Australiana

Australiana

contents

Hilda Rix Nicholas:
a cosmopolitan artist in 1920s Sydney

Hilda Rix Nicholas was one of Australia's most successful international artists. When she returned to Australia in 1918, she brought her magnificent paintings infused with post-impressionist light and colour to a generation of young Australian artists, yet her triumphant homecoming had been marred by the loss of her sister, mother and husband. Here, Julie Petersen focuses on her period of recuperation, while living in Sydney's leafy Mosman.

1
Hilda Rix Nicholas (1884-1961), *Sleepy,* c. 1911, Paris. Oil on canvas, 99.4 x 80.6 cm. McClelland Sculpture Park + Gallery, Gift of Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, 1972

JULIE PETERSEN

Born in Ballarat in 1884, Emily Hilda Rix was fortunate to have been part of the emancipated generation of women who travelled to Europe to live, study and practise art in the first decades of the 20th century.

As with fellow artists Margaret Preston and Thea Proctor, Hilda Rix was free to study overseas with her male counterparts and pursue a career as an artist **(plates 1–2)**. Ambitious and talented, she became both nationally and internationally successful. Classically trained in the studios of Paris, she became part of the annual summer artist colony in Étaples on the north-west coast of France. Along with Ethel Carrick Fox, she was one of the first women to practise her art openly in the streets of Tangier in Morocco **(plates 3–5)** and successfully exhibited her work at the prestigious Paris Salon and the Société des Peintres Orientalistes Francais (French Society of Orientalist Painters).

The outbreak of the Great War on 28 July 1914 ended her idyllic life. In late 1914 Hilda, her mother Elizabeth and sister Elsie evacuated from Étaples to London. Elsie contracted enteric fever and died in 1914, followed by their mother Elizabeth in 1916. That year Hilda met an Australian soldier, George Matson Nicholas DSO, who had seen and admired her work in the studio at Étaples. Three days after they married on 7 October, Major Nicholas returned to the front and was killed in action, aged 29, on 24 November 1916.

When Hilda Rix Nicholas returned to Australia in May 1918, her crates of artworks and belongings contained experiences from her life in Europe during 11 years abroad. Among the colourful costumes and paintings from Morocco, her drawings and paintings of peasant life in Étaples and her ambitious works for the Paris Salon, were a selection of artworks depicting her mother Elizabeth, sister Elsie and husband George.

Shattered by the loss of her loved ones, Rix Nicholas returned in 1918 with her grief as well as her cache of artworks. Her tragic experiences during the war became integral to her artistic oeuvre and to her eventual concerns for national sentiment. Hilda's recuperation in Sydney, where she lived in Mosman for four years, was a turning point in her life. Her luminous paintings were critically acclaimed and the artist's success cemented her place in the Australian art scene. The people she met in Sydney, and the artwork she created there, allowed her to re-set her creative course and to follow what she believed to be her artistic and personal destiny.

As an artist of international repute, Hilda Rix Nicholas was welcomed as a celebrity. Her first solo exhibition back in Australia, at the end of 1918 at the Guild Hall in Melbourne, was much anticipated, with the National Gallery of Victoria purchasing three works. This favourable reaction was repeated in Sydney with her solo exhibition at Anthony Hordern's Fine Art Gallery in June 1919, where the Art Gallery of NSW acquired four of her works. Respected artist and teacher Julian Ashton opened the exhibition and praised Rix Nicholas, as she was 'able to do what few artists could – that was to draw, and this, added to her brilliancy of colouring made her pictures a source of delight to all'.[1] Influential art editor and writer Bertram Stevens wrote a monograph about the life and art of the artist and remarked on her portrayal of personal loss as universally significant.

When Rix Nicholas decided to capitalise on her success by moving to Sydney in October 1919, it was fast becoming the creative hub for Australian artists.

Studying at the atelier of Antonio Datillo Rubbo, the future modernists

3–4

Miss Goodwin (photographer), *Hilda Rix sketching in the Soko, Tangier*, 1914. Rix Wright collection

5

Hilda Rix Nicholas (1884-1961), *Arab sheep market*, 1914, Tangier. Oil on canvas, 47 x 57 cm. Private collection

were discovering the liberation of post-impressionist colour and light. Datillo Rubbo encouraged his students Roy de Maistre, Roland Wakelin, Grace Cossington Smith and Nora Simpson to work out of doors, apply bolder brushstrokes and use vibrant colour. It is little wonder that Datillo Rubbo wanted to introduce his talented students to Rix Nicholas's work. After viewing her exhibition, he wrote a letter in which he gushed:

> As a brother brush, I feel to express, without any academic expressions, my greatest admiration for your works, which to my opinion is the best collection ever exhibited here. As a teacher, I can see the enormous beneficial influence which in time will have upon the younger artists and for this you deserve the teacher's gratitude in helping them.[2]

One student who benefited from exposure to Rix Nicholas's European and Moroccan works was the young Grace Cossington Smith, who despite her previous knowledge of modern art, found Hilda's work more than inspiring:

> I met (my FATE) the other day – in the ART line! There has been a very stirring exhibition here, which has created quite a furore – Senor Rubbo has not been sane since! I went to see it three or four times and any other picture seems very dull after seeing these … very coloured – scenes in Morocco and people – dresses – all sunny – but the most astonishing thing was the life in them.[3]

Rix Nicholas was welcomed into the formal societies of the Sydney art scene. She was invited to join the Women's Painters Society where she exhibited and gave lectures about her experiences studying and working in France, and her artistic and cultural experiences in the market place in Tangier.[4]

She chose to live and work in the leafy North Shore suburb of Mosman,

describing it as a "lovely spot whose sheer beauty has helped my tired nerves".[5] As a student of the impressionist Frederick McCubbin and an acquaintance of Arthur Streeton, Rix Nicholas would have been well aware of Mosman's artistic legacy. The artists living at the 1890s Sirius Cove camp at Mosman had produced some of the most Arcadian visions of Sydney Harbour through the observations of Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton, who painted *en plein air* along the shoreline.

Rix Nicholas's Mosman flat was part of the once-grand mansion *Abbotsford*, situated high on Raglan Street overlooking both Sirius Cove and Mosman Bay **(plate 6)**. Set in the garden of this estate was a disused stable, which the artist (with the aid of a carpenter) converted into a studio **(plate 7)**. She described the conversion in an unpublished manuscript:

> A skylight was cut in the southern side of the roof – floors were built over the cobbles – dividing partitions were removed. But the old racks and mangers having become a rich brown with age, were left standing – lids being made for them later, making them picturesque and useful receptacles for long rolls of canvas.[6]

Rix Nicholas painted a subdued interior view of her wood-panelled studio and commissioned respected photographer Harold Cazneaux to photograph the artist posing in one of her favourite 19th-century costumes.

From this ideal setting she created numerous landscape paintings. *View from the garden, Mosman* is perhaps one of her most post-impressionistic works created during her time in Sydney **(plate 8)**. Rix Nicholas with her outdoor painting kit also ventured into the bushland surrounding the coastal suburb and painted *White gums, Cremorne Point* **(plate 9)** and *Rain clouds at dawn* **(plate 10)**, along with other views around the harbour.

6
Unknown photographer, *Abbotsford, 17 Raglan St Mosman*. Mosman Library, Local Studies Collection

7
Harold Cazneaux *Interior, Mosman studio* c.1921, photograph. Rix Wright collection

8
Hilda Rix Nicholas (1884-1961), *View from the garden*, c.1920, Sydney. Oil on canvas, 50 x 70 cm. Private collection

9
Hilda Rix Nicholas (1884-1961), *White gums, Cremorne Point*, 1921, Sydney.
Oil on canvas 40 x 30 cm. Private collection

10
Hilda Rix Nicholas (1884-1961), *Rain clouds at dawn (Sydney Harbour)*, c.1920, Sydney.
Oil on canvas on board, 33 x 26 cm. Rix Wright collection

11
Unknown photographer, *Our Wildflowers*, Hilda Rix Nicholas, standing,
as 'The Spirit of the Bush', Mosman, 1920. Rix Wright collection

Sydney Harbour and its surrounds re-acquainted Rix Nicholas with Australian light and her love of painting out of doors. She wrote evocatively about the location:

From this high point of vantage one can enjoy the million moods of the harbour – her soft pastel misty days when the old garden below is filled with spring blossoms – her balmy summer days with the joy of bathing and the reviving southerly busters which refresh one in readiness for the next day.[7]

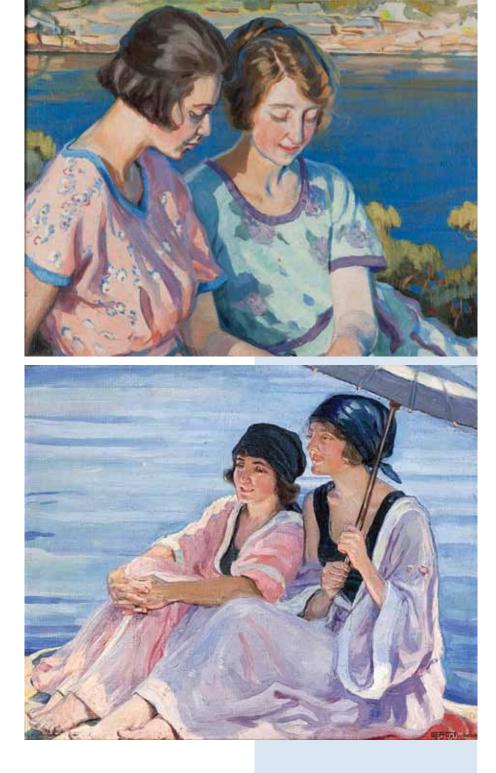Relaxing into a welcoming social and art scene, Rix Nicholas gathered around her a new group of friends and acquaintances and utilised her creative drive, imagination and talent for creating costumes to participate in the bohemian pastimes of Sydney society. Mustering her willing friends, she dressed them as bush-themed characters for the tableau called *Our Wild Flowers*, winning first prize at the Society of

Women Painters' Ball in 1920 **(plate 11)** and as polar bears and ice maidens in *The Arctic Set* in 1921 for a benefit at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

Mosman became a home where Rix Nicholas could build a close circle of friends to fill the void left by the deaths of her closest family members. Sylvia Walker and later Dorothy Richmond were two women on whom she relied as secretaries, flat mates, companions and models. Many of her pastel drawings and paintings at this time feature the benign visage of Sylvia in her favourite blue day-dress. In *Sylvia and friend, Mosman* and *The bathers*, Hilda portrayed her friends as modern women enjoying the relaxed leisured lifestyle of Sydney in the 1920s **(plates 12–13)**.

Unlike many of the modernist artists in Sydney at that time, Rix Nicholas was not interested in the burgeoning metropolis and went instead in search of natural beauty. Leaving the city behind, she went on painting trips to the surrounding districts of western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

During her time in Sydney, Rix Nicholas revisited her experiences from her time abroad. The artist continued to draw studies of Australian soldiers returned from the war as part of her ongoing memorialisation of her late husband and her growing feelings of nationalism. In 1920, the visiting Prince of Wales received a study of a soldier as a gift from the artist and returned to England with it on board HMS *Renown*.[8]

When the War Memorial Mural competition for the Melbourne Public Library was announced in 1921, Rix Nicholas was more than prepared to embrace the challenge. To her bitter disappointment, her paintings which configured 13 soldiers in four groupings depicting injured, battle weary and hopeful men under the radiant light of the AIF symbol of the rising sun, failed to be selected as the winner but remained in the top three finalists **(plate 14)**. Rix Nicholas took little comfort from the fact that she was in the company of other unsuccessful artists such as Arthur Streeton and George

Lambert. Still keen to identify herself as a war widow artist, she remained much aggrieved. Writing to a friend she complained 'All soldiers who have seen mine say they would have thought only a digger could have painted it, because I have the absolute spirit of the men "on the field".'[9]

At the end of 1922 with the impending sale of *Abbotsford*, Dorothy Richmond and Rix Nicholas made plans to move out of Mosman and

12
Hilda Rix Nicholas (1884-1961), *Sylvia and friend, Mosman*, 1921, Sydney. Oil on canvas, 35 x 45 cm. Bridget McDonnell Gallery, Hampton, Victoria

13
Hilda Rix Nicholas (1884-1961), *The bathers*, 1921, Burraneer Bay, Sydney. Oil on canvas, 50 x 61 cm. Private collection, photograph Tim Connolly Photography

journey to the Monaro region to stay with Dorothy's family in Delegate. By this stage Rix Nicholas had decided

> to turn misfortune into a good cause and make of this uprooting into inspiration. I am having all my pictures, treasures and furniture stored and I and my companion are going to travel into the 'Way Outback' of Australia and paint things typical of my country.[10]

This subsequent journey to country districts and the Monaro in particular

was to change the direction of her life. Five years after she had arrived back in Australia, Rix Nicholas held a final solo exhibition at Anthony Hordern's Fine Art Gallery in August 1923, and returned with her Australian artworks to Paris in 1924.

Dorothy Richmond accompanied Rix Nicholas and remained closely entwined with the artist's life as a constant friend and model **(plate 15)**. The marvellous portrayal of Dorothy in *Une Australienne,* in particular, evokes the worldly chic and elegance of 1920s Paris **(plate 16)**. The pose – both sensuous and defiant – echoes the confidence which Rix Nicholas must have felt on her return to France where she experienced many triumphs; her exhibition of Australian works was successfully reviewed, she was elected an Associate of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, her painting *In Australia* was purchased by the French government and she was invited to show her exhibition titled *Australian Life* in London and British regional galleries.

After her return to Australia in September 1926, she married Edgar Wright in June 1928 and moved to his grazing property at Delegate in southern NSW. She traded the sophisticated world of Europe for rural Australia, where she found purpose and inspiration in the people and landscape of the Monaro. There she continued to portray those around her, replacing French peasants, Sydney bathers and Australian servicemen with musterers, wool classers, her friends including Dorothy relaxing in the summer house in her garden at *Knockalong*, her second husband and eventually the nannies attending to her only child Rix, born in 1930.

Although women were the major practitioners of French modernism in Australia in the early 20th century, Rix Nicholas did not identify as a woman artist nor as a modernist, but simply as an artist working outside any movement or style.

16

Hilda Rix Nicholas (1884-1961),
Une Australienne, 1925, Paris. Oil on canvas,
103 x 81 cm. J. B. Hawkins Antiques

The constant nurturing and support of her close family and friends, her international success, natural talent and hard work had made Hilda Rix Nicholas supremely confident in a male-dominated art world and free to follow what she saw as her artistic destiny.

Although she continued to draw and paint with the same masterful sense of draughtsmanship, vigour and luminous palette evident in her best work from Paris, Tangier and Sydney, she remained isolated and resistant to change. As the national and international art world moved on, Hilda Rix Nicholas was never again to experience the brilliant success of her earlier years.[11]

Julie Petersen is the Mosman Art Gallery exhibition curator of *Une Australienne: Hilda Rix Nicholas in Paris, Tangier and Sydney*. She has curated numerous exhibitions including *Fairies in the Garden: the enchanted childhood of Honey and Jane Lindsay* (Norman Lindsay Gallery, 2004); *Marie Byles: A Spirited Life* (National Trust of Australia, 2005); *Caught: Photographs of Life at Sydney Fish Markets*, (Mosman Art Gallery 2009); *Australian Accent: The designs of Annan Fabrics and Vandé Pottery in the '40s and '50s* (Mosman Art Gallery 2010); and *Safe from the City's Haste: Mosman vistas 1838 – 1955* (Mosman Art Gallery 2012).

Une Australienne: Hilda Rix Nicholas in Paris, Tangier and Sydney is on exhibition at the Mosman Art Gallery from 3 May until 13 July. Academics and curators will present a series of talks in a half day Symposium - *Out There: Australian women artists in the modern world* on Sunday 1 June 2014. 10am – 1.00pm Cost: $25 (includes morning tea). The 80-page catalogue costs $20 plus $5 postage. For information on workshops and events visit www.mosmanartgallery.org.au

NOTES

1 'Hilda Rix Nicholas' *SMH,* 25 July 1919.

2 Letter from Antonio Datillo Rubbo to Hilda Rix Nicholas, 16 June 1919. NLA MS 9817, Series I. The papers of Hilda Rix Nicholas are held at the National Library of Australia, Canberra (NLA MS 9817).

3 Letter from Grace Cossington Smith to Mary Cunningham, 10 August 1919, copy found in Hilda Rix Nicholas correspondence NLA MS 9817 Series I.

4 Address given to the *Women Painters Society* 24 May 1920 and 'An Artists Life in France' 21 May 1921. NLA MS 9817 Series II.

5 Letter to Lady Stradbroke (wife of the Governor of Victoria),1922, NLA MS 9817, Series I.

6 Article draft, undated by Hilda Rix Nicholas ' An ideal studio made from an old stable'. NLA MS 9817, Series II.

7 *Ibid*.

8 Letter from Mr Thomas, Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales, HMS *Renown*, Sydney, 15 August 1920. NLA MS 9817, Series I.

9 Letter to Lady Stradbroke, *op cit*.

11 Hilda's son Rix Wright became a champion and custodian of his mothers' artworks. He worked closely with both private and public galleries to promote the purchase of his mother's work for public art institutions. In March 1985, a fire at *Knockalong* destroyed 57 artworks by Hilda. Fortunately, Rix Wright had previously sold many more artworks in a major exhibition at Macquarie Galleries in Sydney 30 August – 18 September 1978. The Art Gallery of NSW staged a concurrent small-scale retrospective exhibition *Project 26: Hilda Rix Nicholas 1884 – 1961*. These exhibitions were the beginning of a critical reappraisal of Hilda Rix Nicholas's artistic legacy. (Correspondence, Macquarie Galleries File, Art Gallery of NSW Archive).

The Australiana Society Canberra Centenary Members' Tour 2013

The Australiana Society Canberra Centenary Members' Tour conducted from 5-8 September 2013 was extremely successful and thoroughly enjoyed by all who participated. It was superbly organised and led by committee member Lesley Garrett, assisted by Dr Paul Donnelly, another committee member.

JUDY AND IAN HIGSON

The tour commenced on Thursday afternoon, 5 September at the Bungendore Woodworks Gallery where Stan d'Argeavel, the exhibitions coordinator of the Gallery and a most generous, informative and thoughtful host, gave a talk and demonstration of the Hannah Cabinet (**plates 1-2**).

This is master craftsman Geoff Hannah's most ambitious piece of furniture to date, a truly amazing work of craftsmanship and fine art. More works by Geoff and other makers formed a very fine display of furniture, sculpture and artworks.

The tour continued on Friday with a morning visit to the National Library of Australia where Catriona Anderson, curator of pictures and manuscripts, organised a private viewing in the Ferguson Room of parts of the Ducie Collection.

The Ducie Collection consists of 56 watercolours attributed to George Raper, a midshipman on the flagship HMS *Sirius*, and one of the most talented First Fleet artists. The watercolours acquired

1
The Hannah Cabinet

2
Stan d'Argeavel with a drawer from the Hannah Cabinet

from the Earl of Ducie show the birds and flowers of the Port Jackson area, as Raper saw them between 1788 and 1790. Many are the first visual records by a European artist. Nicki Mackay-Sim gave us a wonderful insight into the ups and downs of the ongoing research into George Raper's watercolours **(plate 3)**.

Jennifer Gall discussed the value and context of the Bligh notebook, the personal notebook kept after the mutiny by Captain Bligh throughout his famous whaleboat voyage to Timor. Jennifer is the author of *In His Own Hand,* a book about the Bligh notebook, and an accomplished musician who played an impromptu fiddle piece to illustrate the music that would have been heard on board Royal Navy ships such as HMS *Bounty*.

The National Library provided the Ferguson Room with all its facilities for our sole use and the personnel to ensure our visit was a success. The Library representatives were gracious and attentive hosts and we are truly in their debt.

Curator Mathew Jones welcomed the tour group to the Library's Treasures Gallery. Here Mathew kept us enthralled with the information he provided on many fascinating items, including the silver kettle and spirit lamp given by Queen Charlotte to Sir Joseph Banks in 1813. The visit to the Library concluded at the Bookplate Cafe where tour members joined the curators for lunch. Overall, it was a most inspiring time with each event unique, informative and inspiring.

It was then on to the National Portrait Gallery where Krysia Kitch greeted the tour group **(plate 4)**. Krysia introduced us to the first Australian exhibition of Richard Avedon's work, the stunning photographic exhibition 'Richard Avedon People' **(plate 5)**. Avedon was an iconic American photographer best known for his work in the fashion world and for his minimalist portraits, portraits "…that defined the twentieth century."

At the National Museum of Australia, curators Michelle Hetherington and Cheryl Crilly introduced the group to the Springfield Collection. Springfield, a major rural property located near Goulburn in NSW and its rich

3
The National Library laid out the George Raper watercolours for members to study

4
Lesley Garrett (left) and Dr Paul Donnelly (right) with Krysia Kitch at the National Portrait Gallery

5
Krysia Kitch discusses Richard Avedon's photographs at the National Portrait Gallery

6
A glassworker drawing hot glass
from the kiln

7
The Canberra Glassworks inside the
Kingston Powerhouse

8
The Kingston Powerhouse

collection of a large variety of materials, was held by descendants of the one family from 1827 for almost two centuries. The collection, which includes more than 2,000 objects, is one of the largest single collections to come to the National Museum and provides a rich and well-documented record of one family's history and its intersections with the history of the region and the nation.

Michelle and Cheryl shared their time and knowledge of the Springfield Collection, concentrating on the fabulous gowns and accessories worn by generations of Springfield women. These costumes were placed in context within displays in the museum and we were privileged to see a number of exhibitions where items from the Springfield Collection featured.

Saturday morning saw the group at The Kingston Powerhouse, Canberra's oldest permanent public building **(plate 8),** which supplied Canberra with coal-generated electricity from 1915 until 1957. It was designed by the Federal Government architect, J S Murdoch, and built between 1913 and 1915. Murdoch designed other important heritage buildings in Canberra such as Old Parliament House and its East and West Blocks, Gorman House, the Hotel Canberra (now the Hyatt) and the Kurrajong Hotel.

This heritage industrial building is now the home of the Canberra Glassworks where volunteers, generous with their time on a Saturday morning, took us behind the scene to view both the cold and hot shops where contemporary glass artwork is taught and works of art in glass are created **(plates 6-7)**.

We were also able to view *Ranamok 2013,* the prestigious Australian and New Zealand annual glass prize now in its 18th year. The finalists' work is shown first at the Canberra Glassworks, where the winner is announced. The show captures the amazing range of artworks currently being made in Australasia.

A tour of Canberra is not complete without a visit to Parliament House. We were privileged to hear Leonie Bessant, from the Victorian Tapestry Workshop in Melbourne, introduce us to the Arthur Boyd tapestry hanging in the Great Hall. Leonie was the head weaver responsible for translating the original Arthur Boyd painting (which we saw in the mezzanine) into this magnificent work.

Leonie's description of the process and the achievement of Victorian Tapestry Workshop under her guidance in making this tapestry left us all in wonder of her skills, quite apart from now having a full appreciation of the complexity, design and workmanship of this tapestry. Having travelled up from Melbourne, Leonie was pleased to see the tapestry again and still in great shape.

Leonie entertained us again at afternoon tea with her lively personality and creativity and took home the cake iced with "43rd Parliament" which, at the time, was in its last day until the new government was sworn in.

The last item on the tour was a viewing of *Lanyon* homestead with its gardens and outbuildings. *Lanyon* is an historic grazing property nestled in the Lanyon Valley, along the Murrumbidgee River, now located on the southern

outskirts of Canberra. The property was settled in 1833 by James Wright and his friend John Hamilton Mortimer as squatters. The homestead was built in 1859 and has been furnished to recreate the rural lifestyle of that era.

It was wonderful to wind down at *Lanyon* and wander the garden, under the expert guidance of Narelle Sonter, who gave us a rich and most informative talk on its history and landscaping

features **(plates 9-10)**. A most enjoyable lunch at Lanyon Cafe completed the morning and marked the end of The Australiana Society's Canberra Centenary Members' Tour.

Judy and Ian Higson took part in the tour during Canberra's centenary year. Judy is a Committee member of the Australiana Society.

9
Narelle Sonter explains the layout of *Lanyon's* gardens

10
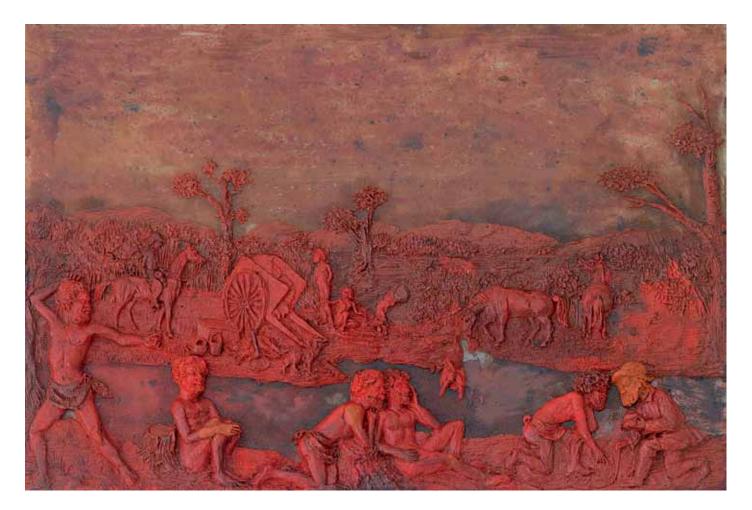Narelle Sonter's talk at *Lanyon* enthrals members seated on the wide veranda

A South Australian colonial wax relief
by Josef David Herrgott (1823–61)

Gary Morgan's research into this recently rediscovered colonial wax relief, reported here for the first time reveals it to be an important relic and memento of the early exploration of South Australia

GARY MORGAN

Wax carvings, reliefs and models served a number of purposes, ranging from the purely artistic to the practical, in Australian colonial art. Numerous examples of the practical are the wax models of fruit, flowers and other produce that were regularly exhibited in various international exhibitions in the 19th century. Wax models were the practical solution to the problem of exhibiting fresh Australian produce in these exhibitions, and were often made by professional wax modellers, many unknown, in Australia's various museums and horticultural societies.[1]

However, apart from the wax medallions of artists such as Theresa Walker (1807–76), it is less usual to find a wax carving or relief modelled or carved by a professional artist and for a purpose beyond the practical. One such previously unknown work, an intriguing red wax relief on glass depicting an Aboriginal group with explorers, has recently come to light (plate 1).[2]

Five Aboriginals are shown in the foreground on one side of a river or creek, the figure on the right apparently explaining something to a European

man. In the middle ground, on the far side of the river, are a European on horseback, a cart with buckets and other tools lying before it, some horses to the right and another group of Aborigines, centre, around a fire. The composition is completed with a background of low hills and gum trees.

Initially, Theresa Walker (1807–1876), Alexander Schramm (1813–1864), August Saupé (?–1913) or perhaps one of Adelaide's several figurative silversmiths of the second half of the 19th century such as Julius Schomburgk, Henry Steiner or J.M. Wendt were suggested as possible creators of this relief. The silversmiths were included because the form and composition of the work indicate that it may have been a model for a commemorative or presentation piece.[3]

However, the artist appears to have had an academic art education, based on the quality of the modelling, the well-defined compositional technique and the neo-classical poses of the standing figure on the left and the two reclining figures in the centre. The figure of the European at lower right has the character of a northern or eastern European woodcarving, suggesting that the maker may have been a German immigrant.

Who was the artist?

Further research suggested another artist, Josef Albert Franz David Herrgott (1823–61), variously known as Josef Herrgott, David Herrgott, Daniel David Herrgott or Joseph Herrgott. His surname was also spelt Hergott, Helfgott and Hergolt.

Josef Herrgott was born in Schesslitz, Bavaria in 1823, the son of Heinrich and Margareta Herrgott, and came to South Australia about 1853, probably via the Victorian goldfields.[4] It is not known whether or where he studied art, but he must have had some training prior to his arrival in Adelaide since he was employed as an artist soon after his arrival in the new colony.

Herrgott was appointed artist and collector on the Benjamin Herschel Babbage expedition to Lake Torrens in 1858. The following year, he joined Alexander Tolmer as artist and botanist on an unsuccessful and generally disastrous attempt to cross the continent from south to north. Between April and July 1859, he joined the second expedition of the explorer John McDouall Stuart, again to the vicinity of Lake Torrens, as botanist.

Herrgott's employment as a botanist as well as artist on these expeditions probably reflected his interest and

friendship with Baron Sir Ferdinand Jakob Heinrich von Mueller (1825–96), the renowned botanist and explorer, as well as with George William Francis (1800–65), the first Director, from 1857, of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. Von Mueller had lived in Adelaide from 1847–51, and from 1853 was Government Botanist in Victoria. Following Stuart's expedition in 1859, Herrgott sent his botanical collection to von Mueller, who assessed and wrote up the collection, now scattered among several herbaria in Australia.

Herrgott produced at least one wax model depicting Aboriginals. This was described in the following terms in an article in the Adelaide press in July 1860:[5]

Colonial Art— Mr. Hergolt, who, as many of our readers are aware, acted as botanist in some of the late exploring expeditions to the north-west, has just completed the modelling of a romantic incident in Australian aboriginal life, which is well worth inspecting. The model, which is about 20 inches by 10 inches in size, and made of some wax-like composition, the whole being covered with a glass case, represents a complete bush epic – love, rapine, and murder. In the right-hand corner of the foreground is a native fire, round which most or the members of some 'happy family' had been apparently sitting. At the tragic moment, however, shown by the model, several lubras are on their feet pointing with dismay after a retreating blackfellow who has rushed into the camp across a creek of water, and is carrying off "the old man's daughter". This – the main point of the scene – is helped out by several others of a very stirring kind. From each side of the creek fighting men are letting fly at each other 'like mad.' One stalwart fellow, who had rushed to the rescue, is lying pierced by a spear of tremendous proportions, and others are menacing each other as though they really meant it. Wombats, opossums, and dogs are scattered under the trees, and there are groups of children idling about apparently uninterested, from just having had a very full meal. Altogether the model is very well executed. The position of the men and women is natural and expressive, and their forms and features are truthfully given. Some propensity to indulge unduly in muscle may, perhaps, be charged against the artist; but the figures from which he modelled were picked out from a large number. Besides, the natives near Lake Gairdner are a comparatively fine race, and not deteriorated by civilization.

The wax model described is certainly not the current work, being both larger and compositionally different, but it proves that Herrgott was producing wax reliefs of Aboriginals at this time. Significantly, the date of the report and the reference to the Aboriginals being from Lake Gairdner is consistent with this work being created shortly after Stuart's expedition to Lake Torrens, which is just to the west of Lake Gairdner.

Herrgott's other works include a series of sketches made during Babbage's expedition in 1858 (now in the collection of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia in Adelaide) and a series made on Stuart's second expedition in 1859, now in the Mitchell Library.[6] Alfred Howitt reproduced the RGSA sketches in his 1907 book on early exploration in South Australia,[7] with a short biography of Herrgott.

While the Babbage expedition sketches are mainly caricatures and humorous drawings, the Mitchell Library sketches are of more interest. Herrgott's album of 38 sketches made on Stuart's expedition show, in contrast to the caricatures from Babbage's expedition, events and places from the expedition, many annotated by Herrgott. Some of the drawings have sketches on the verso and some include latitude and longitude. The subjects include Aboriginals of the area, kangaroos, and general topographical scenes with expedition members.

Howitt noted that Herrgott was widely known and identified by his wearing "a distinctive hat",[8] similar in shape to a *pickelhaube* or a pith helmet,[9] and shown in several annotated self-portrait sketches from the Babbage expedition (plates 1-4). Herrgott's 13 sketches from the Babbage expedition include three self portraits; of the 38 sketches in the album from Stuart's expedition, Herrgott in his "distinctive hat" appears in eleven.

Herrgott shows two of the 1859 expedition party (of only four on the expedition – Stuart, Herrgott, Campbell, whose first name is not known and Louis Müller, a stockman and, like Herrgott, also a botanist) surveying a dry lake bed with finished and unfinished sketches of horses (plate 3). The figure on the far left, in the hat, is consistent with the annotated self-portrait of Herrgott (plate 2) from the Babbage expedition portraits. The figure on the right is annotated "Stuart" in pencil, in an unknown hand but probably Herrgott's, with an arrow pointing to the figure. The sketch therefore appears to show Herrgott and Stuart with their horses during the expedition.

A sketch in the same album shows Herrgott the botanist, in his "distinctive hat", examining plants while another member of the expedition on horseback looks on (plate 4). In this case, the location is identified as "Herrgotts Springs" and shows the characteristic 'mounds' of these and other springs in the area, from which water bubbles.

In the wax relief, the mounted figure in the left middle ground is wearing the same hat as shown in plate 3. Consistent with Herrgott's practice of often including himself in his compositions, the figure is almost certainly a self-portrait of the artist, David Herrgott.

The bearded European in the right foreground resembles the bearded Stuart (plate 3) but this is not certain; it is perhaps a generic portrait of an explorer who is receiving assistance from Aboriginals (which Babbage, Tolmer and Stuart all received, to greater or lesser degrees, in finding water sources) and is portrayed in a manner which betrays the Germanic origin of the artist, as noted earlier.

There is however a hint from the composition that the explorer may be Herschell Babbage. Babbage was a widely ridiculed figure and Herrgott's depictions of him in the drawings of the Babbage expedition (RGSA collection) which were reproduced in Howitt (1907) are invariably caricatures, often accompanied by demeaning commentary. The two Aboriginals in the foreground appear to be laughing at the

explorer to the right which may perhaps continue Herrgott's ridicule of Babbage.

Further evidence that the artist of the wax relief is David Herrgott comes from the work itself. The modelling of the horses and in particular the horse on which the rider is mounted closely resembles the modelling of the horse at the left of Herrgott's Stuart expedition drawing **(plate 3).**

In another sketch from the Herrgott sketch book in the Mitchell library of the Stuart expedition,[10] Herrgott is mounted on a horse, in a strikingly similar pose to the figure in the wax relief, and with his "distinctive hat" **(plate 6b).**

I conclude that Joseph David Herrgott (1823–1861), a German immigrant and artist/botanist to several early expeditions of exploration in the interior of South Australia, was the artist of the wax relief and has included a self-portrait of himself in the composition.

The work can be securely dated to after the second Stuart expedition of late 1859 and before Herrgott's death in 1861, and almost certainly to the period 1859-60.

What is the subject?

What of the rest of the composition? What, if any, specific event does it depict?

Herrgott's other, but apparently lost, wax model of around 1860 is, from the description in the *SA Review* quoted earlier, clearly a narrative, being described as "a complete bush epic". It does not depict one event but an amalgam of events, real or imagined, in one composition.

The present wax relief appears to follow the same multi-narrative pattern. In the foreground we have, from left to right, Aboriginals ranging from aggressive to cautious to assisting a European explorer – a clear narrative.

The multiple narrative nature of the composition may continue in other aspects of the work. For example, in a letter to the Editor of the *Adelaide Advertiser* of 27 December 1860, the correspondent "Northman" writes: [11]

AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE
To the Editor of the ADVERTISER.
Sir– In the Melbourne *Argus*, of the 20th of the present month, there is an advertisement of a work on Australian exploration – of which the following is a copy:
In the press – The Journals of the Expeditions into Central Australia, conducted by Messrs. Herschell Babbage, McDouall Stuart, and Alexander Tolmer, during 1858 and 1859, by Daniel David Herrgott, Botanist and Naturalist to the three expeditions. – Edited and revised by R. Dixon Gason, 139, Elizabeth street." …

The place where Mr. Babbage abandoned his drays and stores in the Elizabeth country would have afforded an artist of the Cruikshank school fine scope for his pencil. The natives, after plundering the drays of what stores they could understand the use of, chopped holes in the tanks with the axes left behind, and wishing for something savoury, they cooked the blister salve in the frying pan; so that if they made a hearty meal of it, it might afford some interesting data on the effects of blister salve taken internally. …

Given the multiple narrative form of Herrgott's other wax model, it is distinctly possible that the figures of the two Aboriginals around the fire and the abandoned dray with stores and material scattered about depict this event.

Likewise, the horses to the right middle ground, including the one running away, may be a reference to the events of 15-16 April 1859 on Stuart's expedition when the horses escaped. In his journal, Stuart describes the events:[12]

Friday, 15th April, East Side of Decoy Hill. At daybreak despatched Campbell for the horses. At 7.30 he returned with only five, and said that he found them on the track, going back for the water from which we have come, and that the others had left the tracks and gone west towards the hills. I immediately despatched Muller on horseback to track and bring them back, and I sent the others by Herrgott to get water at the springs. Sundown: no appearance of the horses …
Saturday, 16th April, Same Place. Muller and the horses have not yet come … he tied the mare to a bush; she broke loose, and would not allow him to catch her until she got to the water.

Herrgott also witnessed two horses escaping on the 1859 Tolmer expedition, described in Tolmer's journal.[13] Their escape was a critical factor in Tolmer's decision to abandon the expedition.

Horses, or sometimes camels as in the expedition of Burke and Wills, were essential in early Australian exploration. Losing them could, and often did, mean disaster for the expedition and put the lives of the expedition members at risk. Herrgott would have remembered these important events.

The depiction of the scene on the banks of a creek or waterhole is relevant, since the primary purpose of Stuart's 1859 expedition was to locate additional reliable water supplies north of Chambers Creek (see below) so that pastoral leases, including one for which he had applied,[14] could be expanded. Herrgott himself discovered the group of springs which Stuart named after him, Herrgott Springs.

Given their aim of finding water sources, it is not surprising that Herrgott would choose to place the narrative of his wax composition on the banks of a river or creek.

But which river or creek? The setting is certainly not Herrgott Springs or other springs in the area since these are all 'mound' springs, where water does not lie or run on the surface but is contained within distinctive mounds (**plate 4**). The setting could be imaginary but, in keeping with Herrgott's work and focus as a recorder of places, people, flora and fauna on three exploratory expeditions, it probably depicts an actual location.

The only creek with running water and waterholes in the area where Babbage, Tolmer and Stuart ventured is Chambers Creek (now Stuart Creek), which Stuart discovered on his first expedition in 1858. This is the likely setting for Herrgott's narrative.

This conclusion is circumstantially supported by the fact that James and John Chambers held a number of pastoral leases in the area through which Chambers Creek flowed, and both financially and materially backed all three expeditions. The relationship between Herrgott and the Chambers brothers is further explored below.

Herrgott sketched the area around Chambers Creek during the Stuart

expedition in 1859[15] **(plate 5)** and the sketch generally resembles the creek and landscape in the wax relief.

Whatever the detailed narrative, it is clear that the wax relief, like the other Herrgott wax model described in 1860, does not show any single event but is an amalgam of events from the expeditions in which Herrgott took part in 1858–59 in the outback of South Australia, in particular around the area of Lake Torrens.

What were the wax reliefs for?

What was the purpose of Herrgott's wax models? It is significant that the events depicted in both the present model and the one which was described in the Adelaide press in 1860 are related to the area around Lake Gairdner/Lake Torrens. This area was of great interest to James (1811–62) and John (1814/15–89) Chambers, early settlers in South Australia who arrived in the colony in 1837/38.

After establishing businesses of inland mail delivery, cart making and horse livery in their initial years in the colony, the Chambers brothers were, by the early 1850s, well established in the Flinders Ranges and around Mount Remarkable, with their pastoral operations centred at Moolooloo and Oratunga stations. They also operated a copper mine at Oratunga and were closely associated with the early exploration of South Australia. Their pastoral lease at Mount Samuel was used as a base for Herschel Babbage's 1858 expedition (on which Herrgott was the artist-botanist) and they were closely associated with John McDouall Stuart's expeditions.

The brothers had Stuart survey their Flinders Ranges leases, supported him to explore for new pastoral lands and sponsored several of Stuart's expeditions, including his second expedition in 1859 in which Herrgott participated. This expedition started from the Chambers' pastoral station at Oratunga. Stuart always preferred to use the Chambers' tough bush-bred horses on his expeditions[16] and used them on the 1859 expedition.

On his 1859 expedition, Stuart was not only interested in finding additional reliable water supplies north of Chambers Creek so that the known pastoral land could be expanded but, under an agreement with the South Australian government, he wanted to secure an extension to his own pastoral lease[17] by further surveying the area.[18] On this expedition, Herrgott discovered the group of 12 artesian springs which Stuart named after him, and which later became the settlement of Herrgott Springs and then Marree.[19] The expedition discovered other springs to the north and northwest of Chambers Creek, which were valuable additional sources of water in an otherwise dry and forbidding landscape.

Herrgott, as well as the explorers Babbage and Stuart, had a close association with the Chambers brothers extending over many years and this association perhaps provides a clue to the purpose of Herrgott's wax models of exploration.

On 27 December 1886, Hugh Chambers, the son of James Chambers who had died in 1862, exhibited a number of "relics" at an exhibition by the Old Colonists Association at the Town Hall in Adelaide to mark the

6 a-b

Detailed comparisons between the modelling of the horse in (a) the wax relief and (b)Herrgott mounted on a horse from Mitchell Library image a6407045 from the Stuart expedition sketch book. The sketch is inscribed *Peculiar sandstone formation above Chambers Creek*. Note the similarity in modelling between the wax figure and the sketch of both the horse and Herrgott. Image top right © Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, call number PXB128

50th anniversary of the founding of the colony. The "relics" were described, in part, in the *South Australian Register*:[20]

> During the evening hundreds of those in attendance, at the Town Hall visited the Banqueting room where early relics of South Australia were to be seen. In this connection, the Old Colonists' Association claims mention ….
> A scene in relief representing a group of aboriginals was shown by Mr. H. Chambers, who also lent Stuart's original diary – a book in which the writing is so minute and fine that it requires a magnifying glass to read it. The same gentleman also lent the programme of the Stuart demonstration printed on satin.

The association of the "scene in relief" with Stuart's diary, and the close connection between the Chambers family, Herrgott and Stuart's exhibitions, provide a strong hint that the work exhibited in 1886 was one of the wax models by Herrgott. This "scene in relief" of a group of Aboriginals may have been the present wax relief, or the wax model described in the press in 1860.

When the current wax relief recently appeared on the market (see note 2), it was accompanied, from the same South Australian collection, by a watercolour of the brig *Rapid* by Walter Stevenson. This watercolour was exhibited at the same Old Colonists, Association exhibition in 1886[21] as the "scene in relief" by a Mr. Simpson, presumably the South Australian colonist Alfred Simpson (1805–91). This association of the two objects provides circumstantial support for this wax relief possibly being the "scene in relief" shown at the same exhibition.

It is likely that the wax models made by Herrgott, including the present one, were made as a token of thanks and appreciation to James and John Chambers for their support, and as a memento of the various exploratory expeditions in the vicinity of their pastoral leases.[22]

Herrgott died in Victoria on 17 October 1861. An obituary noted[23]

HERGOLT.—On the 17th October, at Melbourne, in the 36th year of his age, David Hergolt, artist, naturalist, &c. The deceased was a native of Bavaria; but was thoroughly conversant with French and English, as to locality, manners, and language. His general attainments in the arts and sciences were of no ordinary character, and he has left behind him many a trace of his mastery in nature and art. As a citizen of the world, he was just, frank, manly; as a friend, he was intelligent, generous, kind; and his premature exit into the spirit world is deplored by a large circle of friends, both German and English.

Conclusion

This newly discovered wax relief can be firmly attributed to the German immigrant artist Josef David Herrgott (1823–61) and dated 1859–60.

The work, which is most likely centred around Chambers Creek in the northern Flinders Ranges area of South Australia, depicts not a specific event in the exploration of South Australia but an amalgam of events that were important during the exploratory expeditions of 1858-59 of Babbage, Tolmer and Stuart

to the area around Lake Torrens on which expeditions Herrgott was artist and botanist.

Given that these expeditions were sponsored and supported by the brothers James and John Chambers, it appears that the wax relief was produced for them as a memento, a conclusion supported by its likely exhibition in the Old Colonists, Association "relics" exhibition in Adelaide in 1886 by James Chambers' son Hugh.

Herrgott's works are rare and no work attributed to him seems to have appeared on the art market over the past 50 years. This wax relief is the only known work by him in this medium although, from the press reports in the 1860s, he is known to have created at least one other. His graphic work is known only from the sketch book in the Mitchell Library in Sydney, the drawings in the archives of the Royal Geographic of Australasia in Adelaide and a series of gouaches related to those drawings in the collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia.

Both his drawings and this newly discovered wax relief showcase an extremely talented artist and draughtsman with the composition and the modelling of the wax relief of the very highest order. It is hoped that additional works by this talented artist will emerge so that his work can be more fully appreciated.

Dr Gary Morgan is an independent art historian and author based in the Adelaide Hills, South Australia and has a PhD in mathematics and an MSc in Art History from the University of Adelaide. He is the author of *The Etched Works of Mortimer Menpes (1855-1938)*, standard catalogue raisonné of the etchings of the Australian/British artist Mortimer Menpes (1855–1938), who will be the subject of a major exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA) in June– and has contributed previous articles to *Australiana*, including research into two Henry Steiner gold cups in the AGSA collection.

His interests include Australian decorative arts, prints and drawings. He is currently researching the influence of the French Pont Aven School on Australian expatriate artists during the period 1880–1910.

NOTES

1 For example Tony Kanellos, *Imitation of Life: a visual catalogue of the 19th-century fruit models* …, Adelaide Botanic Gardens, 2013.

2 The work appeared on the art market in *Sotheby's Australia Auction Catalogue* 30-31 October 2012, lot 11, accompanied by a small watercolour by the 19th-century Adelaide painter Walter Stevenson after a composition by William Light, lot 12. Both works were from a private South Australian collection. The watercolour is discussed later.

3 David Hansen, *Sotheby's Australia Auction Catalogue* 30-31 October 2012, lot 11.

4 Howitt (see n. 6), preface, p xxx quotes from John McDouall Stuart's journal referring to Herrgott as being "long in the Victorian gold diggings".

5 *SA Register*, 2 July 1860, p 3.

6 Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. *Sketch book of David Herrgott*, 1859, call number PXB 128, available at http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/item/itemDetailPaged.aspx?itemID=930905#

7 A.J. Howitt, *Finding Burke and Wills: personal reminiscences of Central Australia and the Burke and Wills expedition, with a glance at Benjamin Herschel Babbage's 1858 expedition and with selected sketches of the Babbage expedition by Benjamin Herschel Babbage and David Herrgott*. Australian Association for the Advancement of Science 1907, reprinted by Friends of the State Library of South Australia, 2007.

8 Howitt, *op cit*, p 29

9 Pith helmets were widely used in India, and recommended for hot climates such as South Australia to avoid *coup de soleil*. Pith helmets were imported into Adelaide in the 1850s e.g. "Another Volunteer" in a letter to the editor suggested for the SA Volunteers' uniform "As regards our head-dress … Why not try pith helmets, of which hundreds are now received from Calcutta and Singapore?", *SA Register* 28 Oct 1854 p 2.

10 *Sketch book of David Herrgott*, 1859, image a6407045, available at http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/item/itemDetailPaged.aspx?itemID=930905#

11 'Northman', who wrote several letters to Adelaide newspapers regarding activities in the north of the colony, may have been either John or James Chambers, who held large pastoral leases around Lake Torrens. The same letter appeared in the *SA Weekly Chronicle* of 29 Dec 1860 p 5.

12 J. McD. Stuart, *Journal of the second expedition*, 1859, accessed at www.australianexplorers.com.au/stuart-two

13 Alexander Tolmer, *Reminiscences of an Adventurous and Chequered Career at Home and at the Antipodes*, London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1882 vol 2, p 290.

14 Deirdre Morris, "Stuart, John McDouall (1815–1866)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online,* available at www. adb.anu.edu.au

15 *Sketch book of David Herrgott*, 1859, available at http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/item/itemDetailPaged.aspx?itemID=930905#

16 Margaret Goyder Kerr, *Colonial Dynasty: The Chambers Family of South Australia,* Rigby, 1980.

17 This was granted to him following his 1858 expedition but, as a discoverer of the area, the maximum lease that could be granted was 1000 square miles

18 Deirdre Morris, *op cit.*

19 The name was changed in World War I because of strong anti-German sentiment and is now the town of Marree.

20 *SA Register*, 10 Jan 1887, p 3.

21 *Ibid.*

22 Another, perhaps less likely explanation relates to Herrgott's publishing activities. In December 1860, Melbourne and Adelaide newspapers carried advertisements for a forthcoming book by Herrgott on his various explorations with Babbage, Tolmer and Stuart; see Tim Bonyhady, *Burke and Wills: From Melbourne to myth*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2002, p 11 for an account of the promotional material, including wax figures that were used in travelling exhibitions to promote the Burke and Wills story between 1861 and 1864. However, it appears that this book was never published and the fate of the manuscript remains unknown. The wax relief could have been made to publicise the book in the same way as wax models by artists such as Charles Summers and Sydney Carnroux were used about the same time in the media frenzy, including book promotion, following the fate of the Burke and Wills expedition. While these wax works were substantial, large works modelled in the round, Herrgott's wax reliefs were of a smaller scale and perhaps not suited for publicity purposes.

23 *SA Register* 26 Oct 1861 p 2.

A colonial Grecian library table

An early colonial library table in the neo-classical style, with a maker's label for Clarke of Castlereagh Street, Sydney, c. 1835, came to light in a distressed state a decade ago. Warwick Oakman ponders who might have made the table, where such an impressive piece of furniture might originally have been used, and speculates how it may have come into the hands of its previous owners, a family of solicitors.

1

Lot 100, "A Highly Important Freestanding Four Sided Neo-Classical Cedar Pedestal Library Desk, Sydney c. 1835". Goodmans Auctioneers, Sydney, *Important Australian Furniture*, Monday 28 April 2003, pp 30-33. H 75, w 176, d 131cm

WARWICK OAKMAN

On 27 August 2002, Sotheby's auctioned an Australian cedar and rose mahogany Grecian library table, c. 1835, for four persons, with the label of the first cabinet maker in colonial Australia known to label his furniture, Clarke of 22 Castlereagh Street, Sydney.

The desk, in a distressed condition, was purchased privately, beautifully conserved and restored by William Petsalis of Campbelltown NSW, then re-offered through auctioneer Tim Goodman of Goodman's Auctioneers in April 2003 (**plate 1**). Tim Goodman presented the table well, devoting four pages to it in his catalogue.[1] Tim also began to ask the critical questions of its maker (then assumed to be John Clarke

Jnr), the history, context and type. The library table sold for $117,000 to the present owners.

This previously unrecorded item is the finest and largest example known of a colonial library table. How could such an impressive piece of colonial furniture, probably a commission for a large and important room, be virtually unknown? At the request of the owners, I have researched this seminal item of Australian furniture. Questions are raised as to its maker, its later owners and contexts, allowing us to ponder the bookish dreams of colonial Sydney of the 1830s and 40s.

The Clarke library table

The rectangular library table is constructed of finely cut veneers of book-matched Australian cedar, with

bun feet in Australian rosewood (rose mahogany). It has four pedestals, each presenting a cupboard door with fielded panels, flanked by pilasters, enriched to the capitals and bases with carved acanthus leaves.

In the language of the day, the use of the acanthus leaf is symbolic with reference to antiquity – the foliate capital of the Corinthian order is derived from the acanthus leaf. In the language of colonial Sydney newspaper slang of the 1820s and 1830s, a 'Corinthian' was a person of taste, education and influence; Sir John Jamison of *Regentville* and Captain John Piper of *Henrietta Villa* were "the first Corinthians of the Colony".[2]

One subtly recessed drawer sits above each working pedestal to each front, linked by a shallow panelled neo-classical frieze, similarly panelled, with

2
Clarke library table. Detail of blocked frieze. Note book-matched 'plum pudding' cedar veneers, central fiddleback tablet and cross-banded friezes. Photo W. Oakman 2014

3
Clarke library table. Detail of typical working pedestal face. Note book-matched flame cedar veneers to sunk fielded panel, quadrant moulds to edges, bolection faces on untapering pilasters, plain tablets above. Acanthus leaf lappets to tops and bases of pilasters. The acanthus let into the pilasters and original. Breakfront veneered plinth base on Australian rosewood bun feet. Photo W. Oakman 2014

4
Clarke library table. Detail of typical working pedestal interior (type 1 – four drawers). Note 'pencil cedar' linings to carcass, unnumbered and unlettered drawer faces with compressed handles and dry waxed finish. Clarke label is affixed to the inside of each cupboard face. Surface mounted double pin brass locks. Photo W. Oakman 2014

5
Clarke library table. Detail of typical working pedestal interior (type 2 –two banks of three square drawers). Photo W. Oakman 2014

raised central tablets. Each right pedestal (individually locked), with a maker's label to the back of the door, contains four drawers – unnumbered, unlettered and without locks. The left pedestal is sham. The pedestals are each fitted alternately with four or six square or rectangular drawers. The solid bun feet are of Australian rosewood, for strength.

The surface finishes to the veneered external faces were originally French polished and much remained. The internals of pedestals and internal drawer faces were dry waxed and this finish remains. The library table had evidence of use, losses to veneers and damage associated with moving and re-assembly. The friezes were not illustrated but present, the leather was gone, as was much of the cross- and edge-banding to the top. Nonetheless it remained mostly complete and as conceived, the work of a skilled and tasteful cabinet maker, a fashionable piece of furniture for its time and purpose **(plates 2–5)**.

Affixed to the interior of each pedestal door face is an example of the earliest surviving Australian cabinet maker's printed label **(plate 6)**:

CLARKE, Castlereagh Street, SYDNEY. 3 doors from King Street, Cabinet Manufacturer and House and Ship Joiner. Fancy Furniture executed in a superior style. Sun Shades and Window Blinds, of every description, SHIP CABINS NEATLY FITTED &C.

Tim Goodman noted "It appears that this is John Clarke's pedestal desk' and advised the present owners that it had 'been found in an attic'.

History of the Clarke library table

When Sotheby's sold the library table in 2002, no mention was made of its prior history. When re-offered in 2003, Tim Goodman had contacted the original vendors. Goodman noted in the catalogue:

For the last 100 years the desk belonged to the Maund family of Sydney. John Williams Maund founded Maund and Kelynack Solicitors in the early 1900s. John served as curator [Trustee] of the Art Gallery of NSW as well as lecturing

at the University of Sydney. John's son, also named John Williams Maund, joined the legal firm. When Maund and Kelynack moved from Margaret to Castlereagh St, the desk was not accommodated. Richard Maund inherited the desk, later passing it to another cousin, Roderick Maund. Roderick stored the desk for many years at his firm Spinners and Dyers.

The Maund family was unable to provide any further information on the library table.

John Williams Maund Snr was born in Paddington NSW in 1876 and died in Sydney in 1962. He was admitted as an attorney in Sydney in May 1900, and the firm J.W. Maund & Kelynack first advertised in 1926, located in the Bank of New Zealand Chambers, on the corner of George and Wynyard Streets.[3]

J.W. Maund was an enthusiastic watercolour painter and conservative art collector. In 1928 he bought Tom Roberts' *Bailed Up* from the Macquarie Galleries for £450. A Trustee of the Art Gallery of NSW for 22 years, he was the first to claim that Dobell's portrait of Joshua Smith was "not a portrait, but a caricature and therefore not eligible for the prize."[4]

Research into the J.W. Maund & Kelynack partnership reveals a possible link with the Clarkes of Hunter's Hill. Maund's partner Gareth Owen Kelynack (1898–1961) was the son of barrister Arthur James Kelynack (1864–1923). Arthur was born in Wollongong on 18 December 1864,[5] second son of Wesleyan Rev. Dr William Kelynack and Lucy Hannah Houlding. He became one of the first four law graduates of the University of Sydney in 1892, the same year he was admitted to the Bar.

Reverend Kelynack officiated at his son Arthur's marriage to Sara Alice Bestic Marshall on 23 December 1889.[6] Arthur Kelynack eventually bought *Vailele* at Woolwich for his growing family in 1902, the house originally built as *Corinda* in 1892–3 by Thomas Keddie – formerly a tenant of *Woodstock*.[7]

In the 19th century, the Hunter's Hill-Woolwich peninsula was an elegant semi-rural village, difficult to get to, peopled by an enclave of French settlers, comprising rural retreats for rich Sydney merchants commuting by water. Then, as now, it was a tight-knit community. John Clarke Jnr, his father and brothers owned land in Hunter's Hill from 1835. John Clarke Jnr moved to Hunter's Hill

in the 1840s; his descendants developed large parcels and some remained on that land until the early 20th century.

The Clarkes certainly knew Arthur's father the Rev Dr William Kelynack, as he officiated at the marriage of William Clarke's son Edwin on 3 April 1871.[8] It is possible that the Clarke family, as the first and largest property owners on the peninsula, and the barrister Arthur James Kelynack were acquainted.

The Clarke family

The late Kevin Fahy was the first to enquire about the Clarkes. Kevin, also a resident of Hunter's Hill, owned the first known piece of furniture with Clarke's label, a Pembroke-type work table (**plate 7**). He illustrated it in the first book on Australian colonial furniture, *Early Colonial Furniture in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land,* published in 1972. Kevin noted: [9]

A similar table with drop flap sides and pleated silk-lined work box is illustrated in Loudon (1833).[10] A drawer contains the trade label of 'Clarke, Castlereagh Street, Sydney' ... This piece was originally from Inverell Station, the property of Alexander Campbell.

Although the label just says "Clarke", Kevin later wrote that "John Clarke Jnr is recorded as the maker of a cedar work table and a pedestal desk".[11]

Kevin added the rider that, while the 1828 Census of NSW records 65 cabinet makers, upholsterers and apprentices, a joiner, a turner, a carver and gilder and a chair maker engaged in the furniture trade, all but two in Sydney, "three-quarters of their number worked in some eight workshops, each employing up to 10 workmen."[12]

Michel Reymond published extensive research into the cabinet-makers John Clarke Jr, Andrew Lenehan and James Templeton in *Australiana* in 2008.[13] David Kelly has supplied further information about Clarke, taken from his forthcoming book, *Convict and Free: Master Furniture makers of Early NSW,* for which the author is sincerely appreciative.

John Clarke Snr (1781–1838)

John Clarke Snr was born in Norfolk in 1781 and married Susannah Butcher. They were living in Southwold, Suffolk in 1801, then moved to London. By 1814, John Snr is living in Rotherhithe, London, described as a victualler; by 1822 he is a shipwright, at the same location. When Charles George was born at Bermondsey in 1818, John was still a shipwright.

John, his wife Susannah and their four younger sons William, James Richard, Charles George and Edward Thomas followed John Jnr to Sydney, arriving on the *Harvey* on 27 August 1827. John Snr may have worked initially as a shipwright, possibly with his son John Jnr.

In 1833, John Clarke Snr applied for a new liquor licence which was granted for the Shipwright's Arms in Windmill Street, Millers Point.[14] He died at Windmill Street "after a short and painful illness" on 20 July 1838, aged 57, and described as a shipwright.[15] John Clarke senior had property in the city and it seems unlikely that he ever lived at Woolwich.

John Clarke Jnr (1801–1854)

John Clarke Jnr is the best known of the Clarke family, born in Southwold, Suffolk in February 1801, and the first to venture to Australia. He arrived in Sydney on the *Harvey* from London on 17 June 1825, his age given as 23. Two years later, most of his family followed.

On 19 May 1827, at Scots Church John Clarke Jnr married the widow Charlotte Webster, who already had a daughter, Charlotte. Their daughter Susannah was born in late 1828 or early 1829, and another daughter, Mary Ann, was baptised at St Andrew's Scots Church in 1831.[16]

John Clarke Jnr is described on his marriage certificate as a "builder", in trade directories a "builder" in 1828 then a "cabinet maker" in 1829. By April 1829, "John Clarke, Cabinet maker" of George Street is offering an allotment to rent in Harrison Street.

In 1830 he purchased property at 22 Castlereagh St, Sydney where he is described as a "cabinet maker".[17] The property is described as "That Unique Cottage residence with a good garden" (plate 8). In 1832 John Clarke Jnr is listed as an "upholsterer" and from 1833–37 as a "cabinet maker and upholsterer" in Castlereagh Street.

In 1834 he applied to purchase ten acres at Woolwich on the Lane Cove River, now known as Clarke's Point. Here he built *Viewforth,* completed by 1836. After 1837, John Clarke Jnr ceases to be listed in trade directories until 1851, when he is listed as living at Balmain, "cabinet maker".

10
Clarke's Estate subdivision map November 1880[60]

John Clarke Jnr rented out his 22 Castlereagh St property from 1837 until its sale in 1847 to cabinet maker Andrew Lenehan. Throughout this time, the boom years of colonial Sydney. it appears that John Clarke Jnr never developed the prime Sydney site from what he had acquired in 1830.

The oldest surviving house in Hunter's Hill is *Woodstock*, built by John Clarke Jnr in 1835 for his father John Clarke Snr, shipwright and hotelier.[18] The original form, like that of the cottage at 22 Castlereagh St, is clearly of multiple timber gables and a plain vernacular form **(plate 9)**.

Roslyn Maguire and Diana Drake write about the Clarke brothers' development of their land:[19]

> In addition to the five stone residences built on the 26 acres of Clarke land opposite Cockatoo Island, at least three of their buildings were built of timber, with another large timber building close to the shoreline of Parramatta River marked 'carpenters shop'. One timber house with Clarke family associations still survives at 4 Alfred Street, a small cottage named *Woodstock*.

After renting out his Castlereagh St premises in 1837, John Clarke Jnr appears to have reverted to his earlier profession of builder, living at his newly built cottage *Viewforth*. John Jnr had let *Viewforth* before 1850 and taken up residence at *Bankside Cottage* in Balmain where he died, aged 53, in April 1854.[20]

Viewforth no longer survives, but a description of it, from 1933, does:

> **An Old House.**
> Viewforth, Woolwich, Sydney.
> [By Madeline Buck]
> A very old house is *Viewforth* on the Parramatta River. It was built nearly a hundred years ago by convict labour for James Clarke who came to Australia in 1828.
> He seems to have been a man of many parts, for he was noted as a musician, followed the profession of architecture, and painted many pictures. One of the latter is now in the possession of the Mitchell Library. It is known that several pictures denoting scenes of old Sydney were presented to residents of Balmain, so that if they could be unearthed, would be have considerable value.
> With the house went ten acres of land, almost all of which seems to have clung to it to this day. Mr Clarke left the property to his daughter, Mrs J.J. Wright of Queanbeyan . … This property has one frontage to the Lane Cove River, the other to the Parramatta River."[21]

The information Madeline Buck presented here is unreliable. The Mitchell Library has no record of a painting by James Clarke.[22] While John Wright did marry Mary Ann Clarke in 1850,[23] she cannot have been the daughter of James, who married in 1838; she is a daughter[24] of his elder brother John, who is more likely to be the "J. Clarke, Esq., of *Bankside Cottage*, Balmain" (see note 23) who we know lived in *Bankside Cottage*.

According to rate books, James's widow Lavinia may have lived at *Woodstock* briefly in the mid 1860s but otherwise the house was let to a series of tenants throughout the 19th century. The property was subdivided in 1880 **(plate 10)**.[25]

William Clarke (c 1810–1868)

William Clarke was born about 1810. He is described as a cabinet-maker of Hunter's Hill Parish in trade directories of 1839, so may have begun to learn his trade in London, but could have completed only two or three years of his seven-year apprenticeship by the time he sailed in early 1827.

In 1838, William Clarke married Charlotte Webster (his brother John's step-daughter), while James married Lavinia the same day, at *Viewforth* at Hunter's Hill. William and John are recorded in the 1841 census as living in two households at Hunter's Hill. Eleven children are known. In January 1843, when William's second son Edwin was baptised, William gave his address as "*Woodstock,* Parramatta River"; in May 1844, James too gave his address as "*Woodstock*".

Sometime in the 1850s, William built a new timber house on his own eight acres at Clarke's Point, where Lucy and Ernest were born, and Alfred John died in 1867.[26] William himself died there on 24 March 1868, aged 57.[27]

James Richard Clarke (1814–1860)

James Richard Clarke was born in 1814, when his father was at Rotherhithe and described as a victualler. In 1838, he married Lavinia Matilda Woodley (c. 1821–1870) at *Viewforth* and the following year she produced the first of ten children, Henry T Clarke (1839–1922); the last, Wilmot, was born in 1859.

James is described as a cabinet maker, of Hunter's Hill Parish, in trade directories of 1839. He would have been old enough to start his apprenticeship soon after arriving in Sydney, possibly under his brother John, or another nearby cabinet maker; aged 14, he is recorded as living with John in the 1828 Census.[28] In May 1844, when James' daughter Emmeline (Emiline) was baptised, James gave his address as "*Woodstock*".

In 1853 he was living in Balmain and advertised to lease a cottage, which may have been *Viewforth* or *Woodstock*, at Woolwich:[29]

TO LET, a neat Verandah Cottage, containing five rooms, &c., with orchard, pleasantly situated on the Parramatta River, opposite Cockatoo Island Apply to JAMES R. CLARKE, corner of Stephen and the main streets, Balmain, facing the residence of Rowland Ronald, Esq.

James died at Balmain on 25 May 1860, aged 46, "Through life he was much and deservedly respected."[30] Lavinia was left with nine children and applied for probate of his will immediately; his profession was given as cabinet maker.[31] His widow died on 19 April 1870 at her daughter's residence, *Hillside Cottage*, Balmain.[32]

Charles George Clarke (1818-1878?)

Charles George Clarke was born in Bermondsey, London in 1818 and arrived in Sydney with his parents in 1827. In 1853, Charles Clarke was living in Clyde Street, described as a cabinet maker. He too can have been old enough only to have been apprenticed in Sydney.

In February of 1854, an advertisement appears for a vacancy at the Odd Fellows Medical Institute, of which Charles is secretary. Applicants are asked to give

their testimonials to his brother, Edward T. Clarke of Prince Street North. These ads ran until June. Then in 1860, Charles is "Noble Grand" with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, when he authorised a funeral notice of one of their Balmain members. The Charles G. Clarke who died, aged 61, in 1878 may be the same person.[33]

Edward Thomas Clarke (c 1823–1875)

Edward, the youngest of the brothers, married Mary Anne Campbell at Pyrmont on 7 November 1846.[34] Their first son Edgar or Edwin died in 1853;[35] BDM records that they had three more boys and four girls between 1853 and 1866.

In 1854, he is at 30 Prince Street North in the city, associated with the Oddfellows Medical Institute. Three years later, he is living in Balmain working with timber as a "mast and block maker" for ships; he was in debt for the small sum of £10.10.0½ and found insolvent, though allowed to keep his household furniture and tools of trade.[36]

While working in the office of Balmain MLA John Booth, Edward died suddenly, aged 52, "leaving an affectionate wife and six children to deplore their irreparable loss."[37] At the time he was residing at Bold Rock Point, Balmain.[38]

Summary of the work of John Clarke Jnr

The standard late 18th–early 19th century Statute of Apprentices lasted seven years. One could not set up nor advertise oneself as a 'builder' or a 'cabinet maker' unless this had been completed. After 1814 this was relaxed.[39] If John Clarke Jnr arrived in Sydney at the age of 23, listed as a builder, rather than a cabinet maker, it is unlikely that he ever was himself a cabinet maker. After 1829, with the arrival of his two cabinet maker brothers, William and James, John Clarke Jnr is listed as a cabinet maker. As a builder, perhaps this allowed him to obtain extra work for his two newly arrived younger brothers, or to work with another cabinet maker.

Furthermore, the maker's label states Clarke, not John Clarke Jnr, offering a variety of services: house and ship joiner, cabin fitter, window blind maker, fancy furniture and cabinet making. In addition the 1832 directory lists John Clarke Jnr as an "upholsterer" (another seven-year apprenticeship). Research has not yet found any record of the men who worked for John Clarke Jnr providing these extensive services. One is left with the impression that the first label of Australian furniture in fact refers to a family concern, of three brothers, led by their eldest John Clarke Jnr, with capital supplied by a father who died in 1838. Two labelled examples of Clarke furniture survive.

After 1838, John Clarke Jnr is heir to his father's estate. This is when the Clarke brothers move to Hunter's Hill and begin developing their houses. The modest timber Castlereagh Street premises was never developed until its sale in 1847. It would appear that eight houses were built on the Clarke land at Hunter's Hill, including three of timber, plus a "carpenter's shop".

At a time when Sydney was dominated by the 'Corinthians' of taste and commerce: Captain Piper, Sir John Jamieson, the Macarthurs, John Verge and Alexander Macleay, and those of the "respectable mansions of Woolloomooloo Hill", the Clarke residences are not noted for their taste, style or size.

So for whom and where was the Clarke Library Table commissioned ? Clearly it was not intended for a timber cottage in Hunter's Hill.

Private Libraries, Offices and Ware-rooms

The Clarke library table seats four rather than two. It is unlikely that the table was commissioned for a single person's use. Neither the pedestals nor their internally divided drawers are numbered or lettered (standard on early 19th-century rent and bank furniture). The library table is of a quality in materials and design conception that suggests its function was both ornamental and practical to a large room, rather than for a counting house, as suggested by Michel Reymond.[40]

Colonial Sydney of the 1830s and 1840s had many private libraries. Happily records for many of these survive.

In addition, numerous sale notices and 44 catalogues of bankruptcies from the 1840s survive in the Mitchell Library. Eight sale catalogues survive from this time with a desk or library table described, of some of the most important figures in colonial society.[41] None of those described fits the Clarke library table.

CLIENT	HOUSE OR ADDRESS	AUCTIONEER	DATE
Henry Ginn	Cumberland Place	Mr Blackman	no date
Library: Double writing desk, with ten drawers and pigeon holes			
Henry Ginn was a leading Sydney engineer.			
Rev. Dr Lang	College Buildings Jamison St	Blackman	1846
Library: 1 large table with eight drawers			
The Rev Dr J. D. Lang was the most prominent Presbyterian Minister of colonial Sydney, writer, politican and activist.			
William Hirst	Darling Point	TS Mort	June 1846
Library: library writing table, slope top, seven drawers, Bramah locks			
Mr Justice A'Beckett	Castlereagh St	TS Mort	no date
Library: 1 office desk. Library table, cloth top, with drawers			
Hugh Chambers	Macquarie St	TS Mort	June 1847
Library: round table and cover			
William Carr	*Godrich Lodge,* Darlinghurst	TS Mort	Nov 1848
Library: Library table, of elegant design and workmanship, with oil skin cover			
Sir Maurice O'Connell	*Tarmons,* Woolloomooloo	TS Mort	May 1848
Library: Library table			
Mr Justice Therry	Lyons Terrace	S. Lyons	no date
Study: an extra size four-drawer library table, covered with leather, a moveable alphabet of pigeon holes to match, with paneled[sic] back, and French polished, an office desk			
John Verge designed Lyons Terrace.			
H H Macarthur	*Vineyard*	Edward Salamon	July 1848
Library: round table			
The Vineyard, later known as *Subiaco,* was designed by John Verge and demolished 1963. The fitted bookcases from the library survive at the Benedictine Order, Jamberoo NSW. The suite of dining room furniture, the design attributed to John Verge, is in the collection of Sydney Living Museums at Elizabeth Bay House.			
J R Wiltshire	Potts Point	George A Lloyd	Dec 1848 *Library: 1 telescope table*
Rev Mr Bodenham	Castlereagh St North	TS Mort	Oct 1848
Library: library table with drawers			

The major private libraries were:
- *Camden Park*, Camden NSW, for John and William Macarthur, completed in 1837
- *Elizabeth Bay House*, Elizabeth Bay, for Alexander Macleay, uncompleted, functional from 1839
- *The Vineyard*, Rydalmere NSW [now demolished], for Hannibal Hawkins Macarthur, completed 1835
- *Greystanes*, Prospect NSW
- The Australian Subscription Library (later the Free Public Library), various addresses, corner of Bent and Macquarie St Sydney, 1826–48

Camden Park

The library at *Camden Park* is the finest and only complete surviving library of the colonial period in NSW, and the best documented. John Macarthur had commissioned architect John Verge to carry out alterations to *Elizabeth Farm* that had incorporated a "library/bedroom" in the early 1830s, prior in the construction of *Camden Park*. Remains of those bookcases may be found today in the library hall at *Camden Park*.

Camden Park was the culmination of John Macarthur's lifetime of architectural zeal. Started in 1831, work was sufficiently underway for architect John Verge to design furniture and fittings in 1833. These are

invoiced to his son William, who was to handle his father's affairs in the last year. The Verge Officer Ledger entry for *Camden Park* is the most extensive of all. Page 92 records:

to William Macarthur esq
April 11
do. design fittings for library[42]

The ledger, despite containing entries for "consoles tables for lobby" and "sideboard for groined end of dining room" contains no entry for a library table. The bookcases, despite being designed in 1833, were not supplied until 1835. In a box of receipted bills in the Macarthur papers, the author recently found:

Bought of W.H. Tyrer, Drapers and
Silk Merchants, Sydney
Mr William Macarthur Esq.

	Oct. 26
2 bookcases	£25.50 ea
1 pedestal sideboard	£30-
1 hall table	£5-
983 feet of cedar	£5-
	Dec 2
2 bookshelves	£25.50 ea

In 1858, as shown in the watercolour
(plate 11), the room sports a twin
pedestal library table with banks of
drawers, and a round table to the centre
of the room. The boxes of receipted
bills do not contain a record of purchase
of a library table. While the furniture
illustrated in 1858 is no longer in the
house, it seems unlikely that 20 years
after completion a library table would
have been removed. As the century
progressed, the library at *Camden
Park* became an important focus for

scientific learning. It includes books
from important colonial libraries that
have now been dispersed – those of
Macleay, Dunmore Lang, Stenhouse and
Wise. A library table would have been
increasingly useful. It can be assumed
that the Clarke library table does not
come from *Camden Park*.

However, the sideboard supplied by
W H Tyrer to *Camden Park* in 1835,
designed by John Verge (**plate 12**), and
the Clarke library table show marked
affinities. Perhaps the design of the
Clarke library table came from architect
John Verge for another project?

Elizabeth Bay House

Elizabeth Bay House was begun 1835,
habitable and largely complete by
1839 for Colonial Secretary Alexander
Macleay. "The finest house in the
Colony" was designed by John Verge
and others. Alexander Macleay and
his son, William Sharpe Macleay, were
Fellows of the Royal Society. Due to
Alexander Macleay's financial troubles,
furniture from the house was sold in
1845. The sale notice does not include
a library table or library furniture.
The original library furniture was
Macleay's 18th-century library bookcases
and collector's cabinets, now in the
collection of the Macleay Museum,
University of Sydney; a Macleay library
table is currently on loan to *Elizabeth
Bay House*. While it is possible the
Clarke library table may have been
commissioned for this room and never
delivered, there is no evidence.

The *Vineyard*, [later *Subiaco*]

The Vineyard at Vineyard Creek, on
the Parramatta River, grew from a
cottage started in the late 18th century.
Architect John Verge designed the Greek
revival mansion for Hannibal Hawkins
Macarthur **(plate 14).** *The Vineyard* was
completed by 1836 and demolished in
1961. Hannibal Hawkins Macarthur
was the nephew of John Macarthur of
Camden Park, businessman, politician
and farmer. Following his bankruptcy
during the financial crash of the early
1840s, many of the contents were sold
by auctioneer Edward Salamon in 1846.
The description is one of the most
extensive and informative of Colonial
Sydney. The library contained a *round
table.*[43] The major furniture of the house
– a suite of dining room sideboards –
survived the sale and remained in the
house until its demolition in 1961. They
are now in the collection of Sydney
Living Museums. The fitted library
bookcases, similar to those designed by
Verge for *Camden Park*, were removed
in 1961 and reconfigured at the
Benedictine Order Sanctuary Library,
Jamberoo NSW. It would appear that
the Clarke library table was not supplied
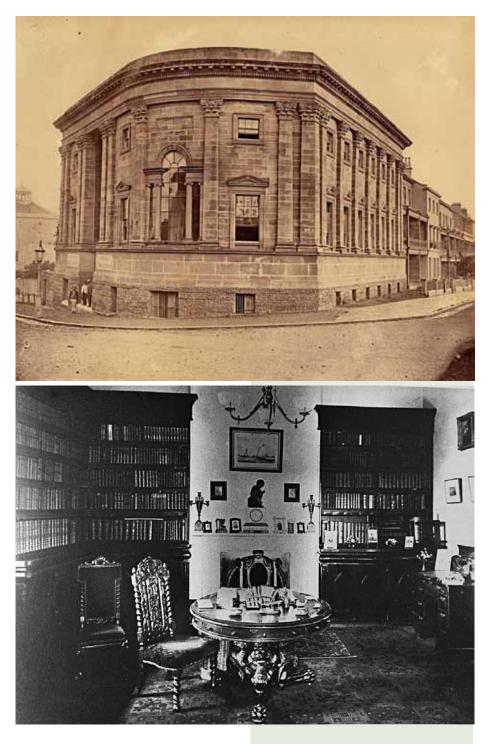to *The Vineyard*.

Greystanes, Prospect NSW

Greystanes at Prospect in NSW was
built for pastoralist Walter Lamb c.
1833. It was an elegant Greek revival
house with bow front, French doors

and light Grecian verandahs of cast iron. The colonial revival architect Hardy Wilson drew it c. 1914, regarding *Greystanes* as one of the most beautiful of all colonial houses. *Greystanes* was demolished in the 1950s. The interiors from the 1830s survived at least until the 1880s, when this rare photo was taken **(plate 15)**. The room shows complex aesthetic tastes: fitted Gothic open bookcases in a Grecian house, an 18th-century walnut kneehole desk c. 1750 to the right, Empire bronze candelabra and clock, mid 19th-century Gothic chairs and a splendid round library supported on a tripartite lion monopodia base c. 1830, ably demonstrating the diversity (and quality) of taste that could be found in an Australian colonial library. The Clarke library table was not supplied for *Greystanes*.

The Australian Subscription Library

The Australian Subscription Library commenced in the manner of a private gentlemen's club, with a charter and subscribers, with membership by invitation, in 1826. The location of the club, its books and members moved from rented premises in Pitt Street, George Street and Bridge Street until finally settling in the premises illustrated **(plate 16)** in 1845. With the Library continually in serious debt, the NSW Government acquired its books and premises in 1869; it is now the State Library of NSW. The papers of architect John Verge in the Mitchell Library contain a plan for carpeting for the Australian Subscription Library to be sent to London, suggesting the involvement of John Verge in the fittings of earlier rented premises, prior to Verge's retirement in 1837.[44]

19th-century photos of the interior of the Free Public Library do not show the Clarke library table. Elizabeth Ellis, Mitchell Librarian Emerita, advised the author that in the 1990s she explored the Kingswood storage depot looking for furniture from the earlier library to return to the Mitchell Library. While a few examples of late 19th-century Australian cedar office furniture were found, nothing of the

15
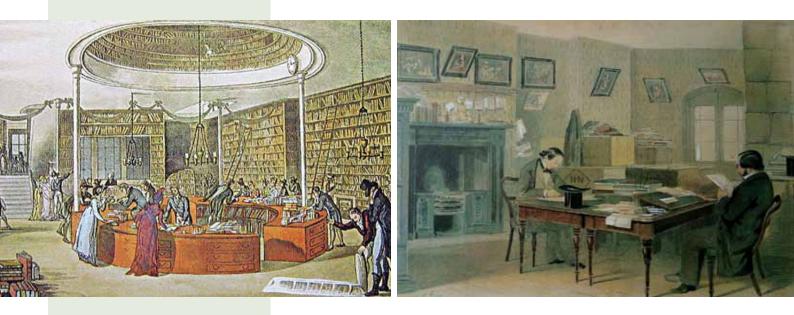
Australian Subscription Library (later free Public Library), 1826–1848, corner of Bent and Macquarie St Sydney. Collection: State Library of NSW.

16

The Library at *Greystanes*, Prospect NSW c. 1880.63 Illustrated in *Terence Lane & Jessie Searle Australians at Home: a Documentary History of Australian Domestic Interiors from 1788 – 1914*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne 1990 p 223

quality or date of the Clarke desk was held.[45] Dr James Broadbent, former Head Curator of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW, suggested that the Clarke desk may have been supplied for the Australian Subscription Library in the 1830s, then sold in one of the early financial crises.[46] Nonetheless, this remains only a suggestion.

Ware-Rooms and Offices

The Temple of the Muses, an elegant Regency London bookshop (**plate 17**), though just as easily a commercial interior of colonial Sydney, demonstrates how much furniture of the time, particularly a library table, could become part of the architecture of a building. It is possible that the Clarke library table was supplied for a similar interior of Sydney. John Verge itemises in his surviving ledger book designs for desks for commercial interiors. The

most important entry to survive is that invoiced to Messrs Appleton & Jones of George Street (now David Jones):

> Item 102
> Messrs Appleton & Jones
> 1836
> July 22   To a design for a cloth wrack to stand in shop
> To plans, specifications, &c. for new ware room at west end of the old – and superintending works
> June To plans, specifications &c. for fittings, gallery and desk, in New Ware Room
> To a design for a Cloth rack to stand in Same. Estimate and fittings Tenders for same.[47]

Unfortunately, no other record of Australia's first department store interior survives.

A little way round the corner in Bligh Street was the office of French wool buyer M. Henri Noufflard (**plate 18**). Arriving in Sydney on the *Chusan* in 1852, Henri Noufflard rented an early 1820s house of four rooms per floor in Bligh Street. The house served as office, store rooms and residence of a wealthy merchant of mid 19th-century Sydney. M. Noufflard offered to investors a rate of 12% return on stock investments and access to French woollen markets of £2,500,000.

The room contains crates for exported goods, a nodding Chinaman on the

mantelpiece and a safe to the left. The desk in action would appear to be a sectional cedar dining table, minus the leaf, covered with a square of wool felt to protect the top. This rare watercolour is the only surviving interior view of a room of colonial Sydney that served as a wealthy businessman's commercial office. It demonstrates the utilitarian nature of the furniture. It is suggested that the Clarke library table was perhaps too grand for such a use and was not conceived a 'counting house desk'.

Conclusion

The Clarke library table is the earliest and finest surviving example of Australian colonial cabinet maker made furniture bearing a printed maker's label. Craig, Fahy and Robertson were the first to publish this label. Both Kevin Fahy and Michel Reymond have asked critical questions of John Clarke Jnr and his cabinet making business.

In the light of comparative and circumstantial evidence, it is unlikely that the Clarke label refers to the manufactures solely of John Clarke Jnr, but rather also those of his father and younger brothers, William, James, Edward and Charles. John Clarke Jnr, as the eldest brother of a timber working clan of free settlers in colonial Sydney, very likely used 22 Castlereagh Street as both his residence and town office until the death of his father in 1838. No part

of that residence would suggest a man of fashion or influence. Nonetheless, John Clarke Jnr was closely connected to and participated with cabinet makers of colonial Sydney.

Both William and James were cabinet makers, Charles is described in 1853 as a cabinet maker, while Edward was a mast and block maker. Charles and Edward were both young when they arrived, so can only have learned their trades in Sydney, possibly in John Jnr's business or another nearby.

I would like to suggest that the Clarke library table may be the work of any member of the Clarke family, a collaboration, or may be the work of another cabinet maker, a tenant of John Clarke Jnr, or retailed or commissioned through John Clarke Jnr. Certainly after the printing of the Clarke label c. 1831–37, a plethora of labels and the identity of cabinet makers begins. Perhaps the Clarke library table was the cause of this.

The Clarke library table then (as now) would have been a major investment for a colonial interior, unlikely to be a made for stock, more likely for a large and specific purpose. The Clarke library table was possibly purchased back by a Clarke brother at one of the bankruptcy sales of the 1840s, or was an order never delivered. It may have passed from a Clarke descendant of Hunter's Hill to barrister Arthur James Kelynack of *Vailele* Hunters Hill, thence passed as a useful large desk to his son G.O. Kelynack, of Maund & Kelynack, solicitors. All remain suggestions.

Warwick Oakman lives and works in Hobart as an antiques and art dealer and architectural historian. He is a member of the AAADA and a former President. He has a lifelong interest in Australian decorative arts and architecture, collecting and researching obscure objects in those areas.

NOTES

1 Lot 100, "A Highly Important Freestanding Four Sided Neo-Classical Cedar Pedestal Library Desk, Sydney c. 1835". Goodmans Auctioneers, Sydney, *Important Australian Furniture.* Monday 28th April 2003, p 30.

2 Quoted in Dr James Broadbent, *The Australian Colonial House; Architecture and Society in New South Wales 1788–1842,* Hordern House, Sydney, 1997 p 99.

3 *Sunday Times* 25 July 1926 p 24.

4 http://creativeeffortsydney.blogspot. com.au/2013/05/john-williams-maund-1876-1962.html, accessed 21 April 2014

5 *SMH* 21 Dec 1864 p 7; *ISN* 16 Jan 1865 p 14.

6 *SMH* 11 Jan 1890 p 1.

7 Mari Metzke, "*Dulce Domum*, *Vailele* and John Richard Houlding," *Hunter's Hill Trust Journal*, 24, April 1995.

8 *SMH* 20 April 1871 p 1.

9 Clifford Craig, Kevin Fahy & E. Graeme Robertson *Early Colonial Furniture in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*. Georgian House. Melbourne, 1972 p 140.

10 J.C. Loudon, *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Villa and Farm Architecture and Furniture*.

11 Kevin Fahy & Andrew Simpson *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture: Pictorial History & Dictionary 1788-1938*. Casuarina Press, Sydney 1998 p 38.

12 *Ibid* p 15

13 Michel Reymond 'John Clarke Jnr, Andrew Lenehan and James Templeton, Cabinet Makers of Castlereagh St, Sydney'. *Australiana* May 2008 vol 30, no 2 pp 24–32.

14 *Aust* 12 July 1833 p 4.

15 *Sydney Herald* 25 July 1838 p 3, *Sydney Monitor* 27 July 1838 p 3.

16 P. Reynolds, *Leichhardt Historical Journal* May 1997 p 30.

17 M. Reymond, o*p cit* p 24.

18 Megan Martin & Diana Drake, "Woodstock and its early tenants", *Hunter's Hill Trust Journal*, 24, April 1995, pp 1-4.

19 Roslyn Maguire & Diana Drake "The Magnificent Villa and Humble Cottage" Timber building traditions of Woolwich, *Hunter's Hill Trust Journal* vol 22 no l March 1993.

20 Death notice *SMH* 22 Apr 1854 p 5. BDM NSW V1854519 41A/1854

21 *SMH* 9 Sept 1933, p 9. His youngest daughter Mary Ann married J.J. Wright on 30 September 1850; *SMH* 1 Oct 1850 p 3. Mrs Buck wrote a number of articles for the *SMH* in the later 1920s and 1930s.

22 Richard Neville, *pers comm* 22 April 2014.

23 "By special licence, on the 30th September, 1850, by the Rev. J. McGarvie, D.D., Mr. J. J. Wright, of Queanbeyan, to Mary Ann, youngest daughter of J. Clarke, Esq., of Bankside Cottage, Balmain." *SMH* 1 Oct 1850 p 1.

24 P. Reynolds, *op cit.*

25 Martin & Drake, *op cit.*

26 *SMH* 27 May 1859 p1; 5 Mar 1863 p 1; 21 Dec 1867 p 7.

27 *SMH* 25 Mar 1868 p 1. BDM NSW 6422/1868

28 Census 1828, C1291.

29 *SMH* 4 June 1853 p 8.

30 *SMH* 29 May 1860 p 1.

31 *SMH* 1 June 1860 p 1.

32 *SMH* 21 Apr 1870 p 1.

33 BDM NSW 6642/1878.

34 *SMH* 11 Nov 1846 p 3.

35 *SMH* 5 Apr 1853 p 3.

36 *SMH* 9 May 1857 p 4 reports that Edward, of Balmain, surrendered his estate. Two weeks later he was declared bankrupt but allowed to keep his tools of trade, *SMH* 23 May 1857 p 4.

37 *SMH* 31 May 1875 p 1.

38 *SMH* 31 May 1875 p 8

39 Anthony Camp 'Apprenticeship' *Practical Family History*, 64, April 2003 pp 12-14.

40 M. Reymond, *op cit* p 31.

41 Bound copies of house sales, Sydney, various dates (1840s), Mitchell Library. Copies provided by Dr James Broadbent.

42 *Verge Ledger 1833* p 92. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

43 M. Reymond, *op cit.*

44 Papers of John Verge, contained in papers of Will Graves Verge. State Library of NSW ML MSS1198

45 Elizabeth Ellis *pers. comm.* 12 Dec 2012.

46 Dr James Broadbent *pers. comm.* 14 Jan 2014.

47 *John Verge Ledger*, 1830–1837, p 102. Mitchell Library.

48 M Martin & D Drake, *op cit.*

49 *Ibid*.

50 Attributed to Emily Macarthur, *Album of views, photographs and watercolours*, State Library of NSW Macarthur Papers. Illustrated in Terence Lane & Jessie Searle *Australians at Home: a Documentary History of Australian Domestic Interiors from 1788–1914*, Oxford UP, Melbourne 1990 p 105.

51 Rachel Roxburgh., *Early Colonial Houses of NSW,* 1974 p 56. Measured drawing of sideboard in dining room alcove, *Camden Park.*

52 The Library at *Greystanes*, Prospect NSW c. 1880. Mrs B. Allen.

53 From *Ackermann's Repository of the Arts, Literature, Fashions, Manufactures &.c.* Rudolph Ackermann, London 1809, copies of which were available in colonial Sydney. Courtesy Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection.

Australiana Society Annual Report 2013
President's report

JIM BERTOUCH

It gives me great pleasure to present my report on the society at the 2014 AGM. Since my last report there has been a considerable amount of society activity.

Our first event after the last AGM was the show-stopping evening at the Mitchell Library to view the Macquarie collector's chest, the Dixson collector's chest and the Wallis album with Elizabeth Ellis and Richard Neville. This was one of the very best events that I can remember, with the unique opportunity to examine the two chests side by side and to see, at close quarters, the extraordinary Wallis album of watercolours and drawings found in Canada a few years ago. The presentations were fascinating and the discussion that followed was spirited and enlightening. Several members came from interstate, such was the drawing power of the event. I particularly want to thank Tim Cha for organising this.

In August, feedback from our stand at the AAADA Fair at Randwick's AJC Centre was excellent with 15 new members signing up. Greg Currie again lent objects from his collection with a number of his kookaburra pottery pieces appearing to take flight from one of the showcases. The stand was decorated with many other objects of Australiana including wooden boxes and apprentice pieces, chairs and paintings and looked fantastic. The stand drew considerable audience attendance and attention throughout the fair at the stand and it is clear that we are getting the message across about the importance of Australiana!

In September, Lesley Garrett organised an event-packed tour of Canberra including viewings of the Hannah cabinet, Bligh notebook and Arthur Boyd tapestry, as well as guided tours of the exhibitions at the National Portrait Gallery and costumes from the *Springfield* collection in the National Museum. The weekend finished with a talk on the garden at *Lanyon* with Narelle Sonter the garden designer. Thanks again to Lesley and to Judy and Ian Higson who took the photos and wrote up the story for the journal.

On the first of February we had our annual dinner and lecture in the junior common room of St Paul's College at the University of Sydney. Paul Donnelly organised an address by Michael Turner, senior curator at the Nicholson Museum. Michael gave a highly entertaining talk and spun together many threads and stories relating to Sir Charles Nicholson and his circle of friends, and the quite extraordinary and diverse collection that he bequeathed to the University. It was a wonderful venue and an excellent lecture.

Our most recent event was the talk by Elizabeth Ellis on the Sydney punchbowl, which had been presented to the Mitchell Library in 1926, and is one of the rarest objects in that collection. The punchbowl was made in China but decorated with early scenes of Sydney. Hordern House had commissioned a limited edition of reproductions, one of which was there for members to examine. Elizabeth Ellis has recently written the definitive work on the punchbowl and the other similar bowl at the National Maritime Museum. Her fascinating presentation was very well attended, and thanks to Annette Blinco for organising this.

The committee is planning more exciting and innovative events for the next 12 months so keep an eye on the website for announcements as well as reports and photos of past events. The website looks really fantastic and Tim Cha is doing an excellent job in making it so attractive and interesting.

As you will have noticed, the May 2013 edition of *Australiana* was a bumper issue with 48 pages rather than our usual 40 pages. It is a pleasure to announce that the committee is planning to have an annual bumper edition with the next one planned for November this year, just in time for Christmas. In that issue there will also be a further innovation with a new gift subscription form, so that members can purchase a 12 month membership of the society to use as a Christmas present. So if you can't convince someone to join the society, try tantalising them with a one- year taste!

And while talking about the journal the editor, John Wade, is keen to receive articles on less well represented subjects, such as ceramics, glass, furniture, toys and even painted gum leaves! I would particularly like to acknowledge the excellent job he has done, with the assistance of designer Kylie Kennedy, of the review and re-writing of articles, and the wonderful layout, editing and general presentation of the journal. It just looks fantastic and is the pre-eminent publication for academic articles on Australiana.

Those of you with a keen eye will have noticed that the Society had some significant media exposure in January this year with the story about the possible overseas sale of the Trevor Kennedy collection. Although we are not, and don't intend to be, a political organisation, the committee decided that it was extremely important that the Society be seen to take a stand on the possible export of such a significant collection of our Australian heritage, which many members had the privilege of viewing in May 2011.

I would like to finish by thanking all of the members of the committee for their support and contribution throughout the year. Everyone has worked hard to ensure the smooth running of the society and to help expand the depth and breadth of society events. In particular I am very keen to extend events beyond the immediate Sydney environment. To that end I am excited to tell you that plans are well advanced for two interstate trips in 2015, Tasmania in the first half and Adelaide in the second half.

I would particularly like to thank Annette Blinco as vice president, Michael Lech as secretary and Andrew Morris as treasurer as well as those two stalwarts Andy Simpson and Michel Reymond. Your committee is getting busier and in the next 12 months we will have to look at the constitution of the Society, which was last updated in 2001, to allow us to expand and to cater better for today's requirements.

Thank you all for your attendance at the AGM and I look forward to seeing you at future society events.

The 2013 Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award
Judge's report, April 2014

ELIZABETH ELLIS

The Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award is an annual award generously sponsored by Peter Walker Fine Art of Walkerville, South Australia. Peter Walker is a valued member and longstanding supporter of the Australiana Society. The society is most grateful for his continued interest in the activities of the society and the journal in particular. All articles which appeared in volume 35 of *Australiana* in 2013 are eligible for the 2013 Award.

The four issues of *Australiana* published in 2013 maintained the journal's high standards of excellence in the scope and presentation of its content and in the exceptional quality of its editorial work, design and production. The uncompromising editorial dedication to promote original scholarship and research continues to focus on Australian subjects. In addition, the journal is a visual delight with its excellent illustrative material accompanying the articles and high standards of image reproduction.

The accessibility and relevance of articles in *Australiana* both to aficionados and novices alike are noteworthy at a time when a number of our cultural institutions are facing financial constraints and the loss of many of their long-term, specialist staff. With a diminishing capacity of institutional staff to undertake detailed investigations on their collection items, *Australiana* is increasingly important as a valuable avenue for the dissemination of new research which is usually undertaken by individual members.

The range of articles highlights the diversity of interests of members across all types of decorative and fine arts. Each year's offerings continue to raise the bar and in 2013 there was a bumper crop of excellence from which to choose. This made the judge's task more difficult in that so many of the articles were of such a high standard and all contributed commendable new scholarship and research.

After considerable deliberation, I have selected for the 2013 Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award the article by Joy Hughes, "George III's gifts to the Governors of New South Wales" and the accompanying supplement, "Upholding King and Church" by Rosemary Annable which appeared in the May 2013 issue of *Australiana*, vol 35 no 2.

Joy Hughes is a renowned historian and researcher who worked for many years as a consultant with the Historic Houses Trust of NSW (now known as Sydney Living Museums). She undertook extensive research on the properties administered by the Trust and was co-curator of the Trust's major exhibitions *The Age of Macquarie* and *Francis Greenway, Architect* and co-editor of the accompanying publications. Other notable curatorial work which Joy completed while employed by HHT were the landmark exhibitions and catalogues on the architect John Horbury Hunt and on the demolished houses of Sydney and NSW.

Joy's forensic research abilities and her exceptional and detailed knowledge of the intricacies of the history of early colonial NSW are amply demonstrated in her article on the portraits of King George III and Queen Charlotte which hang in Government House, Sydney. Over the years, many myths grew up around these portraits. Joy has patiently separated fact from fiction in an exemplary case study which carefully examines a wide range of primary and secondary documentation and evidence. In so doing, she demonstrates how art historical research should be undertaken, but in less deft hands often is not.

Rosemary Annable is another renowned consultant historian, with her particular field of expertise being heritage conservation. She contributed greatly to the preservation and historical recognition of many significant buildings in her 30 years working in NSW. Her supplementary piece records hitherto unnoticed references to early Australian colonial governors' official allocations such as chapel plate and furnishings, which are listed in the archives of the Jewel Office of the British Lord Chamberlain's Department.

The main article is handsomely illustrated and is a worthy recipient of the Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award as well as a most welcome addition to our knowledge of artworks in Australia in the early period of European settlement.

Elizabeth Ellis OAM is the Emeritus Curator, Mitchell Library, Sydney

Treasurer's Report

ANDREW MORRIS

What a difference a year makes! Your society earned a cash surplus of $6,715 for the 2013 calendar year, compared with the 2012 deficit of $3,154.

Contributors to this outcome were an extremely healthy 14.6% rise in revenue from member subscriptions, a similar 15.6% rise in sales of advertising in *Australiana*, encouraging attendance at our Australia Day and other events, a successful Canberra tour and rising sales of back copies of *Australiana*, while our largest expenditures relating to production of our quarterly publication were well managed once again.

Overall the society had invested $77,926 cash and investment reserves by year's end (the prior year: $71,210).

Personally I would like to thank Michael Lech, our secretary, and all committee members for their assistance in my role as honorary treasurer.

I look forward to continued support from subscribers, donors and advertisers.

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

	12 months to 31/12/2013	12 months to 31//12/2012
INCOME		
Subscriptions from Members	18,334.54	15,995.50
Subscriptions from Members (Life)	0.00	2,000.00
Subscriptions written off	0.00	0.00
Advertising in *Australiana*	6,653.64	5,754.54
Australia Day & other events	7,700.00	9,780.00
Interest received	2,955.65	2,882.91
Donations received	1,865.00	635.00
Sponsorship - Peter Walker Fine Art	400.00	400.00
Sales of *Australiana* (back copies)	2,004.55	726.36
Sundry income (meetings, events)	0.00	0.00
Canberra tour income	3,381.82	0.00
Canberra tour costs	-2,444.50	0.00
Total income	**40,850.70**	**38,174.31**
EXPENDITURE - *Australiana*		
Design, production, post & stationery	20,402.35	19,319.92
Digitisation of back issues	0.00	2,686.60
Editorial fees	5,597.73	5,688.37
Writing Award	400.00	400.00
Expenditure - *Australiana*	**26,400.08**	**28,094.89**
EXPENDITURE - GENERAL		
Australia Day & other events	4,496.33	10,340.17
Website & Internet	631.40	1,093.18
Membership brochure production	468.00	339.09
Insurance	462.00	460.00
Merchant & bank fees	722.67	774.33
General meeting & event expenses	250.00	0.00
Subscriptions to RAHS (2013 & 2014)	452.73	226.36
Fair Trading NSW (2010, 2011 & 2012)	252.00	0.00
Expenditure - general	**7,735.13**	**13,233.13**
Total expenditure	**34,135.21**	**41,328.02**
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR	**$6,715.49**	**-$3,153.71**

BALANCE SHEET

	31/12/2013	31/12/2012
ASSETS		
Community Solutions Chq Account (Westpac)	3,415.77	8,145.60
Community Solutions Cash Res Account (W'pac)	5,009.13	4,062.15
Interest Bearing Term Deposit (Westpac)	69,172.18	66,288.53
Subscribers, ads, event deposit	0.00	181.82
GST refundable	939.53	616.30
Total Assets	**78,536.61**	**79,294.40**
LESS LIABILITIES		
Creditors & suppliers owed	0.00	1,437.82
Subs raised/collected in advance	0.00	5,872.73
GST payable	610.91	773.64
NET ASSETS	**$77,925.70**	**$71,210.21**
MEMBERS' ACCUMULATED FUNDS		
Balance brought forward	71,210.21	74,363.92
Surplus/loss for year	6,715.49	-3,153.71
MEMBERS' FUNDS	**$77,925.70**	**$71,210.21**

'Une Australienne'
currently on loan to the Mosman Art Galley for their exhibition titled
'Hilda Rix Nicholas in Paris, Tangier and Sydney'
3 May to 13 July 2014