

# Australiana

February 2014 vol 36 no 1





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Florence Fuller (1867–1946), *Portrait of Deborah Vernon Hackett* c. 1908,  
oil on canvas, h 80.5 w 62.5 cm. Collection: National Portrait Gallery, Canberra,  
purchased 2005, no 2005.84

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# “dear Emily” in Western Australia

Former Prime Minister Julia Gillard, in her misogyny speech on 9 October 2012, was not the first to react to men allegedly putting down women’s activities. A century ago, English designer and artist C R Ashbee – his business damaged by low-priced competition from amateur women artists – condescendingly referred to them as “dear Emily”. Here Dr Dorothy Erickson examines the work of Western Australian women artists and shows that they were far from incompetent.

## 1

‘MH after JA’, *View from Mt Eliza*, watercolour. “dear Emily” on a painting expedition overlooking Perth Water in the 1870s. The ‘JA’ was probably John Absolon. Collection: Royal Western Australian Historical Society, Perth

## DOROTHY ERICKSON

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In the 19th century, the only sanctioned career path open to gentlewomen was marriage. A woman was expected to be the poet Coventry Patmore’s “Angel in the House” – a refining influence on the man who had to venture forth into the increasingly industrialised and “contaminating” commercial world. Girls were educated from the cradle to undertake social duties

as gracious hostesses. If they did not marry, they remained dependents upon their fathers and suffered stigmatisation, as they were considered not to have done their duty. Unmarried gentlewomen without adequate family support usually had to become governesses or teachers, passing on the skills such as languages, needlework and art that they had learnt themselves.

Society’s attitude was enunciated by English designer Lewis F. Day (1845–1910) in 1881 when he wrote in the *Magazine of Art*:<sup>1</sup>

It is one of the pressing questions of our time ... How shall poor gentlewomen support themselves? ... The real source of their distress and trouble is in the prejudice ... that a man is degraded by allowing his daughters to work for their own living.

So when there was an overabundance of women in the British population, the men who footed the bills began to think that perhaps the gentlewomen ought to be able to earn a living. Setting up an art studio became a respectable and eventually fashionable occupation, primarily favoured by the daughters of lawyers, doctors, artists and the clergy. Even Princess Louise was a sculptress of note.

A few strong-willed individuals continued their careers after marriage, but it was considered humiliating for the husband if the wife's work was sold for more than pin money. Those works that were sold were often underpriced, undervalued, and undercut the work of professional craftsmen such as the members of the Guild of Handicraft – so much so that in 1908 leading Arts and Crafts designer Charles Robert Ashbee (1863–1942) and other craftsmen derisively called the amateur artists in England “dear Emily”.<sup>2</sup>

Western Australia at the turn of the 19th century had some very proficient ‘dear Emilys’ who, as in England, were drawn from the progressive circles and the social elite. Most of these women were newcomers to the colony who, in the normal course of events, would not have considered migrating to such an isolated outpost. They came to join family members drawn to a colony in the middle of a gold boom, having escaped the world-wide depression of the 1890s. A few, such as Margaret Hamersley (Lady Forrest), Deborah Drake-Brockman (who became Lady Hackett, Lady Moulden then Dr Buller-Murphy), Henrietta Strickland and Alice Chidlow were from old established Western Australian families.

The women's movement, combined with a craft revival, had encouraged the artists to expand beyond their traditional art forms of embroidery and painting, so

the products of their studios were diverse and included pottery, china painting, leatherwork, pyrography, woodcarving and metalwork. Marie Tuck, Florence Fuller, Eva Benson, May Gibbs, Kate O'Connor, May and Helen Creeth, Louie Benham, Amy Heap, Kitty Armstrong, Annie Andrews, Elizabeth Owtram, Daisy Rossi, Flora Le Cornu (later Mrs Landells), Janie Craig and Annie Dorrington, set up professional studios in Perth, while Ann Augusta Knight set up her studio in Albany. They were the “Angels in the Studio” – but that is another story.

The newcomers found a capital that had begun to bloom with new buildings and even amenities in advance of older centres. In 1902, an enchanted traveller, May Vivienne, wrote of Perth:

... beautifully situated, and one cannot fail to be charmed with its picturesque and lovely surroundings. ... a handsome and prosperous city, with noble buildings on all sides, electric light, tram cars, beautiful parks around it, and yachts dancing on the broad waters of the Swan River.<sup>3</sup>

The citizens concerned themselves with local issues and looked toward the international arena. Now, indicative of Western Australia's financial significance, the world returned their gaze.

The gentlewomen from the upper echelons of society who set up home studios in the period 1880–1915 while continuing with their social duties included the Governor's wife Lady (Ethel) Bedford née Turner; the Premier's wife Lady (Margaret) Forrest née Hamersley; the major newspaper owner's wife Lady (Deborah) Hackett née Drake-Brockman; Marion Holmes wife of the WA Bank Manager; Bessie Rischbieth wife of a major industrialist; Pansy Francis daughter of a successful pearler; Henrietta Strickland and Alice Chidlow daughters of old Western Australian families; Mattie Furphy wife of foundry owner Sam Furphy; and Bunbury lawyer's wife May Walker. There were many others but the fruits of their labours have not yet been uncovered.



2

Lady (Ethel) Bedford, photograph

A number joined the Western Australian Society of Arts, formed in 1896 by the members of the Wilgie Sketch Club together with the new architectural fraternity in the colony. The aim was “...to advance Painting, Sculpture, Architecture and Kindred Arts in the colony.”<sup>4</sup> Its first president was Bernard Woodward, curator of the new Museum and Art Gallery. The second was Frederick Williams, head of the Technical Art School, who in 1900 proposed that the society enlarge the scope of future exhibitions to “... include such work of artistic merit as embroidery, woodcarving, art needlework, designs for silver and gold work, ceramic and hammered ironwork.”<sup>5</sup> This catered to the female members. They held design competitions in conjunction with the annual exhibition and these were open to non-members in “order to cultivate a taste for art”.<sup>6</sup>

Perth was still a very British society, with social pressure against married women having careers. However by 1911, Western Australia had more professional women supported by more servants per head of population than elsewhere in Australia.<sup>7</sup> Servants





allowed a greater proportion of local women the time to pursue careers or engage in artistic activities (**plate 1**).

Vice-Regal patronage encouraged the amateur artists. From 1902 to 1909 the Governor of Western Australia was Sir George Bedford, a competent and enthusiastic artist. His wife Ethel (1848–1913) was a painter of the unusual Western Australian wildflowers (**plates 2–3**). She exhibited watercolours of wildflowers with the WA Society of Arts in 1908. The Batty Library holds 47 of her wildflower paintings and some of her husband's landscape paintings. The Bedfords were followed by the Stricklands. Lady (Edeline) Strickland was a keen student of art history so there was encouragement from the highest levels to engage in art.

The unique flora of the colony attracted considerable local interest. Wildflowers, of which there are over 14,000 endemic to Western Australia, have always been identified as a particularly Western Australian subject. A long tradition of painting them has endured. This is not merely a legacy of the 19th-century interest in botany but an assertion of local identity. They are depicted in metalwork and featured strongly in watercolour sketches, illuminated addresses, china painting, embroidery, woodcarving and textile design.

Wildflower paintings were always prominent in the entries for the international exhibitions, such as those of 1886 in London, 1899 in Coolgardie, 1900 in Paris (**plate 4**) and 1902 in Glasgow (**plate 27**). It provided a sense of identity, for Western Australians new and old were entranced by the unique flora.



Sectional View of Timber Court. Paintings of wild Flowers by Lady Forrest.

### 3

Ethel Bedford, *Banksia coccinea*, watercolour. Collection: State Library of Western Australia 8854P

### 4

Inside the Western Australian pavilion at *L'Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1900*. This photograph shows the display of wildflowers painted by Lady Forrest. Collection: State Library of Western Australia 606.944

This interest was led by Margaret Forrest, the Premier's wife, who went on painting trips with Marianne North and Ellis Rowan and whose work was exhibited at the Paris and Glasgow exhibitions as was that of Dircksey Cowan, Gertrude E. Ford, Etta Finnerty, country painters Mrs E. Hardey of Geraldton and Mrs W. C. Thomas of Albany, and the professional women painters May Creeth, Annie Dorrington and May Gibbs.

Margaret Elvire Hamersley, later Lady Forrest (1844–1929) had the traditional upbringing of a girl of her class (plate 5). She was born in France to Anne Louise Cornelius, an Anjou princess who was born in the Tuileries Palace in Paris, and Edward Hamersley, a wealthy landowner descended from English royalty. The family returned to his property "Pyrton" at Guildford in Western Australia in 1850 and Margaret was educated by her parents and governesses. Painting excursions were a regular occurrence. In 1876, after her father's death, she married surveyor John Forrest (1847–1918) who was to become the first premier of Western Australia, knighted KCMG in 1891, GCMG in 1900, and the first Australian-born Baron – Baron Forrest of Bunbury – in 1918. She was a hostess, confidante, counsellor and frequent traveller with her husband, the most powerful man in Western Australia from 1890 until his death in 1918.

Margaret had a room set aside as a studio in her home "The Bungalow" in Perth where she painted many of the



5

Margaret Elvire Forrest in evening dress, photograph

6

Margaret Forrest (1844–1929), *Diplolaena microcephala*, *Pityrodia hemigenoides*, *Stackhousia pubescens*, *Chamelaucium uncinatum*, *Verticordia grandis*, watercolour and gouache 1889, 53.9 x 37.6 cm. State Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia





state's unique wildflowers (**plate 6**). She exhibited in the 1881 International Exhibition in Perth and was a founding member of the Wilgie Sketching Club, second president of the West Australian Society of Arts and in 1894 a foundation member of the Karrakatta Club, the first women's club in Australia. She won a special first class award for "WA Wildflowers in watercolour" at the 1899 Coolgardie International Exhibition and also exhibited at the Paris Exhibition of 1900 and the Glasgow exhibition of 1902.

When her husband went into federal politics in 1901 and much time was spent in Melbourne in a suite at the Grand Hotel, she had less time to paint but returned to it, after his death, in her studio in Cottesloe. Her paintings were used to illustrate at least two books. Margaret Forrest had been closely involved in the development of Kings Park, which was not far from her home and which at that stage was abundantly blessed with wildflowers that she could paint.

Another, much younger, woman from an old Western Australian family was Deborah Vernon Hackett (1887–1965) who became an international entrepreneur, welfare worker and writer but was also a china painter (**plates 7–8**). She was the third daughter of surveyor Frederick Slade Drake-Brockman, and his wife, the shipwreck heroine Grace Vernon Bussell. An individualist from an early age, she was one of the few girls educated at the boys' school Guildford Grammar,



**7**  
 Florence Fuller (1867–1946), *Portrait of Deborah Vernon Hackett* c. 1908, oil on canvas. Collection: National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, purchased 2005

**8**  
 Deborah Hackett (1887–1965), *Cowslip Orchid plate*, overglaze painting on porcelain, from a series painted early in the 20th century, 22.5 x 2.9 cm. State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia 1962/00C1, gift of Dr Deborah Buller-Murphy 1962





an intrepid rider, caver and later skier. In 1905 aged 18 and against family approval she married wealthy and influential lawyer and newspaper proprietor John Winthrop Hackett (1848–1916), forty years her senior.

The Hacketts took an active interest in the cultural life of Perth. As a Member of the Legislative Council, Winthrop Hackett was instrumental in the foundation of many public utilities. Deborah Hackett painted the local wildflowers and wrote a book *Australian Household Guide*. From 1906 she was a member and Patron of the WA Society of Arts. It is probable that she learnt china painting from the Misses Creeth; works of hers are in the collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia. The couple travelled frequently and entertained lavishly until her husband died in 1916.

In 1918 she married Sir Frank Moulden, solicitor and Lord Mayor of Adelaide. In 1923 she established a syndicate to mine tantalite in Western Australia and she had interests in wolfram and beryl in Queensland and a pastoral company, Minilya, in Western Australia. She had acquired her interest and knowledge of geology from her father and was a force in promoting her mines internationally. She was a pioneer of air travel, chartering single-engine

aircraft to fly in the outback, and was a passenger on the first commercial flight from Australia to England.

Her second husband died and in 1936 she married Justice Basil Buller-Murphy and became known as Dr Buller-Murphy, having been awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by the University of WA. She was a prominent society hostess in Melbourne and active in many charities. She published *An Attempt to Eat the Moon*, a book of Aboriginal legends, in 1958. Deborah was more than “dear Emily” – she was a *force majeure*.

Catherine Liddle (1856–1912), who married industrialist Robert Hesleden Binney in Tasmania in 1881, was a china painter of distinction who had been taught by Madame Borodic (**plates 9–10**). Catherine exhibited in the Tasmanian International Exhibition of 1891–2, winning gold and silver medals and a diploma. When she and her family arrived in Western Australia in 1898 she found she was unable to have her work fired and had to send it to the eastern colonies until May Creeth imported a kiln. A cup and saucer she painted was presented to Princess May, Duchess of York, in 1901 when the latter visited Western Australia. Catherine Binney exhibited with the WA Society of Arts in 1902 and 1903. When she died in 1912

**9**  
Catherine Binney (1856–1912), *Plaque, Invergarry Castle*, porcelain overglaze enamel painting, 11.1 x 8.7 x 0.9 cm. State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia 1973/00C3, gift of Mrs M. I. Mason, 1973

**10**  
Catherine Binney (1856–1912), *Cake dish*, porcelain overglaze painting, 5.05 x 21.9 cm. This was part of the suite exhibited in Tasmania. State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia 1912/00C8, gift of Mrs R. H. Binney

some of her painted china, a dessert set of four stemmed dishes and six plates, each individually painted with field flowers, cornflowers, wheat, poppies etc, was presented to the WA Museum and Art Gallery. It is presumed that these were some of the 20 pieces shown at the exhibition in Tasmania. Catherine signed her work “C: Binney”.

Another forceful young woman was Bessie Mabel Rischbieth née Earle (1874–1967), theosophical feminist, embroiderer, designer and maker of applied arts who was born at Burra, South Australia, the elder daughter of





Jane Anna née Carvoso and William Earle, teacher, farmer and mining surveyor. At an early age she went to Adelaide to live with her wealthy uncle William Rounsevell MP, a supporter of the *Married Women's Property Acts* (1883–4) and universal franchise. Politically aware from an early age, Bessie was educated at Miss Stanton's School in Glenelg, and at the Advanced School for Girls, Adelaide followed by private art training. On 22 October 1898 she married Henry Wills Rischbieth. They moved to Western Australia the following year where her husband had established Henry Wills and Co.

Bessie (**plate 11**) learned fine needlework and crochet from her mother. She joined the Western Australian Society of Arts with which she exhibited painted furniture from 1902, and later designs for fingerplates, repoussé copper and brass plaques and plates, portieres, piano cloths and other embroidery. An expert needlewoman, she was an examiner at the Perth Technical School for many years. In 1905 she enrolled at Perth Technical School under James W.R. Linton and passed design.

An admirer of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, whose work she had seen in magazines and on her travels, she ordered panelling and furniture in the Mackintosh-influenced Liberty style from London for her morning room, which she completed by designing and stencilling panels of stylised 'Glasgow' roses and making beaten-copper fingerplates and other fittings (**plates 12-15**). The elegant, stencilled inserts for the panelling were in



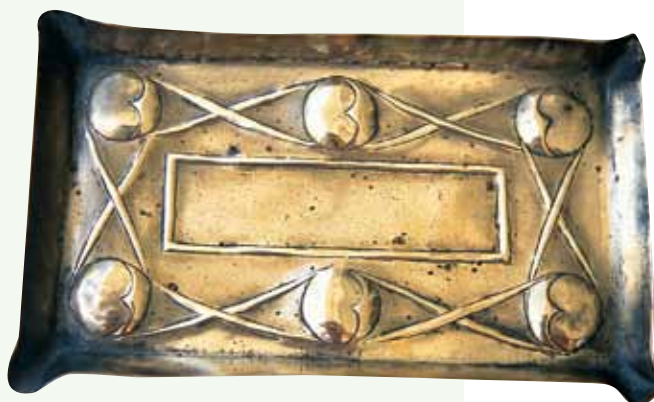
**11**  
Bessie Rischbieth's Morning room at "Unalla", Peppermint Grove WA, 1904. The panels with stencilled Glasgow roses inserted can be seen below the dado. Bessie had been in Glasgow in 1902 for the exhibition and was obviously impressed with the Mackintosh circle of designers

**12**  
Bessie Rischbieth (1874–1967), stencilled panel made for the Morning Room at "Unalla", her home in Peppermint Grove, 1904

**13**  
Bessie Rischbieth (1874–1967), embroidery Bessie made to replace the stencils c 1930s

**14**  
Bessie Rischbieth (1874–1967), repoussé card tray, brass c. 1904

**15**  
Bessie Rischbieth c. 1904, photograph







16



17



18

two shades of pink with turquoise leaves contrasted against a brown ground. This morning room was home to a group of her painter friends who included the teacher James W. R. Linton, Daisy Rossi, Florence Fuller, Kate O'Connor and her sister Bridget O'Connor (later Lady Lee Steere), who met there for weekly design discussion sessions.

The driving forces in her widely travelled life were social reform and the status of women. From 1909, she was involved with the Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia, a reformist feminist group, founded by Lady (Gwenyfred) James. She edited their magazine *The Dawn* from 1920–1947. This work involved her in many social issues to do with women and children and she became one of Australia's better-known feminists, particularly as the inaugural President of the Australian Federation of Women Voters, which she helped form in 1921; she held that position for 21 years. It was affiliated with the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, on whose board she served for 20 years. She received her OBE at Buckingham Palace in 1935. A well-known figure in Perth, she was active for environmental causes until just before

her death in 1967. Sir Walter Murdoch wrote in the preface to her book *March of Australian Women* "She has built for herself a name, which will live in the history of her country as the intrepid champion of a better-ordered society."

Painter, pyrographer, china painter and tireless charity worker Marion Holmes (née Genders 1856–1921) came to Western Australia in 1890 with her husband Henry Diggins Holmes, the Manager of the WA Bank. Marion Holmes (plate 19) was a foundation member of the Karrakatta Club and, like most of the others detailed here, part of the social elite. In 1891 she formed the WA branch of the Countess of Meath Ministering Children's League and was very much involved. However she had time for her art and won a second-class award in 'oil painting – landscape' at the Coolgardie International Exhibition in 1899.

She learnt china painting and pyrography from May Creeth and exhibited with the WA Society of Arts. Daisy Rossi reviewing the 1912 exhibition wrote: "In the painted china class there is a choice selection, though it is the work of only two entrants. Miss Higham has two painted vases and seven fruit plates with versions of fruits painted on them and Mrs H. D. Holmes has sent nine



19

16

Marion Holmes (1856–1921), pyrography screen, 73.5 x 64.9 x .8 cm. Collection: Western Australian Museum CH1971.65

17

Marion Holmes (1856–1921), pokenwork umbrella stand, 69 x 27.4 cm. Collection: Western Australian Museum CH 1971.63

18

Marion Holmes (1856–1921), pokenwork panel of Erato, 79 x 22 cm. Collection: Western Australian Museum CH 1971.66a

19

Marion Holmes, photograph

pieces (vases, teapots and plates) with one exception showing very pleasing work.”<sup>8</sup> These are probably those now in the collection of the WA Museum.

Mrs Holmes was an accomplished exponent of pokerwork, which she exhibited with the WA Society of Arts that same year. Several of her pieces are in the collection of WA Museum (plates 16-18).

May Walker née Carey (1876–1965), daughter of surveyor Thomas Carey, after whom the suburb Carey Park is named, and his wife Rosa Strickland was a painter and china painter. She lived in Bunbury but came to Perth for her art education commencing in the 1890s and continued with May Creeth after the latter arrived in 1898. May (plate 20) married solicitor John Lennard Walker in the late 1890s. They resided in a

house called “The Willows” in Bunbury where she was known as a gracious hostess. Her painting (plates 21–22) was a pastime for a childless woman.

Henrietta Strickland known as Etta (1879–1961) was a cousin of May Walker from the same old Western Australian family. Etta (plate 23) studied woodcarving under William Howitt at Perth Technical School in 1904. In 1906 she carved a sideboard, (plate 25) very much in Howitt’s style and exhibited it in the Women’s Work Exhibition of 1907, which was held in Perth Town Hall. It is possible that Howitt constructed the sideboard for Etta to carve, as Howitt’s entwined initials HW are carved into the interior of the door under “carved by E. Strickland.” She was of independent means, did not marry and died in 1961.

Amateur woodcarver Pansy Francis was born in Auckland, New Zealand and educated at boarding school at Longford in Gloucestershire, England (plate 24). The family came to Australia during the gold boom. Pansy was the unmarried daughter who helped run the household and was a good cook and keen gardener. Although a gentlewoman, she was not part of the social elite and did not feature in the social notes as did the other women detailed above. Pansy spent a few years with her father in Broome where he had pearling luggers.



**20**  
Greenham & Evans, *May Walker*,  
photograph, Perth, later 1890s

**21**  
May Walker, *Tuscan china jug* painted with  
the trigger plants called ‘Cow-kicks’, 1912-20

**22**  
May Walker (1876–1965), a set of orchids,  
which hung in her home “*The Willows*”  
in Bunbury, oil on board, each panel  
30 x 11 cm





In 1908 she passed a woodcarving exam at Fremantle Technical School. Over the years, Pansy Francis carved a very considerable number of pieces of furniture. The first works were panels carved in the classes, and then applied to furniture built to take them. Two examples of this type of work are the music cupboard in the West Australian Museum carved with Pan playing his pipes on the upper section and the inset panel of Pan's face on the door. A turn-of-the-century settle has pansies carved on it (**plate 26**). The WA Museum's jarrah stand is carved with kangaroo paw and other wildflowers.

Painter in oils and on silk Gertrude E. Ford (c.1873–1909) was the daughter of A. P. Ford, a surveyor in the Lands Department, who arrived from South Australia at the time of the gold rushes. She had been educated at Hardwicke College in Adelaide. Her brother George Ford was organist at St George's Cathedral; both died very young. In 1898 she exhibited oil paintings of fruit and a *Group of Native Flowers* with the WA Society of Arts. These were described by the critic 'Hermit' as small "though fairly well executed, wants modelling and vignetting." Despite this criticism she was selected to exhibit

**23**

Etta Strickland, c 1900. Photograph courtesy McKenzie's Auctioneers

**24**

Pansy Francis, photograph, courtesy of the family

**25**

Etta Strickland (1879–1961), *cabinet*. Photograph courtesy McKenzie's Auctioneers

**26**

Pansy Francis (1884–1973), *settle carved with pansies*, jarrah, 1908, 118.5 x 110.0 x 47.0 cm. Collection: Western Australian Museum

wildflower paintings in the Western Australian Pavilion of the Paris Exhibition in 1900, which were sent on to the Glasgow International Exhibition in 1902 (**plate 27**).

In 1901 she exhibited a lush still life of fruit and flowers with the WA Society of Arts and in 1905 and 1906 Miss Ford won prizes for lace making. In 1903 a painting of a church interior she exhibited was described as displaying "exhaustive care in the drawing, and a life-like representation of the soft colouring peculiar to the subject." This was entitled *Wherein*



23



24



25



26



## 27

*Western Australian wildflowers* at the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1902. Gertrude Ford's wildflower paintings are part of this display. Another amateur exhibitor was Dircksey Cowan daughter of James and Edith Cowan

## 28

Alice Jane Chidlow (1858–1914), *landscape*, oil on board. Private collection

*Thine Honour Dwells* and was illustrated in the catalogue. Another was *Anglican Cathedral*. It was possible she sketched or painted while her brother was practising on the organ. Her painting of the cathedral was presented to Bishop Riley.

Another painter from an old Western Australian family was Alice Jane Chidlow (1858–1914) whose family pioneered

the Northam area and after whom the settlement of Chidlows is named. Alice Jane was the youngest daughter of successful early colonist William Chidlow of “Springfield”, Northam and his wife Mary Woodward. After her parents’ death, Alice Jane lived with a sister in Pinjarra and then at Cottesloe Beach. Alice Jane never married,

travelled to Europe and probably studied overseas, as she spent some years abroad.

She was a competent painter in oils in the style of Constable (**plate 28**). She became a painter member of the WA Society of Arts and in 1903 exhibited oil paintings *Calm Cottesloe Beach*, *River Path*, *Near Cottesloe*, *Reflections*, *Study of Apples* and a watercolour of *A Storm*. She was a prominent member of the Children’s Protection Society and an energetic worker for the Liberal League. She died of an apopleptic stroke while nursing an ill sister.

Lisetta Vanzetti (1885-19??) was born at Padua, in Italy in 1885 to Domenico and Malvina, née Ricci. This was an old Albaredo d’Adige (Verona) family. Orphaned in 1895, she arrived in WA in 1902 with her sister Mathilde to live with her brothers Francesco, Carlo and Antonio who had arrived earlier to live with their uncle, mining entrepreneur Eugene Vanzetti who was at the time the richest man in Western Australia (**plate 29**).

She was a student at Perth Technical School where she studied embroidery with Loui Benham. She joined the WA Society of Arts and exhibited embroidery in the 1903 exhibition. In 1906 Lisetta won





the prize for needlework (**plate 30**). When Francesco forsook the artist's life and went farming, she moved with her brother and sister-in-law to Moora in 1912 and married in 1921.

We do not know about the rest of her life or the work of many of the other 'dear Emilys' whose names appear in catalogues, but gradually the stories of some are being uncovered and revealed. This is a contribution to that endeavour.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to the friends and relatives of these women who have supplied the portrait photographs, and interesting details and have allowed me to photograph works made by their relatives. Another of this group was Mattie Furphy who has been profiled earlier.

**Dr Dorothy Erickson** is an historian and practising jeweller with an international reputation. She contributes frequently to *Australiana* and has written many books on West Australian subjects. Her latest publication is *Inspired by Light and Land: Designers and Makers in Western Australia 1829-1969*.

#### NOTES

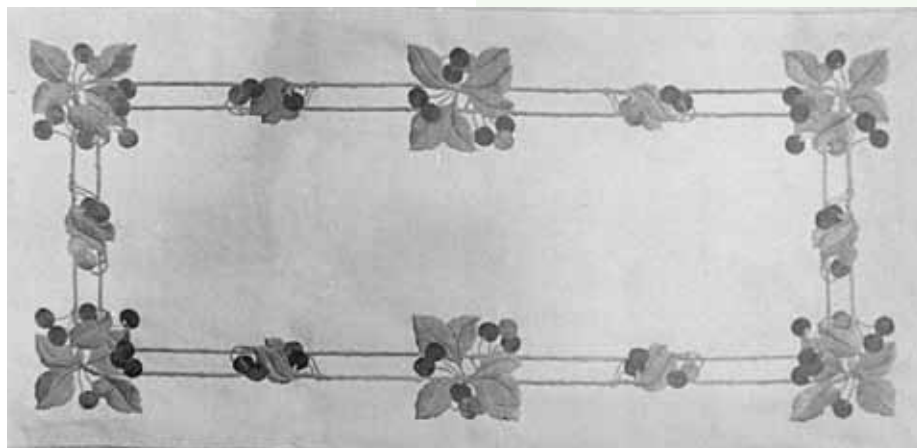
- 1 "The Woman's Part in Domestic Decoration", *Magazine of Art*, 1881 pp 462-3.
- 2 Alan Crawford, *CR Ashbee: architect, designer and romantic socialist*, Yale UP 2005, p 144.
- 3 May Vivienne, *Travels in Western Australia: Being a Description of the Various Cities and owns, Goldfields and Agricultural Districts of that State*. London, Heinemann, 1902, p 29.
- 4 Exhibition catalogue 1896.
- 5 *Western Mail* 7 Apr 1900, p 9.
- 6 "Socialites", *The Herald* 28 May 1901.
- 7 Robert Pascoe, *Peppermint Grove: Western Australia's Capital Suburb*. Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1983, p 112.
- 8 *West Australian* 20 Nov 1912, p 8.
- 9 *West Australian* 7 Dec 1898, p 5.

#### 29

*The Vanzetti family*, 1906. Lisetta is on the left in the back row, photograph

#### 30

Lisetta Vanzetti (1885-19??), *embroidery* exhibited in 1906. This won the embroidery prize



# A “Grecian” colonial cedar chair

We all relish finding an unrecognised treasure in an out-of-the-way place. John Watkins discusses a chair bought at a country auction, and suggests that, during its 185 years, it may have travelled all the way from Woolley’s workshop in Hobart to the little village of Wooli in northern NSW.

**1**  
Cedar chair of Neo-Classical style, c 1827–28, bought at a house contents auction in March 2013 at Lawrence, Clarence River, NSW. Ht 83 cm. Private collection

**2**  
Mr Gallagher’s weatherboard house at Lawrence, home of the chair for many years, at the time of the March 2013 contents sale

## JOHN D. WATKINS

When I was visiting Wooli in northern NSW during April 2013, my cousin Rhonda, a retired art teacher, wanted me to meet Ian Dobbin, a friend of her late father who shared my interest in Australian furniture and house restoration. They wanted to show me ‘something of interest’ that Ian had bought at a local house auction.

They arrived in the evening. To my surprise, Ian lifted from the back of his ute a colonial cedar chair with sabre legs and of very early appearance (**plate 1**). My immediate response was “It looks to be

about 1830.” “Yes,” said Ian “and there is one just like it at Old Government House at Parramatta!”

We compared it to a carver chair of very similar design, now at Parramatta and said (I have not sighted their evidence for this provenance) to be originally from Government House, Hobart, illustrated in John Hawkins’ series of articles in *Australiana* on Government House, Hobart.<sup>1</sup> Could Ian’s chair have once been part of the furnishings of Tasmania’s Government House? We have corresponded numerous times since, and I have recommended holding off on any serious ‘restoration’ given its importance.





## The sale

The March 2013 auction of the contents of a weatherboard house with bull-nose veranda at 2 Manton's Lane, Lawrence, 20 km north-east of Grafton (**plate 2**), described the lot simply as a cedar chair. The elderly gentleman owner, Mr Gallagher, was using the chair as his telephone table in the hallway. The auction was not well attended, as early in the year the Clarence River had been in flood, the house sale had been delayed and the contents sale also delayed. The hammer price was \$100. After the auction, the chair rode to its new home in the tray of the ute on a back road, as the ferry service across the Clarence was halted due to flooding. Luckily the chair did not get wet.

Mr Gallagher had been in failing health and unfortunately passed away two weeks after the sale. Family members were unable to provide any history other than that Mr Gallagher, who had lived in the home for more than 50 years, had owned the chair for many years.

Several other cedar pieces were in the sale. A cedar wardrobe with two arched panelled doors, hanging space inside and one long drawer below, on simple turned feet, dating from about 1870, sold for \$1,200.

## The chair

The cedar dining chair is 83 cm high, with curved sabre legs in the Greek Revival style popular in the early 19th century. The carved swag-shaped top rail (**plate 3**) is framed at either end with carved swirls which end in four stylised fronds springing from a single ring (**plate 6a**). The mid rail is reeded in four bands.

The chair seat has at least three intact covers and possibly more. Layer 3 is a black faux leather cover possibly 1880s (**plate 1**). It has not yet been removed. The chair has a drop-in seat – there are no cross or corner supports in the drop-in frame. On the upper side on each of the four seat support rails (sides and back) is the Roman numeral I cut by a half-inch chisel (**plate 4**). No other marks are visible – though what is under the black seat cover is not yet known.

3

Cedar chair, detail of top rail

4

Cedar chair, chair rail with half-inch chisel mark Roman numeral "I"



Along the outside of both supporting side rails, pieces of cedar have been screwed in later to provide support for the rear leg joints, which have weakened with age. Underneath, old steel brackets also support the rear leg joints. The top rail and other parts of the chair all appear in reasonable condition.

The cedar is fine grained, light in weight but of apparent sound quality with no obvious chips or cracks other than the wear to the seat supporting rail joints. The chair is unrestored, but was re-polished with shellac many years ago, and appears to have retained in places an earlier if not original polish.

## Stylistic comparisons

Though sabre-legged chairs are rare in colonial Australian furniture, several exist with a very similar ancient Greek *klismos* shape and neo-classical carving. The form of the chair with sabre legs and the frond carvings to the top rail match a carver and two dining chairs of Tasmanian origin, now at Old Government House Parramatta (**plate 5**).<sup>2</sup> I inspected these chairs at Old Government House; the carving appears to be deeper and finer in these chairs. There is also a minor variation in detail - double rings vs single rings at the base of the four fronds on the top rail carving (**plate 6b**). Such variations could be explained as the work of different carvers.

In turn, the Old Government House chairs are closely related to four drawing room chairs still preserved in the Executive Council Room of Government

House Hobart, though these have a carved rather than reeded mid rail. John Hawkins suggested that the three chairs at Parramatta may be part of the set of 24 dining chairs originally ordered for Government House, Hobart, in 1827. He suggested that the drawing room chairs still remaining at Government House Hobart were differentiated from the dining room chairs by the different forms of the mid-rails (**plate 7**). The numbering by half-inch chisel is identical to the method of numbering on the others described.

While Hawkins identified a set of dining room chairs and a set of drawing room chairs in Government House Hobart, the chair from Lawrence at 83 cm appears to be shorter than both of those, though the seat height is the usual 41 cm. This chair may represent a third set of a very similar design to the two sets from Government House, Hobart.

We remain convinced that this recently discovered chair is connected with the other versions extant in Hobart and Parramatta and probably from the same workshop – which Hawkins believes was that of Hobart cabinet-maker Joseph William Woolley, who supplied the “Trafalgar” chairs to the Tasmanian Government in 1827–28 at a price of £2 15s each.<sup>3</sup> At this time, sabre legs would have been old-fashioned in London, where contemporary English design pattern books were nearly all advocating turned legs.



## Provenance

So how did the early colonial cedar chair c 1827 with sabre legs arrive at Lawrence on the Clarence?

Such a chair could have been purchased more recently from Tasmania by a collector – but this appears unlikely. The previous owner was not a collector as such – the chair had become a utilitarian object along with his other cedar furniture. It had probably been in use for many years as a telephone table – it was not a collector’s object.

Though the Australian red cedar from the Clarence (or the “Big River” as it was originally named and reported by escaped convict Richard Craig) was prized throughout the Australian colonies, the chair is not of local Clarence River origin – it is too early in form and too sophisticated.

Several early homes nearby include those built by the Small family, who sent the sailing vessel *Susan* to the Big River on 5 May 1838 with the escaped convict Richard Craig to cut cedar. The reports on the journey describe the banks of either side to be “thickly covered with the finest cedar”.<sup>4</sup> The Smalls established the cedar industry on the Clarence and lived on Small’s (now Woodford) Island. There was two-way trade between Sydney and the



6a



6b



6c

### 5

Cedar dining chair now at Old Government House, Parramatta. Ht 86 cm. Collection: National Trust of Australia (NSW), photograph John Watkins, 2013

### 6

Detail of carving on top rail

- (a) Chair from Lawrence
- (b) Dining chair now at Old Government House Parramatta
- (c) Drawing room chair from Government House, Hobart.



Clarence – cedar was shipped south and other goods shipped north.

The cedar timber for furniture-making in Tasmania was imported from NSW, as red cedar does not grow in Tasmania. But at that time the chair would have still been in Tasmania and probably made of finer grained cedar growing further south. The Small family home was on the island in the 1840s: a house is still there but there is no known connection between Mr Gallagher and those homes.

The history of the cedar wardrobe is the first clue to the likely trail. The owner's son confirmed to Ian that it had been purchased for \$180 with competitive bidding from Mr Gallagher's brother-in-law at a large auction held in Grafton on 10 March 1973, when the belongings of three elderly siblings – Bill, Wilfred and Fanny Zuill – from a prominent Clarence River family were auctioned.<sup>5</sup> The sale included a large number of cedar pieces (**plate 8**).

Their father William Arthur Zuill (1867–1942) was MLA for Clarence for two terms between 1915 and 1920.<sup>6</sup> The son of John Zuill and Janet Anderson, he was principal of W A Zuill Auctioneers. John Zuill had arrived on the Clarence River in the 1860s and became the owner of Southgate and Sportsman's Creek cattle stations.<sup>7</sup> The Crown land sale of the original allotments at the village of Wooli, on the coast near Grafton was conducted by W A Zuill in 1923. Many of the allotments were purchased by my grandparent's extended family members – the Lee and Collett families who were also graziers in the Clarence district, and contemporaries.

The chair is too early and possibly too refined to be in the home of grazier John Zuill, but for a prominent businessman and Member of Parliament it is of a quality which, together with the stylistic link to chairs at Government House Tasmania, would be a desirable piece of furniture. It is interesting to speculate that this side chair, and possibly a suite of them, may once have been in the home of W A Zuill in Grafton. As an auctioneer, Mr Zuill would have been accustomed to sales of furniture. Since early colonial times, sales of fine furniture have always been well attended.

**7**  
A single cedar dining chair remains from the 48 chairs ordered for Government House in Hobart in 1827. This chair has a plain centre rail and a reeded front rail. Collection Government House, Hobart, photo courtesy J B Hawkins Antiques

**8**  
Auction notice Zuill family belongings, *Daily Examiner* (Grafton), 8 March 1973



**John D. Watkins** is the Commercial Director of Mirabela Nickel Ltd which operates the Santa Rita nickel sulphide mine in Brazil.

#### NOTES

1. J B Hawkins, "The Creation and Furnishing of Government House, Hobart by Lt Governors Sorell, Arthur and Franklin between 1817-1843. Part II - Arthur (1824-1836)", *Australiana*, May 2009 vol 31 no 2, 15-33. <http://www.jbhawkinsantiques.com/articles/Furniture>
2. K Fahy & A Simpson, *Australian Furniture* pl 110.
3. Hawkins, *op cit* p 24
4. *Sydney Monitor* 4 July 1838 p 2; see Brett J Stubbs, *A Thematic History of the City of Grafton*, Clarence Valley Council, Grafton, 2007 p 9.
5. *Daily Examiner* (Grafton), 8 March 1973; archival research by Ian Dobbin
6. <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parliament/members.nsf/ec78138918334ce3ca256ea200077f5d/31131852971e897dc a256e630011a330?OpenDocument>
7. "Death of Mr John Zuill", *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* 27 Nov 1909 p 4

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# Australian cartography: a numismatic perspective



1

**Obverse:** laureate head of Antoninus Pius, facing right, AD 138-161

**Reverse:** Egyptian shrine with two columns with papyrus capitals, supporting arched pediment, disk and uraei on; within a seated statue of Isis, facing right, wearing horns, disk and plumes, suckling Harpokrates (Horus) who wears the skhent (crown of upper and lower Egypt).

Metal: bronze Size: 33 mm

Mint: Alexandria, Egypt

## PETER LANE

For centuries, coins and medals have depicted maps of Australia, although rarely if at all have they been studied by scholars. Perhaps this is because of their limited contribution to cartography, as they were used mainly in a political sense. Perhaps collectors and academics are simply unaware of their existence. All these pieces are scarce and some very rare.

Rather than telling the story of mapping and charting our coastline, which has been recorded elsewhere many times, I have focused on why they were issued. There are no catalogues on this subject. The specimens illustrated here are not a full listing of this topic but are representative.

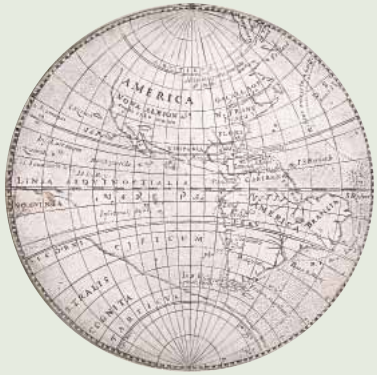
This article also records two associated pieces for the sake of completeness. The specimens date from AD 149, when the Old World concept of a southern land was first thought of, up to the mid-1820s when the world coastlines were virtually fully mapped.

## 1 Antoninus Pius, bronze drachm, Alexandria Mint, Egypt, Year 12 of reign (circa AD 148/149)

A world map was drawn in Alexandria in AD 150 and is known as the Ptolemy map after the cartographer Claudius Ptolemy who created it. This world map was the first to show a great southern land mass. This map was lost but rediscovered in Italy in the Middle Ages. Claudius Ptolemy would have used coins like this one of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, as they circulated in Egypt and the Roman Empire during his lifetime.



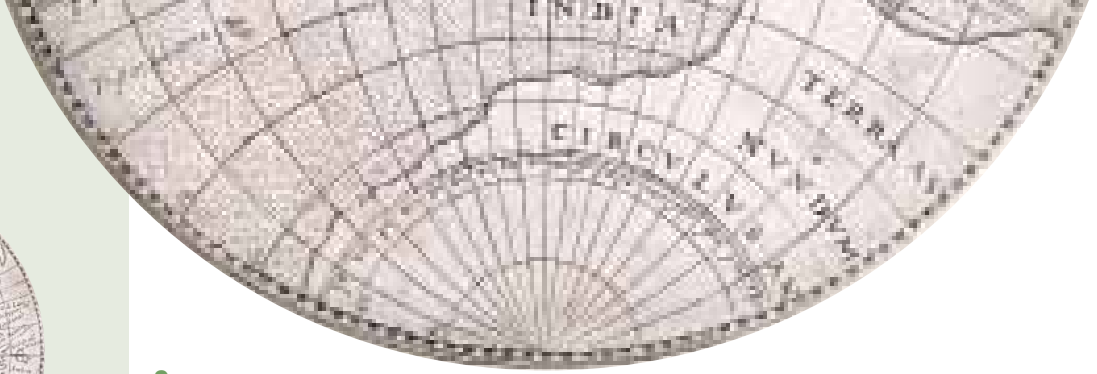




## 2 Drake medal (hand engraved) c. 1580

The engraving on the medal is usually attributed to Michael Mercator (c 1565/70–1600). Other contenders to have engraved the medal are Jodocus Hondius (1563–1612), born Wakken (Belgium), arrived in England 1584, left 1594 and lived remainder of his life in Amsterdam, or “F.G.”, a French engraver possibly associated with Richard Hakluyt. The main argument in favour of Mercator is that one medal has his name on it. The date of the Drake medal has always been circa 1580. I suggest it may have been created later, perhaps 1584 to 1600, as Mercator would have only been 10 or 15 years of age in 1580, and Jodocus Hondius only 17.

The Drake medal, of which only nine are known, was engraved to celebrate the first circumnavigation of the globe. The two islands that seem to be tucked into the Gulf of Carpentaria (not yet recorded by Europeans) are named Petan and Iaua [Java] minor; the latter and larger island is thought to be Lombok or possibly Bali.



**2 Obverse:** Map of the western hemisphere, regions named, latitude and longitude lines. Australia-Antarctica shown as one land mass. The large island to the north is named NO. GUINEA. The map records the route taken by Sir Francis Drake when he circumnavigated the globe.

**Reverse:** Map of the eastern hemisphere, regions named, latitude and longitude lines. Australia-Antarctica shown as one land mass and this mass is recorded as TERRA AV[STRALIS]NVNDVM. Two small islands to the north of Australia are recorded as Petan and Iaua minor (Java). The map records the route taken by Sir Francis Drake when he circumnavigated the globe.

Collection: Dixon Library, State Library of NSW, ZDN/M1144a & b

Metal: silver Size: 68 mm

## 3 Hesse-Kassel thaler 1669

Princess Hedwig Sophia (1623–1683) was the younger daughter of George Wilhelm, Margrave of Brandenburg (1619 – 1640), and his wife Charlotte Elisabeth of Palatine-Rhine. In 1649 Hedwig Sophia married Landgrave Wilhelm VI of Hesse-Kassel and became his consort. She bore him six children and, with the death of her husband in 1663, the Landgravine ruled from 1663 to 1670 as Regent for her eldest son Wilhelm VII (b 1651, ruled 1663 –1670) who died without issue, and then for his younger brother Karl I (b 1654, ruled 1670–1730).

**3 Obverse:** An armorial shield with hat above, all seeing eye with JOHOVA in Hebrew above, ropes around the shield, Inscription around HEDWIG SOPHIA. V:G:G:L:Z:H:G:A:C:S:P: M:Z:B:W:V:U. REGENTIN (Hedwig Sophia, By the grace of God, Landgravine of Hesse, born of the electoral line of the Margraves of Brandenburg, widow, guardian and Regent.)

**Reverse:** A winged heart, sword cutting a cord from world, around rim DISSOLVOR ANNO 1669. The continents are named: VRQPA [Europe] TARTARIA ASIA AFRICA and HOLLAN NO [an abridged form of Nova (or New) Holland]. Cities appear as circles and Australia has three imaginary ones. Animals populate the land: elephants, lions [?] and horses [?]. A whale [?], a sea monster below Australia and four ships decorate the oceans.

Metal: silver Size: 43 mm





#### 4 Charles II British Colonisation medal 1670

**Obverse:** conjoined busts of Charles II and Catherine of Braganza facing right, he wearing a breast plate and she draped. Around, CAROLVS ET CATHARINA REX ET REGINA [Charles and Catherine king and queen].

**Reverse:** a globe depicting all the continents; Antarctic and Australia (west coast only) joined as one land mass. Around: DIFFVSVS IN ORBE BRITANNVS 1670 [Briton spread over the world]. Metal: silver Size: 41mm Engraver: John Roettier (1631–1703), born Antwerp, arrived in England 1661. Reference: Betts 44.

This medal may allude to the dowry brought with Charles II's marriage, which laid the foundation of the British Empire in India, or possibly to the acquisition of territory notably in North America and Asia.

Charles II (1630–1685) was restored in 1660 as king of Great Britain. In 1670 he married Catherine of Braganza (1638–1705). Catherine was born into the House of Braganza, the most senior noble house in Portugal which became Portugal's royal house after Catherine's father, John, 8th Duke of Braganza, was proclaimed King John IV, after deposing the House of Habsburg in 1640.



#### 5 Duchess of Portsmouth medal c. 1673

**Obverse:** Duchess facing right, around, LVCIA DVCISSA PORTSMOVTHEISIS [Lucy, Duchess of Portsmouth]

**Reverse:** Cupid seated, facing right, around OMNIA VINCIT [[love] conquers all].

Metal: silver

Size: 28 mm

Engraver: George Bower (1664–1689)

Mint: Royal Mint London.

This satirical medal commemorates the title of Duchess of Portsmouth conferred on Louise de K rouaille (1649–1734) on 19 August 1673. The Duchess was a mistress of Charles II, who gave her the titles of Baroness Petersfield, Countess of Fareham and Duchess of Portsmouth. Around 1675 she brought to Charles' attention a young Frenchman who proposed a solution to the longitude problem. While the French proposal was ineffective, it led Charles to establish the Royal Observatory, Greenwich.



#### 6 Queen Christina medal 1680

**Obverse:** Head of Christina facing right, around: REGINA CHRISTINA. On truncation: IH [engraver's initials]

**Reverse:** Eastern Hemisphere, around: NE MI BISOGNA NE MI BASTA [I do not need it, it is not enough for me.]

Metal: bronze

Size: 36 mm

Engraver: Giovanni Hamerani (1649–1705)

Mint: Rome

Christina was born 1622 in Stockholm and died in 1689 in Rome. She was Queen Regent of Sweden from 1632, abdicating her throne in 1654 and converting from Lutheran to Roman Catholic later in 1654. She spent her later years in Rome and was a benefactor of the arts. She is one of the few women buried in the Vatican grotto. Christina's first cousin on her mother's side was Hedwig Sophia of Brandenburg who issued the 1669 Hesse-Kassel thaler.







## 7 Naples ducato 1684

**Obverse:** Bust of Charles II bareheaded and draped, armoured collar of the Golden Fleece, facing right. Around, CAROLVS II DG HISPANAR NEAP REX [Charles II by the grace of God King of Spain, Naples]. Below bust IM [engraver's initials].

**Reverse:** A western and eastern hemisphere with a mace between, a crown above, with a banner above with the words, UNVS NON SVFFICIT [One is not sufficient] Below, AG/A. 1684.

Metal: silver Size: 41.5 mm

Engraver: IM [John Montemein]

Mint: Naples, mint officers: AG [Andrea Giovane] and A [Marco Antonio Ariani]

Reference: Davenport 4045

This coin is believed to be one of the inspirations for the later pillar dollar of Latin America. Charles II's (1661–1700) father died in 1665 and his mother acted as regent until she died in 1696, due originally to his youth then his mental incapacity (due to inbreeding). He then ruled in his own right until his death in 1700. His realm included Southern Netherlands, Spain's overseas empire in the Americas, Naples and Sicily. The two hemispheres may allude to his territories around the world.



## 8 Mexico Mint 'hemisphere' dollar (8 reales) 1769

**Obverse:** Crowned Spanish coat-of-arms, assayers' initials and value on either side. Latin Legend: CAROLVS III D G HISPAN ET IND REX [Charles III by the Grace of God, King of the Spain and Indies] MF [Assayer's initials] 8

**Reverse:** Crowned hemispheres, between crowned and banner-entwined pillars, all set on the ocean. Around: VTRAQUE VNVM [On both sides Unity] [mint mark] 1769

Photo courtesy Noble Numismatics, sale 92, lot 2774

Metal: silver

Size: 40 mm

Mint: Mexico City

This specimen was struck the year before Captain Cook discovered the east coast of Australia. In 1813, New South Wales holey dollars were struck from Spanish dollars but none are known struck from 'hemisphere' dollars.

The hemisphere dollars were minted from 1732 to 1772 at the Mexico City, Santiago, Lima, Guatemala, Bogotá and Potosi mints.



## 9 New Century medal 1800

**Obverse:** Angel on right holding a parchment with the word ERFAHRUNG [discovery]. A bearded angel with walking stick on left, another parchment below the other with the word AUSTRALIEN [Australia] on it, a telescope (?) and books to the right. Around top, DIE BESTE LEHRERIN [the best teacher]. In exergue engraver's name, C.I. KRUGER. F.

**Reverse:** A globe with the words SACHSEN [Saxony] BRAN [Brandenburg] BOEHM [Bohemia] all surrounded by sea, at base a plaque with '1800'. At top DAS SCHEIDENDE IAHRHUNDERT [Turn of the century]

Metal: silver Size: 40 mm

Engraver: C I Kruger Mint: Dresden, Saxony

This medal alludes to the future scientific importance of Australia as seen in 1800 by Germans. Johann Reinhold Forster (1729–98), author and naturalist, who sailed with Lt James Cook, was appointed to a chair at the University of Halle, at the time in the Electorate of Saxony where the medal was minted in the capital, Dresden. This may have created the focus on Australia. Forster had translated, edited or reviewed many accounts of voyages to the Pacific including those of Arthur Phillip, John Hunter and John White.



**Obverse:** Bust of Napoleon Bonaparte wearing breastplate and cloak, facing left. Around: INSCRIBED TO NAPOLEON BONAPARTE BY D. ECCLESTON \* LANCASTER \* On truncation J. HANCOCK.

**Reverse:** Centre, Eastern Hemisphere, with continents named, EUROPE ASIA AFRICA and EASTERN OCEAN (Indian Ocean) [Australia depicted but not named, and Tasmania and the mainland are joined] Around, HE GAVE TO FRANCE LIBERTY TO THE WORLD PEACE in small letters, MDCCCII

Metal: white metal Size: 58 mm Engraver: John Gregory Hancock

Publisher: Daniel Eccleston. Reference: Nobles sale 60, lot 985

## 10 Peace of Amiens medal 1802

The Treaty of Amiens ended hostilities between the French Republic and the United Kingdom during the French Revolutionary Wars. It was signed in Amiens on 25 March 1802; the truce lasted only till 18 May 1803. During this brief cessation of hostilities, Matthew Flinders and Nicholas Baudin met on 8 and 9 April 1802 off the coast of South Australia at Encounter Bay, near the mouth of the Murray River; neither was aware of the treaty but they had documents to allow their ships to travel freely as they were both on exploring and research expeditions.

Daniel Eccleston of Lancaster (1745–1821) was an enlightened radical Quaker and enthusiastic numismatist. The illustrated medal is scarce and not recorded in most major numismatic catalogues. This is not surprising as it is a rare medal; in England at the time there was little interest in acquiring a medal depicting Napoleon as a hero. Eccleston also issued tokens and other medals and had a lifelong interest in Aboriginal rights. This attitude and interest in numismatics is reflected in another of his medals, which depicts George Washington in a suit of armour (a warrior) and an Indian standing with head downcast, with the words 'THE LAND WAS OURS'.

## 11 Thomason's large Hemisphere medal, c. 1820s



**Obverse:** A map of the western hemisphere, with numerous place names, latitude and longitude lines with degrees recorded around the edge.

**Reverse:** A map of the eastern hemisphere, with numerous place names, latitude and longitude lines with degrees recorded around the edge. Australia is shown as one land mass (no Bass Strait). Australia is recorded as NEW HOLLAND and locations named: VAN DIEMANS LAND [sic], Botany B., C. York, Tryal Rocks, Sharks Bay, South Head, and Endeavour Strait.

Metal: white metal Size: 74 mm

Engraver: Thomas Halliday

Mint: Thomason, Birmingham

Reference: Eimer 160/1139a

The engraver Thomas Halliday (c. 1780–1854) trained as an engraver at Matthew Boulton's Soho Mint before establishing his own business in Birmingham c. 1810 to 1842. He engraved dies for many token and medallion makers.

Sir Edward Thomason (c. 1769–1849) originally worked for Matthew Boulton before setting up his own business. In 1800 he became a founding member of the Birmingham Philosophical Society.

Thomason's factory in Birmingham was established in the early 1790s and he is well known for his inventions including a corkscrew he patented in 1802. In 1807 he added a medal and token department. In 1828 his workshop finished a series of 16 medals on scientific subjects, including hemisphere medals. In 1817 he struck a series of Napoleonic medals for James Mudie and this venture proved to be a huge scale failure. By 1822 Sir Charles Forbes and the Colonial Office gave Mudie and his daughters free travel to New South Wales and a land grant.



12 Thomason's small hemisphere medal, c. 1820s

**Obverse:** A map of the western hemisphere, with numerous place names, latitude and longitude lines with degrees recorded around the edge.

**Reverse:** A map of the eastern hemisphere, latitude and longitude lines with degrees recorded around the edge. Australia is named NEW HOLLAND and VAN DIEMANS LAND [sic], and the location of Botany B [Bay] is named. To the north of Australia, Endeavour Strait is named.

Metal: white metal

Size: 51 mm

Engraver: Thomas Halliday

Mint: Thomason, Birmingham

Refer previous medal for further information.



**Acknowledgements**

Matt Cupper, School of Earth Sciences, The University of Melbourne for information on the Drake medal. Noble Numismatics, for supplying the image of the 1769 Spanish dollar: sale 92, lot 2774 and the Mitchell Library for supplying the images of the Drake Medal in the Dixson Library, State Library of NSW; ZDN/M1144a & b

**Peter Lane** is a life member of our Society, Honorary Numismatist at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Secretary of the Numismatic Association of Australia, and a numismatic expert examiner under the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986*. He has focussed his research on exploration medals, hemisphere coins and medals, convict love tokens, and British military medals awarded to those who served in colonial Australia. He has written a history of the AGSA numismatic collection which is envisaged to be published later this year. He can be contacted at [pnj.lane@bigpond.com](mailto:pnj.lane@bigpond.com)

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# A Venetian gondola on Farm Cove?



1

[*Government House Sydney from Mrs Macquarie's Point*], hand-coloured albumen print photograph, c1870, 20.3 x 25.5 cm, mounted on Winsor & Newton prepared mill-board. Collection: Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Sydney.

Colouring photographs by hand added to the attraction of black and white photographs in the 19th century. An 1870s view of Government House from across Farm Cove in Sydney Harbour not only has been coloured, but the artist has added some extra touches, including a gondola cruising off the Governor's residence.



2

Detail of plate 1, showing the gardener's lodge with a painted figure in the doorway

3

John (Johann Nepomuk) Degotardi (1823–1882), [*Government House Sydney from Mrs Macquarie's Point*], photograph, c 1870, carte de visite. Collection: Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection, Historic Houses Trust of NSW



## MEGAN MARTIN

Quite soon after the invention of photography in the 19th century, professional photographers began tinkering with their monochrome images, hand-tinting daguerrotypes and cartes de visite, and sometimes completely overpainting paper prints.

By mid-century the practice had become a genteel pastime for ladies. Books such as *Art Recreations* by Madame L. B. Urbino and Professor Henry Day, published in Boston in 1859, offering instruction in “Photograph painting in Water Colors”, as well as instructions in taxidermy, theorem painting, feather flowers, tamarind-seed work and so on.

A somewhat battered but intriguing example of this art was recently acquired by the Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection. It is an albumen print photograph of Sydney's Government House taken from Mrs Macquarie's Point across Farm Cove, pasted onto an 8x10 inch panel of Winsor & Newton's prepared mill-board (**plate 1**).

The original photograph may have been the work of well-known printer and photographer John Degotardi (1823–1882),<sup>1</sup> who advertised that he took over the George Street photographic studio of his fellow German-speaker William Hetzer in 1867.<sup>2</sup> The following year, swept up by enthusiasm for Australia's first British Royal visit, he decorated his windows with German and Austrian flags and the letter “A” to welcome Queen Victoria's son Prince Alfred Duke of Edinburgh,

and offered photographs of the Duke's ship HMS *Galatea* and her officers, grandly advertising “by appointment, Special Landscape Photographer to H. R. H. the Duke of Edinburgh”.<sup>3</sup>

The photograph shows the garden created on the eastern side of Government House in the 1860s, including a new terrace wall ornamented with 17 vases, a circular fountain basin on the upper terrace, a brick gardener's lodge on the extreme left of the photograph (**plate 2**) and, on the shoreline, the Governor's bathing house. The picture also shows a castellated paling fence surrounding the grounds and a timber shed over the water – probably a boatshed. The original photograph was taken before an arcaded colonnade was added to the eastern side of Government House in 1879-1880.

A number of related views of Government House taken by Degotardi in 1869/1870 are known to exist (**plate 3**). But an amateur photographer named Frederick Allerding (1815–1900) also took photographs of Government House around the same time and one of his photographs is very similar to the overpainted picture (**plate 4**). Allerding was a watchmaker and jeweller who came to Sydney in 1860 from London, where he had settled in 1837 from Hamburg, Germany. At first he was in partnership with Edwin Beckmann in George Street, but in 1861 went into business by himself in Hunter Street, later joined by his son Henry (Heinrich). Frederick Allerding was a committee member of the Amateur Photographic Society of New South Wales established in Sydney in July 1872.





4

F. (Christian Frederick Gottlieb) Allerding (1815–1900), [*Government House Sydney from Mrs Macquarie's Point*], photograph, c 1870, carte de visite. Collection: Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection, Historic Houses Trust of NSW

5

Detail of plate 1, showing a painted figure in a gondola

The unknown amateur artist [she?] has overpainted the waters of Farm Cove, overpainted the sky and enhanced the colour of trees and shrubs, but generally left the stonework of the buildings untouched. She seems to have used oil colours, a technique described in *Art Recreations* with the caution that oils

require an experienced hand. She has added colour to a flag flying from the tower of Government House, and added a second flag nearby (**plate 6**). She has coloured the plants growing in front of the gardener's cottage, coloured a blind in the front window of the cottage and inserted a figure into the doorway (**plate 2**). Another figure has been placed under a tree in the enclosure around the bathhouse.

But the most engaging and unexpected painted addition is the Venetian gondola in the waters below the cottage (**plate 5**). With attendant seagulls;

It is not clear whether the gondolier is male or female, whether the gondola is 'anchored' or just drifting. These are details that even the forensic eye of a digital camera with a macro lens cannot resolve because they have not been delineated by the artist.

The gondola itself is a mystery. Sightings of antipodean gondolas were reported in the 19th century: in Melbourne in the mid-fifties a company called the Upper Yarra Steam Gondola Company operated a small paddle-wheel







6

Detail of plate 1, showing the flags flying over Government House

7

Reverse of plate 1, with Winsor & Newton prepared mill-board label.

steamer which they called a gondola; the English cricket team was rowed around Otago harbour in something called a gondola in 1864; and there was a suggestion in 1868 that the then picturesque Cook's River in Sydney could be made navigable for a small gondola steamer on the Yarra model. It is unlikely that the Farm Cove gondola is related to any of these vessels.

A decade after the photograph was taken, a "complete gondola, with tent, gondolini and small boats" was exhibited at the Melbourne International Exhibition by Napoleone Fassi & Brothers of Venice.<sup>5</sup> But that is a later story.

The tent-less Farm Cove gondola is surely simply a touch of whimsy, deftly realised by a talented amateur artist. Imagine the image framed and hung in a candlelit drawing room – a perfectly convincing little picture.

**Megan Martin** is Head, Collections and Access, Sydney Living Museums (Historic Houses Trust of NSW)

#### NOTES

1 John (Johann Nepomuk) Degotardi, the son of a printer from Graz, was born at Ljubljana in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Trained as an engraver and printer, he and his new wife arrived in Sydney from England in 1853, where he soon set up in business as an engraver and printer,

later winning awards for his landscape photography. See *ADB* 4, 1972, p 40.

2 *Freeman's Journal* 20 Apr 1867 p 15.

3 *SMH* 27 Apr 1868 p 8.

4 The Historic Houses Trust has several different views taken from Mrs Macquarie's Point.

5 *Melbourne International Exhibition, 1880: the official catalogue of the exhibits, with introductory notices of the countries exhibiting*, Melbourne, Mason, Firth & McCutcheon, 1880, vol 2 p 160. The Italian gondolas exhibited were advertised for auction, see *Argus* 23 May 1881 p 2.



8

Winsor & Newton porcelain paint palette, described in trade literature as a 'divided slant' tile, 15.5 x 19cm. Collection: Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection.



# John Rider Roberts

Two years ago, we published a watercolour by John Rider Roberts that is especially important as a visual record of Robert Fowler's industrial pottery, bottle and pipe works at Camperdown in Sydney's inner west. As manufacturing in Australia is replaced by service industries, such manufacturing sites are being obliterated and redeveloped for housing, just as this one has recently been.

Michel Reymond follows up with a look at some of the other works by this surveyor-artist, who recorded landscapes that have now disappeared, and was well regarded in his time.

**1**  
John Rider Roberts (1819/20–1868),  
*On the Barwin [Barwon] River*,  
watercolour 29.7 x 65.5 cm,  
titled, signed and dated 1864.  
Collection Geelong Gallery  
gift of an anonymous donor 1985,  
accession no. 1985.14

## MICHEL REYMOND

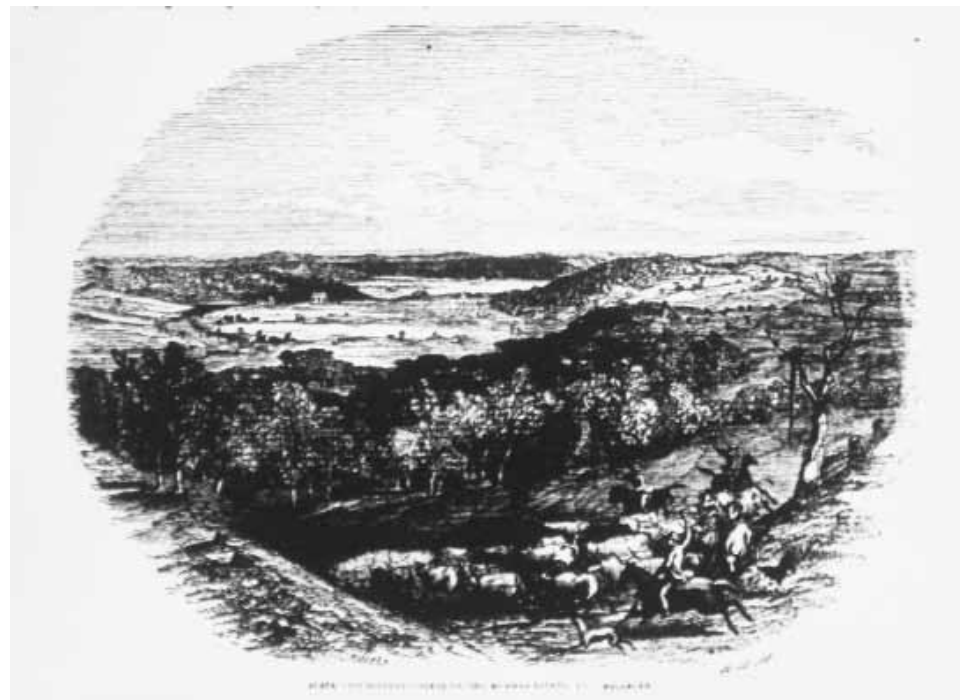
A documentary watercolour by John Rider Roberts (1819/20–1868) of *Fowler's Pottery, Camperdown*, NSW dated 1865 (**plate 3**) was the subject of an informative article in the February 2012 issue of *Australiana*.<sup>1</sup> Author Geoff Ford, the well-known ceramics researcher and collector, located the description of the pottery which captioned an engraving, taken from the watercolour, published in *The Illustrated Sydney News* and he added a biography of Roberts, extracted from *The Dictionary of Australian Artists*.<sup>2</sup>

Deutscher and Hackett's November 2011 auction which included this narrative scene, accompanied by extensive catalogue notes, attracted a lot of interest and drew attention to J. R. Roberts and his art. Roberts's watercolours had already been identified in the collections of the Mitchell Library and the Dixon Collection at the State Library of NSW as well as the Geelong Gallery. He is now also represented in the National Library of Australia, which bought the *Fowler's Pottery* watercolour.<sup>3</sup> It had belonged to the Fowler family, who had probably commissioned the work from the artist.



2

John Rider Roberts (1819/20–1868),  
“Australian scenery. – Scene on  
the Mummel Estate near Goulburn.”  
Engraving, *Illustrated Sydney News* 20  
May 1854 p 1



3

John Rider Roberts (1819/20–1868),  
*Fowler's Pottery, Camperdown*, signed  
and dated 1865. Watercolour 25.0 x  
42.5 cm. This watercolour was the basis  
for an engraving published and described  
in *The Illustrated Sydney News*,  
16 October 1865, p 5. Sold Deutscher  
and Hackett, Melbourne 30 November  
2011 lot 69. Collection: National Library of  
Australia, purchased 2011. Photo courtesy  
Deutscher and Hackett

Roberts was a surveyor, architect  
and probably land speculator as well  
as a landscape painter and newspaper  
illustrator, most notably for *The  
Illustrated Sydney News*. This illustrated  
weekly first appeared on Saturday, 8  
October 1853 and ran until 24 June  
1854. It recommenced publication as a  
monthly on 16 June 1864.

Like many others, Roberts may have  
emigrated from England to Australia  
as a result of the gold rushes, seeing  
opportunities to use his skills as a  
surveyor, architect and artist in the rich,  
rapidly growing colonies. Apart from his  
Sydney paintings dated 1853, he first  
comes to notice in December 1853, when  
*The Illustrated Sydney News* announces:

VIEW OF SYDNEY.– Early in  
January we shall present all our  
regular Subscribers with a copy of  
a large View of THE CITY OF  
SYDNEY AND PORT JACKSON,  
now being engraved in the first style  
by W. G. Mason, from an elaborate  
drawing by J. Roberts, Esq.<sup>4</sup>





#### 4

John Rider Roberts (1819/20–1868),  
*Watson's Bay and the Heads*,  
watercolour, signed and dated l.l.

John R. Roberts 1863.

Davidson's Auctions, sold 8 March  
2008. Photo courtesy Robert Davidson,  
Davidson's Auctions, Sydney

From March 1854, Roberts began advertising as a surveyor at 4 Jamison Street in Sydney, the advertisements appearing weekly until 29 April in *The Illustrated Sydney News* and elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> In May, he and Henry Haege announced in the press that they had entered a partnership as surveyors and civil engineers, operating from Haege's offices at 2 Jamison Street.<sup>6</sup> By 13 May, intending *Illustrated Sydney News* advertisers were being advised to contact Roberts & Haege directly with "instructions for illustrating views, ground plans, elevations etc".<sup>7</sup>

His close relationship with this publication continued, with the weekly illustrating another artwork in May 1854, a view of the Mummel Estate near Goulburn, "taken from a large water colour drawing, by J.R. Roberts" (**plate 2**).<sup>8</sup> Roberts combined his surveying and sketching, this image also being used to sell this real estate. In December, Roberts had collected funds from more than a dozen subscribers to support the Balmain Regatta.<sup>9</sup>

In 1855 he was living at Rushcutters Bay, in 1856 advertising from his Bridge Street office to buy land at Waverley.<sup>10</sup> In August 1856, W. Dean was auctioning land in the St George area, for which the plans could be inspected at their premises and at J. R. Roberts's office in Bridge Street.<sup>11</sup> The next year, he warned that people cutting or removing timber from the Norwood Estate at Petersham would be prosecuted, giving his addresses as Petersham;<sup>12</sup> when Richard Peek auctioned the land, Roberts could provide plans and information to intending purchasers.<sup>13</sup>

His personal life was less than happy. On 29 June 1855, Judge Therry accepted the surrender of his estate with net debts of £901. After a series of meetings, the Insolvent Court resolved:<sup>15</sup>

*In the estate of John R. Roberts, a third meeting. Claims amounting to £843 1s. 6d. were proved, and the official assignee read his report. The creditors allowed insolvent to retain his household furniture and wearing apparel, subject to any claim the assignee may have for rent and other expenses, and directed the assignee to sell the interest of the insolvent in certain land mentioned in his report.*

This loss was compounded by the loss of a 17-day-old infant who died on 4 July 1854.<sup>16</sup> A son William was born to John and his wife Emma in 1856, and a daughter Isabel in 1862, but both died in infancy;<sup>17</sup> there may have been other children, not yet identified. His wife's mother, Harriet Grimston, died



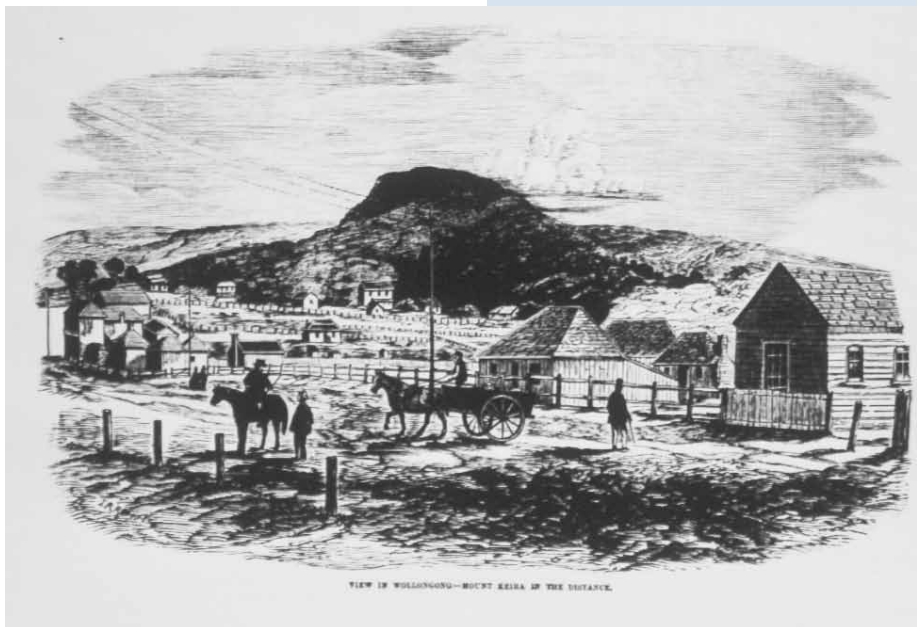
in London on 16 September 1864.<sup>18</sup> Roberts himself died either at Newtown on 30 June 1868<sup>19</sup> or at the Sydney Infirmary on 1 July 1868<sup>20</sup> at the age of 48 from “dropsy” (oedema), after several months’ illness.

It seems that between 1855 and 1864, his main activity related to his surveying. His art begins to be mentioned again in 1864, coinciding with the re-birth of *The Illustrated Sydney News*. Although photographs (by Wilhelm Hetzer and others) were becoming increasingly common as the basis for *The Illustrated Sydney News*’ engravings, Roberts, among other artists such as Samuel Calvert, Frederick Cubitt, Frederick Grosse and F. C. Terry, continued to provide original paintings as fodder for the newspaper’s engravers. He and Walter George Mason (the proprietor of the newspaper) engraved a view of Glen Stuart in South Australia after a sketch by Colonel Commandant J.H. Biggs; this one bears just his initials “J.R.R.”<sup>21</sup>

Roberts was a regular contributor to the now-monthly newspaper, often providing contributions of scenes in the country, Queensland or Victoria. In 1865, his drawings included “Moore College, Liverpool N.S.W.”;<sup>22</sup> “Wesleyan Church, Armidale”;<sup>23</sup> and “Opening of the Queensland Railway”.<sup>24</sup> An 1866 “View in Wollongong – Mount Keira in the distance,” illustrated in the issue of 16 March 1866, is described in the text without attribution, but carries the signature “J.R. Roberts” at lower left (**plate 5**).<sup>25</sup>

Some other works are mentioned in rival newspapers, such as this painted scene of Sydney Harbour:<sup>26</sup>

FINE ARTS.— We beg to call attention to a well executed picture of the Champion Oarsmen of Australia, Messrs. M’Grath and Punch, now on view at their establishment in George-street. The men have been photographed by Messrs. Baldwin, of Hunter-street, in a very superior manner, and appear in the act of starting for a race. The background, painted by Mr. J. R. Roberts, embraces a



really well delineated view of Fort Macquarie, Government House, and that portion of the city, extending from the National School to the Flagstaff Hill. As a work of art it is well worthy of inspection. The likenesses are excellent, and the truthful manner in which one of the prettiest sites in the harbour has been worked in, deserve every praise. We believe that the picture is to be sent to England to be engraved, and published by subscription.

In May, the newspaper reported that the lithograph had been completed in Sydney:<sup>27</sup>

The background takes in a view of Government House and Port Macquarie, being not only a most careful representation of the spot itself, but also forming a most artistic arrangement for showing off the principal figures in the foreground. The lithographing, of which we cannot speak in too high terms, was executed by Messrs Grouchy [Gruchy] and Leigh, of Wynyard-street, from a water-colour drawing by Mr. J R Roberts, whose elaborate, careful, and highly-finished work we have before had occasion to notice. The likenesses are remarkably truthful ... They were carefully

## 5

John Rider Roberts (1819/20–1868), “View in Wollongong – Mount Keira in the distance”. Engraving, *Illustrated Sydney News* 16 March 1866 p 9.

copied in the first instance by the artist from photographs, then by a careful and complicated process, transferred in the same way to the stone. The original painting is in the possession of Messrs M’Grath and Punch and will be published, in the course of a few days, by Messrs. Baldwin of Hunter-street.

On the night of 29 June 1865, St Mary’s Cathedral was destroyed by fire. *The Illustrated Sydney News*, having shown the building entire in April, used the same artist’s adaptation with the fire raging, but Roberts made his own interpretation:

The destruction of St. Mary’s Cathedral has called forth the talent of several local artists. Among the most recent productions is a drawing by Mr. J. R. Roberts, which has been engraved on wood by Mr. F. Cubitt,



**6** John Rider Roberts (1819/20–1868), *Kirribilli as seen from Bennelong Point*, watercolour, signed l.r. “J R Roberts 1864”. Private collection

and printed on letter paper. The picture is boldly drawn, and tolerably well engraved, and will give to persons at a distance some idea of the terrible grandeur of the late conflagration.<sup>28</sup>

Roberts was one of three professional artists from NSW – alongside Conrad Martens and Frederick Terry – who submitted landscape paintings to the 1866 Intercolonial Exhibition in Melbourne.

In the department of art the Exhibition does not adequately represent the state and the resources of art in this colony. There is one picture by Mr Conrad Martens, one by Mr F C Terry, one by Mr. J R Roberts, one by an amateur (Mrs. C T. Geddye), and two by Mrs. Thurston. These were painted for competition for two prizes awarded by the Commissioners to the best painting illustrating colonial scenery.<sup>29</sup>

Reports of his work did not end with his death in 1868. On 16 August 1876, Bradley, Newton & Lamb auctioned the contents of “Sunnyside” at St Leonards on Sydney’s North Shore, the home of Henry Austin. Austin was a Sydney wool broker, author of a widely-read monthly wool report, president of North Sydney Cricket Club, committee member of the Australian Jockey Club and prominent Roman Catholic layman. He appears to have been moving to Woollahra.

Among the household furnishings, watercolours by Roberts and Terry were promoted in newspaper advertisements:<sup>30</sup>

**CHOICE WATER COLOUR PAINTINGS.**

**J. R. ROBERTS.**

**EXQUISITE** Water Colour Painting in gilt frame—

Subject “Scene in New England”

**VERY FINE** Water Colour Painting, in gilt frame—

Subject—“The Blow Hole, Kiama.”

...

**F. C. TERRY.**

**EXQUISITE** Water Colour Painting in gilt frame

Subject—“Moonlight Scene off Long Bay.”

**J.R. ROBERTS.**

**EXQUISITE** Water Colour Painting, in Gilt Frame

Subjects “Droving Cattle, Liverpool Ranges.”

**F. C. TERRY.**

**VERY CHOICE** Water Colour in Gilt Frame

Subject— “Scene in Illawarra.”

**J. R. ROBERTS.**

**CHOICE** Water Colour, in gilt Frame

Subject— “Double Bay”

Ditto ditto ditto

Subject- “Double Bay”

Companion picture, to Lot 112.

Ditto ditto ditto

Subject— “Cattle Drinking on the Barwon.”

The auctioneers, as ever, added their own “puff piece”:

**IMPORTANT NOTICE.**— It will be noticed by connoisseurs and those who are acquainted with our best masters, that many of the valuable works included in this collection are from the brush of the unapproachable “TERRY,” whose decease is ever to be lamented. It must be borne in mind that his productions have now an increased



interest and value, and it is hoped for the sake of high art in this colony that his pictures will realise prices commensurate with his genius and power, and fall to the lot of someone worthy of them. “J. R. ROBERTS” is a well-known artist of great ability, his pictures are so beautifully executed that the critics pronounce them almost perfect works of art.

Henry Austin had exhibited his four watercolour paintings by J.R. Roberts, in the extensive non-competitive art section, at the Sydney Intercolonial Exhibition of 1870. The are recorded in the catalogue as numbers 2700-2703.

## Extant works

Roberts's extant paintings are watercolour landscapes of scenes in Sydney, New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. The Mitchell Library holds five watercolours by Roberts:

- *[View of house in a bay]*, watercolour 20.3 x 43.5 cm, signed John R. Roberts, dated 1853?, SV\*/Art/88, from the collection of David Scott Mitchell;
- *[View of The Rocks]*, watercolour 25 x 36.1 cm, signed John Roberts and dated 1853, V1/1853/1
- *Fort Macquarie and New Government House from Farm Cove*, watercolour 25.7 x 30.3 cm, signed J.R. Sydney and dated 1853, SV/293;
- *Harbour Scene [View of Neutral Bay, including Craignathan and Ben Boyd's Woolstore]*, watercolour 25.3 x 35.6 cm, signed J Roberts and dated 1853, from the collection of Sir William Dixon, DL8;
- *St George's Bridge, Balloone [i.e. Balonne] River, Queensland*, watercolour, 30.4 x 71.6 cm, signed John R. Roberts and dated 1865, XV4B/ St Geo/1.

In 1985, an anonymous donor gave the Geelong Gallery a watercolour entitled “*On the Barwin [ie Barwon] River*” signed and dated 1864 (**plate 1**), which came from the extensive collection of George Cowlishaw, sold in Sydney by Sotheby's in 1984.<sup>31</sup>

Although titled “On the Barwin” [sic], this is probably the painting of “Cattle drinking on the Barwon” from the collection of Henry Austin, auctioned in 1876.

Roberts's watercolours have seldom appeared at auction during the last few decades. This prompted the writer to search *Australian Art Auction Records* to see what auction sales might be recorded for this artist.<sup>32</sup>

As well as *Fowler's Pottery*, the following watercolours are listed:

1. *Sydney Heads from Balgowlah Heights*, sold 16 September 1981, Rushton Fine Arts, Sydney.

2. *Sydney Harbour from the Wharf at Point Piper looking towards Darling Point*, sold 13 September 1984, Christie's. The subject was subsequently re-identified as *Kirribilli as seen from Bennelong Point* (**plate 6**); Kirribilli House and Admiralty House are shown prominently.

3. *On the Barwon River*, signed and dated 1864, sold 16 October 1984, Sotheby's, now in the Geelong Gallery (**plate 1**).

4. *At Clifton*, sold 24 November 1999, Christie's. However, Christie's catalogue of 16 October 1984 records *At Clifton* as being painted by Tom Roberts, not John Roberts, so this *Australian Art Auction Records* entry appears to be incorrect.

5. *Watson's Bay and the Heads*, signed and dated 1863, sold 8 March 2008, Davidson Auctions, Sydney (**plate 4**).

It is probable that some of his works were commissions from building owners, such as Enoch Fowler, wanting a record of their achievements. Some of Roberts's extant paintings of Sydney Harbour may have formed part of a series from *The Illustrated Sydney News* begun in August 1864 with Frederic Terry's “View of Port Jackson no. 1”.<sup>33</sup>

As Geoff Ford has demonstrated, the key to identifying and dating at least some of the watercolour paintings by John Rider Roberts may lie in the pages of *The Illustrated Sydney News*. All you need is a lightning fast internet connection to access Trove or a microfilm copy of *The Illustrated Sydney News* to flip through and compare the newspaper illustrations with the artworks.

**Michel Reymond** has a background in property law and a passion for history, architecture, theatre and the arts. He is a councillor on North Sydney Council, where he has served three terms as Deputy Mayor. He is a founding member of the Society, past President and current committee member.

## NOTES

- 1 Geoff Ford, “An 1865 watercolour of Fowler's Camperdown Pottery”, *Australiana* vol 34 no 1, February 2012, pp 36–38.
- 2 Joan Kerr (ed.), *Dictionary of Australian Artists*, OUP Melbourne 1992, p 673.
- 3 NLA 5753942
- 4 *ISN* 10 Dec 1853 p 6, and subsequent issues, eg 7 Jan 1854 p 6
- 5 *ISN* 11 March 1854 p 8, and subsequent notices.
- 6 *SMH* 9 May 1854 p 2; they had already advertised in the professional directory in *ISN* 6 May 1854 p 1 and sought a pupil in *ISN* 6 May 1854 p 12.
- 7 *ISN* 13 May 1854 p 3.
- 8 *ISN* 20 May 1854 p 1 & 2.
- 9 *Empire* 19 Dec 1854 p 6.
- 1 *Empire* 29 Mar 1856 p 1.
- 11 *SMH* 30 Aug 1856 p 6.
- 12 *SMH* 4 June 1857 p 1,
- 13 *Empire* 4 July 1857 p 6.
- 14 *SMH* 30 June 1855, p 8.
- 15 *SMH* 23 Aug 1855 p 5.
- 16 *SMH* 6 July 1855 p 1.
- 17 BDMNSW William b 2579/1856 d 1487/1856; Isabel b 2488/1862 d 1501/1862
- 18 *SMH* 17 Nov 1864 p 1.
- 19 *ISN* 11 July 1868, p 3.
- 20 *SMH* 14 July 1868 p 1; *Empire* 15 July 1868 p 1.
- 21 *ISN* 15 Oct 1864 p 7.
- 22 *ISN* 15 Apr 1865 p 5.
- 23 *ISN* 16 May 1865 p 8.
- 24 *ISN* 15 July 1865 p 13.
- 25 *ISN* 16 March 1866 p 8.
- 26 *SMH* 28 Jan 1864 p 5.
- 27 *SMH* 14 May 1854 p 4.
- 28 *SMH* 21 July 1865 p 5
- 29 *SMH* 5 Oct 66 p 6.
- 30 *SMH* 12 Aug 1876 p12
- 31 Geelong Gallery 1985.14. Thanks to Veronica Filmer, Registrar, Geelong Gallery, for providing this information.
- 32 *Australian Art Auction Records*
- 33 *ISN* 17 Aug 1864 p 9.

# Book reviews



REVIEW BY  
LESLEY GARRETT

**Tony Kanellos,**  
*Imitation of Life: a visual catalogue of the nineteenth-century fruit models in the Santos Museum of Economic Botany in the Adelaide Botanic Garden; a collection of papier maché models made by Heinrich Arnoldi & Co. Gotha, Germany (1856-1899).*  
Adelaide, Board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium 2013, \$69  
ISBN 978-0-9807021-6-3

In masterminding and producing this fine book, Tony Kanellos, Cultural Collections Manager and Curator of the Santos Museum of Economic Botany located in the Adelaide Botanic Garden, has provided both reader and book collector with a gem. It clearly demonstrates his care of and expertise in the safekeeping of the Heinrich Arnoldi collection of fruit and fungi models held by the SMEB (one of the three largest collections of them in the world) since their acquisition by Dr Richard Schomburgk, Director of the fledgling Adelaide Botanic Garden, shortly after taking up that post in 1866. With his own leading essay Tony Kanellos clearly demonstrates his knowledge and ability to write and write well.

Essays by Stephen Forbes, the current Director of the Gardens; Jürgen Götz

who is actively researching the Arnoldi models worldwide; and Hans Sommer, Director of Marcus Sommer SOMSO Modelle GmbH in Sonneburg Germany, the company which recently supplied models to the SMEB, augment Tony Kanellos' informative and erudite text. Their combined essays inform the reader about the history of the Arnoldi models, how they were originally constructed and the importance of the historic building in which the fruit and fungi models have always been housed since their arrival in South Australia. Fascinating new information that has come to light since the full mapping of the apple genome completed in 2012 updates knowledge to the present. Their combined scientific debate is spare and engaging.

Careful thought has been given to the book design by Kate Burns resulting in a large square format which is modern, eye catching and sturdy.

Special mention must be made of photographer Paul Atkins who placed each of his main subjects at the centre of its square against a chocolate background. Each fruit seems to be sailing like a ghostly planet towards the reader from darkest outer space – accurate, as it happens, as most of them are now lost forever and therefore irreplaceable.

The 300-plus images will remind readers of the work of the 18th-century botanical artist Mary Delany, who in a mere ten years and past the age of 70 created close to a thousand botanically correct floral studies by cutting and layering coloured tissue paper and mounting the pieces onto a black background. This inky background serves to intensify any colour, bringing the subject into sharp focus. To aid in this process, Paul Atkins has reproduced the apples at 200% actual size and the plums, pears, peaches and apricots at 150%, allowing the reader to appreciate fully the painted surface and correct detail of such things as a blemish or the

botanical accuracy of length or angle of a stem where it attaches to the fruit.

Doubtless the original models are faithful to their relative size one to another, as Arnoldi would have worked from living specimens, just as Mary Delany did before him. These models were intended as teaching tools and were therefore made with an eye to accuracy.

During the writing process a decision was made to do away with page numbers in favour of reinstating Arnoldi's original numbering as marked on each sample. This subtle gesture somehow gives the fruit added power: the ability to organise themselves, thank you! The inclusion of some of the original labels which accompanied the models from their Gotha birthplace is charming – the mid 19th-century cursive is part and parcel of the German *Naturwissenschaft's* stock in trade. South Australia saw a large influx of German free settlers at the time which led to an ongoing friendship which lasts to this day.

But centre stage in this book is reserved for the models themselves. Arranged in sections under the simple botanical classification of apples, pears, plums, peaches and apricots mentioned above, the models are the stars in this publication and make up its bulk. As each page is turned there is another, then another silently passing by. Each image is perfect. The process of looking at the book becomes hypnotic and meditative.

The fungi, housed in a separate cabinet, while not included among the larger images are illustrated in the introductory essay. The modelled apples, while manufactured in Germany, include fruit from other nations and it is possible by reading the translations of the original labels to appreciate Arnoldi's wide range of subjects. Lost today are many of the homely names once commonly used, e.g. Model Nr. 98 listed as *Hausmütterchen* which in English becomes "Little House Mother."



Weighing in at just over 2 kg and measuring 26 x 26 cm, this book deserves to be read with the support of a cradle or cushion resting on a table to prolong its life by 200 years – the estimated age of the living apple tree Milton Wonder in Oxfordshire or Bramley’s original seedling. Priced at a modest \$69, it is destined to fly off the shelves, so be quick.

Inspired texts are meant to do just that – inspire. This one had me donning hiking boots bound for the Adelaide Hills round Hahndorf, preferably accompanied by a pomologist, on the hunt for any 160-year-old apple types planted in response to the beauty of Arnoldi’s models and in need of resurrection and baptism. It filled my head full of questions such as: Did Dr Schomburgk or Arnoldi hear of Granny Smith and her startling random seedling in 1866, some 1,347 km east of Adelaide in Eastwood, now a suburb of Sydney? Is the colour used in the models fugitive? Watercolour or oil based? Was the black ink used to number the models made from lamp black? Were they aware at the time that apple trees easily live to 200 years of age and much longer by simply keeling over and re-rooting? The questions were to be followed by an equally diligent search for any of the lost, misplaced, even shattered original models.

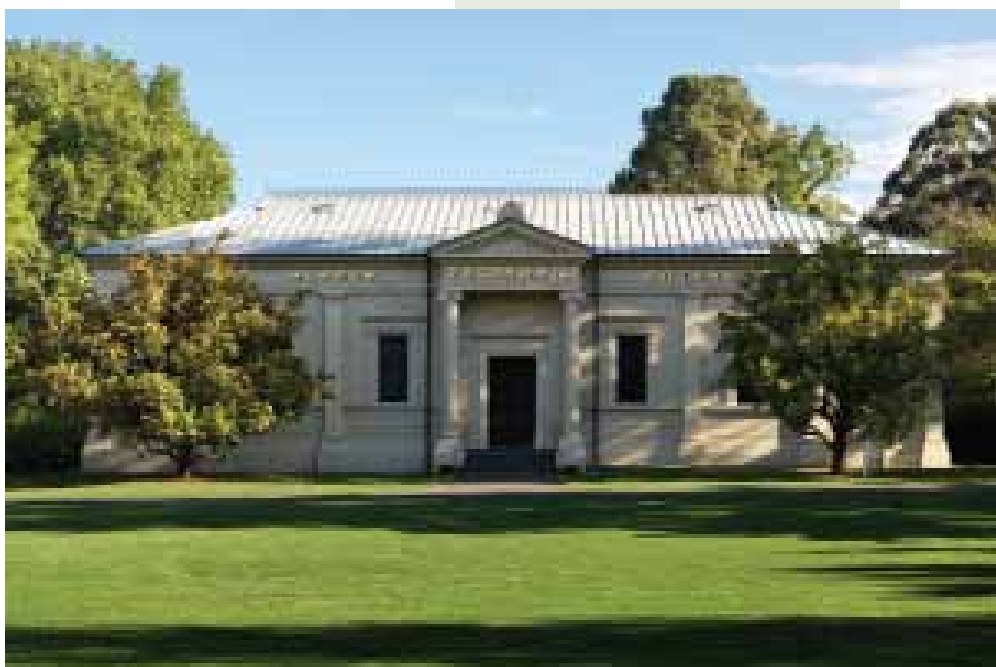
So thank you Tony Kanellos, and above all the Adelaide Botanic Garden for having the foresight and determination to preserve these models housed in the heart of this, the world’s only remaining colonial Museum of Economic Botany. The publication of this book will surely secure the future of both.

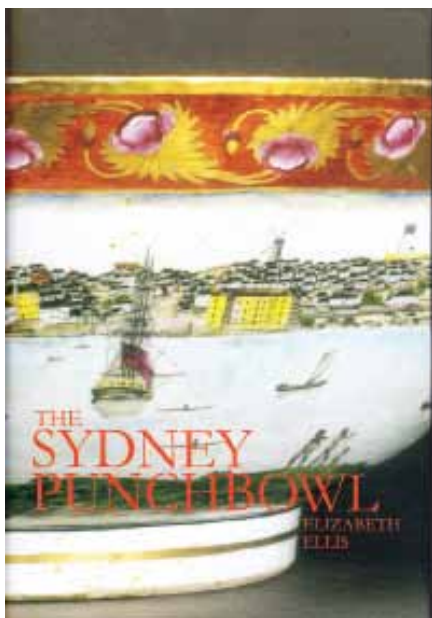
**Lesley Garrett** is a committee member of the Australiana Society, a German-speaker who lived for a long time in Germany and is familiar with Bavarian gardens where some of these fruits still grow. A dedicated traveller, she has organised tours for the Australiana Society to Tasmania and Canberra, and writes occasionally for *Australiana* and *The Journal of The Australian Garden History Society*.



**1**  
Arnoldi apple model 219, *Apfel aus Halder*,  
photograph by Paul Atkins

**2**  
Santos Museum of Economic Botany,  
Adelaide Botanic Garden,  
photograph by Grant Hancock





## REVIEW BY JOHN WADE

**Elizabeth Ellis,**  
*The Sydney Punchbowl.*  
 Potts Point NSW,  
 Hordern House, 2013, \$35.  
 Hard cover, 225 x 153 cm, 135 pages  
 ISBN 978-1-875567-72-0

Hordern House commissioned Elizabeth Ellis OAM, the Emeritus Mitchell Librarian, to research the background to the Chinese export porcelain punchbowl in the Mitchell Library showing scenes of the colony about 1814.<sup>1</sup>

This was part of a wider project to reproduce a limited edition of 25 faithful copies. These were made by a team of

skilled artists in the Chinese porcelain centre of Jingdezhen.

The Governor of NSW, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, launched the bowls and the book at the Mitchell Library on 22 October 2013. Both the Governor and the Mitchell Library were presented with one of the exquisite copies. They are not cheap at \$16,500 but most have already been sold.

The original bowl entered the library collection in 1926 as a generous gift from Sydney auctioneer William A. Little, who had bought it in a London bookshop. It seems it had earlier been offered to the NSW Agent General Sir Timothy Coghlan in his official capacity, but he bought it privately himself for £40 in what Ms Ellis describes politely as “a somewhat self-interested move”.

The book is divided into short chapters which cover the China trade, porcelain manufacture, the manufacture of the bowls, other Chinese services made for Australia, punches and punch bowls, panoramas, comparative painted views that relate to the punch bowl and the monograms. It would have been helpful if these chapters had been listed on the contents page.

Another chapter refers to the companion bowl, which Paul Hundley tracked down and acquired for the Australian National Maritime Museum in 2006, a gift from New Jersey Congressman Peter Freylinghausen II. This had surfaced in London in

1932 and was offered to the NSW Government; I recollect years ago seeing a document that said as the Mitchell Library already had one, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences had no need for another! It was sold to America, where former Sydney ceramics dealer Randall Reed noted its presence in a Chinese porcelain exhibition in Newark, New Jersey.

The painted scenes are identified, analysed and annotated. The exterior is similar to a number of panoramic views of Sydney, none identical; the original watercolour(s) supplied to the Chinese artists may have been lost. The interior is an Aboriginal scene preliminary to a marriage, possibly based on an original print or sketch, as it is monochrome.

Try as she might, the author is unable to pin down definitively the owner of the worn initials on the bowl. She makes many suggestions; particularly appealing are those that suggest the bowl was intended not as export ware for the colony, but as a souvenir gift to a British patron.

The book splendidly combines text with relevant illustrations. A few minor errors will not bother the astute reader, although the proof reading of page 95 failed to correct the mangling of the author’s summary.

### NOTE

1 See Elizabeth Ellis, “Chinese puzzles: the Sydney punchbowls” *Australiana* vol 34 no 2, May 2012, pp 18-30.







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I have recently purchased in Edinburgh this magnificent brass and mahogany rain or weather gauge by James Crichton of Glasgow for measuring the rainfall in points (100ths of an inch). This instrument may have an Australian history or even a direct connection with the Colony of New South Wales.

Dr James Cleland in his *Annals of Glasgow* published circa 1816 notes:

*There is one of Crichton's Gauges in the neighbourhood of Largs, belonging to General Brisbane of Brisbane but owing to the gentleman's absence from the country, no accurate return could be got for 1815.*

He continues noting and tabulating the rainfall in Glasgow measured in points using four rain gauges made by 'the celebrated James Crichton', at Bothwell Castle (Lord Douglas), at Glasgow, (The University of Glasgow), at Carbeth (John Guthrie Esq) and at Greenock (The Infirmary).

Are we to construe that Brisbane, who had built his private observatory at Largs in 1808, was part of this rainfall recording group and that his absence in France had caused a break in communications?

Dr Cleland published another volume, *Enumeration of the inhabitants of the City of Glasgow...* in 1832. Cleland, a civil engineer, had worked with Crichton on the weights, measures and Imperial Standards for Glasgow, noting:

*The celebrated Philosophical Instrument Maker came to Glasgow 11th June, 1766, as a blacksmith ... Mr Burns... introduced young Crichton as a superior genius, to Mr Anderson, Professor of Natural Philosophy... who took him into his family.... Crichton commenced business on his own in 1774 as a Philosophical Instrument Maker and carried on that profession for a long period in a manner which has seldom, if ever, been surpassed. His astronomical instruments, particularly his Dipping Needle, Hydrostatic Balance, Weather Gauges, Thermometers etc. are specimens of the greatest perfection of the art... A rain gauge constructed by Crichton, of Glasgow, was placed upon the top of this [Macfarlane] Observatory in the year 1801; a regular register has been kept of rain ever since by the Professor of Astronomy... It deserves mention that the rain gauge at Dalkeith Palace [Duke of Buccleuch] and the one at Sir Thomas Brisbane's at Largs upon the West coast, are all exactly similar and were all made by Crichton.*

I believe that Governor Brisbane brought a Crichton rain gauge to Australia and used it to keep the first rainfall records at Parramatta between 1822 and his departure in 1826. If so, did he bring his own gauge from Largs, taking it back on his return?

