volume 5 p. 811 & Hawkins, *19th century Australian Silver* p. 33. On 3 June 1803, W. Maum and another convict B. Walker were committed at Parramatta on suspicion of robbing their employer Henry Brown Hayes of a sum of money (*Sydney Gazette* 5 June 1803, p. 1b)
- 8 Powerhouse Museum 87/882; E. Czernis-Ryl (ed.), *Australian Gold and Silver 1851-1900*

# Letters to the editor

## From Bob Fredman

Subscribers to *Australiana* are becoming more discerning about what they are prepared to accept, if the recent letters by David Kelly and Denis Lake are any indication. There is an increasing expectation for authors to be more accountable for their claims.

That brings me to the latest series of three articles by John Hawkins on the subject of early Tasmanian government furniture. I generally like John's work – it is well composed, well researched and well illustrated. But I have always taken his conclusions with a grain of salt. My concern is that unless the reader is knowledgeable on the subject, they may not appreciate that John's views are sometimes without a solid basis – though they are not necessarily wrong.

I am not saying that John deliberately misleads anyone, because he tends to preface his unproven claims with 'I suggest'. Take for example, some of the captions to the photographs in Part 2 of 'The Creation and Furnishing of Government House', *Australiana*, May 2009.

Page 16 plate 3, the TMAG sofa: Yes this famous sofa could conceivably be the Government House sofa, but equally so could be one of the other good early Tasmanian sofas extant or others extinct. There is no fact in the style or the provenance of the TMAG sofa that makes this attribution anything more than a possibility.

Page 16 and others: Some if not all of the decorative features on this furniture may well be Irish, but most of these features can equally be Scottish provincial, or English provincial.

Page 20 plate 8, a library chair: Yes it is sophisticated but I see no evidence of common cabinet-making detail with the Executive Council chairs. The woodcarving and chair construction have nothing alike, other

than that they are on armchairs of the period.

Page 30 plate 12: The 'alternative thought' that this table could be Australian could easily have been tested by a professional assessment of the timber, as part of the research prior to going to print.

Page 31, plate 13: If those initials are from William Ames's half-inch chisel, I would be interested to see what his pencil looked like.

Page 33, plate 15: I have seen several three-ball back splat chairs around the country and I would not think it likely that purely because they have the same back they are all from the Government House suite. And they have nothing in common with the four chairs from the Executive Council, save for the scroll arm which could have been incorporated when they were made at a later date to match the earlier style. The particular chair illustrated is also problematic, as the front leg design puts it later than the claimed period. In comparison, stylistically the chairs in plate 7 are much more likely to be of the period.

What authors such as John Hawkins write tends to become lore. This process is surreptitiously assisted by the gradual removal of the 'I suggest' prelude, as occurs in Appendix B on page 27 where the TMAG sofa is now unconditionally the same sofa as in the Return of Furniture 1834 by J L Archer.

Overall however, the series of three articles does represent some excellent research that breaks new and exciting ground. We need to give full credit to John for discovering the opportunity that the official records have provided in relation to their correlation with an existing collection, in the same manner as his earlier Woolmers revelations (*Australiana* Feb 2002). It is a pity that he indulges in a little fantasy.

## From Warwick Oakman

I refer to the letters of Denis Lake and David Kelly in *Australiana*, August 2009 concerning the article by Ruth Dwyer and Brett Manley on the Champion library table published in November 2008.

The late Lady Peek was upset with the late Kevin Fahy for ruining the reputation of her great grandfather William Hamilton, Hobart Town cabinet-maker. William Hamilton, she said – despite the proof of labelled examples in her own collection – only ever made furniture in good English timbers like walnut and rosewood! Nonetheless, it is a study group to begin to make attributions.

Hamilton ran a large workshop. Like the best English cabinet-makers of his day, he would kit out the whole house. Either in his bespoke, native timber furniture, or blended with imported furnishings.

The most well documented suite of his furniture was supplied to Thomas D Chapman at Sunnyside, New Town, Tasmania, c. 1845. That suite is shown in a series of photographs taken c. 1880 now in the Tasmanian Archives, and which may be viewed on-line at [www.archives.tas.gov.au](http://www.archives.tas.gov.au).

Three of the four Sunnyside hall chairs, crafted in Tasmanian blackwood to a Loudon pattern, are now in the collection of the *Australiana* Fund. The late Caroline Simpson had acquired the hall chairs from the Chapman family at auction. On her death, they had been gifted to the Historic Houses Trust of NSW and then sold at auction, as they were not related to the Trust's properties. I was the underbidder.

The London-made, Assyrian-headed, mahogany lobby tables, supplied by Hamilton, are still with descendants of the family, one at Panshanger, Longford, in northern Tasmania.

Happily, the Tasmanian Museum has just purchased a wonderful Huon pine star loo table, stamped Hamilton and labelled 'Thomas D Chapman Esq, Sunnyside' (accession no 02009.64). It is also shown in a photo of the drawing room c. 1880 in the Tasmanian archives (item PH30/1/2088). Sunnyside has fitted Huon pine joinery to the drawing room – a very rare occurrence, demonstrating the relationship of furniture, architecture, 'native' timber furniture and Hamilton.

Hamilton supplied two other suites of native timber furniture that remain with the descendants of the families for whom they were supplied. One is in Hobart, one in country Tasmania. The furniture is labelled and stamped, allowing for further understanding of the creativity and quality of Hamilton's workshop. Sadly, these groups of furniture have not yet been published.

I know of 18 examples of labelled or stamped Hamilton furniture, including these suites and the Peek family furniture, and have owned two, though not including the oft-quoted, published examples cited by Mr Kelly.

I sat down with some local friends and we totted up another four items, also by Hamilton, that they remembered over the years.

Like an identikit, from those items, attributions can be made. After a long list of similarities has either been drawn or not, an attribution is reached. Conversely, I recently owned a lovely table, from the family of McGough, a cabinet maker and overseer who worked at Port Arthur that had some of Hamilton's tunes – but not the quality, inventiveness or style of the group stamped or labelled by him. Every second pattern book piece of furniture has similarities. But the length of bolts, numbering of feet, origin of metal ware, cuts of secondary timber, plane profiles, dimensions and another dozen other characteristics are thumb-prints of a cabinet maker.

Articles like Brett Manley's need to be encouraged. The more items of furniture and Australiana research that are published, the better we can draw and justify conclusions about it. Brett Manley happens to have discovered and purchased the table, then sat down and found a way to publish his

thoughts. This is the very spirit of the Australiana Society journal.

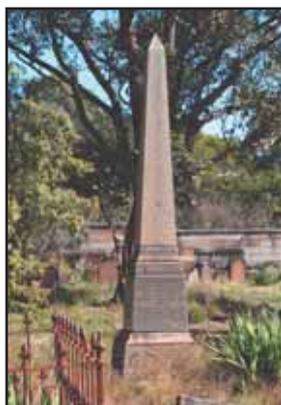
His published research is the tip of the iceberg – Brett has lineal metres of research on the subject. That it found what it did via researchers based outside Hobart, written by a dyslexic man, is wonderful. However, I have never suggested any relationship of William Hamilton to John Lee Archer to George Smith; that was John Hawkins.

So all this helps towards an attribution of the native timber table to the workshop of William Hamilton. The article fleshes out a broad and interesting context, where I appeared as a footnote – and wish to remain.

**Warwick Oakman** is a third-generation antique dealer specialising in 18th and 19th century furniture and antiques, based in Battery Point, Hobart. He is President of the Australian Antique & Art Dealers Association and lives in a Regency villa in New Town, Tasmania.

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## Book Reviews



Obelisk erected for Captain John McLerie, Camperdown Cemetery, 1874

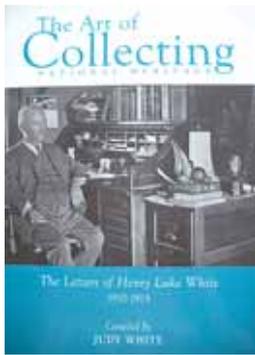
**Les Carlisle, *Apprehension of Bushrangers Medals and Rewards*. Sydney, privately printed 2008. A4 size, 37 pages plus 2 pages of endnotes. Available from the author at \$20 plus \$5 for postage and packaging within Australia, email [malecarl@bigpond.net.au](mailto:malecarl@bigpond.net.au)**

**L**es Carlisle is a well-known author of a number of publications including *Australian Commemorative Medals and Medalets from 1788* and contributor to the *Journal of the NAA* and other publications. He has had a long interest in this numerically small, rare and important series of bushranger medals.

Much has been written about bushrangers, but precious little on those who captured them and their rewards; this publication fills a much needed gap. The author has researched his subject well and gives a potted history of the recipients, details on the medal makers and lots of incidental information never before recorded.

I recommend this publication to numismatists and those with an interest in nineteenth-century Australian history.

*Peter Lane*



**Judy White,**  
*The Art of Collecting*  
*National Heritage.*  
*The Letters of Henry Luke*  
*White 1910-1913*  
The Seven Press, Scone, 2007, \$85  
RRP (size 220mm x 300mm).

**T**his magnificent publication by Judy White about the art of collecting is a collector's item of artistry in itself, published in a limited edition of 300 copies. Highly recommended, the book reveals progressively a fascinating study of the scholarly world of Henry Luke White of Belltrees – one of Australia's foremost ornithologists and stamp collectors, once well known but now forgotten.

After a visit to Belltrees homestead in 1919 as a boy, Patrick White (who later was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature) wrote to his uncle Henry, thanking him for a pleasant, interesting holiday. His uncle noted with pleasure that his clever little nephew, 'Paddy', had written a 'remarkably well-written and expressed letter' – a portent for things to come.

Henry Luke White himself was a remarkable letter writer and, according to Patrick White's biographer David Marr, ruled Belltrees for forty years 'with a kind of genius'. Alec H. Chisholm, too, pictured him as being 'for many years laird of Belltrees station in the Scone district'. The pastoral home, as Chisholm described it, was 'tucked away in the fertile valley of the Upper Hunter'.

H.L. White (1860–1927), while quietly dignified was a 'very agreeable and entertaining host' and a more than inveterate letter writer; he was in truth immensely prolific. Fifty-four volumes of

press copy letters have survived, recording his outward correspondence with cousins and brothers, solicitors, bishops, aldermen, agents, horse trainers, booksellers, and fellow ornithologists and stamp collectors around the world. Judy White, one of the foremost rural and family historians in Australia, has judiciously selected characteristic letters over a mere three-year span, using a methodology similar to that of the great biographer Lytton Strachey (*Eminent Victorians*). To brilliant effect, these letters and the beautifully presented illustrations that accompany them, have captured the intriguing man in his own voice and time, and brought him thus to vivid life again for the reader.

While this quiet, modest and humble man talked of his collections merely as hobbies, he was seriously dedicated to scientific research and used a rigorous methodology of classification. The birds' eggs of his vast collection were fully and properly identified in clutches, 'only one side blown' and with the provision of full data. With characteristic modesty when he donated his collections to public institutions, he completely avoided any form of personal glory – the preservation of the collections was what matters, and therefore the focus should be on them alone. His motive was to do everything in his power 'to instil a love of our native birds into the rising generation'. In December 1913, he wrote to a correspondent in England:

*My 33 sets [of birds' eggs] took 25 years to collect, and are from a stretch of country at least 500 miles long and 20 miles wide; which equals 61/2 million acres [much larger than the whole British Isles].*

By the time he died in 1927, he had formed one of the most outstanding large collections for the study of natural history in Australia, and the finest collection of pre-federation Australian stamps. He also gathered together in his lifetime a fine collection of rare Australian books (over 2,000) – a collection that was unhappily broken up for probate purposes. He did this all while vigorously managing Belltrees, near Scone in NSW – a most famous, successful pastoral property of

outstanding achievement. He assembled his collections purely in his limited leisure hours, which involved demanding accumulation, preservation and cataloguing. Sundays were devoted to his stamp collecting.

Henry Luke White was a man of the scientific and intellectual Enlightenment, highly motivated, passionate and concerned about the advancement of knowledge, particularly in the scientific field. In 1917, he donated his fully annotated collection of 8,500 bird skins to the National Museum of Victoria; at his death these were joined with 12,000 thoroughly documented Australian birds' eggs. This collection is now one of the Museum of Victoria's proudest possessions.

Also in 1917, he donated his unsurpassed collection of New South Wales postage and fiscal stamps to the Mitchell Library, Sydney, and in 1921 he added those of Queensland and Western Australia. He provided the beautiful cabinets in which to house them. His daughter Norah Hordern also donated her collection of Tasmanian stamps in 1922. The H.L. White Postage Stamp Collection is 'one of the great treasures' of the Mitchell Library and is regularly consulted. This internationally regarded collection of stamps has an insurance value of several million dollars, as such a collection would be impossible to assemble today.

Judy White's book is a fitting tribute to an unjustly forgotten scholar and collector. To achieve this, she has assembled a well-selected team of expert advisers and contributors – including Paul Brunton, Senior Curator, Mitchell Library; the ornithologist Dr Les Christidis, Head of Research and Collections and Assistant Director, Australian Museum, Sydney; Belinda Isles, ornithologist; Derek Anderson, Emeritus Professor of Botany; the photographer David Noonan; the philatelist Barbara Hancock, and Wayne Longmore, Collections Manager of Birds and Mammals at the Museum of Victoria. The book's almost visceral shimmering beauty is due to the outstanding work of Sophie Bettington, designer of the appropriately titled enterprise *Vivid Imagination*.

*John Ramsland*



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