

# Australiana

August 2013 vol 35 no 3





# SIMPSON'S ANTIQUES

FINE AUSTRALIAN ANTIQUES



An English pottery plate by Minton & Boyle depicting the coat of arms of the Union Club, Hobart, c.1840

[www.australianantiques.com.au](http://www.australianantiques.com.au)

AA&DA  
AUSTRALIAN  
ANTIQUARY AND  
ART DEALERS  
ASSOCIATION

By appointment  
Mobile: 0404 051 999  
Email: [simpson@casuarinapress.com.au](mailto:simpson@casuarinapress.com.au)



# Australiana

August 2013 vol. 35 no. 3  
ISSN 0814-107X

## THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

www.australiana.org.au  
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

*Australiana*, the magazine of The Australiana Society Inc.,  
is published in February, May, August and November  
and is available only by subscription.

## EDITOR

John Wade

## SUBSCRIPTIONS 2013

Household.....\$60  
Institutions.....\$65  
Life.....\$1100

To subscribe, call us for a brochure or download a membership  
form from the web site and mail with your payment, or call or  
email with your credit card details

## ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL

Send editorial contributions and advertising for  
*Australiana* by email to johnwade@optusnet.com.au or  
on disc to PO Box 2335, Bondi Junction NSW 1355.  
You can download a Style Guide from the website

## INDEX

An index to *Australiana* is available on the web site

## GIFTS

The Australiana Society is listed on the Australian  
Government's Register of Cultural Organisations and  
recognised as a Deductible Gift Recipient.  
Gifts to the Society are tax deductible.

## COMMITTEE 2013

### President

Dr Jim Bertouch

### Vice-President

Annette Blinco

### Secretary

Michael Lech

### Treasurer

Andrew Morris

### Committee

Timothy Cha

Dr Paul Donnelly

Lesley Garrett

Judy Higson

Michel Reymond

Andrew Simpson

All articles appearing in *Australiana* in 2013 are eligible  
for the Peter Walker Fine Art writing award sponsored  
by Peter Walker Fine Art, Adelaide.

# contents

4

The Cambewarra connection: William Bäuerlen,  
Gertrude Lovegrove and The Wild Flowers of New South Wales  
*Megan Martin*

10

The lost gallantry medals of Joseph Maxwell VC, MC and Bar, DCM  
*John Ramsland*

17

Frank Piaggio and Piaggio & McKinlay, watchmakers and jewellers of Perth  
*Michel Reymond and Dorothy Erickson*

23

Letter to the Editor  
*Dorothy Erickson*

24

Ceremonial maces of Australian universities, part 3  
*Christine Erratt*

26

The puzzle of Gannon House  
*Sean Johnson*

30

Mac the Wire King  
*John Wade*

34

Books *John Wade*  
JM Houstone, *Early Australian Silver: The Houstone Collection*  
Michael Fahey & Mike Coward, *The Baggy Green*  
Andrew Montana et al, *Australia Revealed*

36

Reports from the Annual General Meeting of the Australiana Society Inc.  
*Jim Bertouch & Andrew Morris*

38

The Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award 2012: Judge's Report  
*Elizabeth Ellis*

## ADVERTISERS

Simpson's Antiques	2
W J Sanders	25
The Merchant of Welby	39
Peter Walker Fine Art	39
J B Hawkins Antiques	40

## DESIGN

Kylie Kennedy, Reconstruct Design 0402 417 871

## PRINTERS

Point Graphics 0419 248 068

## COVER

Gertrude Lovegrove (1859-1961), *Crinum flaccidum*, watercolour. Collection Caroline  
Simpson Library and Research Collection, Historic Houses Trust of NSW

© Copyright 2013 The Australiana Society and/or individual authors and photographers.  
Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society.

# The Cambewarra connection:

William Bäuerlen, Gertrude Lovegrove  
and *The Wild Flowers of New South Wales*

*The Wild Flowers of New South Wales* is a very rare publication, yet a copy was found among the books in a house called Meroogal at Nowra, now a museum managed by the Historic Houses Trust NSW. Megan Martin set out to discover the connection, ultimately acquiring a collection of 52 Gertrude Lovegrove watercolours.



1

*Telopea oreades*

## MEGAN MARTIN

In 1891, Angus & Robertson published in Sydney a loose-leaf folio publication titled *The Wild Flowers of New South Wales*, written by William Bäuerlen and illustrated by Gertrude Lovegrove. This was part 1 of an intended 25 parts, but in the event it was the only part printed. Surviving examples are now very scarce, with just a handful of copies listed in public collections.

One of these surviving copies was found among the collection of books at Meroogal, an Historic Houses Trust of NSW property at Nowra in the Shoalhaven district on the NSW south coast. This article explores the significance of this association and uncovers the connections between Bäuerlen, Lovegrove and the Thorburn family who lived at Meroogal.

William Bäuerlen (1840–1917) was a German-born botanist whose name first appears in Australian metropolitan newspapers as a botanical collector to the 1885 Bonito expedition to British New Guinea. This expedition was organised by the NSW branch of the fledgling Royal Geographical Society of Australasia and funded by the NSW, Victorian and Queensland governments. The party left Sydney in June 1885 and returned on 3 December, having spent four months exploring the Fly River region and making various natural history collections.

Bäuerlen, who had been collecting Australian plants since 1883 for Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, Director of the Botanical Gardens in Melbourne, resumed collecting for him on his return from New Guinea. He also began to collect for Joseph Maiden, curator of the Technological Museum<sup>1</sup> in Sydney and in July 1890 he was appointed to a full-time permanent position as Botanical Collector at the museum, a position he held until July 1905.<sup>2</sup>

Bäuerlen's name is known to botanists today, preserved in the taxonomy of a number of Australian plants, including the *Correa baeuerlenii* and the *Eucalyptus baeuerlenii* (known as

Bauerlen's Gum). He has a proper entry in the Australian National Herbarium's online biographical dictionary. Gertrude Lovegrove's entry, on the other hand is just a stub.<sup>3</sup>

Gertrude Louisa Lovegrove, known in her family as Gattie, was born at Terara in the Shoalhaven on 11 August 1859. She was the eldest daughter of William Lovegrove and his wife Melanie de Mestre. The Lovegroves and de Mestres<sup>4</sup> were both prominent local families and William Lovegrove was a government official -- Crown Land Agent, Clerk of Petty Sessions. Gattie's childhood was spent at the Lovegrove property called Tulse Hill at Falls Creek south of Nowra. Although the family left Tulse Hill in early 1887, moving to the Sydney suburb of Marrickville, William Lovegrove retained property near Nowra and ran as a candidate for the seat of Shoalhaven in the NSW Legislative Assembly in 1887, and again in 1889.<sup>5</sup>

Gertrude Lovegrove may have met William Bäuerlen when he first began collecting botanical specimens in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven around 1883.<sup>6</sup> Or she might have met him at the Shoalhaven Agricultural and Horticultural Association annual show in February 1884, when he exhibited a set of specially bound volumes of the ferns of the Illawarra. Gertrude won first prize in flower painting at that show and her father William won prizes in the original watercolour and original oil painting categories. He was also chairman of the show association<sup>7</sup> and may even have become some kind of patron to the botanist, since we know that Bäuerlen



2

[*Kennedia prostrata*]

3

1. *Veronica perfoliata*

2. *Boronia pinnata*

3. *Pimelia collina*

[*Pimelea linifolia* subsp. *collina*]

4

*Cassia australis* [*Senna odorata*]



**5**  
Morse Bros (photographers), *Kenneth McKenzie and Tot Thorburn standing outside Fairfield, Cambewarra*, May 1893, photograph. Collection: Historic Houses Trust of NSW

**6**  
L. Herbst (photographer), *William Bäuerlen*, c 1900. Collection June Wallace papers, Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection Historic Houses Trust of NSW

**7**  
Phillips & West, Landscape Photographers, *Meroogal*, c 1887. June Wallace papers, Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection

**8**  
Kerry & Jones (photographers); *The New Guinea Exploration Expedition team, Watsons Bay, Sydney, 3 December 1885*. Collection June Wallace papers, Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

wrote to William Lovegrove from the Fly River, New Guinea, in November 1885.<sup>8</sup>

Bäuerlen had a well-established network of friendship and patronage in the Shoalhaven at this time. He returned to the district after the New Guinea adventure and his first letters to Maiden were written from Cambewarra in July 1886.<sup>9</sup> Although he shifted his collecting operations to Braidwood in late 1886 and then went further afield to the far north-west of NSW in 1887, he was back in Cambewarra for nearly six months in 1888 and again in November 1890.<sup>10</sup> In the meantime the local press kept track of his movements – or were kept informed of them – and in July 1887 Nowra’s weekly newspaper, the *Shoalhaven Telegraph*, gave an

account of his collecting itinerary and botanical discoveries.<sup>11</sup>

One of the friendships Bäuerlen formed during these Shoalhaven sojourns was with Kenneth McKenzie (c 1835–1922), a builder and former mining clerk,<sup>12</sup> who lived with his elderly parents on the McKenzie dairy farm Fairfield at Cambewarra. Kenneth was an amateur woodworker and a keen bushwalker and naturalist. He was also the architect of Meroogal, the picturesque two-story timber house built in Nowra in 1885–86 for his widowed sister Jessie Thorburn and her unmarried daughters – although the youngest of these, Kennina Fanny (Tot) Thorburn (1865–1956), kept house for her uncle Kenneth and her grandparents at Cambewarra.





Tot also kept a diary from 1888 until 1896. Her diary entry for Wednesday 11 April 1888 records that “William Bauerlin came and had tea with us and interested us very much telling us of his travels, wish I knew half as much as he knows...” On this occasion Kenneth and Bäuerlen spent two days collecting specimens on Cambewarra Mountain. Bäuerlen made several visits to Fairfield during the winter and spring of 1888 and was back there again in November 1890, bringing stimulating conversation and travel tales.<sup>13</sup>

The strength of the Cambewarra connection led to the announcement of the publication of *The Wild Flowers of New South Wales* in the *Shoalhaven Telegraph* on 21 January 1891. The *Telegraph* provided a detailed account of the intended publication and informed potential subscribers that orders for subscription could be left at the offices of both the *Shoalhaven Telegraph* and the *Berry Register* where copies of Part 1 were available for viewing.

Some of the details given in the newspaper’s account came from a prospectus for the publication<sup>14</sup> which explained that there were to be 25 parts, each containing four coloured plates with descriptive letterpress. Although Angus & Robertson were nominally the publishers, the actual lithography and

printing of the plates and the letterpress was entrusted to a Scottish printer, Young J. Pentland of Edinburgh. Unfortunately the printer had forgotten to send the letterpress for one of the plates.

By February 1891 Bäuerlen was based at Ballina, collecting in the “Big Scrub” and, although the Lismore Northern Star gave an extended report of the publication of Part 1 of *The Wild Flowers of New South Wales* in June 1891,<sup>15</sup> it seems to have taken a while for his superior at the Technological Museum, Joseph Maiden, to notice the new publication. Eventually Bäuerlen was asked to explain how a full-time public servant came to be free-lancing.

In September 1891 he dutifully wrote to Maiden outlining the genesis of the work.<sup>16</sup> He said that he and Miss Lovegrove had come to an understanding to publish the work “some years ago (in 1887 I think)”. She was to prepare the artwork for the plates, and get a number of subscribers “amongst her large circle of friends”. He was to provide her with material for the plates, write the letterpress and find the money for the preliminary expenses. When the plates for part one were completed, they were sent with accompanying letterpress to Edinburgh, through the agency of Angus & Robertson, to get an estimate of the

9

*Blandfordia grandiflora*

10

[*Kennedia rubicunda*]

11

1. *Gentiana saxicola* [current botanical name uncertain]

2. *Tetratea thymifolia*

cost of the whole work. Armed with this information they decided to get “a few hundred specimen copies” of the first part printed at Bäuerlen’s expense, to give intending subscribers an idea of what the work would be like. He paid £50 for the 250 copies printed. Bäuerlen explained to Maiden that the first batch of copies arrived in December 1890 “and since then we have gone on canvassing amongst our private friends”.<sup>17</sup>

Bäuerlen said he had not mentioned the matter to Maiden earlier because he did not like to speak of the affair until he could be sure that it would be completed. Nor did he want Maiden to think that he was merely soliciting a subscription, since he and Miss Lovegrove had agreed that Maiden would receive a presentation copy of the whole work. There never was a whole work. It is not even certain that Bäuerlen ever received all 250 specimen copies and



## 12

Plates I and II from William Bäuerlen and Gertrude Lovegrove *The Wild Flowers of NSW Part 1* Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1891

All the botanical illustrations are watercolours by Gertrude Lovegrove (1859–1961). Collection Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection

the missing pages of letterpress from part 1 don't seem to have turned up either.

In April 1894 at Marrickville Gertrude Lovegrove married Wilfred Blacket (1859–1937), a barrister who went on to become a King's Counsel.<sup>18</sup> Gertrude died childless in Sydney in February 1961, aged 101. Bäuerlen remained in the north for most of the 1890s, contributing a series of occasional papers to the *Northern Star* about Australian native plants adapted for cultivation. He also married, in Ballina, in 1896. He maintained contact with the Meroogal household, sending Tot Thorburn a photograph of himself and one of his little daughter, Lenora, in 1900.

In addition to the rare copy of *The Wild Flowers of New South Wales*, the Meroogal collection includes a couple of other books that had once belonged to Bäuerlen, stamped 'W. Bäuerlen Botanist'. One is John Ruskin's *The storm cloud of the nineteenth century: two lectures delivered at*

*the London Institution, February 4th and 11th, 1884*. Another is a volume of verse by Alfred Lord Tennyson.

After retiring from the Technological Museum in 1905, Bäuerlen had a number of short articles published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, mostly concerned with aspects of economic botany. By that time his marriage had failed and he was living in lodgings in Redfern. He died in straitened circumstances at Sydney Hospital in October 1917. There was no obituary published at the time of his death but a few years later a former newspaper man from the Shoalhaven named Charles Watson wrote a brief memorial of him in *The Australian Forestry Journal*.<sup>19</sup> Watson said that the botanist had left a "unique collection of beautifully-prepared specimens of our native timbers, together with plates illustrating ferns and palms, as well as tree and shrub foliage". He thought that this material "should be

now in some convenient niche for public edification and instruction". The fate of the collection is unknown although there is at least one botanical watercolour by Bäuerlen in the collection of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney as well as his many herbarium specimens in the National Herbarium NSW and the National Herbarium Melbourne. His collecting correspondence with Joseph Maiden is in the Powerhouse Museum Archives as is a large collection of timber specimens. A relic of his professional library, his copy of R.D. Fitzgerald's *Australian orchids* (1875–94) has found its way into the collection of the Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.

Until recently Gertrude's artistic legacy has been poorly represented in public collections. A bound collection of 19 of her flower paintings was given to the Mitchell Library in 1935. The National Library acquired three Lovegrove botanical watercolours through bequest from the late Dr Helen Hewson. However, in June 2013, thanks to the very generous support of the Historic House Trust Members and the Foundation for the Historic Houses Trust of NSW, the Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection has acquired a collection of 52 original watercolours for *The Wild Flowers of New South Wales*. This collection has been in private ownership for more than 40 years, acquired from Gertrude Lovegrove's estate. A few of these watercolours are published here for the first time

**Megan Martin** is Head, Collections & Access at Sydney Living Museums (also known as the Historic Houses Trust of NSW), responsible for the splendid archive in the Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection, and a former President of the Australiana Society.

## NOTES

- 1 Now the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, better known as the Powerhouse Museum.
- 2 K. L. Wilson "William Bauerlen - a 'Circumspect and Zealous' Collector" in P.S. Short *History of Systematic Botany in Australasia: Proceedings of a Symposium held at the University of Melbourne, 25-27 May 1988* Australian Systematic Botany Society, Melbourne, 1990, pp 97–104.
- 3 Since the first draft of this article was written in 2012, the National Library of Australia has published *Collecting Ladies: Ferdinand von Mueller and Women Botanical Illustrators* by Penny Olsen, with a chapter on Gertrude Lovegrove.
- 4 Etienne de Mestre trained Archer, winner of the first two Melbourne Cups in 1861 and 1862.
- 5 Alan Clark *Lovegrove of Shoalhaven*, Shoalhaven Family History Society Inc., 1996.
- 6 Ferdinand von Mueller "Note on the occurrence of Hymenophyllum bivalve in continental Australia" in *The Southern Science Record*, vol 3 no 6, June 1883, pp151–2. This refers to William Bäuerlen as "a circumspect and zealous fern-collector in New South Wales."
- 7 *Shoalhaven Telegraph* 28 Feb 1886 p 2.
- 8 "The Geographical Society's expedition", *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 Nov 1885 p 11.
- 9 Powerhouse Museum Archives MRS 203/1.
- 10 *Ibid* MRS 203/1-203/2.
- 11 *Shoalhaven Telegraph* 20 July 1887 p 2.
- 12 On McKenzie, see [www.hht.net.au/collections/research/meroogals\\_uncle\\_kenny/kenneth\\_mckenzie](http://www.hht.net.au/collections/research/meroogals_uncle_kenny/kenneth_mckenzie).
- 13 Transcript of Tot Thorburn's diaries available online through the Meroogal page on the Historic Houses Trust website [www.hht.net.au](http://www.hht.net.au).
- 14 Powerhouse Museum Archives MRS 203/3.
- 15 *Northern Star* (Lismore) 6 June 1891 p 2.
- 16 Powerhouse Museum Archives MRS 203/3
- 17 These private friends almost certainly included Jessie Thorburn and her daughters as well as Kenneth McKenzie. There are references to 'Miss Lovegrove' in Tot's diaries for 1892 and she stays to tea at Meroogal on at least one occasion.
- 18 Entry for Wilfred Blacket in *Australian Dictionary of Biography online* [adb.anu.edu.au/biography/blacket-wilfred-5260](http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/blacket-wilfred-5260).
- 19 C.J.B. Watson "Botanist, Bushman, artist: a trio of early bush lovers" in *The Australian Forestry Journal* 15 Oct 1921, pp 311–3. The trio were Bäuerlen the botanist, Kenneth McKenzie the bushman and Samuel Elyard the artist.

## 13

[*Stenocarpus sinuatus*]

## 14

1. *Grevillea kennedyana*
2. *Marsilea quadrifolia* [*Marsilea mutica*]

## 15

1. *Hardenbergia monophylla*  
[*Hardenbergia violacea*]
2. *Smilax glyciphylla*



# The lost gallantry medals of Joseph Maxwell

VC, MC and Bar, DCM

The extraordinary tale of war hero Joe Maxwell, a country boy who won four awards for bravery in France in 1917–18, including the Victoria Cross. After the war he led an unsettled life as an unskilled labourer, and lost his medals in a fire and boating accident.



1

Private Joseph Maxwell (left) on enlistment in 1915

## JOHN RAMSLAND

One misses the faces of the fine fellow you knew in the days of storm, the faces of those good comrades who stuck through the smoke and racket and dust of war and in those glamorous days of leave, the faces of those who have gone. Joseph Maxwell, *Hell's Bells and Mademoiselles*, pp 1-2

... But he'll remember with advantages  
What feats he did that day: then  
shall our names  
Familiar in his mouth as  
household words  
...  
Be in their flowing cups fresh  
remember'd.  
This story shall the good man  
teach his son;  
William Shakespeare, *King Henry V, Act IV, scene 3*

Surpassed only – according to most military authorities – by Lieutenant Colonel Henry “Harry” Murray VC, CMG, DSO and Bar, DCM, Croix de Guerre, in the number and importance of gallantry awards by an Australian in the First World War, Maitland boilermaker's apprentice Joseph Maxwell emerged from the same conflict with the Victoria Cross, Military Medal and Bar and the Distinguished Conduct Medal as witness to his stand-out bravery and natural martial ability.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the Great War, he was awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal as well as the 1914–1915 Star for his services in Gallipoli in 1915. Later as a distinguished war hero, he received coronation medals on the occasion of the coronations of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth II.

In the 1920s however, Maxwell lost all his gallantry and service medals



## 2

Joe Maxwell's medals in the Hall of Valour at the Australian War Memorial. From left, Victoria Cross, Military Cross and Bar, Distinguished Conduct Medal, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal 1914-20, Victory Medal, and Coronation medals of George VI and Elizabeth II, awarded to all VC winners.

Photo AWM OL00413\_004

## 3

Lucknow, late C & B Macfarlane, *Lt Joseph Maxwell VC*. Studio portrait, Sydney, 1919.

Photo AWM P03390\_001

apart from his Victoria Cross in a boating mishap on Lake Macquarie. They had disappeared in their carrying case into the davey dark. On several occasions during the Great Depression, Maxwell applied for their replacement without luck (or perhaps his propensity not to follow through on his request), until he finally paid for their replacement.

Both the 1920s and 1930s proved to be particularly troubled times for the war hero and veteran of some of the worst battles of the Great War. Like so many other ex-servicemen and women who had experienced the disillusionment of the War itself came the gradual disillusionment of peace and civic life. For Joe Maxwell the road back was an exceptionally difficult one with many pitfalls. It seemed like Armageddon 1914-1918 had claimed yet another victim after the event.

Joseph Maxwell was born to John and Elizabeth Maxwell at 268 Hereford Street, Forest Lodge – a tiny, rundown and cluttered precinct of Glebe in Sydney's inner west. Ruth Park, the famous author, described Forest Lodge colourfully and metaphorically as 'a creaky old suburb bound for oblivion, the sails rotten rags, the timbers worm-eaten, nothing ahead but wreck and disaster'.<sup>2</sup> Unemployed John Maxwell, with three daughters and an infant son to feed and raise, realised this and moved the whole family to the coalfields of the lower

Hunter Valley. He soon found labouring work in East Greta and North Rothbury.

At the age of five, Joe Maxwell began attending the nearby Gillieston Public School close to the mines and chimney stacks. The renowned schoolmaster Frederick Bates was dedicated to inspiring skilful teaching and the promotion of schoolboy sport competition. As John Maxwell, Joe's proud father, remembered his son's schooldays in 1919:

*Even in those days he was distinguished for his pluck and athletic attainments. His prowess in football and cricket excited the admiration of his school mates and one of his proudest moments of his young life was when he was chosen as one of the representatives of the district to meet the Sydney boys in a cricket match.<sup>3</sup>*

When Joe left school after completing the junior technical course at Maitland Superior Public School, he obtained a job as a boilermaker's apprentice at the Hexham engineering works owned by Alexander and James Brown. Hexham, with the Hunter River on one side and the railway on the other in a narrow, gloomy, mosquito-infested lowland, was a small northern industrial precinct of Newcastle. The engineering works were suddenly closed down at the end



of 1914. Men arrived at work to find a notice on the locked gates; 250 men including 18-year-old Joe Maxwell were thrown out of work.<sup>4</sup>

Joe, with some of the other unemployed men, travelled by train to Sydney and attended Victoria Barracks, Paddington, where they attempted to enlist in the AIF. Joe and some others were successful.

Joe joined on 6 February 1915 with the reluctant permission of his parents and at Liverpool was posted to the 18th Battalion; allotted the recruitment number of 607 in No 8 Platoon, B Company, 5th Brigade, 2nd Division Australian Imperial Force. His home address on enlistment was 5 Nicholson Street, Maitland, a timber



#### 4

Cover illustration *Sydney Mail*,  
28 February 1917

two-storey terrace house a few minutes walk from Maitland Superior Public School, which he had attended for the last two years of his schooling, and the railway station where he was able to catch the train to work as an apprentice at Hexham 25 minutes away.

Joe had earned the 'munificent sum' of eight shillings a week as an apprentice; in the AIF he was to earn six shillings a day which increased to 10/- a day when he was promoted to corporal. To the impoverished young man from a humble working-class family in the struggle-town part of Maitland this represented

what he called 'the wealth of the Indies'<sup>5</sup> – a favourite phrase of his.

Maxwell fought in Gallipoli, especially in the assault on Hill 60 and on the Western Front in several of the bloodiest battles – Pozières, Passchendaele 1917 and Amiens and the Hindenburg Line. He became an almost unbelievable fictional hero, so extraordinary were his wartime exploits. But these deeds were real enough, even though they are dully recorded in the formal bland wording of official citations. They were very much real and indisputable.

For action on 25 September 1917 as Company Sergeant Major (a warrant officer), he received his first gallantry medal, the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) in the battle of Menin Road, as part of the broader Third Battle of Ypres (that is Passchendaele) near Westhoek. When his commanding officer was killed in the offensive, CSM Maxwell took command and by quick initiative, common sense and firm tactical judgement was instrumental in saving the lives of around 30 Australian troops. The citation for the DCM was for 'conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty'.<sup>6</sup>

He had led the platoon cleverly and courageously in attack. Later, when a newly-captured position was under heavy fire from the enemy, he dashed to it and led the men to a safer but equally important strategic position. Thus, he saved many lives of his comrades.<sup>7</sup>

Not long after, on 8 March 1918, Joseph Maxwell achieved the Military Cross for bravery while on patrol at Pont Rouge, beside Ploegsteert Wood in Flanders. While acting with three others as a covering party to his returning patrol from No Man's Land, he became keenly aware of a nearby approach of about 30 Germans. He swiftly brought back the main party of his patrol and deployed them strategically in wait. A short sharp engagement routed the enemy, three of them being killed and one wounded who was captured. The German prisoner provided valuable information under interrogation. In this whole encounter, Maxwell displayed

great initiative and gallantry.<sup>8</sup>

Promotion for Maxwell was swift. Four days later after the incident for which he was awarded the DCM, he was appointed Second Lieutenant and on New Year's Day 1918, he was made a full Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Maxwell's Bar to his Military Cross came during an attack by the 18th Battalion near Rainecourt east of Amiens on 9 August 1918. Swept by machine-gun and artillery fire at the jumping-off position, Maxwell found that he was the only officer in his company not to become a casualty. Immediately, he took over the leadership and he was able to get the troubled uncertain company off on time preceded by a British tank which was drawing heavy fire. A 77 mm enemy shell scored a direct hit on the tank. While stunned by the blast, Maxwell, still under heavy machine-gun fire, leaped to the hatch of the tank and tore it open. This allowed the crew to stagger out. They were scarcely away from the derelict when it burst into flames.

Maxwell assisted the badly wounded tank commander back to safety and then returned, pressed the attack and succeeded in reaching and consolidating the objective, despite facing more heavy machine-gun fire.<sup>9</sup> This courageous and particularly well-judged engagement showed Maxwell as a capable, but still young lieutenant.

About a year earlier in September 1917 in an extant letter to his parents, he had expressed his innermost feelings and fears:

The days and nights just keep rolling into each other and it feels like this nightmare will never end. It's the company I'm keeping that keeps me strong, the other soldiers in my battalion are great we are all great mates and take care of each other best we can I am fortunate to have a great bunch of mates ... It's bloody warfare out here, the noise and the adrenalin rushes are indescribable feelings when its on ... I wonder the point about killing

another human being but I'll go crazy if I keep feeling like this, as if I slip up I could be the next, it's them or us you know what I mean.

My experiences here are horrendous blood shed there is nothing I would bring back home to talk about.<sup>10</sup>

And yet his 'band of brothers'<sup>11</sup> was sustaining him and his sanity through all the difficulties of the Western Front. He would not have them around him back in Australia after the war .

All these events and episodes of gallantry were merely a prelude to the battle for the Beaurevoir Line and the award of the Victoria Cross.

Early on 3 October 1918, a series of remarkable events began to unfold. Maxwell took part as a Platoon Commander in a major attack onto the Beaurevoir-Fonsomme Line near the town of Estrees north of St Quentin. When zero hour came, Maxwell was highly critical of the Allied barrage and claimed later that it was the most inaccurate and costly artillery fire that he had experienced. One shell fell so close that it deafened one of his ears for a month. After the misdirected Allied barrage, heavy German counter-fire dropped onto their jumping-off place and seemed to follow them as they charged forward.

In quick succession, Lt Irvine was wounded, Lt Smith was killed and Lt Chambers was shot in the leg before being hit in the chest by a machine-gun burst and then lay still.

Joe Maxwell halted the advance to consolidate a dangerous situation. When the creeping German barrage settled a little, he pushed his men forward again, but then noticed that Lt Parker, the last of the officers in the whole engagement, fell heavily, his leg blown off above the knee. Joe found himself in sole charge of the operation.

Now a massive complex of new enemy belts of barbed wire confronted Maxwell and his company. Belt after belt comprehensively barred their way to the Beaurevoir Line. The Allies' artillery had made no impression on it at all. A continuous hail of enemy machine-

gun lead scythed across it methodically. Several men had tried to walk over the top of the belts, but a moment later their bullet-ridden bodies hung from it.

The Australian advance was held up with a jerk but Joe's Lewis gunner offsider did a splendid job pouring volley after volley 'through a red-hot barrel' at the enemy beyond the wire as they were advancing. Several Germans were hit by the Australian Lewis gunner and they retreated to their own machine-gun nests which continued to fire lethally at the stranded Australians.

Maxwell's company faced what appeared to be an impenetrable wall of wire. The belts of wire, six metres wide and six layers deep stretched away on either side and were lost from view in the mist and smoke. But Maxwell had quickly formulated a daring tactic in his mind.

Being of slight, neat build, Maxwell suddenly went on the attack by crawling by himself beneath two belts of wire without being noticed and with machine-gun bullets whizzing well over the tops of the belts. He was out of their line of fire. Corporal Bonzer, the Lewis gunner, followed him under the wire and wriggled to the left. He mounted his Lewis gun on a strand of wire and fired an accurate burst at the closest machine-gun nest. A German in the nest threw up his arms and fell backwards caught by a bullet. Others ducked for cover in the several machine-gun positions.

Seizing his chance, Maxwell made his surprise move. He climbed quickly to the top of the barbed wire thicket and bounced his way onwards, keeping his balance. So sure was he that he leapt quickly from the belt like an agile tightrope circus walker, landing with sureness close to the nearest German machine-gun nest and took it out of action with his Smith and Wesson revolver. After reloading, he signalled his men to be ready to storm the post – a deliberate ploy. Other machine-gun nests opened fire on them and they had to take cover. While this was happening, Maxwell charged on by himself while the others were occupied.

Legs pounding the earth, he drove on straight for the next machine-gun post.



5

Maxwell family home at 5  
Nicholson Street, Maitland,  
built in 1915

He crashed into it before the Germans could turn their gun on him. He had fired his revolver with each bound before reaching the post and three German gunners fell dead. The remaining four shouted 'Kamerade' and, throwing down their arms, surrendered to their solitary Nemesis. Corporal Bonzer kept firing accurately from his low position within the barbed wire and silenced another machine-gun nest; he was later awarded a DCM for his contribution. More surrenders eventuated and the Beaufort Line was in Australian hands.

The way was open for Maxwell's men to burst through the perimeter of the

Hindenburg Line and take it as their own. Under Maxwell's direction several prisoners were hurried back to the Allied lines.

The day of glory was not over yet. From the next German dugout that had previously claimed surrender, a sniper's rifle shot rang out and one of Joe's men was killed instantly. The cowardly act, as it was believed to be, was punished. But the rest of the Germans fled and Maxwell quickly regained his composure.

To their left, C Company was seriously held up by the combination of barbed wire and heavy, accurate machine-gun fire. Maxwell's company was so far ahead he was able to organise a successful surprise manoeuvre at the rear. More prisoners were taken, but the whole operation was too costly for the Australians. Of the 99 men and four officers who had 'hopped over', only 19 remained standing. Their losses had been extraordinarily heavy. The German barrage and the raking machine-guns had done particularly lethal work, assisted by heavy belts of new barbed wire that had trapped the men in the assault.

The German occupants of the next trench, mainly wounded, had had enough and 60 men surrendered. One young lad had his foot and part of his leg smashed to a red pulp. Maxwell, realising the boy's dilemma, tenderly wrapped his shattered limb in a sandbag, devoting what was seen as valuable time to it. His men looked on. It calmed down their bloodlust which had been triggered by the fierce battle and the German sniper's betrayal. It was an insightful touch of good leadership and astute judgement.

Later in the day, a final act. More Germans had by this time surrendered. Lt Maxwell directed one who spoke fluent English to climb the parapet to call out and induce other less sure comrades to surrender. After some long-range to-and-fro bellowing in German, he climbed back down and told Maxwell that they all wanted to surrender but were afraid of being shot in the open. The German prisoner suggested that Maxwell accompany him to the German trench and dugout as a guarantee of good faith.

And so, accompanied by two Australian privates and the German prisoner, Lt Maxwell ventured bravely forth across the open ground of No Man's Land. He had accepted the apparent honesty of the request. Meanwhile, unknown to him, the 30 or so German soldiers in the trench were in violent dispute. Most wanted to surrender but a stubborn minority did not – they wanted to fight on – including the officer-in-charge.

When Maxwell neared the trench, he realised his mistake because he could hear a bitter contention taking place in the trench and dugout. It was a nasty moment. As he climbed down into the trench, an officer with a peaked cap who did not want to surrender was flinging gusts of excited German at his men who were crowded there. Maxwell then saw two machine-guns mounted; they were covering the Australian-held trenches. Beside them were soldiers sweeping the Australian line with field glasses.

Lying dead on the floor of the trench was an Australian who apparently had advanced too far by himself; Joe bent down to identify him and as he stood up he gazed into the muzzle of a Luger.

He was very nearly shot in the face, but another calmer German officer took the revolver from the wild-looking lieutenant. Digging it playfully into Maxwell's ribs, he politely demanded his revolver. Maxwell was forced to surrender. Noticing some blood on Maxwell's chin from a cut on the barbed wire, the officer graciously offered him a drink out of a bottle of Schnapps, perhaps to calm the volatile situation. Maxwell took a swig and then told the German officer that he was unwise not to surrender.

A few minutes later, an Allied barrage caught the trench by surprise. The Germans were blown in all directions. The polite officer received a shell blast full in the face. Maxwell seized the moment in the ensuing chaos, pulling another concealed revolver from his box respirator hidden there for such emergencies.

He managed to capture all the Germans remaining alive in the trench and march them back with his escort to the Australian line. Maxwell's innate sense of survival



had once again saved his life. This whole extraordinary day for Maxwell and his company could not go unnoticed by his commanding officer Brigadier General JC Robertson and Maxwell was thus successfully recommended for the award of the Victoria Cross for most conspicuous bravery and leadership coupled with excellent judgement and quick decision.<sup>12</sup>

Joe Maxwell was the only member of the 18th Battalion in the First World War to be so honoured. He had achieved the remarkable feat of receiving four prestigious bravery awards between September 1917 and early October 1918 – the space of barely 14 months. This carried with it the status of the second most highly decorated soldier in the First AIF. His great ambition – fame is the spur – was splendidly achieved.

Peacetime did not deal so well with Joe Maxwell. For many years he

## 6

Unknown photographer, Lt Joseph Maxwell VC, studio portrait c 1920. Photo AWM P00171\_001-2

endured a troubled restless life, especially before the Second World War. During the Great Depression and despite the national success of his war memoir published in 1932, he moved from country town to country town seeking work. He spent time in Canberra, his home towns of Maitland and Newcastle, Moree, Goulburn, Moss Vale and even Brisbane. He seemed unable to settle down. His movements were like those he was forced to make during the war in northern France and Flanders as the regiment moved with great frequency from village to village. He had been labelled as an unskilled day labourer like his father before him, despite his celebrity.

Sadly, he pursued his lost or misplaced medals from time to time on numerous occasions, colouring his story in various ways. The loss of his medals symbolically revealed his troubled state of mind.

From Moree on 30 October 1936 he wrote this about his lost medals to the officer-in-charge of records at the Victoria Barracks, Melbourne:

In 1923 I was aboard a motor launch which capsized on Lake Macquarie, and sir Amongst my personal effects which were lost were a couple of war medals. A couple of years later in Brisbane the house in which I resided was destroyed by fire and the remainder of my war decorations, hit the skyline in a volume of smoke. My particulars on leaving Australia were

607 Pte Joseph Maxwell  
18th Battalion  
AIF awarded the following medals  
1914 – 15 Star  
General Service & Victory Medal  
DCM 20th Sept 1917  
as Company Sgt Major  
Military Cross March 1918 Lieut  
Bar to M.C. August 1918  
Victoria Cross 3 October 1918

While his list of his medals is carefully recorded in his letter, the story about the boat capsizing on Lake Macquarie sometimes occurred in 1923 and sometimes in 1927. This is the only extant letter that refers to the house fire in Brisbane. The letter in itself shows that Joe lived in several places over the 1920s and 1930s: Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Moree and Brisbane. And there is the essence of truth in the location of his losses. In other correspondence he claims he lost all his medals apart from the Victoria Cross in the boat accident in Lake Macquarie (his VC was at the time safely at his parents' home). They had moved from the Hunter coalfields to *Airlee*, 35 Calvert Street Marrickville in July 1918 while Joe was still serving in northern France and Flanders.<sup>13</sup>

In 1967 while living in a home in the Matraville Soldiers Settlement, Joseph Maxwell reached his journey's end. He had married a war widow, Anne Martin, in 1956 after living a lonely, uncertain life from the mid 1920s when his first marriage had broken down. In early 1921 he had married Mabel Maxwell (no relation), an 18-year-old seamstress of Marrickville. Their only child Jean was Joe's only child.

Joe collapsed and died on 6 July 1967 at a Maroubra Junction petrol station while filling his car, a black Austin 30.<sup>14</sup> His last eleven or so years were happy and mellow. The funeral service took place with full military honours at St Matthias Church, Paddington — at the time the garrison church of Victoria Barracks where Joe had first enlisted in 1915. Until the end of his life, he remained a member of the Woollahra-Paddington RSL Club whose front looked over the road to the walls of his beloved Victoria Barracks. The hundreds of mourners at the funeral underscored his remarkable gift of friendliness and of friendship.

His wife Anne presented his replacement set of medals as he had wished to the Army Museum of New South Wales housed in Victoria Barracks. In 2003, against his express wishes, Joe's medals were presented to the Australian War Memorial, Canberra on permanent loan. His medals together with his portrait and a brass copy of his VC citation were unveiled by the Minister of Defence Allan Fairburn at the VC Corner of the Australian War Memorial. A special guest at the unveiling was his daughter Jean.

Joe's second wife Anne had died on 10 February 1981. Her first husband James Martin, an AIF veteran, had died in late August 1944. She had married Joe Maxwell when she was 57 after meeting him in a convalescent home in Bondi where she worked as a nurse and he worked as a gardener. The hospital was managed by Joe's older sister Myra Macdonald (née Maxwell).

In 1956 Anne and Joe attended the Victoria Cross Celebrations in London. Afterwards, they were able to visit the

battlefield cemeteries on the Western Front.<sup>15</sup> Joe was pleased to have worn his replacement medals on these special occasions.

**John Ramsland OAM** is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Newcastle and author of several books, most recently *Venturing into No Man's Land. Joseph Maxwell VC World War I Hero*, Brolga Publishing, Melbourne, 2012.

#### NOTES

- 1 C Francis, 'Heroic Soldier of the First AIF', *Reveille*, 1 July 1967 p 16.
- 2 Ruth Park, *The companion Guide to Sydney*, Collins, Sydney, 1973 p 387.
- 3 'Young heroes. Winners of the VC. Sydney Lad's Wonderful Record' *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)* 8 Jan 1919. This article was based on an interview with John Maxwell who had returned with his family to Sydney from Maitland to live at Marrickville and who had received news that his son had just been awarded the VC.
- 4 John Ramsland, *Venturing into No Man's Land. Joseph Maxwell VC World War I Hero*, Brolga Publishing, Melbourne, 2012 pp 10-11.
- 5 Joseph Maxwell, *Hell's Bells and Mademoiselles*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1936 (The Gallant Legion series) p 3.
- 6 18th Battalion War Diaries 23/35/27 – October 1917, Australian War Memorial (AWM), Canberra.
- 7 Francis, 'Heroic Soldier', p 11; War Diaries 23/35/29 – December 1917.
- 8 Supplement to *London Gazette*, 13 May 1918; War Diaries 23/35/32 – March 1918.
- 9 War Diaries 23/35/39 – October 1918; Maxwell, *Hell's Bells*, pp 178-80; Ramsland, *Venturing*, pp 139-40.
- 10 Joe Maxwell to his parents, 25 September 1917, private family collection (the only extant letter that Maxwell wrote during the war), cited in Ramsland, *Venturing* pp 117-18.
- 11 Shakespeare, *King Henry V*.
- 12 Maxwell, *Hell's Bells*, --223-9; War Diaries 23/35/41- December 1918; *London Gazette* 6 January 1919; Robert Macklin, *Bravest. Australia's greatest war heroes and how they won their medals*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2008 pp 108-11; Antony Staunton, *Victoria Cross. Australia's Finest and the Battles They Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, 2005 pp 191-3; Ramsland, *Venturing* pp 143-54.
- 13 Joseph Maxwell's Attestation Paper in the AIF and personal file 1914-1967, AWM Archives.
- 14 Steve Martin, 'Afterword', Joseph Maxwell, *Hell's Belles and Mademoiselles* (facsimile), Harper Collins, Sydney 2012, p 271.
- 15 Ramsland, *Venturing* pp 315-6; Martin p 270.

# Frank Piaggio and Piaggio & McKinlay,

## watchmakers and jewellers of Perth

Frank Piaggio (186–1957) was a London-born and trained watchmaker and jeweller who set up his own business in Perth during the 1890s gold rush. After teaming up with Robert McKinlay in 1893, the firm made many presentation and sporting pieces, as well as the 'Coolgardie Brooch'.



### MICHEL REYMOND AND DOROTHY ERICKSON

Francis Augustus Piaggio, known throughout his life as Frank, was born in London in 1865 to Frank Piaggio and his wife Mary née Thompson.<sup>1</sup> His father appears to have followed various occupations such as a sewing machine maker in 1862, a boot and shoe maker in 1874 and china and glass dealer in 1880.<sup>2</sup> During Piaggio's early years the family lived in Lamb's Conduit Street, London WC, and it is likely he learned a great deal from his father's activities.<sup>3</sup>

While living there young Frank received his training in the watch and jewellery trade, referring later in life to his work while in London. Probably in 1887 or early 1888, he sailed to Australia,<sup>4</sup> arriving in Sydney where he pursued one of his lifelong interests, rowing. On 24 May 1888 (the Queen's Birthday), Frank raced in the first Leichhardt Bay Regatta, in the "single sculls, in light skiffs, for manual labour amateurs, handicapped"<sup>5</sup> He finished out of place.

His bride, Georgina Beatrice Davage also of Lamb's Conduit Street, arrived in Sydney on 23 July the same year, and they were married that day at St Paul's Church of England, Redfern (now the Greek Orthodox Cathedral). He was recorded as a jeweller living at 2 Darling Street, Glebe and she of 'full age' (she was 26, he was about 23) who had just landed that day from the SS *Ormuz*.<sup>6</sup> Both families had lived opposite each other in the same Bloomsbury street, suggesting this was a childhood romance which lasted into their adult life.<sup>7</sup>

The couple apparently stayed in Sydney for a while, later sailed to Melbourne and may have spent time there before they sailed for Adelaide on the SS *Victorian*, where they arrived on 8 May 1890.<sup>8</sup> Here Piaggio worked as a jeweller on, among other things, setting 'the Countess of Kintore's Coronet' and pursuing his other lifelong interests, dancing and playing musical instruments, both of which were popular Victorian pastimes.<sup>9</sup>

From Adelaide, they sailed for Perth, arriving before the middle of 1891.<sup>10</sup> This was a time when payable quantities of gold had just been discovered in

**1** Frank Piaggio, *gold mining brooch* reputed to have been made from some of the first gold from the Murchison field (proclaimed in 1891) and probably one of Piaggio's earliest pieces. The owner inherited it from her mother whose father had been a builder at Day Dawn, Cue and other places in the Murchison. Private collection, Norway

Australia, sparking the last of the great 19th-century Australian gold rushes, when the rest of Australia was plunging into the 1890s' depression. Western Australian jewellers were soon producing jewellery on goldmining themes, made from the local gold (**plate 1**).

His first newspaper advertisement appeared at the end of June 1891: "F. Piaggio watchmaker and working jeweller hopes to merit a fair share of public patronage" he announced.<sup>11</sup> And so began an extensive newspaper advertising campaign in the local papers and almanacs in which he actively promoted himself,



## 2

Piaggio & McKinlay, *gold mining brooch labelled Coolgardie*. WA patent Reg. no 9, 1895. Gold had been discovered at Coolgardie in 1892. Private collection, Sydney, photo Andrew Simpson

## 3

Piaggio & McKinlay, *gold mining brooch labelled Coolgardie*, stamped "PIAGGIO & CO" and "PERTH". c 1895. Private collection, Sydney, photo Andrew Simpson

saying among other things that "whilst in London [he] made and set the Prince of Wales' Feathers presented to HRH Prince Albert Victor ...".<sup>12</sup>

He quickly obtained commissions and was active in supporting local organisations, often presenting medals and other presentation pieces he had made.<sup>13</sup> His premises in 1892 were in busy William Street in Perth.

He appears to have quickly become involved in the Perth Amateur Operatic Society, continuing his interest in 1910 as a solo violinist with the Swan Orchestral Society and as a member of the Guildford Orchestral Society in 1913. He was a member of the Perth Volunteer Infantry Force and probably a Freemason.

In May 1892 Piaggio made a watch chain of Western Australian gold, which was presented to performer William Sydney Perman by Sir Thomas Cockburn-Campbell on behalf of the

Perth Amateur Operatic Society.<sup>14</sup> This was favourably commented upon.

A short time later there was another announcement:

We have been requested to state that the handsome jewel which the brethren of the Masonic Lodge Emulation, No. 2,281 recently presented to the I.P.M. Bro. A. B. Wright, is now on view in the window of Mr. Piaggio, the well-known jeweller, of Hay-street. This jewel was manufactured out of Western Australian gold, while the engraving thereupon, together with its other embellishments, were all done in the colony. The work generally is finished in a manner highly creditable to Mr. Piaggio and his talented staff of operatives, and should be inspected by all who are capable of appreciating high class local manufacture.<sup>15</sup>



### Piaggio & McKinlay

The business grew and became successful so that in about August-September 1893, Robert George McKinlay joined and it became known as Piaggio & McKinlay, with the business being carried on from central Hay Street, Perth.<sup>16</sup> Beginning in May 1895, in a series of advertisements, they warned others not to copy their new Coolgardie brooch design (plates 2-3). This advertisement appeared over 300 times in the *West Australian* and *Western Mail* between 1895 and 1900:

NOTICE TO JEWELLERS AND OTHERS. THE COOLGARDIE BROOCH.

Notice is hereby given that legal proceedings will be taken against any person making, selling, or having in his possession any infringement of the "Coolgardie Brooch," as manufactured and registered in this colony by us on the 25th of March, 1895.

PIAGGIO & MCKINLAY, Perth<sup>17</sup>

At the wedding of Charles Moran MLA to Lizzie Healy in August 1895, the groom gave the two bridesmaids Coolgardie brooches, which they wore on their pink frocks. Frank Piaggio gave the couple a brooch as a wedding present.<sup>18</sup>

In 1899, Piaggio & McKinlay changed tactics and supplemented the warning notices with a series of advertisements in the *West Australian*

and *Western Mail* for their "'Coolgardie' Brooch (regd)" for sale at £2 5 shillings. These ads ran from 1899 to 1900.<sup>19</sup>

They had previously designed other gold-mining brooches labelled "Hannans" after the town (subsequently Kalgoorlie) named after Paddy Hannan, who discovered gold there in 1893 (plates 4-6).



4

Piaggio & McKinlay, *gold mining brooch labelled Hannan's*. WA patent Reg. no 9, c. 1894. Collection, Dorothy Erickson, subsequently stolen. Patrick Hannan (1840-1925) had found gold at Hannan's, later Kalgoorlie, in June 1893

5

Unknown photographer, *Annie Campbell Loton née Forrest*, niece of Lord Forrest, wearing a Piaggio & McKinlay Hannan's gold brooch



**6**  
Piaggio & McKinlay, *gold mining brooch labelled Hannans*. c. 1895.  
Private collection, Perth

In 1896 the firm was chosen to supply a silver cradle, the gift of the Perth City Council to their Mayor Henry Saunders MLC on the birth of his son (**plate 7**),<sup>20</sup> and in 1897 an engraved gold medal presented to the town clerk of York.<sup>21</sup>

In 1898 they advertised that they offered “Beautifully manufactured Kalgoorlie quartz brooches, links and charms, in all shapes and styles, are made from specially chosen stones, and veins of gold running through, and are mounted in gold”.<sup>22</sup> Other gold specimens came from mines at Peak Hill, Day Dawn, Lake Austin, The Island, Tuckanarra, Gabanwintha, Lawler, Lakeway and Horseshoe, mostly in the Murchison.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately no jewels set with quartz by this firm have yet been sighted.

Piaggio & McKinlay made a silver pick with which Miss Sylvia Forrest, daughter of the Mayor Alexander Forrest, used to turn the first sod of the Perth Electric Tramway on 31 January 1899. The pick was

A beautifully finished article ... on one side of the solid silver head was engraved the city coat of arms and on the other an electric tramcar. Around the centre of the wooden handle were six shields, two large and four small, the small ones surmounted by raised silver swans. On one shield was the

inscription: “Presented to Miss Sylvia Forrest by the Perth Electric Tramway Company Limited at the ceremony of the commencing of construction at Hay and Bay streets, January 31, 1899”; another carried Miss Forrest’s initials – S.F.; a third the letters P.E.T., and on a fourth, Perth, W.A. The bottom of the handle was tipped with silver and on the crescent-shaped top was a silver swan.<sup>24</sup>

They had obviously made their mark as the firm was chosen to make the gift from the “State school children of Western Australia” to the children of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (later George V and Queen Mary) to commemorate their parents’ visit in 1900. The present was a group of silver models of Australian animals: an emu for Prince Edward (Edward VIII, later Duke of Windsor), a kangaroo for Prince Albert (later George VI), a swan for Princess Victoria (the Princess Royal) and a dingo for Prince Henry (later Duke of Gloucester).<sup>25</sup> In 1901, HRH the Duke of Cornwall and York laid the foundation stone of a new wing of the Art Gallery and Museum with a trowel, square and mallet made by Piaggio (**plate 8**).<sup>26</sup>

On 10 July 1903, Piaggio retired from the firm<sup>27</sup> and it continued under



McKinlay alone until about 1920. In 1921–22 the firm is listed in the Post Office Directories as “McKinlay & Russell”. In the 1930s McKinlay was reputed to work for the Levinson family who had opened a large new building with a front inlaid with bronze and lapis lazuli and employed over 100 staff.<sup>28</sup>

Frank and Georgina Piaggio lived on a riverside location at West Guildford (now Bassendean, a northern Perth suburb), which she had purchased about 1900. Here they built a house<sup>29</sup> and established orchards, vegetable and flower gardens. Apart from being an orchardist, he showed moving pictures in Claremont in 1915, becoming the owner of the Majestic Picture Company in Guildford in the 1920s.

He and his wife were regular exhibitors and winners in the local agricultural shows, he with vegetables and fruit and poultry and she with flowers from their garden. They also made time to pursue his sailing, dancing and musical hobbies.<sup>30</sup>

Later, Robert McKinlay and his wife Janet purchased adjoining land and moved from their house in William Street, Perth to be next to their friends the Piaggios.<sup>31</sup> Their properties were respectively called ‘Royston’ and ‘White Wings’; White Wings was a well-known Western Australian yacht. Robert McKinlay died at Bassendean on 5 July 1939.<sup>32</sup> Piaggio’s wife Georgina died in 1941 aged 79, and Piaggio died in his 92nd year on 17 June 1957, leaving no descendants.<sup>33</sup> In the 1960s, Piaggio Street in nearby Bayswater was named in his honour.

## 7

Piaggio & McKinlay, *silver cradle* made for Perth City councillors to present to Henry Saunders, mayor of the city in 1896.

Collection: Perth City Council, on ‘permanent loan’ by the grandson of the recipient

Piaggio & McKinlay (makers), F M Williams (designer), *silver trowel*, used by HRH the Duke of Cornwall & York to lay the foundation stone of a new wing of the Art Gallery of WA, 1901. The inscription is framed by a design of stylised kangaroo paw. Photo WA Museum, copied from an old lantern slide used for a lecture on design



## Marks

Known examples of his work show impressed marks of either PIAGGIO or PIAGGIO & CO or PIAGGIO PERTH. These marks occur on dated or known registered patent examples between 1894 and 1898, suggesting they could have been in use from the time Piaggio himself first commenced business in 1891 and were subsequently used under Piaggio & McKinlay.

Several versions are in private collections: two “Coolgardie” brooches were known to have been in Sydney collections and two surmounted by “Hannans” in Perth (plates 2-5). These are stamped with “PIAGGIO & CO PERTH” (plate 3) or “PIAGGIO” “PERTH”, on the round wire of the handle. On the underside of the shovel a standing swan is impressed and underneath the bucket the “RD. No9.” A distinctive triple rhomboid cartouche carrying the 15-carat quality mark is applied to the

bucket. “WA” is engraved on the front of the bucket. A somewhat similar brooch is in a family collection in Norway (plate 1).

This firm’s jewellery reflects the style of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods; it shows a certain sophistication in the design and use of materials perhaps reflecting the London training which Piaggio received before he came to Australia. This can be seen in the examples of their jewellery illustrated in Cavill, Cocks & Grace, *Australian Jewellers Gold and Silversmiths Makers and Marks*, and in Anne Schofield & Kevin Fahy, *Australian Jewellery 19th and Early 20th Century*.<sup>34</sup> Work from this firm can also be seen in Dorothy Erickson, *Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia: A History*.<sup>35</sup> Illustrated in these publications is the firm’s most identified goldfields piece, the Coolgardie Brooch, a patent for which was registered in Western Australia in 1894 as WA Reg. no 9.

**Dr Dorothy Erickson** is a Perth-based historian and practising jeweller, who has brought the work of many Western Australian artists and craftspeople to our attention. She is a frequent contributor to *Australiana*, and the author of several books on Western Australian crafts and craftspeople.

**Michel Reymond** is a Sydney lawyer, councillor and foundation member of the Society who enjoys researching *Australiana*.

## NOTES

- 1 ancestrylibrary.com – England & Wales Birth, Death, Marriage Index.
- 2 London street directories 1862, 1874 and 1880; see also England Census for 1861, 1871 and 1881 under Piaggio, see ancestry.co.uk
- 3 *Ibid*.
- 4 His exact date of arrival has not been traced.
- 5 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 May 1888 p 3.
- 6 Marriages, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 July 1888 p 1 and marriage certificate reg. no. 1102.
- 7 *Op cit* note 2 and London street directories for the period.
- 8 *Sands’ Sydney Directory*, 1889, records ‘Piaggi [sic] boarding house, 289 Castlereagh Street’ and *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, shipping arrivals, 9 May 1890.

- 9 *Advertiser*, Adelaide, 24 June 1890, 24 July 1890, 26 July 1890 and *West Australian* 28 July 1891.
- 10 His arrival date has not been traced. His first advertisement is in *The West Australian* 30 June 1891.
- 11 *Ibid*.
- 12 *Ibid* and 28 July 1891.
- 13 E.g. *West Australian*, 25 May 1892 (watch chain), 30 Nov 1892, 17 Aug 1893 (silver medal), 30 Nov 1893 (gold medals Piaggio & McKinlay) and 7 Jan 1895 (bracelet).
- 14 *West Australian* 25 May 1892 p.3
- 15 *Inquirer & General News*, Perth, 3 Sept 1892 p 2; *West Australian* 3 Sept 1892 p 2.
- 16 The first reference to Piaggio & McKinlay appears in *The Western Australian* 30 Nov 1893.
- 17 *West Australian* 13 May 1895 p 3 and later. This may have been directed against rival jewellery makers Donovan & Overland, Lindell or Larard who produced similar brooches, see illustrations in Dorothy Erickson, *Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia: A History*, UWAP, 2010, p 76.
- 18 *Western Mail* 6 Sept 1895 p 31.
- 19 *Western Mail* 28 Apr 1899 p 53
- 20 *West Australian* 10 Nov 1896 p 4; *City of Perth News* 10.57, Apr-May 1990.
- 21 *West Australian* 29 Sept 1897 p 4
- 22 *Western Mail Christmas Issue 1898* p 54.
- 23 *Inquirer & General News*, Perth, 8 Apr 1898 p 11
- 24 *Western Mail* 22 Sept 1949 p 23.
- 25 *Western Mail* 27 July 1900 pp 30, 32.
- 26 *Western Mail* 27 July 1901 p 26.
- 27 Notices, *West Australian* 15 July 1903.
- 28 Personal communication to Dorothy Erickson 1980s by elderly jeweller Boxhorn.
- 29 Jennie Carter, *Bassendean A Social History 1829-1979*, 1986.
- 30 *Ibid*
- 31 *Ibid*
- 32 *West Australian* 7 July 1939 p 1.
- 33 Probate records, Supreme Court of WA, Perth. His will is dated 27 Jan 1955.
- 34 Cavill, Cocks & Grace, *Australian Jewellers Gold and Silversmiths Makers and Marks*, 1992, Roseville, CGC Gold p 189 and in Anne Schofield & Kevin Fahy, *Australian Jewellery 19th and Early 20th Century*, 1990, David Ell Press, Sydney p 231, and the Scotch College Medal dated 1898. See also *West Australian* 25 May 1892 p 2 and 3 Sep 1892 p 2.
- 35 Dorothy Erickson, *Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia: A History*, UWAP, 2010 pp 84-87, and *Aspects of Stylistic and Social Influences on the Practice of Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia 1829-1965*, PhD thesis, University of Western Australia 1992.

# Letter to the Editor

Readers may draw some wrong inferences from the early passages of the article in *Australiana* May 2013 vol 35 no 2, "Porcelain Painting in the 1970s and 1980s" by Lesley Garrett, which is otherwise an excellent article.

As I have been cited as references, I would like to point out that porcelain blanks were certainly used by earlier china painters contrary to what might be inferred from her statement that 1970s painters "departed from that which had gone before. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw successive waves of activity. Potters [sic] such as Flora Landells, Marina Shaw and the Misses Creeth had pioneered the way with thrown or hand-built decorated wares ..."

Flora Landells was a painter, a china painter and next a potter. She did not mix the three in one object. She did not do china painting on her own ceramic pots, which were coloured by glazes, but on whatever blanks that were available. In Perth at the time of her career which spanned 1904–1980 this was sometimes bone china rather than porcelain but when porcelain was available and not restricted by

wars and depression it was used by the many china painters who decorated wares either for sale through the tourist shops or for their own use. My captions were obviously inadequate in the Flora articles but I did think people would realise which were on commercial china/porcelain and which were handmade and decorated pots.

Marina Shaw, who worked through the interwar period, was the same and she was never a potter. She painted on whatever ceramic blanks were available and glazed her post-war sculptures. The Marina article clearly identifies 'porcelain teaset painted with on-glaze designs' and another "Noritake porcelain plate". Between the wars the porcelain of choice was Arzberg and Victoria porcelain from Czechoslovakia. The hyphen or lack of it help with dating works and some of these marks are illustrated in my article in *Australiana* August 2012, vol 33 no 3, "Flora Landells, the Maylands School of Art and other students."

The Misses Creeth, who painted in the earlier heyday of porcelain painting at the turn of the century,

were not potters in any sense.

They only painted on porcelain or occasionally, when all that could be obtained was German china, on that (and although not marked porcelain, it probably was). The captions clearly identify which was on what.

The Misses Creeth had trained at the Art-Training School South Kensington in London (now Royal College of Art) where botanist and designer Christopher Dresser and Walter Crane taught at a time when the schools had set up an Art-Pottery Studio in association with the large manufactory Minton who built the facilities. It was actually set up to assist in the training of working class women decorators for their factories but was quickly enlarged to accommodate the many middle class women wanting to set up artist's studios when this became a permissible occupation for the daughters of 'gentlefolk' in the 1880s.

I do hope I have clarified the matter.

**Dorothy Erickson**

# Ceremonial maces of Australian universities

## PART 3

38

2012 mace,  
Charles Sturt University,  
Bathurst NSW.



Christine Erratt describes the new maces made for Charles Sturt University and Charles Darwin University.

### CHRISTINE ERRATT

These two new maces for the time being complete the study “Ceremonial maces of Australian universities (Parts 1 & 2)” published in the February and May 2012 issues of *Australiana*. Should the universities which do not have ceremonial maces acquire maces in the future, all attempts will be made to record their details in *Australiana*.

### 38 Charles Sturt University Bathurst, NSW, 2012

Charles Sturt University commissioned a new university mace in 2012. The original 1990 mace, given to the University on its formation, is now termed the “Ceremonial Mace”.<sup>1</sup> With one Canadian and nine domestic campuses, the University needed to replicate the mace for use across multiple campuses. The University commissioned six maces, each of the same design, to be made. The new maces were designed by Ross Triffitt of Wagga Wagga, and crafted by skilled craftsmen at Eclipse Handcrafted Furniture. One was made for each of five of the University’s Australian campuses in Wagga Wagga, Bathurst, Orange, Albury and Canberra and one for the Canadian campus.

Each is crafted from timbers indigenous to the locations of each of Charles Sturt University’s Australian and Canadian campuses, including Australian Birdseye Red Gum, Ancient Red Gum, Yellow Box, White Box and with Canadian Rock Maple also used for the Canadian campus mace. The mace symbolises the University’s multiple geographies and its links to the land and place.

The mace design is club-like. The dome of each mace is inset with the University coat of arms in sterling silver, representing its significance and value to the community. Broad silver bands surround the upper and lower sections of the slightly bulbous shaft. The silver work was completed by Michael Nugent, a jewellery manufacturer of Wagga Wagga. The circumference of each head is surrounded by a rim of ancient red gum timber from logs found in a local quarry, which had been submerged for thousands of years in deep water causing the timber to become blackened throughout. Each mace is 80 cm long.

### 39 Charles Darwin University Darwin, NT, 2013

The most recent ceremonial mace for an Australian university was gifted by the



39

2013 mace, Charles  
Darwin University,  
Darwin, NT, 2013

# THE ONLY COMPANY THAT WELCOMES THE RETURN OF DAMAGED GOODS.



WHETHER IT'S GOLD, SILVER OR BRONZE, IT'S ALWAYS A STERLING JOB.



The next time you look at a beautiful piece of antique silverware you may be actually looking at a beautiful piece of restored antique silverware. Since 1911, WJ Sanders have been renowned as Australia's premier silversmiths. Today we still employ those

same traditional skills, honed over almost a century, to restore pieces to their former glory. We can also hand craft and design new pieces completely from scratch. For more information or a free quote call 9557 0134 or email us today.

UNIT F, 34-36 FITZROY STREET, MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204.  
PH (02) 9557 0134. FAX (02) 9557 0086. EMAIL: wjsanders@optusnet.com.au  
www.wjsanders.com.au

*W.J. Sanders*  
Excellence in craftsmanship since 1911  
ANTIQUE RESTORATION METALWARE SPECIALISTS

ACN 06 667 8687 868

council of Flinders University to Charles Darwin University (CDU). It was first used in a graduation ceremony on 23 May 2013.

Glenice Lesley Matthews, a Western Australian gold and silversmith, was commissioned to design and make the mace for presentation in 2011. Matthews completed the design work and commenced the silverwork on the mace. After her untimely death in April 2011, the silverwork and overall supervision of its construction was completed in 2013 by Samuel Farmer, a goldsmith and lecturer at Central Institute of Technology, Perth.

The design interprets the mace as a fire stick, representing the traditional owners of the land on which the University is built. The head of the 100 cm long mace is formed by six silver fins, which meet at the top and are surmounted by a small gold-plated silver orb. These silver fins represent the palm leaves of the most

iconic flora of the Northern Territory, *Pandanus spiralis*. The fins surround a gold-plated silver flame representing the flame of knowledge, symbolic of CDU's contribution in so many ways to the culture and on-going development of the Northern Territory. Below the flame is engraved 'Charles Darwin University'.

The tapered shaft is made of sheoak timber and was crafted by WA woodworker Stephen Finch. Upon the shaft is a central knob made of three bands of silver. They feature CDU's colours of red and blue, with silver elements in the form of stars set into the top ring and waves set into the bottom ring. The larger centre ring prominently displays the desert rose symbol, taken from the University's logo, in red enamel within a silver shield.

A silver adornment at the butt of the shaft reflects the design of the telescope used by Charles Darwin.

**Christine Erratt** is an Australian collector, researcher and the author of *Marks on Australian Silver 1950-2005*, available through Parker Press [www.parkerpressbooks.com.au](http://www.parkerpressbooks.com.au)

#### NOTE

1 *Australiana* vol 34 no 2, May 2012



1

Gannon House (1839), 45-47  
Argyle Street, The Rocks, 2013.  
Photo Sean Johnson CLSP

# The puzzle of Gannon House

After examining the construction of this late 1830s shop/house in Sydney's Rocks district, Sean Johnson suggests the builder, Michael Gannon, might have recycled the cedar joinery from an earlier building – possibly the architect Francis Greenway's house.

## SEAN JOHNSON

---

Gannon House, a late Georgian shop-house located at 45 and 47 Argyle Street, The Rocks, is a typical example of the elegant but unassuming buildings which once made up much of Sydney's streetscape, but which are now extremely rare. The building is owned

by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and currently occupied by an art gallery and café (**plate 1**).

During the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan by Clive Lucas Stapleton & Partners, the inspecting architects were immediately struck by the joinery, which has a distinctly earlier character than the established earliest date of the house, 1839.<sup>1</sup>

This part of The Rocks was the site of the colony's first hospital, a complex including houses for the Principal and Assistant Surgeons. Once Governor Macquarie's new so-called Rum Hospital was built in 1816, the old hospital site was gradually subdivided. Macquarie appointed Francis Greenway as Acting Civil Architect in the same year and allowed the Greenway family to move into the old Assistant Surgeons' house, which was situated close to Gannon House on the corner of the present Argyle and George Streets.

After Macquarie's departure on 12 February 1822, Greenway fell out of favour and was eventually dismissed from his position on 15 November 1822, but he was allowed to remain in the house. Things became progressively more difficult for our most famous early architect, his wife and six children. He sank into debt and in 1826 was given notice to quit the house.

However he hung on, claiming that Macquarie had given him the land and approved his design for a new house there. No official recognition of this claim was given but following the death of his wife in 1832 Greenway 'sold' a portion of the land to a lawyer, Frederick Unwin, for £150 – far below its real value. He was finally evicted from the site in 1834 and died in the Hunter Valley three years later.

There is good documentary evidence that Gannon House was built in 1839. The builder, Michael Gannon, obtained the lease of the land in Argyle Street and George Street from Frederick Unwin in that year and it was a condition of the lease that he, within a maximum of two years, develop the whole of the street frontage with 'houses ... built substantially and of good materials.'

By March 1840 Gannon was advertising that he was moving his business from 34 Gloucester Street to No. 1 Argyle Street (now No. 45) where he would continue to carry on his trade as a builder and undertaker.<sup>2</sup> Then in late January 1841, he opened the New York Hotel on the corner of George and Argyle Streets.<sup>3</sup>

## 2

Michael Gannon's first funeral advertisement, *Sydney Herald* 2 July 1835 p 1

**To Undertakers,  
AND THE PUBLIC.**

**M**R. MICHAEL GANNON takes this opportunity to inform Undertakers, that after a great expense he has succeeded in finishing his Funeral Hearse, which is now fitted up in a complete and elegant manner, surpassing any article of the kind in the Colony, and is now ready for hire; Mr. M. G. therefore, solicits a share of patronage from Persons in the above line of business; and begs also to acquaint the Public, that he is now able to perform Funerals in a superior manner and upon reasonable terms.

**N. B.—An assortment of Coffin Furniture always on Sale.**

*No. 34, Gloucester-street, }  
Sydney July 1, 1835 }*

Michael Gannon (1800–1881) was sentenced in Ireland to 14 years, and arrived with his brother James in 1820.<sup>4</sup> Four years later Michael married Mary Parsonage and was assigned to her; they lived in The Rocks where he worked as a carpenter and joiner, and is recorded as supplying a cedar desk to the Government.<sup>5</sup>

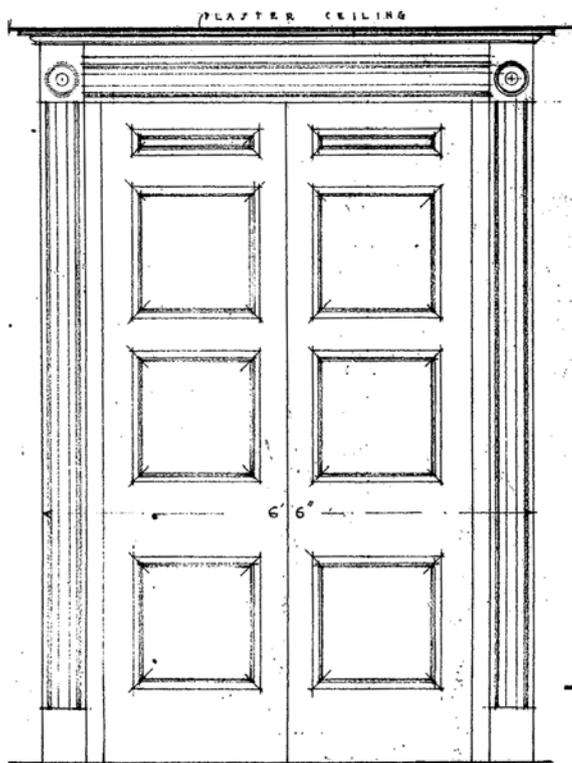
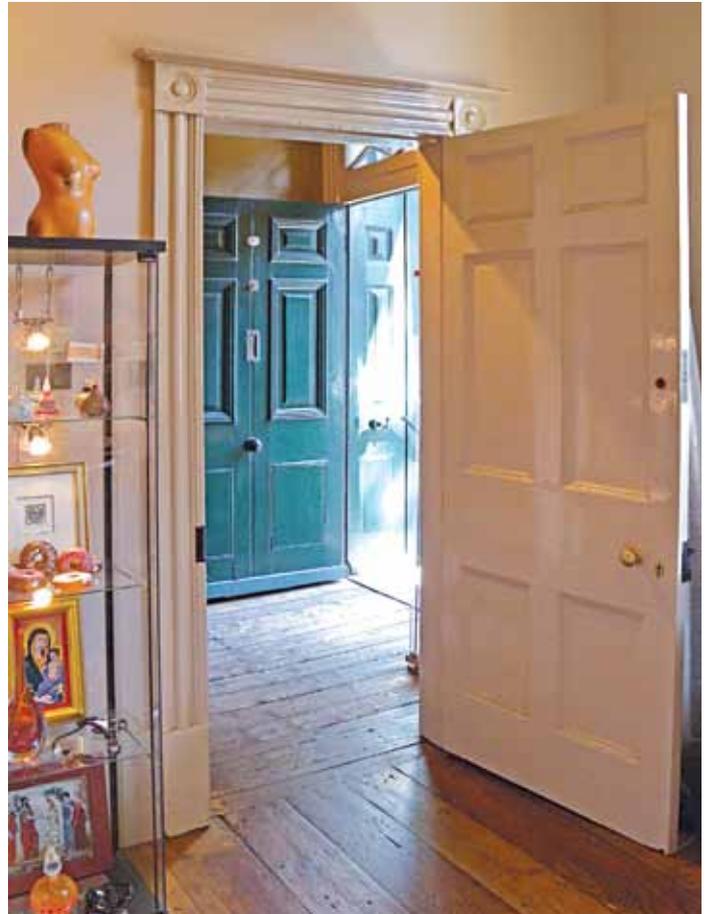
Like many builders and cabinetmakers, he diversified into undertaking. In June 1835 he was seeking "any quantity of emu feathers", presumably to decorate his hearse and horses. From 2 July of that year, he began an extensive advertising campaign in Sydney newspapers offering to "perform Funerals in a superior manner" and hiring his funeral hearse "fitted up in a complete and elegant manner, surpassing any other of the kind in the Colony" as well as "an assortment of coffin furniture" (plate 2).<sup>6</sup>

He became a well-known citizen, running several hotels including the Golden Anchor Hotel in Kent Street<sup>7</sup> and a hotel at Cook's River. As a good Roman Catholic, he subscribed a substantial £50 towards the construction of the nearby St Patrick's Church in 1840,<sup>8</sup> as well as collecting considerable funds from others. In 1850 he bought 1,905 timbered acres south of Cook's River which became known as Gannon's Forest, later the suburb of Hurstville.

He and his brother James were both involved in hotels and in the sport of pigeon shooting.<sup>9</sup> In 1840, Michael Gannon shot against Frederick Oatley for a prize of £25.<sup>10</sup> In 1858, he was honoured with a "handsome silver cup, valued at 20 guineas, subscribed to by eleven gentlemen for the purpose of presentation to Mr. Michael Gannon, the oldest patron and supporter of the sport in the Colony."<sup>11</sup> When he died at his Cook's River residence on 9 August 1881, he was described as "A good shot in his day"<sup>12</sup> and no doubt had the silver trophies, sporting guns and stuffed birds to prove it.

Michael Gannon does not always seem to have built very well. One of several houses he built on Gloucester Street collapsed after heavy rain in 1841. Two of his George Street properties were demolished in the early 1860s. The rear wall of Gannon House shows that the external wall construction changed at first floor level from sandstone below to brickwork above, perhaps indicating haste and the opportunistic use of different materials as they became available, possibly including demolished materials from Greenway's house.

Although evidently built in a hurry, Gannon House has survived and its street facade manages to combine shop front and house fenestration in a pleasing



ELEVATION TO CHURCH  
DOORWAY VNDER GALLERY

TABLE MODEL SIMILAR

**3** Ground floor cedar doorcase, with unusually tall skirting blocks. Photo CLSP, 2013

**4** Ground floor cedar doorcase, with unusually tall skirting blocks, and front door beyond. Photo CLSP, 2013

**5** St Matthew's Church, Windsor. Measured drawing by W Hardy Wilson, National Library, Canberra, nd

arrangement, achieving a subtle balance by grouping the central windows together. No architect would have been involved, but this instinctively tasteful approach is typical of its period.

Inside the building, there are several distinctive joinery details which indicate a date earlier than 1839. The more important ground floor rooms have classically inspired doorcases consisting of architraves of a symmetrical cross-section sitting on skirting blocks with paterae at the corners and topped off with a shelf forming a cornice (**plates 3-4**). This is typical of earlier Georgian buildings and was a detail favoured by Francis Greenway, for example at St Matthew's Church, Windsor, designed in 1817, and as also described in his specification for St John's Rectory, Parramatta (**plate 5**).

In keeping with the usual hierarchy of traditional architecture, the less important doors in Gannon House have simpler door-cases. Even here, however, the way the architraves are



6

Cedar door-case with butt-and-mitred architrave. Photo CLSP, 2013

7

First floor cedar chimneypiece, lacking skirting blocks. Photo CLSP, 2013



put together is old-fashioned for their supposed date of 1839. Instead of being simply mitred at the corners (i.e. cut at 45°) as are most architraves, these have 'butt-and-mitred' corners, a construction detail that went out of use after about 1830 (**plate 6**).

Gannon House retains its original painted timber chimney-pieces in all the principal rooms including the room over the shop in no. 47. One fireplace still has its original hob grate. The fireplace surrounds are composed of architraves, paterae and cornices just like the door-cases (**plate 7**). One remarkable feature of the chimneypieces used is that the architraves hit the floor directly without intervening skirting blocks or plinths. We know of no other instance of this detail. Furthermore, the mantel shelves are extremely shallow over these fireplaces – too shallow to support a mantel clock for example.

It is possible that these chimneypieces were made from recycled door-cases that Gannon obtained from a demolished

building, possibly the former Surgeon's residence on this site. The same explanation might apply to the rest of the joinery in the house. If the occasion ever arises to remove (temporarily) some of this joinery to inspect the back of the woodwork, we might one day solve the puzzle of Gannon House.

**Sean Johnson** is a conservation architect who trained at Oxford, migrated to Australia in 1978 and since the 1980s has worked in both England and Australia, specialising in architectural conservation and designing new work in historic contexts. He is one of the three principals, with Clive Lucas and Ian Stapleton, in the heritage architect firm of Clive Lucas, Stapleton and Partners (CLSP) founded in 1970. CLSP has worked on a wide variety of public, commercial and private heritage conservation projects. For more information go to [www.clsparchitects.com](http://www.clsparchitects.com)

#### NOTES

- 1 Much of the historical information for this article is taken from *Gannon House & Shop, 45-47 Argyle Street, The Rocks, Conservation Management Plan*, Clive Lucas Stapleton & Partners, June 2013, for which the history was written by Dr Shirley Fitzgerald.
- 2 He advertises a house for rent in Kent Street, giving Argyle St as his address, eg *Australasian Chronicle* 18 Aug 1840 p 1.
- 3 *Australasian Chronicle* 26 Jan 1841 p 3
- 4 *ADB* vol 4 p 228.
- 5 Colonial Secretary Letters 1788–1825; I am indebted to David Kelly for this information.
- 6 *Sydney Herald* 2 July 1835 p 1; *Sydney Gazette* 4 July 1835 p 1.
- 7 *Sydney Herald* 9 Jan 1837 p 2. For an account of the feud between Gannon and the gunsmith Alexander Thomson, in which Thomson stripped the doors, sashes, chimney pieces and floorboards from Gannon's Kent Street hotel, see R.C. Solomon, *The Convicted Gunsmiths of New South Wales*, Rockdale 1990 pp 2.66-67.
- 8 *Australasian Chronicle* 4 June 1840 p 3.
- 9 See John Wade, "Pigeon shooting" *Australiana* vol 32 no 2, May 2010, pp 30-36.
- 10 *Sydney Monitor* 30 Oct 1840 p 2.
- 11 *Bell's Life* 19 June 1858 p 2.
- 12 *Manaro Mercury* 31 Aug 1881 p 4.

# Mac the Wire King

The work of many artists goes unnoticed. In the case of Ambrose Brogan, you won't even find his name on the internet or in Trove. But thanks to his niece Mrs Maureen Edgerton, some of his story, his works, his tools and his achievements are preserved in the historical museum in Young NSW.



1

'Mac the Wire King' showground banner held by Ambrose Brogan's niece Mrs Maureen Edgerton and her grandson Joshua Ward. Collection: Lambing Flat Folk Museum, Young

2,3,4,5,7,8,

Ambrose Brogan aka McKinlay (1907–92), brooches made of gold-plated wire, measuring from 3 to 6 cm long.

Collection Mrs Maureen Edgerton.

## JOHN WADE

Ambrose Brogan was a jewellery artist who produced many thousands of popular mementoes over a career that spanned sixty years. Many of his works may not even have survived; few would now be recognised, were it not for the collection donated by his niece and displayed in the Lambing Flat Folk Museum at Young.

He travelled the show circuit in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria

making brooches from gold plated wire and playing tunes on his "bones." Since he also used the alternative name of Ambrose McKinlay, he was known professionally as 'Mac the Wire King'.

Ambrose Brogan was born in Sydney on 3 October 1907,<sup>1</sup> the second child of Thomas James Brogan (1871–1936) and his wife Marcella Theresa. Born Marcella Brogan (1875–1930), she had married Thomas Hallam in 1897 but after he died in 1903, the widow remarried to Thomas Brogan on 1 March 1906 in Sydney.<sup>2</sup> Thomas, the son of John Brogan and Mary Ann McKinlay, later used both his parents' surnames.

Thomas and Marcella Brogan had three children: Ruby McKinlay Brogan (23 September 1906 –1965), Ambrose (3 October 1907–11 December 1992), and Muriel Winifred May Brogan (18 August 1912–13). On Ambrose's birth certificate in 1907, Thomas Brogan was described as a jeweller; Thomas

2 3





4 5



was still recorded as a jeweller when Muriel was born at Redfern in August 1912; she died, aged five months, in early 1913. Thomas' sister Ruby later told her daughter Maureen that he had worked in Pitt Street.

Family tradition, again from Ruby, says Ambrose fell out with his father and left home, but probably not before he learned some of the skills of the jeweller's trade from his father. In his niece Maureen's words, when he was about 14 "his father put him out the door with a pair of pliers and a roll of gold wire." Thomas' death was recorded at West Maitland in 1936, by which time his occupation was listed as shearer. His death certificate notes that Thomas Brogan was also known as Thomas McKinlay; Ambrose likewise used both surnames alternatively.

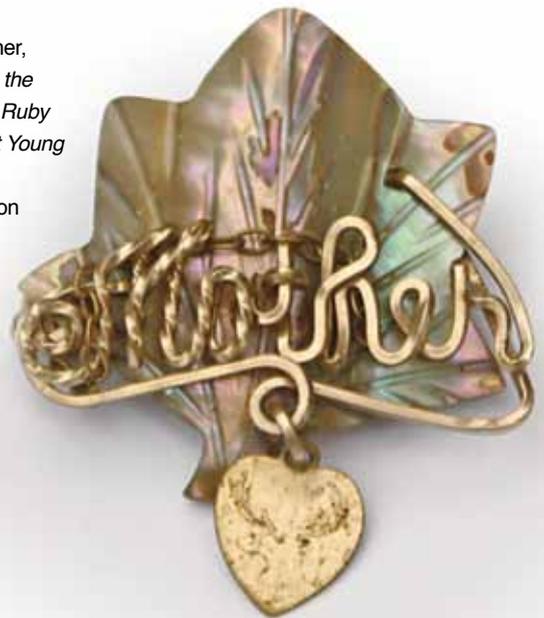
Ambrose began his showground career around 1922 at the age of 14 or 15, after the disagreement with his father. In 1931, the tall, slim young man attended



6  
Unknown photographer,  
[Ambrose Brogan at the  
wedding of his sister Ruby  
to George Hobson at Young  
in 1931]. Collection:  
Mrs Maureen Edgerton



7 8



9

Ambrose Brogan (aka McKinlay) (1907-92), *Bracelet*, made of gold-plated wire. Collection Mrs Maureen Edgerton

10

Ambrose Brogan aka McKinlay (1907-92), *brooches* made of gold-plated wire, measuring from 3 to 6 cm long. Collection Mrs Maureen Edgerton.

his sister Ruby's wedding to George Hobson in Young (plate 6). Ten years later, on 17 May 1941, Ambrose, aged 33, a Roman Catholic and described as a "traveller" of Young NSW, married Doris Bristow, described as a shop assistant of Ashfield, in the Methodist Church at Grafton.<sup>3</sup> She had worked at Grace Brothers' department store on Broadway. After their marriage, she accompanied him on his travels by car to city and country shows through NSW, Queensland and Victoria. In his later years, the car he drove was a green Holden and he towed a caravan from show to show for himself and Doris to stay in.

He was a member of the Showmen's Guild of Australia for at least 40 years. A 1973 newspaper cutting from Young shows him being awarded life membership of the Orange Show Society, after having operated a stand there for 51 years.<sup>4</sup> He continued working into the 1980s, when his failing eyesight meant he could no longer hold the driving licence essential to travel between the shows that he had loved to work for 60 years. Ambrose and Doris had no children; she died in 1984, while he died on 11 December 1992, and was buried three days later in the Roman Catholic section of Young Lawn Cemetery.

Working under the banner of "Mac the Wire King" (plate 1), he made his brooches from a long roll of gold-plated, square-section wire, which he twisted with hand-operated wire twisters and bent into names with tiny jeweller's pliers (plates 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8). He usually twisted the wire for the first letter of the name, the rest being just bent to shape, although in some brooches the wire is twisted for its entire length. The names on the brooches, which measured about 5 cm in length, were held firm with a curving wire attached to a pin, or sometimes with a metal bar; other names are attached to rigid items such as shell or a plastic leaf, with a gold wire pin fixed to the back. His tools of trade – pliers, cutters and wire-twisting tools– are displayed in the Lambing Flat Museum (plate 12).

These brooches and pendants fall into the category of 'fairings', originally meaning late Victorian, mass-produced small china ornaments or boxes with risqué images or words that were sold cheaply at fairgrounds. The Australian versions are more staid, sensible, presentable and public, designed as visible tokens of manly affection, generally for young men to give to their girlfriends, wives or mothers. Like the late 19th and early 20th century glass drinking vessels and other items engraved with names, images or messages and sold at exhibitions and shows, the gold-plated wire brooches were designed for young men to buy, tailored to a specific girl, and present in the fun environment of a sideshow alley.

Mrs Edgerton says that while "Mac"



9



10

had many ready-made brooches in stock, it would have taken him about ten minutes to make a bespoke brooch, and the buyers could enjoy watching his skill in making it. His later brooches are bigger, as his deteriorating eyes and less agile hands made bigger brooches easier to make. At this time he was selling attractive coloured glass paste necklaces too. As well as brooches, he could also make bangles from wire (**plate 9**), combining several strands together for strength, some twisted for decoration.

The names on the brooch are all of girls and women and often diminutives, reflecting the close personal relationship of the giver to the recipient. The names preserved in the museum relate to another era: Lilly, Queenie, Rose, Dottie, Dorothy, Flo, Aggie, Tottie, Valerie, Ida, Maggie, Daisy, Eileen, Betty, Harriet, Ellen and the perennial favourite, Mother (**plate 10**). Some have a small, commercially cast metal pendant attached, with the words of the Lord's Prayer or a short and well-known biblical quotation.

As well as brooches, for those perhaps not yet in a deeper relationship, there are small, usually nameless, pendants, attached to plastic buttons that he made at home. Joyce Simpson recalled that he sold the gold-wire brooches for 2 shillings and sixpence – enough for a comfortable living for a devoted travelling showman.

Brogan had musical talents as a percussionist. He had played in a jazz band on the Manly ferry, on stage and appeared on television on the Mike Walsh Show playing his bones (**plate 11**). In his later years, he was known as “the Bone Man”, parlaying the bones most days at Hamblin's Corner, the intersection of Lynch Street and Boorowa Street, the main thoroughfare of Young. His “bones” look like flat rib bones of cattle, played as a kind of castanet. He had an extensive repertoire of tunes, and occasionally took the train to Sydney and then the ferry to Manly to play the bones. He also played the washboard; both his bones and washboard are displayed in the museum.

Eager for recognition, Ambrose sent examples of his wire work brooches to Queen Elizabeth, Princess Diana, Pope

John Paul II, swimmer Tracey Wickham and tennis player Evonne Goolagong. When he got a polite reply of thanks, he would rush to the newspaper office and get them to publish the story of his latest “celebrity moment”. It's not surprising that, as a showman, he loved getting attention, even in retirement.

### Acknowledgements

It would not have been possible to compile this story without the generous assistance of Ambrose Brogan's niece, Mrs Maureen Edgerton of Young NSW, who recognised the historical importance of his work. She interviewed her uncle before he died and donated an album and much of his material to the Lambing Flat Museum in Young. She made her research available and allowed me to photograph items that she retained to illustrate this article.

Joyce Simpson, President of the Lambing Flat Folk Museum added her considerable local knowledge.

Committee member Lesley Garrett reminded me of my duty to follow up the story, which we had seen together in the Young museum on an Australiana Society weekend visit in 2008.

The artefacts are on display at the Lambing Flat Folk Museum, Campbell Street Young, telephone 6382 2248.

**John Wade** is a former curator, foundation member of the Australiana Society, and long-term editor of *Australiana*.



### NOTES

- 1 NSW BDM 31793/1903
- 2 NSW BDM 619/1906
- 3 NSW BDM 13288/1941
- 4 *South West News* (Young) 6 Jun 1973.

### 11

Unknown photographer, [Ambrose Brogan aka McKinlay (1907–92) playing his musical “bones”], c 1980s.

Collection: Mrs Maureen Edgerton

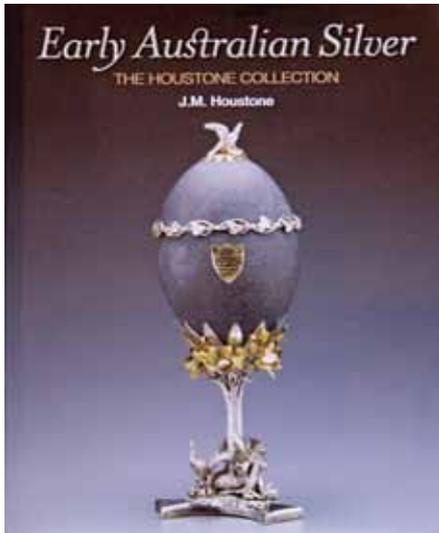
### 12

Ambrose Brogan aka McKinlay's tools, including wire-twisting tools, tweezers, jeweller's pliers and cutters. Collection: Lambing Flat Folk Museum, Young



# BOOKS

REVIEWS BY JOHN WADE



## J. M. HOUSTONE Early Australian silver. The Houston Collection

Halstead Press, Ultimo NSW, 2012.

Hardcover, 320 pages, hundreds

of colour illustrations, index,

bibliography, 275 x 225 mm.

ISBN 9781920831943. \$79.95.

Available from Kardinia Pty Ltd

(02 9953 1497) to *Australiana Society*

members for \$69.95 plus \$15 postage,  
payment by cheque only.

This is one of those rare books that covers a single collection of Australian decorative arts. The author is not only a dedicated collector; he has studied the subject for many years and now presents the results of his life's research and experience for others to enjoy and appreciate.

John Houston has been collecting Australian silver made before 1850 for nearly fifty years. For many of those years, Terry Ingram in his weekly *Saleroom* column in *The Australian Financial Review* used to refer discreetly to the 'Sydney solicitor' who had acquired this or that piece of silver. Now well and truly retired, Houston has continued to collect and more importantly has compiled and published this book based around his collection.

This work joins the very few studies

of Australian silver, such as Kurt Albrecht's *19th Century Australian Gold and Silversmiths*, John Hawkins' *Australian Silver 1800-1900* and *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver*, Eva Czernis-Ryl and Ken Cavill's *Brilliant*, and Dorothy Erickson's *Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia*. It differs from the others by being written by a collector on his own collection, giving a unique insight into the enquiring mind and passion which drove him to specialise in this subject.

The stories of the silversmiths themselves, many of whom arrived as convicts, are fascinating. Alexander Dick, one of the best known silversmiths, whose work attracts a premium, was sentenced to seven years for allegedly receiving goods stolen from the house of Colonial Secretary Alexander Macleay; silversmith turned police constable Jeremy Garfield testified for the Crown at his trial. Houston argues that Dick was set up. And while prominent silversmith Jacob Josephson was convicted of passing and possessing forged notes, his son Joshua Frey Josephson became a respected judge.

The Houston collection focuses mainly but not exclusively on silver made before the gold rushes of 1851. Many collectors would be happy to have just one piece of silver from a maker of the significance of Alexander Dick. What John Houston has done here is not only to collect significant Dick pieces, but also, by a careful analysis of the inscribed initials and crests on pieces he has seen, to identify as many as possible of the services which Dick and others supplied to the gentry of the colony. Nowhere else will you find this information.

Dick, Cohen and others are well represented, but who has ever seen works by Thomas Butler, William Clement and William Park? These are some of the silversmiths that Houston has noted from initials punched on a piece of silver, and then trawled through newspapers to find a likely maker. Before the National Library's digitised newspapers in Trove, this meant hours and hours going through microfilm records of newspapers and directories at night or on weekends

in the Mitchell Library, coming across references largely by pot luck.

The collection includes examples from all of the colonies and New Zealand, as well as a smattering of pieces that are simply interesting historically. These include the silver spade used by Diamantina Lady Bowen for turning the first sod on Queensland's first railway line, and Gubby Allen's Bodyline series watch.

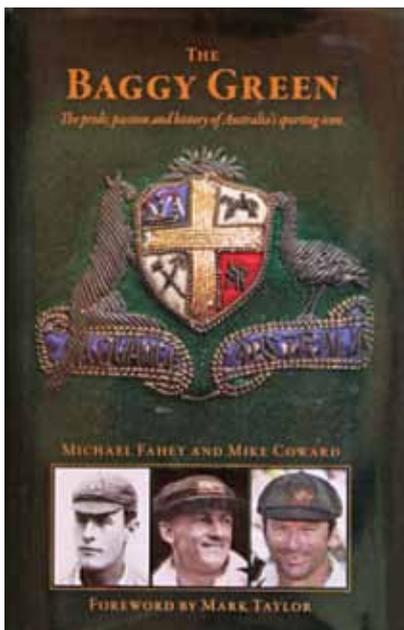
Houston has contributed many interesting articles to *Australiana* and other publications, and lent significant pieces to exhibitions. Many of his articles are the definitive studies of the subject. In this publication of the best collection of Australian silver of this period, the author generously shares his knowledge of the subject, his experience and his collection with others.

Dealer John Hawkins contributed the foreword. As all good dealers should, he has supplied his client John Houston with some of the best pieces in his collection for over 40 years. That is not to say they do not disagree; Houston rejects some of Hawkins' notions of Joseph Forrester being the engraver of various pieces.

Not everyone likes Australian silver. John Mickle for instance, when presented by Victorian admirers with a gold cup on his departure for 'Home', promptly had it melted down and re-fashioned by a London goldsmith (p 278). Lola Montez, the recipient of many baubles from adoring goldminers, flogged her jewels in San Francisco, though at least one gold brooch escaped being melted down (p 262). Even the c 1856 gold-mounted emu egg cup by Julius Hogarth, chosen for the cover photo, sold in 2003 at a well-publicised London auction for only £500.

Australian decorative arts has its fervent supporters but there does not seem to be the same general interest in our past crafts and craftspeople as there was 40 or 50 years ago. However, we all know these things change. This book will be another landmark publication in the field, and I recommend you get a copy before they are all gone. It's unlikely there will ever be a collection like this again.

The Houstone collections stands alongside some of the other great private collections of Australiana such as those of J & J Altmann, Ruth Simon, Caroline Simpson, Trevor Kennedy and Urs Schwarzenbach. The great tragedy is that collectors have to go to extraordinary lengths to keep their collections secure, in this case in a vault. The book however makes it accessible to all.



**MICHAEL FAHEY & MIKE COWARD**  
**The Baggy Green.**  
**The pride, passion and history of Australia's sporting icon.**

Cricket Publishing Company,  
 West Pennant Hills NSW, 2008.  
 Hardcover, 136 pages,  
 250 x 160 mm, colour and  
 monochrome illustrations, index.,  
 ISBN 0 9775631 1 1.  
 Available from Michael Fahey Sports  
 Memorabilia Australia 02 9906 2106  
 or [www.sportsmem.com.au/books.asp](http://www.sportsmem.com.au/books.asp),  
 price \$38.50 plus \$9.50 postage.

If Australians are obsessed by sport, two things above all head the list of

sporting icons: the (Melbourne) Cup and the (Baggy Green) Cap. This book traces the history of the Baggy Green, as much as it can be determined, for until recently the caps were not highly valued.

In earlier days, the cap was regarded as just another piece of gear to be thrown into the kit bag. The resurgence in interest in the Baggy Green arose under captain Mark Taylor, who in 1994 began the practice of all players wearing the Baggy Green in the first fielding session of each test. Steve Waugh, Ricky Ponting and Michael Clarke kept this going, although senior players like Shane Warne and Mark Waugh were less than enthusiastic.

The chapters have several authors, resulting in some repetition. It is not easy to understand the overall picture – which is partly because records of the caps' distribution are scanty. The collector will find the figures on sales illuminating; it's no surprise that Bradman caps attract the highest prices, and the value of all caps sold is well over \$2,000,000.

**ANDREW MONTANA et al.,**  
**Australia revealed;**  
**decorative arts from**  
**The Australiana Fund.**

Canberra Museum and Gallery,  
 Canberra 2013. Soft cover,  
 40 pages, 220 x 290 mm,  
 many colour photos,  
 ISBN 978 0 9807840 9 1.  
 Price \$15 plus postage from CMAG,  
 02 6207 3968 or [cmag@act.gov.au](mailto:cmag@act.gov.au).

It's hard to keep up with the exhibitions going on around Australia and unfortunately we missed this one at the Canberra Museum and Art Gallery, part of the centenary of Canberra celebrations. Fortunately

they produced a 40-page, well illustrated catalogue.

Exhibition curator Dr Andrew Montana provides an introduction, Peter Haynes a chapter on ceramics, Margaret Betteridge one on furniture, and Christopher Menz one on metalwork. There are illustrations of selected works from the four official properties: Government House and The Lodge in Canberra, Kirribilli House and Admiralty House in Sydney.

Displaying Australian works in official properties was Tamie Fraser's initiative, partly to stop every new incumbent doing the usual makeover. She took her lead from the American system of displaying items of American heritage in the White House and State Department premises; President Kennedy famously displayed New England scrimshaw on his desk in the Oval Office.

Canberra Museum and Gallery has had a program of interesting exhibitions, with catalogues, including one on the US-born politician King O'Malley and another on the Ryan family of pastoralists at Galong. It's worth checking their website [www.museumsandgalleries.act.gov.au](http://www.museumsandgalleries.act.gov.au), where you can see images from this exhibition and check for other shows of interest.



# Reports from the Annual General Meeting of the Australiana Society Incorporated

22 April 2013

## President's Report

DR JIM BERTOUCHE

---

It is a pleasure to present the 2013 President's report to the AGM of the Society.

I can assure you that the Society is in excellent shape. We have almost 360 paid up members and our membership drives at the AAADA Antique Fairs in 2012 yielded almost 50 new members. We are also attracting new members through our website. Thanks to Tim Cha the website now looks fantastic and is very user-friendly and easy to navigate. It is also increasingly popular, with Tim reporting that for the first time we had more than 400 hits in January this year, an impressive increase from the 160 hits per month just 18 months ago.

Increasingly we are making announcements to members via email but we still have some members without email addresses. It saves us postage costs if we can send an email and of course we can do this with no lead time.

Our events, since the last AGM, started with a visit to the Manly Art Gallery to see the exhibition of works by Arthur and Merric Boyd from the Bundanon collection. Dr Grace Cochrane, who was the curator, gave a wonderful talk on the collection of ceramics, paintings, prints and drawings. Talk about a talented family!

In August Dr Paul Donnelly arranged a tour of the musical instruments collection of the Powerhouse. This was a wonderful opportunity to 'get behind the scenes' and to see examples of Australian-made instruments, including the circa 1835 piano made by John Benham.

We had a stand at the AAADA Antique fair in Sydney, and Tim Cha organised teams of volunteers to man it for the duration of the event. It was very successful

in attracting new members and raising the profile of the Society.

In December our traditional Christmas drinks were held at *Carthona* in Darling Point, courtesy of Roslyn and Tony Oxley. Again it was a combined event with the Australiana Fund and was a very successful afternoon with the opportunity to see an extraordinary sandstone waterfront home in the gothic revival style filled with contemporary and traditional art and artefacts.

And of course earlier this year Annette Blinco organised our traditional Australia Day event at *Vaucluse House*. The tour of the property 'with ropes down' was followed by a wonderful 'conversation' by Christine Erratt and John Houstone on traditional and contemporary Australian silver. The venue and the evening were perfect and, judging by the feedback, everyone who attended thoroughly enjoyed it.

In March this year there was a wonderful harbour cruise in the fully restored steam tug *Waratah* courtesy of Howard Courtney.

In April, Society members had the opportunity to view the superb exhibition of bird paintings and prints by the Cayleys which was held at the Mosman Library in connection with a launch of the book *Cayley & Son*. The exhibition was put together by Donna Braye and Greg Currie and it was very atmospheric with flowering gum displays and birdsong in the background. This was a good example of using email to alert members because the exhibition was on only for a very short time.

Unfortunately our planned Tasmanian trip which had reached an advanced level of preparation has had to be postponed because of ill health of the wife of one of the organisers, but Lesley Garrett and Paul Donnelly are organising a tour to Canberra later this year. There is also going to be an Australian jewellery exhibition at the Powerhouse in December, and a talk on the two Macquarie chests from the

Mitchell Library collection.

I really want to acknowledge the contributions from all members of the Committee. Michael Lech has continued in his secretarial role and always works quietly behind the scenes to make sure the Society runs smoothly. Our Treasurer Andrew Morris always keeps us up to date with financial matters. Vice President Annette Blinco has friends and acquaintances everywhere and is absolutely invaluable as an event organiser. Tim Cha maintains the website and continually updates the events page and reports on Society meetings. Andrew Simpson keeps a close eye on membership numbers and subscriptions as well as mail-outs including the journal. Michel Reymond is invaluable with his corporate memory, legal advice and incisive summary skills. And Judy Higson, our newest Committee member who joined us in August 2012, is organising the indexation of *Australiana* which will make it so much easier to find specific articles.

John Wade, ably assisted by our designer Kylie Kennedy, continues as editor of *Australiana*, which simply gets better and better each year, and it is now the premier academic journal for the publication of articles on Australiana. Incidentally do you have a story about an item or object of Australiana? If so, write about it. Our editor is always looking for new material and would particularly welcome some shorter articles.

Stuart Purves of Australian Galleries, Paddington, once again deserves our thanks for providing this impressive venue for our meeting and for a tour of the current exhibition.

We are gradually achieving many of the goals that we set out to do when I became President. The committee is enthusiastic, strong and hard working and I am confident that we can maintain the momentum. Here's to the continuing success of the Society in our 35th year.

# Treasurer's Report

## ANDREW MORRIS FCA

Your Society incurred a cash deficit of \$3,154 during the 2012 calendar year ending 31 December 2012 (compared with the 2011 surplus of \$6,208), mainly as a result of your Committee directing some

resources towards digitising past issues of *Australiana* (costing \$2,700). Membership income grew by a modest 1.6%, while our largest expenditures relating to production of our quarterly publication were again contained.

Overall the Society had invested a respectable \$71,210 in cash and investment reserves by year's end (the prior year: \$74,360).

Personally I would like to thank Michael Lech, our Secretary, and all Committee members for their assistance in my role as honorary Treasurer.

I look forward to continued support from renewing subscribers, donors and advertisers. I'm sure you would all agree, *Australiana* continues to be a wonderful scholarly publication.

# Australiana Society Incorporated

## PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

	12 Months to 31/12/2012	12 Months to 31/12/2011
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions from Members	15,995.50	15,750.16
Subscriptions from Members (Life)	2,000.00	0.00
Advertising in <i>Australiana</i>	5,754.54	8,322.73
Australia Day & other events	9,780.00	7,910.00
Interest Received	2,882.91	4,472.14
Donations Received	635.00	2,140.00
Sponsorship - Peter Walker Fine Art	400.00	400.00
Sales of <i>Australiana</i> (back copies)	726.36	704.55
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$38,174.31</b>	<b>\$39,699.58</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE - AUSTRALIANA</b>		
Production	15,960.00	18,006.00
Digitisation of back copies	2,686.60	0.00
Editorial Fees	5,688.37	4,504.23
Postage & Stationery	3,359.92	3,591.85
Writing Awards	400.00	400.00
	<b>\$28,094.89</b>	<b>\$26,502.08</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE - GENERAL</b>		
Australia Day & other events	10,340.17	4,469.74
Website & Internet	1,093.18	513.42
Membership brochure	339.09	0.00
Insurance	460.00	440.00
Merchant & Bank Fees	774.33	620.99
General Meeting & Event Expenses	0.00	725.05
Subscriptions to RAHS	226.36	220.00
	<b>13,233.13</b>	<b>6,989.20</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$41,328.02</b>	<b>\$33,491.28</b>
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR</b>	<b>-\$3,153.71</b>	<b>\$6,208.30</b>
<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>		
	31/12/2012	31/12/2011
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash at Westpac Bank	8,145.60	12,890.66
Donations Account (Westpac)	4,062.15	361.24
Interest Bearing Term Deposit (Westpac)	66,288.53	64,642.71
Subscribers', ads, event deposits	181.82	0.00
GST Refundable	616.30	540.71
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$79,294.40</b>	<b>\$78,435.32</b>
<b>LESS LIABILITIES</b>		
Creditors & Suppliers Owed	1,437.82	0.00
Subs Raised/Collected in advance	5,872.73	3,490.94
GST Payable	773.64	580.46
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$71,210.21</b>	<b>\$74,363.92</b>
<b>MEMBERS' ACCUMULATED FUNDS</b>		
Balance Brought Forward	74,363.92	68,155.62
Surplus (Deficit) for year	-3,153.71	6,208.30
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>	<b>\$71,210.21</b>	<b>\$74,363.92</b>

# Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award 2012

## JUDGE'S REPORT

### ELIZABETH ELLIS

---

The Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award is an annual award generously sponsored by Peter Walker Fine Art of Walkerville, South Australia, to encourage excellence. Peter Walker is a valued member and longstanding supporter of the Australiana Society. All articles which were published in *Australiana* in 2012 are eligible for the 2012 Award.

*Australiana* continues to set a national standard of excellence for the scope and presentation of its content and for the high quality of its editorial work, design and production. Its uncompromising dedication to scholarship and research which is accessible, relevant and entertaining to both specialists and those interested to learn is to be applauded. Long may *Australiana* continue to inform and delight its readers.

2012 proved to be another halcyon year for *Australiana* with an outstanding crop of articles for selection in the Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award. Congratulations are due to all contributors for their articles covering a wide range of subjects which not only enhance the reputation of *Australiana* as a major journal of scholarship and merit but also present valuable new research in the public domain.

As my choice for the 2012 Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award, I have selected the article in two parts by Christine Erratt, 'Ceremonial maces of Australian universities' which appeared in the issues of *Australiana*, February 2012 and May 2012, vol. 34, nos 1 and 2.

Christine Erratt is a well known member of the Australiana Society and the Silver Society of Australia with a particular interest in contemporary Australian silver and design.

She is the author of *Marks on Australian silver 1950-2005*, published by Parker Press, Sydney, 2010.

Her survey of ceremonial maces in Australian universities provides comprehensive documentation of all the existing examples of this distinctive type of object which most Australian universities have commissioned as part of their ceremonial regalia. She initiated this study, which is the first to address this subject.

The excellent accompanying illustrations demonstrate a broad range of innovative design and craftsmanship, all of the highest order. Perhaps surprisingly, apart from the University of Sydney's traditional-style mace made in 1854 by Sydney silversmiths Brush & McDonnell, the remaining 36 examples date between 1926 and 2007. Australian university maces thus form a little known but important genre in Australian 20th century and contemporary silver design and manufacture. Australian timbers form an important component of many of the maces and several of the later examples use wood and other natural objects as their primary elements.

Christine Erratt's meticulous approach typifies the dedication to their chosen fields of interest by Australiana Society members, authors and collectors. It is to her credit that she has undertaken the original research and documentation of Australian university maces for her article which has been so well compiled and described. Now through the publication of her survey in *Australiana*, we are much better informed about these beautiful objects.

**Elizabeth Ellis** OAM is the distinguished Emeritus Curator, Mitchell Library, Sydney and a Councillor of the Royal Australian Historical Society.



THE  
**MERCHANT  
 OF WELBY**  
 ANTIQUES

Noel Ferguson  
 The Merchant of Welby  
 72 Old Hume Hwy Welby NSW 2575  
 3km west of Mittagong  
 T 02 4871 2158  
 M 0408 480 111  
 F 02 4872 2551

[www.merchantofwelby.com.au](http://www.merchantofwelby.com.au)  
[noel@merchantofwelby.com.au](mailto:noel@merchantofwelby.com.au)

Open Thursday to Monday  
 10am – 5pm  
 and by appointment



A superb Colonial Australian Cedar Chest of Drawers, featuring architectural styling with split turned columns supporting the two cantilevered top drawers. The chest stands on its original turned blackwood feet with its original blackwood knobs and all original locks and escutcheons. 101 x 111 x 54 cm

This graduated five-drawer chest circa 1840 is identical to the lead photo for the chapter on furniture by Kevin Fahy in the 1977 book *Australian Antiques First Fleet to Federation* pages 18 & 19, and is also identical to the piece featured by John Buttsworth in *Australian Colonial Furniture* (1987) on pages 64 & 65.

PETER  
 WALKER  
 FINE  
 ART

SIR ARTHUR STREETON  
 (AUST 1876 - 1943)



Sir Arthur Streeton  
 Landscape  
 Watercolour  
 Signed and dated 1920  
 14.5 x 19.5 cm

Peter Walker Fine Art  
 101 Walkerville Terrace  
 Walkerville, SA 5081

p 08 8344 4607  
[info@peterwalker.com.au](mailto:info@peterwalker.com.au)  
[www.peterwalker.com.au](http://www.peterwalker.com.au)

Specialising in rare Australian art



# J.B. HAWKINS ANTIQUES

44 INVERLEITH PLACE  
EDINBURGH EH3 5Q13  
SCOTLAND UK  
Mobile: 07 831 0931 98  
Fax: 44 (0) 131 558 1727  
Email: [emma@emmahawkins.co.uk](mailto:emma@emmahawkins.co.uk)  
[www.emmahawkins.demon.co.uk](http://www.emmahawkins.demon.co.uk)

'BENTLEY'  
MOLE CREEK ROAD  
CHUDLEIGH 7304  
TASMANIA  
Telephone: 61 (0) 3 6363 6131  
Mobile: 0419 985 965  
Fax: 61 (0) 3 6367 6262  
Email: [jhawkins@acenet.com.au](mailto:jhawkins@acenet.com.au)  
[www.jbhawkinsantiques.com](http://www.jbhawkinsantiques.com)



John King Davis (1884–1967) met Douglas Mawson when he was Chief Officer on Ernest Shackleton's *Nimrod* sailing to the Antarctica in 1907, the three forming long lasting and important friendships. Mawson bought the *Aurora* in 1910 and appointed Davis as Master for his 1911–1914 Australasian Antarctic Expedition.

The 1911–1914 Expedition encountered many challenges. Davis faced the difficult decision of whether to wait for blizzards and harsh seas to abate to collect Mawson, who was overdue with his party; he opted to depart leaving supplies, six men and a radio. Mawson, the sole survivor, returned as the ship sailed away. Davis returned but was unable to embark the expedition who had to wait for him in Mawson's hut for another year. On their safe return, Davis was Mawson's best man at his 1914 wedding, perhaps the occasion for a gift.

Davis later commanded the *Aurora* on the mission to rescue Shackleton's Ross Sea shore party in 1916–17.

He was described as 'being easy to talk to, big hearted, and unselfish, influential, modest and a stickler of discipline'.

The finest navigational parallel rulers are in ivory and scissored. This historic presentation instrument, suitably inscribed with the name of the vessel and the Captain's initials is one of the few tangible links with Mawson and his heroic Australasian Antarctic Expedition.



