Australiana

August 2015 vol 37 no 3

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COVER
Side of the Strasburg Clock model, with four painted portraits by G J Walsh of R B Smith, W Franklin, Edmund Lyons and W M McEwen, above a scene of the Rhine at Strasburg. Collection Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney

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Richard Bartholomew Smith's *Wunderkammer*

R.B. Smith made his model of the Strasburg Clock to celebrate the centenary of British settlement. It was hailed as a "scientific triumph of Australian workmanship". At first, Smith exhibited it privately "like a fat woman in a country fair"[1] until it found a home in Sydney's Technological Museum. The clock has been there ever since, a popular and much-loved exhibit although the mechanism has been unreliable. Now, Andrew Montana turns our attention to identifying the subjects and painters of the portraits decorating Sydney's Centennial Strasburg Clock.

ANDREW MONTANA

It stands like an eye-dazzling sentinel in the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, until it performs, as if by magic, on the hour **(plate 1)**. That is, if the mechanisms are working. This bizarre, composite object of horology, technology, and ornamental art remains an iconic example of Victorian popular culture, made to entertain, amaze and instruct in celebration of Australia's centennial year of British settlement, 1888. The rich gilt details, the lettering, the architectural forms, moving and static figurines, and the painted images and portraits belie the cedar case's original overall shoddy construction.[2]

This well-known, colourful Strasburg clock model designed and made by Sydney-born watchmaker Richard Bartholomew Smith (1862–1942) **(plate 2)** was intended to be a showstopper from the start – and hopefully for its creator a moneymaking venture that would bring both fame and wealth.

Smith commenced making the clock in late January 1887 and exhibited it publicly throughout 1888 and 1889, during which time he secured a written testimonial from the NSW Government Astronomer, H. C.

1.

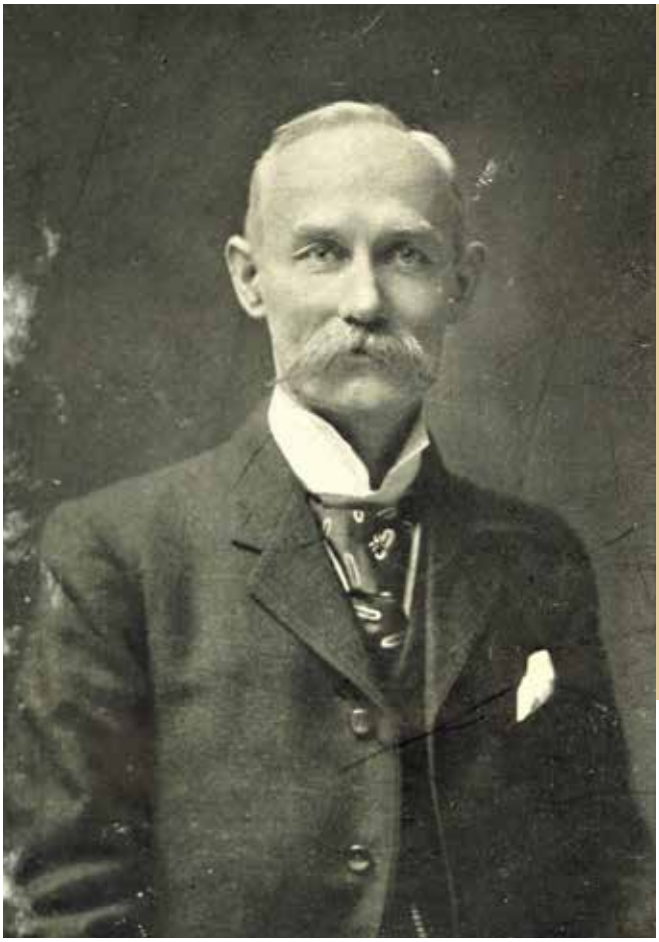
Strasburg Clock, c. 1887–1889. Collection: Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney. Photo Jean-Francois Lanzarone, image 00212975

Russell, for an advertisement in 1888 that announced the clock would be on view at Smith's Oxford Street premises for a short season only, before being exhibited all over the world. "Once seen will never be forgotten" puffed the advertising hyperbole.[3]

This Strasburg clock never did travel the world but it did allow viewers to see the difference in time around the world, and its iconography combines pagan and biblical allegories, which went into the formation of the cyclic Christian calendar. Indeed, times had changed in Sydney since James Oatley, the ex-convict watchmaker and former keeper of the Town Clock under Governor Macquarie, informed his clients in 1833 that his clocks were true time keepers, "without the hazard of sending them on a sea voyage, where a contrary wind might spring up and make the rate they went on board much quicker than on their return".[4]

Much has been written about the making, history and mechanical vicissitudes of the Strasburg clock and the foibles of its eccentric and self-promoting inventor. It has been housed for over 120 years within the various incarnations of what was known as the Sydney Technological Museum in the late 19th century, then the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, and the Powerhouse Museum when the first stage of a massive redevelopment opened in 1981.

At the time of its creation, Smith's clock was regarded as a union of art and science, a union fundamental to practical philosophies about colonial enterprise. The clock was also instructive about one's place and time in a world created by what was commonly believed to be the Great Architect and Designer above. Remarkably, due to Smith's persistence in its purchase by the government for the Technological Museum in 1890 and the clock's continuing exposure as a working museum object, the museum, in the late 19th century, acquired by default its first contemporary example of late Victorian colonial art decoration; gilding, panel painting, faux marbling and signwriting.



2.

Richard Batholomew Smith (1862-1942), early 20th century photograph inserted in Ebenezer Henderson's book *Life of James Ferguson F.R.S*, England, 1870, which Smith owned and annotated. Collection: Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney. Photo Andrew Frolows image 00221846

Until now very little attention has been given to the authorship of the paintings and portraits and the ornamentation decorating the clock case's historical revivalist forms, appropriating the original Strasbourg clock in France.[5] This research throws new light on the authorship of these paintings and portraits, identifies the subjects of the portraits and contributes new information on the artists. It does not repeat the hitherto identified iconography of the clock's allegorical paintings: the four kings, the three fates, the four seasons, the phases of the moon, the tides, the creation and judgement day and the paintings of Urania, the muse of astronomy, Copernicus the astronomer and J.B. Schwilgué, the builder of the clock in Strasbourg. This information is well covered elsewhere,[6] and it must be added that most of the allegorical paintings were loosely based on reproductions illustrating the Strasbourg clock, which Smith referenced.

Tracing literature about the clock reveals that the artists and artisans involved in the carving, the paintings and the ornamentation had been long forgotten in cultural memory, and then more recently identified incorrectly. In the museum's first major publication on its design collection in 1991, the clock's case construction and ornamentation were, according to curator David Dolan, the work of the leading architectural (stone) and wood carver, James Cunningham(1841–1903).[7] Cunningham's name comes up again in the museum's brochure on the clock published in 1992 as the suggested local woodcarver responsible for the clock's wooden case, a surmise based on museum documentation. But the extraordinary painted decorations were not attributed **(plates 3–4)**.

Two years later, then director Terence Measham followed on from Dolan's essay, and claimed in a book on the museum's treasures that the clock was

3.

The left side of the Strasburg Clock with painted portraits by Gerald James alsh (d 1917) of the makers of the clock, each with their tools: Richard Batholomew Smith, the constructor of the model (top left); W. Franklin, the carver of the woodwork (top right); and Edmund Lyons and William Maxwell McEwen, painters (lower left and right), above a scene of Strasburg on the Rhine. Collection: Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney, image 00221516

ornamented and painted by James Cunningham.[8] In 2005, historian Graeme Davison in his illuminating narrative essay on the history and context of the clock and its maker edited Cunningham's name out (although Cunningham may have made the basic wooden frame) and identified the woodcarver as one W. Franklin, the decorators as Lyons and McEwen, and the painter of the portraits as artist Gerald Walsh.[9]

These four men, according to Davison, were represented (although the portraits of Lyons and McEwen were deemed the "possible" subjects in the caption) in the paintings on the left-hand side of the clock's central tower **(plate 3),** flanking the portraits on the tower's right-hand side of NSW Premier, Henry Parkes and, he thought, his deputy William McMillan **(plate 4)**.

At the time Davison was writing, the clock was dismantled and undergoing conservation in the museum. This gave him the chance to observe that Smith (presumably) had sketchily inscribed the names of the carver, the artist and decorators, and the dates of commencing and completing the project, on the back of the main clock face, hence Davison's attributions.[10]

The inscriptions Davison noticed in 2005 must have been made around the time Smith was disgusted that his Strasburg clock had not been in working order since before World War I. He once again generated maximum publicity about his invention, suggesting to the press in 1922 that a public subscription to the amount of £50 be raised if the museum could not find the funds.[11] Determined to get the clock back in working order and on display again in the museum, he eventually succeeded through cajoling museum officials and spending "eight months of unwearying efforts"[12] in its repair, adding a chandelier with a miniature lamp in the alcove where Christ appeared that lit up automatically at the beginning of the apostles' processional and cut out at the end.

It was probably around this time that Smith included the miniature figural portrait bust of himself, flanked by two female muses (his wife and daughter?) crowning the central tower encased by an open Gothic revival filigree canopy. Typically identifying Smith as a "genius", this 1924 report asserted that the oil paintings were executed by Gerald Walsh formerly of Melbourne, and the decorations were by Lyons and McEwen who had used over "3000 leaves of gold" in its embellishment.[13]

Recent Australian design histories have not mentioned the work of Lyons[14] and McEwen. So this firm's advertisement published in the *Aldine Centennial History of*

New South Wales during the year the clock was decorated deserves full quotation here:

> LYONS and McEWEN, Art Decorators, 147 Elizabeth-street, established their business in 1880. Both gentlemen are natives of the colony, and thoroughly proficient in the art of sign-writing and decorating. During the late jubilee and centennial festivities the firm executed a large number of transparencies and canvasses, for which they gained great credit and many complimentary notices. Examples of their work exist in the decoration of many of the shop windows throughout this city, and which include Hagon's in King-street, Condy's in Oxford-street, Bailey's in Parramatta-street, and others. Messrs. Lyons and McEwen acquired their artistic knowledge in Sydney, having been pupils of the late Signor Amibitti [*sic*, Anivitti]. It is worthy of note that their training is a local one and that they are able to compete with any firm of the city. The members of the firm are E. Lyons and W. McEwen.[15]

A student of the Accademia di San Luca[16] in Rome, the Italian-born artist Signor Giulio Anivitti worked in Sydney from May 1874 and advertised for students of drawing and oil painting.[17] In 1875 he became the first instructor in drawing and painting at the art training school at the NSW Academy of Art in Sydney, attracting a large number of students. Developing a reputation for portraiture, he painted portraits of the leading Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy in a grandiose and somewhat stilted classical, academic manner.[18] He continued to teach students – Lyons and McEwen among them – until he returned to Rome in 1879. Anivitti's last major public commission was the allegorical mural paintings of Europe for the Sydney International Exhibition's Garden Palace building interior opened that year. He died in Rome two years later.

In March 1889, Smith's model became an advertisement for Lyons and McEwen, and was again exhibited at Smith's Oxford Street premises. The *Sydney Morning Herald* notice drew out the "26 beautiful paintings, executed by Lyons and McEwen, the premier decorators", for the public to inspect with a shilling admission per adult and sixpence for children.[19]

Smith soon toured his model around Sydney, undoubtedly in competition with the travelling showman and lecturer Mr C. Jameson's model of another Strasburg clock purportedly built in London before the Great Exhibition of All Nations in 1851. Jameson later toured with it across

4.

The right side of the Strasburg Clock with two painted portraits by Gerald James Walsh (d 1917) of Sir Henry Parkes and Sydney Burdekin, and a scene of Sydney Harbour with Government House and Fort Macquarie from near Mrs Macquarie's Point. Collection: Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney image 00221548

5.

Sydney Burdekin MLA (1839–1899), Alderman 1883–98 and Mayor 1890–91 of the City of Sydney, photograph. Collection: City of Sydney Archives

continents and arrived in the antipodes in the early 1880s with his travelling sideshow trophy for public amazement and amusement. Smith exhibited his model at the Hospital Bazaar and Village Fair in the Exhibition Building in Prince Alfred Park in September 1889, with the press accolade that Mr R. B. Smith was a "young man, who has displayed remarkable mechanical and inventive genius in the construction of this timepiece".[20]

After letters about Smith's "genius" were published in the press and other newspaper reports noting its possible purchase by the Technological Museum or the Art Gallery in late 1889,[21] Smith approached the Technological Museum in January 1890 to sell his Strasburg clock. After deliberations, by late March the NSW government had brought it for the museum, not without controversy, for £700.

This richly decorated mechanical marvel was soon ready for public inspection, awe and admiration at the museum.[22] It must have been Smith who reported that visitor numbers at the museum had dramatically increased, especially on a Sunday, as a result of his clock's purchase, although within days this 'increase' was countered by the *Sydney Morning Herald*'s insertion that visitor numbers at the museum were always good as evidenced by statistics.[23]

Gerald Walsh

But the question remains, just who was the painter of the portraits Gerald Walsh, son of a Victorian judge?[24] An elusive character, his name, occupation or place of residence in Sydney are not listed in *Sands' Sydney and Suburban Directory* throughout the 1880s, leaving one to speculate that he may have been an iterant artist, employed by Lyons and McEwen to paint the portraits under the umbrella of their business.[25]

Curiously, memories of the artist Gerald Walsh emerged in the mid-20th century in Western Australia, where one of Walsh's painting's titled *Bayley's Luck* hung for decades in the Fimiston Hotel (demolished 1980),[26] an old pub at Boulder, the gold mining area near Kalgoorlie. According to one local resident, Walsh came to Coolgardie seven years after the gold diggers Bayley and Ford "made their find" in 1892,[27] a story confirmed by another one-time resident of Coolgardie. To the latter, Walsh worked as a house painter and decorator and was a "very well-known identity" at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries around Coolgardie. Measuring about 7 by 5 feet (2.1 x 1.5 m), and dating to 1899, *Bayley's Luck* shows Bayley and Ford striking gold. This "landmark" identity also did flower studies, painted other versions of *Bayley's Luck*, and hung his paintings in "most of the hotels in the old town when our beards were black".[28]

Walsh painted another version of *Bayley's Luck* on a butter-box lid and gave it to a woman who once nursed him.[29] He painted the altar scenes of St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Coolgardie[30] and, described as "a local artist", he exhibited a painting of two trains at Esperance at St Mary's church bazaar in 1903.[31] In 1904 he tendered unsuccessfully to supply scene paintings in Coolgardie.[32]

Gerald James Walsh, "artist", died in Perth Public Hospital on 6 October 1917,[33] with no mention of family but a request for "Sydney and Melbourne papers please copy", presumably as he had worked in Sydney and his father, Dublin-born Robert Walsh QC (1826/7–1899), had been a Victorian County Court judge with a large family.

William McEwen

The gold rush of Western Australia attracted many artists and decorators from the Eastern seaboard, which was suffering the 1890s' depression and massive unemployment. William Maxwell McEwen (1859/60–1938) had married Honoria Jane Callen in 1886; three girls were born in Sydney, Nora in 1887, Jessie in 1889 and Marjorie in 1894. Three more children were born in WA: Dorothy in 1897, John Maxwell in 1900, and William Duncan in 1903.

He left the partnership of Lyons and McEwen in the 1890s, also travelling west to Perth where he joined the WA Society of Arts in 1896 as a working member. According to his daughter Mrs Marjorie G. Mercer, he joined the staff of the Perth Technical College as a teacher of art and remained in this job for 25 years[34] although he is listed only as an instructor in signwriting from 1914 to 1924. In 1926 he exhibited 11

watercolours of WA and NSW scenes and landscapes. In 1928 he exhibited watercolours of scenes at Harvey, North Beach and Waverley NSW. [35] Mrs Mercer wrote in 1942 that "we still have many of his paintings in our home."[36]

William McEwen died, aged 78, at South Perth on 21 August 1938,[37] after having taught "nearly every young man in the sign writing and decorating trade" who passed through Perth Technical College.[38] His family claimed in 1942 that he had written the words to what is now our national anthem, "Advance Australia Fair", at the request of Mr Hermes who composed the music for the Ashfield Band in NSW.[39]

An account published in a regional newspaper in 1888 helps solve the riddle of the identities of the portraits of the clock painted on the left and right sides, some misattributed due to the memory and inscriptions made by Smith in the early 1920s, which Davison saw on the back of the clock face in 2005. "More familiar faces meet the eye on the side of the tower", wrote a NSW Central Western district local in 1888 after recently returning from Sydney where he was "courteously afforded a special opportunity of viewing the model of the marvellous Strasburg clock" by Smith. "As here", the writer continued his description:

> gazing placidly on the ideal pictures of the Fates, are to be seen the visages of Sir Henry Parkes and the Hon S. Burdekin, **[plate 5]** whilst portraits of Mr R. B. Smith, the constructor of the model, Mr W. Franklin, the carver of the woodwork, and Messrs. Lyons and M'Ewan [*sic*], the decorative artists of the work, appear on other panels. The oil paintings are completed by two pretty landscapes, one being a view of Strasburg, on the Rhine, and the other a glimpse of Sydney Harbour from the vicinity of Lady [*sic*] Macquarie's chair.[40]

With its portraits identified including one of Smith himself, the Strasburg centennial clock model not only represents late-19th century technological wizardry and mechanical invention. Significantly, it embodies the skills of colonial Australian art decoration, during a period when heraldry and sign writing, ornamental design, carving, gilding, and panel painting were all sought after and highly regarded artisan skills.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr Dorothy Erickson for sharing her information on William Maxwell McEwen in WA, and Ben Arnfield of the City of Sydney Archives for providing the photograph of Alderman Sydney Burdekin.

Dr Andrew Montana teaches art and design history at the Australian National University, Canberra. The author of many articles on art, design and ornament, his books include *The Art Movement in Australia: Design, Taste and Society 1875-1900* and *Fantasy Modern: Loudon Sainthill's theatre of art and life*.

NOTES

1 *Evening News* (Sydney) 5 Dec 1888 p 3.
2 The Powerhouse Museum conserved and reinforced the frame and its embellishments several times from the late 20th century.
3 *SMH* 25 Dec 1888 p 2.
4 'Old Oatley: the watch-maker', *Sydney Monitor* 6 Jul 1833 p 1.
5 The spelling of Strasburg as used on the clock model and Strasbourg was often interchangeable during the late 19th century in Australia. Contemporary advertisements and notices used both spellings.
6 Eve Stenning, "A monument to Australia's centenary: the Strasburg Clock model" *Australiana Society Newsletter* April 1983 pp 16-22; Des Barrett & Nick Lomb, *Strasburg Clock*, Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney 2007.
7 David Dolan, 'Strasburg Clock Model', *Decorative Arts and Design from the Powerhouse Museum*, Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney 1991 p 82. Cunningham descendants believed he had been the carver; see John Wade, "James Cunningham, Sydney woodcarver" *Australiana Society Newsletter* July 1980 pp 10–14.
8 Terence Measham, *Treasures of the Powerhouse Museum*, Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney 1994 p 67.
9 *Evening News* (Sydney) 5 Dec 1888 p 3 describes the clock and identifies the carver as W. Franklin and the painters as Lyons and McEwen, but omits Walsh. Lyons and McEwen are identified as Edmund Lyons and William McEwen in a court case, *SMH* 14 May 1889 p 4. As yet, no information has been uncovered on "W. Franklin", although a "W.J. Franklin" was awarded a prize "for general proficiency in drawing" at Sydney Technical College in 1891; *Evening News* 25 Mar 1891 p 2.
10 Graeme Davison, "The secret life of the Strasburg Clock" in Graeme Davison & Kimberley Webber (eds), *Yesterday's Tomorrows: the Powerhouse Museum and its precursors 1880–2005*, Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney 2005 pp 154-55; note 26 p 273.
11 "Museum's famous clock; out of order for lack of £50", *Sunday Times* (Sydney) 28 May 1922 p 13. See also R. B. Smith, "The Australian model of the Strasburg clock how I conceived the idea of building it" *The Newsletter: an Australian Paper for Australian People* (Sydney) 29 Dec 1917 p 6.
12 "R. B. Smith restarts Strasburg Replica in Tech. Museum", *Sunday Times* (Sydney) 3 Feb 1924 p 3.
13 *Ibid.*
14 Edmund Lyons may be the son born in 1858 to James and Caroline Lyons, BDMNSW 3959/1858, but otherwise I have been unable to trace him at this stage.
15 W. Frederick Morrison, *The Aldine Centennial History of New South Wales*, Aldine Publishing Co, Sydney vol 2 1888 np.
16 Founded in 1577, it is now known as the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca.
17 *SMH* 22 May 1874 p 1.
18 Roslyn Maguire, *The Italian Connection: Italian artists in 19th century Australia*, exhibition catalogue, S. H. Ervin Gallery, National Trust (NSW), Sydney, 1993 p 5 & 9; Anthony Bradley 'Anivitti, Giulio (1850–1881) *ADB* vol 3 1989 p 38f, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/anivitti-giulio-2892/text4143, accessed 27 Oct 2014.
19 *SMH* 13 Mar 1889 p 2.
20 *SMH* 13 Sep 1889 p 4.
21 *Evening News* (Sydney) 1 Nov 1889 p 8.
22 *SMH* 31 Jan 1890 p 5; 29 Mar 1890 p 11.
23 *SMH* 25 Apr 1890 p 5; 29 Apr 1890 p 6.
24 Judge Robert Walsh died at his St Kilda home on 24 August 1899, leaving a widow and large family; at least three of the boys – Gerald, Mick and Harry – went to WA.
25 He may have been an employee like J. Rudduck who advertised that he was "from Lyons and McEwen, Sydney"; *Wyalong Star* 19 Dec 1899 p 4.
26 *Kalgoorlie Miner* 1 Feb 1980 p 2.
27 *West Australian* 12 Jul 1952 p 14.
28 *West Australian* 26 Jul 1952 p 24.
29 *West Australian* 16 Aug 1952 p 21.
30 *Kalgoorlie Miner* 17 Jun 1902 p 2.
31 *Kalgoorlie Miner* 7 Jul 1903 p 6.
32 *Kalgoorlie Miner* 16 May 1904 p 2.
33 *West Australian* 10 Oct 1917 p 1.
34 *West Australian* 19 May 1942 p 2.
35 WA Society of Arts exhibition catalogues 1896–1926; Dr Dorothy Erickson pers comm 16 Feb 2015.
36 See n 32.
37 *West Australian* 21 Aug 1938 p 68.
38 *West Australian* 11 Sep 1938 p 9.
39 See n 32.
40 "Colonial Art", *Molong Express* 25 Aug 1888 p 2.

Sir Donald Bradman and Withersfield

Cricket is in the news with the Ashes being played in England. Sir Donald Bradman (1908–2001) is respected as the world's best and most famous cricketer, both in Australia and the United Kingdom. His grandfather, Charles Bradman, lived in the small Suffolk village of Withersfield until he emigrated to Australia in 1852 – otherwise "The Don" might have played for England. This account of his family has been compiled from the village records.

1.
Donald Bradman c 1930

CHRISTINE E. JACKSON

Withersfield is an attractive Suffolk village spread up three hills with a brook, church and the three roads into the village meeting at the bottom of the hills. Boys play football in winter and cricket in summer on the two village greens. The pub, The White Horse, is at the top of one hill out of the village, called Church Street, over a bridge past the church.

From this village a young man, aged 19, voluntarily set out for Australia in 1852. His name was Charles Bradman, the grandfather of Sir Donald Bradman **(plate 1)**. While the biography of Sir Donald has been well documented, the story of his family in Withersfield and Sir Donald's connections with the village are less well known **(plate 2)**.

The Church

The Church is dedicated to St Mary and dates from the late 13th-early 14th century **(plate 3)**. A 13th-century iron ring handle of two salamanders is still used today to open the south door to the church. Village children are baptised into the Church of England in the 17th-century font.

The first Bradman to be baptised in Withersfield was a Thomas in 1770 and the Bradmans continued to be baptised, married and buried here from that time to the present day. Charles Bradman, son of John and Lucy, was baptised on 26 May 1833.[1]

The parish registers of births, marriages and deaths, begun in 1558 and kept by the rectors ever since, are now preserved in the Record Office at Bury St Edmunds, and contain dozens of names of Sir Donald Bradman's ancestors.

The form of name Bradnam was adopted in the second half of the 19th century. The churchyard has several memorial stones bearing the names of Bradnams dating from 1898. The Bradnams did not become sufficiently wealthy and prosperous until the late 19th century to be able to afford tombstones.[2]

High Noon Lane in Withersfield

At the northern end of the village is a large village green, Burton Green, formerly Button Green **(plate 4)**, with a lane leading out into the open fields at the northwest corner. This lane, with the improbable sounding name, has been known as High Noon Lane since before 1840.

Three houses or cottages were situated on the right hand side of what is really only a farm track, facing a large open field across the track.[3] The central cottage, probably two-roomed up and down, timber-framed and thatched like other typical Withersfield cottages, was where the Bradman family lived at the time of the Census in 1851 (though they were listed as Bradnams by that date).[2]

John Bradnam, then aged 44, an agricultural labourer, and his wife Lucy (née Rowlinson) aged 43, a son aged 18 called Charles, with Emma 15, Henry 13, George 11, Louisa 8, William 5 and Ann aged 2, all crowded into the small

house. They had moved by the time of the 1861 census. John died in 1874 leaving Lucy, a pauper, who died in 1881. The house was uninhabited after 1925, allowed to become derelict then demolished in the 1930s.

Living conditions in the village were primitive in 1851 for there was no running water piped to the houses until after the end of the war in 1945. Even then, for a while, the water still tasted as foul as the water from the few wells in the village that had previously supplied all the water for drinking and washing. The High Noon Lane Bradnams would have fetched all the water (apart from any rain water they could catch) from a well in the centre of Burton Green. Village greens were open grass-covered spaces for everyone to enjoy, the children to play, the adults to congregate for meetings or just a gossip. According to a former resident, the water from the Burton Green well smelt like rotten eggs and had to be sieved to get rid of the "wrigglies" before it could be drunk (**plate 4**).

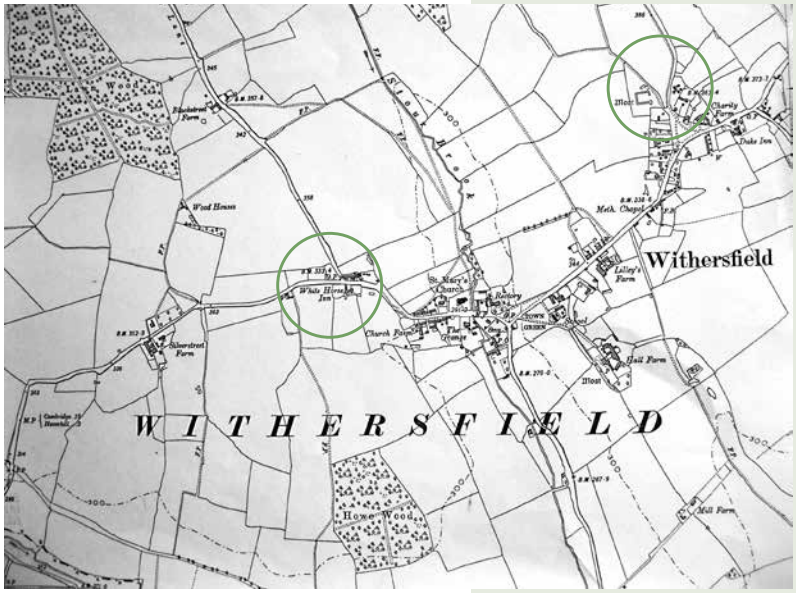
In 1852, John's eldest son Charles, aged 19, decided to emigrate to Australia. He married Elizabeth Biffin in Berrima NSW in 1860 **(plate 5)** and one of his children, George, in 1908 had a son who was named Donald George Bradman, for the family had followed Charles in using his baptismal form of the surname in Australia.

The family was inured to no running water and still suffered the same inconvenience as grandfather had while in Withersfield. George and Elizabeth lived in a wooden single storey house in Cootamundra where Donald was born on 27 August 1908. This home has now been restored alongside a "Memorabilia Cottage containing a nostalgic collection of historical curios and bric-a-brac from Australia's past." From this unpromising start, Donald became so expert a cricketer that he was an important part of the Australian cricket team that toured England in 1930 and for later Ashes series.

The White Horse

The White Horse was a coaching inn where stage coaches pulled by two horses would make one of their stops on the route from London to Colchester in Essex from the time it was built in 1764 until the end of coaching days in the 1840s. John's brother Thomas, the uncle of Charles, was the landlord of The White Horse **(plate 6)** from 1855 until his son Samuel took over a year before he died. Samuel was the publican from 1897 until 1932, so the Bradnams were at The White Horse from 1855-1932 which was an unusual and remarkable length of tenure.

When Charles returned to visit Withersfield as an elderly man, he



2.
Map of Withersfield 1903. The White Horse Inn (centre) and High Noon Lane (right) are circled

3.
The 14th-century church of St Mary, Withersfield where successive generations of Bradmans, and later Bradnams, were baptised, married and buried. Their headstones lie to the right of the path leading to the church

4.
Burton Green, c 1930

probably went to the village pub and met either or both his uncle Thomas and his cousin Samuel. Charles' return visit would certainly have caused quite a stir in the village where several family members lived. A photograph of an elderly Charles and his wife is believed to have been taken about this time **(plate 7).**

Charles' grandson Donald also visited the village, while he was on an Ashes tour of England from April to September 1930. In correspondence with Nigel Ward. Donald wrote on 4 July 1990 "I believe I did pay a visit there in 1930 to see an old lady who claimed relationship, but it was never proved."[3]

We do not know when Donald Bradman visited the village, whether before or after he made a treble century at Headingly in July, but this modest man did not try to make an impression on the village and his visit seems to have passed unnoticed. Apart from newspapers carrying accounts of the Ashes tests that might have alerted village cricket enthusiasts, and unless the lady claiming relationship to him as a Bradnam had spoken to other villagers, there is no other way he could have been identified. Sir Donald appears also to have missed seeing the site of Bradnam builders' merchants.

Sir Donald could have found several descendants of other sons of John (his great grandfather) and five female descendants in the village. But the one who could have interested him the most was Samuel Bradnam, who was then the landlord of the village inn, The White Horse. Samuel had a pony and trap with which he ran a subsidiary business conveying people the two miles between the station in the town of Haverhill and Withersfield. Could Samuel have, unknowingly, conveyed his most famous family member between the Haverhill railway station and Withersfield?

1930

This was the momentous year in which Donald Bradman astounded the cricketing world with his batting scores while on an Australian cricket tour to England to play the Ashes tests. He scored three double centuries in seven innings in this series with a barrage of 309 on the first day (11 July) of batting at Headingley and a final score next day of 334.[4] This was but one achievement in a cold, wet summer when at the start of the season in April he said "I found it difficult for instance to adjust myself to the idea of wearing a sweater, blazer and overcoat before a roaring fire awaiting my turn to bat."

He had already suffered sea sickness on the long voyage to England but once in England "the great beauty of the countryside" delighted him. He enjoyed a Wembley cup final and saw a German Graf Zeppelin fly overhead. He met George V and Queen Mary at their Norfolk house, Sandringham, and talked to the Prince of Wales at The Oval. In between all those excitements, he had visited Withersfield.

Many more huge scores helped create the legend before George VI knighted him in 1949. Had the war not intervened, his career records might have been even more astonishing **(plate 8)**.

The Withersfield Village Cricket Club

There were only vague memories of all this history in the village by the time the newly formed Withersfield Cricket Club was inaugurated on 2 October 1989. The secretary, Nigel Ward, took steps to find evidence of the old story of Sir Donald Bradman's ancestors having been

residents of Withersfield. He wrote to Sir Donald, then aged 82, in 1990 on several occasions and received polite replies. After further correspondence, Sir Donald agreed to become the Withersfield club's first Honorary Life Member and was appointed on 30 January 1991.[5] A large action picture of Sir Donald was framed to be used as the "Clubman of the Year Award". This is presented at the Annual Dinner of the Withersfield Cricket Club. It is kept at The White Horse.

At the time of Sir Donald's death in February 2001, the Withersfield cricket pavilion was in need of replacement. Sufficient funds were raised and a new one built. It was named the Sir Donald Bradman Pavilion **(plate 9)**.

Present day Bradnams in Withersfield

Two households in Withersfield have members of the Bradnam families currently living here. There is also a visible reminder of the Bradnam association with Withersfield. On the corner of the road leading to Withersfield from the nearest town of Haverhill, there is a large building, "Bradnam Builder's Merchants" business and timber yard that is a flourishing concern. The business is well over 100 years old, having been established as a timber yard in Haverhill by Frederick Bradnam (1853–1937) a cooper by trade and then moved to the present Withersfield site in 1900. It is still owned by members of the Bradnam family and run by Steven John and Ronald Clive, sons of Greta Mayes née Bradnam.[6]

Withersfield is proud to be associated with such a famous figure and the villagers tell visitors about its links with Australian cricket and its most famous cricketer – especially at the time of an Ashes test series.

5.
A photograph of Charles Bradman and his wife Elizabeth taken in Australia. Courtesy The Bradman Museum of Cricket, Bowral, NSW

6.
The White Horse inn, c 1930

7.
When Charles was elderly, he and his wife visited England and went to his father John's native village. This is believed to be a photograph of them in Withersfield on that visit

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mrs Greta Mayes generously gave me access to her collection of Bradnam memorabilia and helped me obtain the photographs in the White Horse.

Christine E Jackson FLS is a world-renowned historian of ornithological art and illustration and the author of many reference books. Among them are *Dictionary of Bird Artists of the World*; *Great Bird Paintings of the World*; *Prideaux John Selby: A Gentleman Naturalist*; *Sir William Jardine: A Life in Natural History*; and *Bird Etchings: The Illustrators and their Books, 1655-1855*. She lives in Withersfield.

8.
Don Bradman's 1934 "Baggy Green" Ashes cap. Courtesy Mossgreen Auctions, 19 May 2015 lot 361

9.
The Sir Donald Bradman Pavilion, Withersfield, built in 2001

NOTES

1 Charles was the last child to be baptised Bradman. The name had changed in the 1815/16 parish registers to Bradnam for nearly all subsequent baptisms and has remained in this form in the village to this day.

2 The churchyard has no headstone for John, father of Charles, but there is one for his brother Thomas and his wife. Thomas died 12 May 1898 aged 89 and his wife Hannah died 22 July 1899 aged 82. Their son Sam the publican's headstone states he died 4 May 1932 aged 74. At the time of the census in 1851 the Withersfield population was 642; by the census of 1931 it was 416 and in 2011 it was 450.

3 Nigel Ward was secretary of the Withersfield Cricket Club when newly formed in 1989. His correspondence with Sir Donald Bradman is retained by The White Horse, Withersfield. The Sydney *Sun-Herald* on 12 July 1998 has an account of Nigel Ward's researches and contact with Sir Donald Bradman. He reported that Charles and family lived at 26 High Noon Lane; however, with only three properties this number is not possible. The 26 was the enumerator's number of this household given as he walked round the village and recorded the occupants of each house; John and Lucy's cottage was the 26th household in Withersfield that he recorded.

4 *The Guardian*, 18 Feb 2015; 20 great Ashes moments No. 16: Don Bradman's 334 at Headingley, 1930.

5 Sir Donald wrote to Nigel Ward upon being told he had been elected: 20 February 1991 "It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge receipt of your letter of 30 January in which you notify me that I have been elected as the first Honorary Life Member of the Withersfield Cricket Club."

6 Mrs Greta Mayes, née Bradnam, has kindly lent me Bradman memorabilia and photographs and explained the family links back to Sir Donald Bradman and his grandfather Charles. Her two sons, Stephen and Richard, now run Bradnam's Timber Merchants.

Eureka and Victoria's chair of state

In the 19th century, an appropriately draped "chair of state" under a canopy was deployed on formal occasions when the monarch or her vice-regal representative was present. These chairs were conspicuously larger than any surrounding chairs, acknowledging the status of the occupant. Dr La Nauze traces the history of Victoria's chair of state made c 1859, outlining the role Flint Ramsay & Co played in its genesis, and the ambiguous symbolism of the Southern Cross.

ROBERT D LA NAUZE

An elaborate gilt chair of state used in Victoria for over 150 years stands in the ballroom of Government House in Melbourne. Today it remains at Government House, though in the 19th century it was often transported to venues that were to be attended by regal or vice-regal representatives and was thus familiar to many Melbournians.

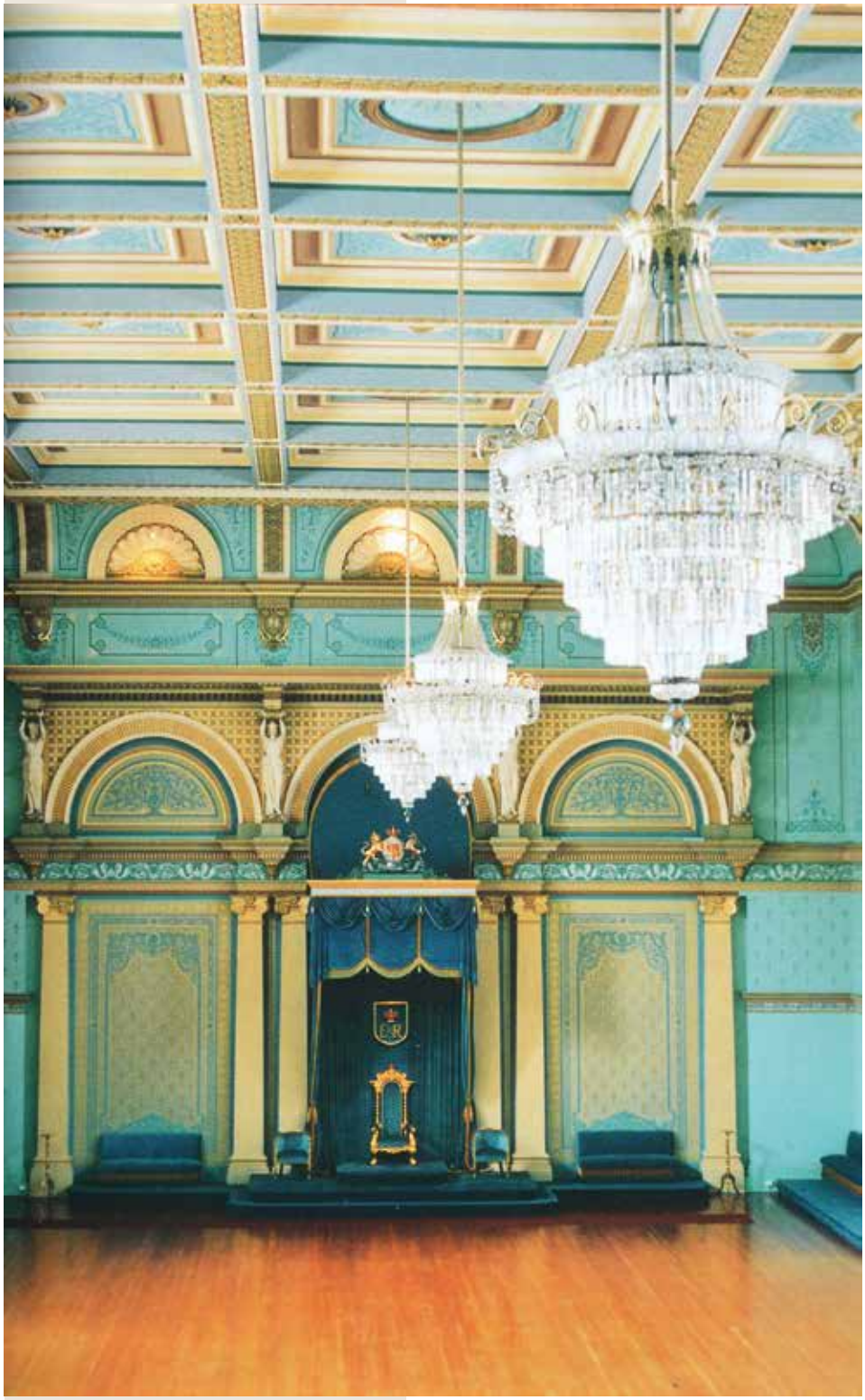
The chair's original upholstery included two embroidered eight-point stars that, with three carved stars, formed the Southern Cross. Queen Victoria's monogram was embroidered within this iconic symbol below a carved banner proclaiming "Advance Victoria". This ambiguous symbolism can be interpreted either as the monarch holding dominion over her Victorian subjects or as the monarch subservient to the will of the newly won democratic reforms in Victoria.

The chair has been renovated at least three times, obscuring the symbolic meaning of the decoration that, immediately after the Eureka uprising, Victorians would have understood. This tangible link to a period of significant democratic reforms has been inadvertently lost.

The State Chair

Victoria's chair of state, commonly known as the "State Chair", is Elizabethan Revival in style **(plate 1)**. It is made of gilded wood with an upholstered, arched back and barley-twist side columns, surmounted by a crown under which "Advance Victoria" is carved on a banner. Carved on either side

1.
The Victorian state chair, published with permission of the Office of the Governor



2.
The Victorian state chair in the ballroom of Government House, Melbourne. Photograph taken by James Renner and Michael Ritchie, Office of the Governor, 1994

and immediately below the crown are three eight-pointed stars. The front upholstered arms terminate in carved lion's heads.

The right leg bears a shield with the cross of St George (England & Wales) surrounded by a garter, while the left leg bears the saltire cross of St Andrew (Scotland) similarly surrounded. Centrally below the seat is carved the floral emblem of Ireland, the shamrock. The official brochure issued by the Victorian Government in 1994 illustrates the setting surrounding the state chair in the ballroom of Government House **(plate 2)**.[1]

In 1876 when the new residence for the Governor on the Domain was completed, *The Argus* reported that:

> at the head of the [ball] room, on a raised dais will be placed the Governor's chair, which is the same piece of furniture which has done duty as the state chair for the last 16 years. It is being renovated, and will be as good as ever.[2]

This report infers that the state chair was made circa 1860. The report also stated that:

> All the old furniture from Toorak, which was made by Messrs Thwaites and Son 20 years ago, is being renovated, and will be used in the new building. That this furniture should now be fit to be placed in the new Government House speaks well for the makers.

George Thwaites & Son were renovating furniture that they had supplied to *Toorak House* 22 years earlier just prior to the arrival of Lieutenant-Governor Charles Hotham in 1854. Since, in 1876, the state chair was also being renovated, it has been not unreasonably assumed that Geo. Thwaites & Son were undertaking its renovation.[3] While Thwaites is likely to have effected this refurbishment, extending the attribution to its manufacture by Thwaites is more problematical.

3.
Detail of the Victorian state chair (published with permission of the Office of the Governor) compared to detail of "Antique State Chairs", figure 2, plate lxix from Blackie and Son's *The Cabinet Maker's Assistant* published in 1853

Blackie and Son's *The Cabinet Maker's Assistant,* may have inspired the design for the state chair, as it resonates with one of the "Antique State Chairs" shown in plate lxix, **(plate 3)**.[4] Blackie's pattern book reached the colony very soon after its publication in 1853 and was widely used as inspiration for contemporary furniture, including the furniture that George Thwaites made for *Toorak House* in 1854.

From the colony's earliest days through to the death of Hotham in late 1855, several different chairs can be identified as having been used as chairs of state. For example, at the inaugural Legislative Council sitting on 13 November 1851, Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe sat in an upholstered wing-backed chair of state of quite modest proportions compared with the current state chair.

A search of the register of government accounts for the period 1856 to 1859 gives rise to only one contract for supply of furniture to the Governor. On 1 August 1856, Thomas Chuck of Bourke Street was paid £50 for "supplying furniture for his Excellency the Governor" who at the time was the colonial administrator Colonel Edward MacArthur.[5] As caretaker governor, and so soon after the imbroglio concerning the furniture purchased for Hotham and the antipathy towards the Queen's representative, it is unlikely that MacArthur would have placed an order for a chair of state.

The Age reported that a silver medal was awarded to McKendrick and McEwan for exhibiting a "state chair" at the Victoria Industrial Society exhibition held in December 1856.[6] Twenty years later James McEwan was, along with Thwaites, to supply furniture to the Governor's residence on the Domain. However, a link between the exhibited piece and the state chair has not been established and the specificity of the c 1860 date for the state chair mentioned in the 1876 press report suggests that this 1856 chair is not the existing chair.

Ramsay Brothers and the Royal Birthday Ball 1859

In searching for a reference to a state chair c 1860, the closest I have found is a chair described at the Royal Birthday Ball held on the evening of 28 June 1859:

> The Royal Birthday Ball … came off yesterday evening at the Exhibition Building, and may be justly pronounced a success in every respect … The building was most tastefully decorated with flags of all nations, and over the vice-regal chair, a handsome dais was erected, the colors of the 40th Regiment, with their many honourable names, and the British ensign, being suspended on either side. The chair of State, as well as the couches, were manufactured by Messrs. Ramsey [*sic*], and deserve mention from the taste displayed in their design and the skill shown in their manufacture.[7]

"Messrs. Ramsey" were the brothers Flint and David Ramsay who operated as Flint Ramsay & Co, importing English and Scottish furniture. *The Age* report of the ball provides further important details:

> Facing the principal entrance a canopy was erected for his Excellency, under which was placed the chair of State. The canopy was a very tasteful work of art, as was also the chair of State, and the decorations were of the most superb and *recherché* description. Over the canopy were the illuminated letters "V.A." [*sic*] and the royal arms. … The whole arrangements were under

4.
Exhibition Hall in preparation for the opening in 1869 of the first public art exhibition, Melbourne. The state chair surrounded by chairs from the public library attributed to Geo. Thwaites & Son. Detail from photograph taken by Charles Nettleton, State Library of Victoria acc no H12962

> the immediate superintendence and direction of Mr Cassidy, his Excellency's steward …
> The chair of State … was covered in crimson velvet, the wood work being white, with gold mouldings, and surmounted with the Royal Arms. It was manufactured by Messrs Ramsay Brothers and Co., by whom the whole of the furniture, which was of the most gorgeous description, was constructed and supplied, with the exception of the canopy, of which we shall merely state that it was all the most fastidious could desire. This was made by Messrs Hickinbotham.[8]

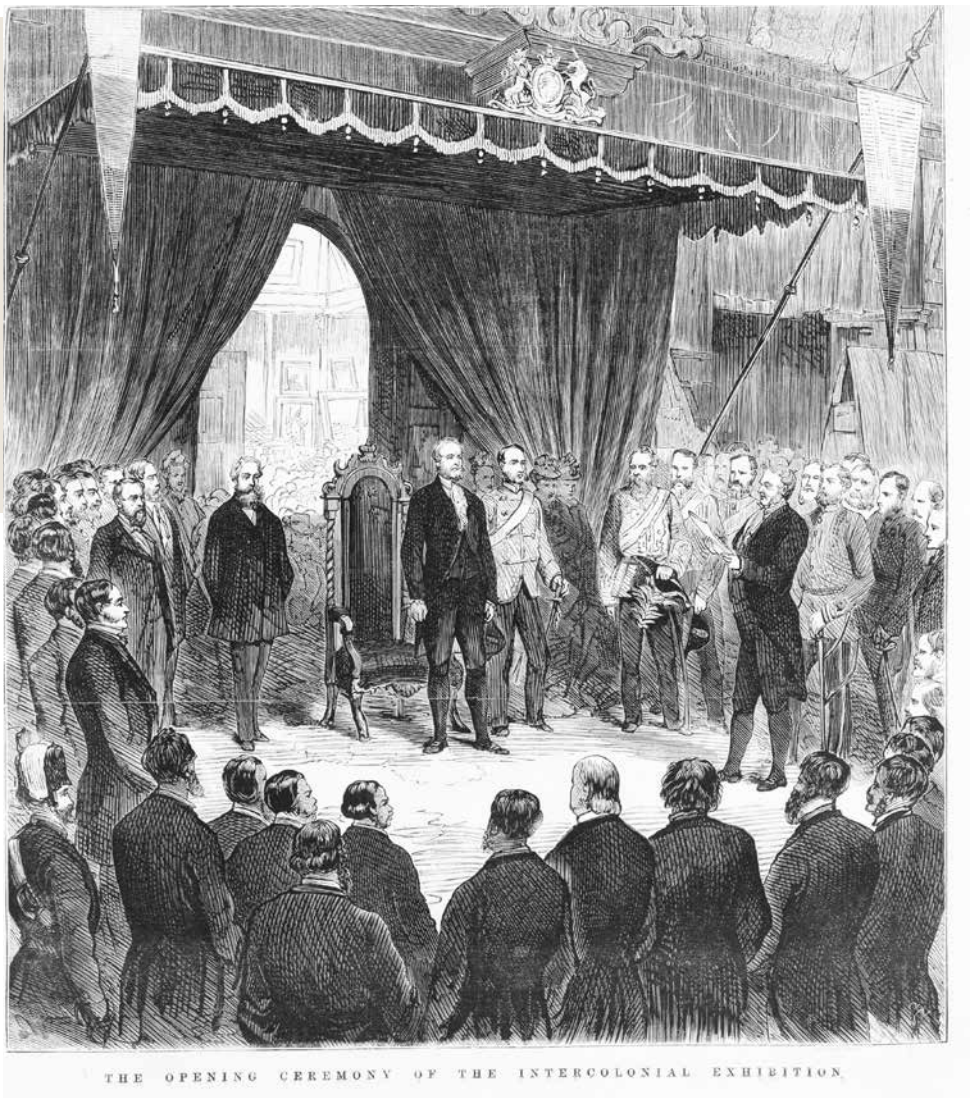
Before the opening of the first public art exhibition in the Exhibition Hall, Melbourne, in 1869, Charles Nettleton photographed the state chair surrounded by chairs from the public library **(plate 4)**.[9] Today the state chair is fully gilded, not partially gilded with white painted wood as described above. However, the differences in reflected light on the chair apparent in Nettleton's 1869 sepia photographic print show clearly that the state chair in its original manifestation was substantially white-painted wood with only the barley-twists and crown gilded. The original seat was not upholstered but consisted of a studded red morocco cushion probably stuffed with horse hair. The back was upholstered in red velvet on which the VR mongram and two eight-pointed stars were embroidered.

Little is known about the Ramsay brothers, though in *The Age* of 12 November 1858 they placed three separate advertisements as "importers of furniture, carpets and house furnishings"; as valuers of "household furniture, hotels and general estate" and producers of "mirrors, silvered in the colony". No evidence has been found that the Ramsay brothers made furniture themselves; rather they seem to have imported items or commissioned local cabinet-makers especially to fit their mirrors or they supplied mirrors to other furniture manufacturers. Gilt items would have been sent out to specialist gilders.[10]

While the state chair is an imposing piece, the carving on the chair is not of high quality and certainly not of the quality of the carved Thwaites-made chairs and sideboards transferred from *Toorak House*. Yet, given its specificity to the state of Victoria, it was assuredly made in the colony. I thus conclude that the Ramsay brothers supplied the state chair for the Royal Birthday Ball of 1859, though it was probably manufactured, carved and gilded by others in Melbourne. No record has been found to attribute the making of this chair to Geo. Thwaites & Son but this firm is the most likely cabinet-maker to have restored it in 1876.

The state chair as a star witness

During the period of Sir Henry Barkly's governorship (1856–63), the state chair came into regular use and from 1859 onwards, the chair found itself a central witness to important formal occasions in the life of colonial Melbourne. After its appearance at the 1859 Royal Birthday Ball, the chair of state was, for instance,

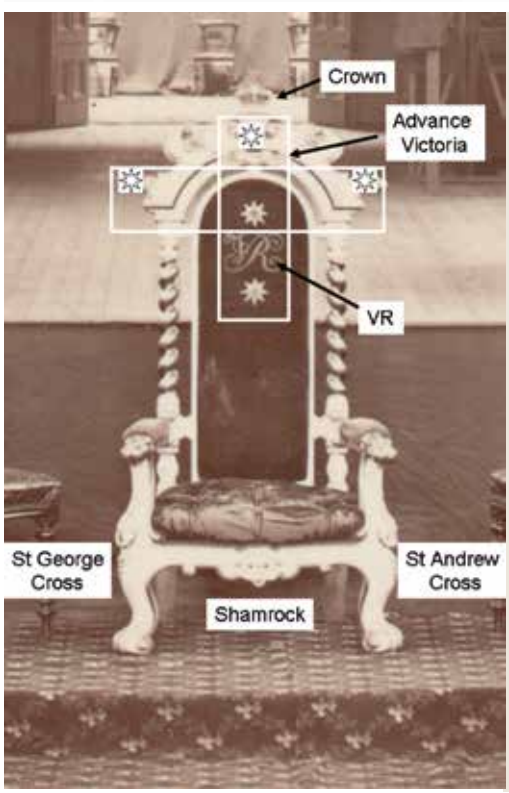


5.
Sir Redmond Barry reads the presidential address to the acting Governor, Sir William Stawell, at the opening ceremony for the 1875 Intercolonial Exhibition. The state chair takes centre stage. Wood engraving by Samuel Calvert, State Library of Victoria, acc no IAN06/09/75/145

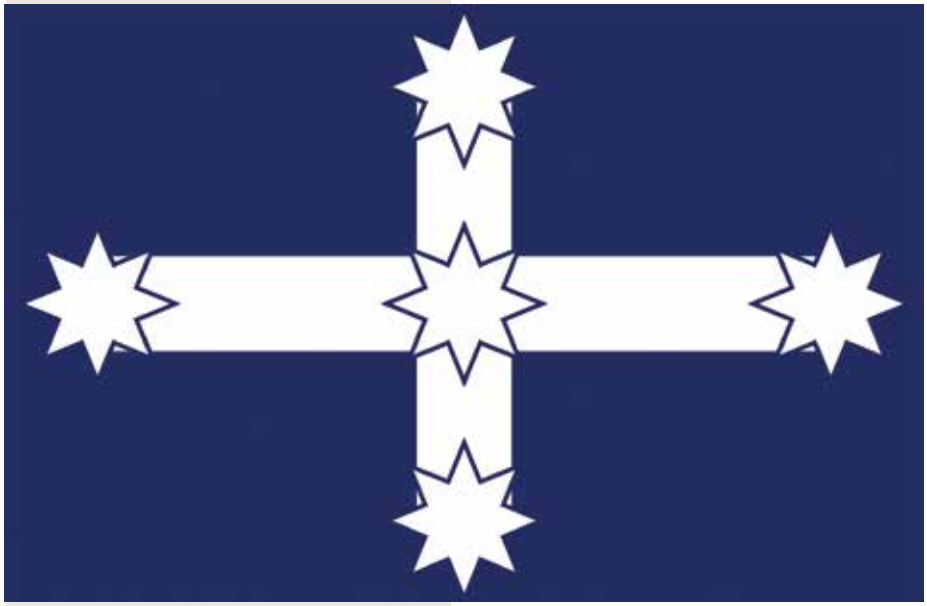
used at the investiture of Major-General Thomas Pratt as Knight Commander of the Bath. Pratt (1797–1879) was appointed KCB for his services as commander of Australian and New Zealand troops in the Maori wars of 1860. He was invested with the insignia by Governor Barkly, his son-in-law, at the Exhibition Buildings on 15 April 1862, the first such investiture in Australia.[11]

> At the upper end, under a canopy of crimson velvet, ornamented with a yellow fringe and tassels was placed the Chair of State, also covered with crimson velvet, and bearing the royal initials.[12]

In 1875, produce and wares from the Australian colonies were on display in Melbourne at the Intercolonial Exhibition. During the opening ceremony, the acting governor, Sir William Stawell, stood in front of the state chair while the exhibition president, Sir Redmond Barry, gave his address **(plate 5)**. Stawell was attired in the costume of an Administrator of the Government and the readers of the *Illustrated Australian News for Home Readers* were urged to note that such attire bore "close resemblance to ordinary court costume, the principal, if not only difference being the color of the silk stockings worn".[13] The reporter omitted to detail the actual colour to



6.
The Victorian state chair with original decorations showing the manner in which the cabinet-maker encompassed the Queen's monogram and the "Advance Victoria" banner within the Southern Cross. The location of the three carved eight-point stars is indicated, the other two are embroidered on the chair back. Detail from 1869 photograph by Charles Nettleton, State Library of Victoria acc no H12962



7.
"Flag of the Southern Cross",
the 1854 Eureka Flag

the regret, no doubt, of his readers.

In the redecorations of 1890, the chair was upholstered in peacock-blue velvet to match the room furnishings:

> … in the ball-room the scheme of colouring is entirely in peacock-blue plush, which constitutes a splendid set-off to the lovely coloring. The settees, canopy, throne-chairs, and partières for the openings into the buffet are of the same material. The centre chair on the dais is worked in gold cross wire, with the V.R. in a larger and more elaborate style than formerly, and the upholstery is in rolled and tufted peacock plush matching the other drapings.[14]

Today, the chair is fully gilded and has been upholstered again in 'peacock-blue' velvet – a colour scheme which derives from redecorations in 1890 – though nowadays, the monarch's monogram and the two embroidered eight-pointed stars have been omitted.

The forgotten symbolism

In order to understand the significance of the symbolic meaning of the motifs carved and embroidered on the state chair, it is necessary to return to earlier times.

On a winter's day in June 1854, the arrival of the new vice-regal couple, Sir Charles and Lady Hotham, was announced by salvoes of artillery. Gathered along the route to Melbourne, cheering crowds welcomed the new Lieutenant-Governor with expectant goodwill. Crossing Prince's Bridge, the official party passed through a triumphal arch; on one side were the arms of the Hotham family and on the other, the colonial arms. Overhead, wooden models of a kangaroo, an emu and a sailor held sway below a gilt crown.

The triumphant scene was completed by a banner proclaiming "Victoria welcomes Victoria's choice" [15] – a banner, according to author William Kelly, that was the best of the "gushing transports of composition … glorious in its conception, alterative in its alliteration, and, like many of the immortal Wordsworth's lines, almost mystical in its simplicity."

> However, the colonists understood it, if the reader don't [*sic*], and the inconceivable ingenuity and versatility they evinced in applying it, and making all the beasts of the earth, the birds of the air peculiar to the happy land, appear to comprehend and appreciate the line, was enough in itself to stamp the Melbournites as 'citizens of genius and renown.'[16]

While espousing democratic reforms, Hotham's authoritarian behaviour soon lost him the support of his Executive Council and government officials. Hotham considered the armed actions at the Eureka stockade, Ballarat, in December 1854 as a sign of general insurrection. His refusal to grant an amnesty for the Eureka prisoners and his desire to maintain a mining fee, despite the Legislative Council passing reform measures for the gold licence system, saw his political capital collapse.

In February 1855 he was raised to Governor but he had lost favour in London. In November he tendered his resignation and on 17 December, with his health failing, he caught a chill while opening the Melbourne gasworks and died at *Toorak House* on 31 December 1855.[17]

After Hotham's death a period of relative parliamentary stability descended under the stewardship of Edward MacArthur, the colony's Administrator, and then under the new governor, Sir Henry Barkly. Barkly, soon after his arrival on Christmas Eve 1856, realised that "the governor's participation in policy-making was not welcome under the newly-granted responsible government" and "adjusted to his new functions as a constitutional 'sovereign'".[18]

Nettleton's 1869 photograph of the state chair shows clearly the original embroidered back of the chair with Queen Victoria's monogram; below and above her VR cipher are two embroidered eight-pointed stars that must be read in conjunction with the three carved eight-pointed stars **(plate 6)**. The carved stars were originally painted white and were not easily discernible. Together, the five eight-pointed stars align to form a stylised version of the Southern Cross

constellation, as deployed on the Eureka flag, where each star also has eight points **(plate 7)**. Interpreting the symbolism today without knowing the social attitude and political persuasion of the chair's instigators is speculative, but there is no doubt that the Southern Cross was there for all who took the time to see it and without doubt those who recognised it made their own interpretations.

From the earliest colonial times, the emblematic Southern Cross appears in various guises: patriotic displays, banknotes and the Eureka Flag reputedly derived from the Australian Federation Flag of 1831, in which the five stars represented the five Australian colonies. In the immediate aftermath of the Eureka uprising on 3 December 1854, press reporting described the flag as the "Australian Flag" though later it was described as the rebel flag.[19]

Thus, one might interpret the symbolism as a nationalistic statement or merely a symbol of the colony of Victoria asserting itself as part of Victoria's empire. Another might see the cross and stars as representing the movement to democracy or a rebellion against the establishment. "From Eureka to 1858 conservatives [in Victoria]… were on the run" though "the counter-attack came in 1858, with the return of economic discipline, and [with the failure] of the campaign for equal electorates".[20] This was the context surrounding the craftsmen who made the state chair.

The stars clearly mark the state chair as being made in the colony. Such symbolism was etched deeply into the psyche of those who, like parliamentarian Peter Lalor, had been at the Eureka uprising, and those of liberal persuasion who had experienced the turbulent period leading up to the transition to responsible government. One can interpret the symbolism as Queen Victoria exerting her rule over Victoria or alternatively Queen Victoria *captured* within the Southern Cross (be it the Australian or Eureka flag or otherwise) with the banner proclaiming Advance Victoria. The alterative power of the symbolism, most assuredly, in Kelly's words, was sufficient for the citizens "to comprehend and appreciate the line" and thus to stamp Melbournians as "citizens of genius and renown."[21]

The designer of the state chair, whoever he was, clearly wanted to make a point. Perhaps the artisan was silently asserting the young colony's democratic aspirations since despite inertia in the establishment, this period had achieved "self-government, the ballot for both houses, and—for the Assembly—manhood suffrage, abolition of members' property qualification, redistribution of electorates, and three-yearly elections."[22] Whatever his motivation, some Melbournians at the time must have been aware of the hidden message and interpreted it according to their political persuasions.

Regrettably, subsequent restoration of the state chair has erased this powerful symbol and Victorians have inadvertently lost a tangible link to this remarkable liberalising period of their colonial history.

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Dr Robert La Nauze's biography, *Engineer to Marvellous Melbourne: the life and times of William Thwaites,* was short-listed for the History Publication Award, Victorian Community History Awards, 2012. He is currently writing a history of the Melbourne-based colonial cabinetmaking firm of Geo. Thwaites & Son. Contact him at roblanauze@gmail.com.

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1.

2.

The Australiana Society Tasmanian tour 2015

Australiana Society members were privileged to see, touch and experience many and varied treasures on our Tasmanian tour. Here we showcase the welcome and rare opportunities extended to those who participated, and encourage other members to consider creating a future tour showcasing your state or region, offering unique and privileged opportunities to members.

1.
Colonial gallery, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston

2.
Colonial gallery, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston

3.
Part of the collection in storage, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston

4.
Dr John Millwood's 1837 house and purpose-built gallery, Launceston

5.
Jolly Farmer Inn, Perth, built 1826

JUDY AND IAN HIGSON

The Australiana Society Tasmanian tour conducted on 20–23 March 2015 was extremely successful and thoroughly enjoyed by all 40 who participated. Hobart member Colin Thomas organised and led the group superbly, ably assisted by Peter Woof and Andrew Simpson.

The tour began on Friday afternoon in the colonial gallery of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG) in Launceston with a warm welcome from Colin Thomas who was competing for our attention with, among others, John Glover, William Buelow Gould, colonial furniture and Mentor's 1888 Melbourne Cup, on loan from Canberra **(plates 1-3)**.

Colin's welcome preceded a behind-the-scenes tour of the art gallery building of the QVMAG. History curator Jon Addison and visual arts and design registrar Rosalie Kelly conducted the tour, providing a rich informative history of the museum since 1891 and its collection which began in 1842.

This tour gave us a glimpse of the breadth and quality of the collection. Of special interest was the extensive fine arts storage. We were fortunate to see furniture, ceramics, textiles and clothing storage. Each area contained first class examples that at various times form part of the museum's public exhibitions.

Friday evening saw the official welcome and cocktail party hosted by John Millwood and his partner Sam Finlay in his beautifully restored award winning Georgian house **(plate 4)**. The original house was built in 1837 for Dr William Russ Pugh (1806–97). After a welcome by Australiana Society

3.

4.

president Dr Jim Bertouch and our first sample of some excellent Tasmanian wine, cheese and delicious canapes, we were privileged to be able to wander through John's house admiring the quality of the restoration, some fine examples of early colonial furniture and his astounding collection of early colonial art.

Saturday morning saw the group on their way to Hobart via some private historic residences generously opened to us by the owners. These important houses and their collections are not on the tourist trail and we were privileged to have access arranged for us by the tour organisers.

First was a drive to Perth to visit the cheerfully named *Jolly Farmer* built in 1826 as a coaching inn and now the home of Robert Henley and Michael McWilliams **(plate 5)**. After a warm welcome from Robert and Michael we were free to explore this "Georgian pub"[1] now set in a wonderful classic cottage garden that highlights some of the original and early outbuildings. Robert and Michael have an extensive collection of early colonial furniture with some very early "Jimmy Possum" chairs.

A real highlight was the opportunity to sneak a peek through the window of a multi-award winning artist's studio.

Next was a short drive to *Fairfield* where Nick and Alison Dennis welcomed us **(plates 6–8)**. After Peter Woof's introduction to the property, we were free to explore. *Fairfield* is one of several homesteads built for Thomas Archer (1790–1850), originally as four

5.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2015 TASMANIAN TOUR WERE:

- warm welcomes from all who provided access to their homes and who were keen to answer the many questions from tour participants
- behind the scenes viewing at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston
- an extensive private collection of outstanding early colonial art in Launceston
- early colonial furniture, "Jimmy Possum" chairs and a glimpse through the studio window of a multi-award winning Tasmanian artist
- a room in the 1850s *Fairfield* extension where all the carpentry and joinery was crafted in huon pine
- furniture attributed to James Penman (1840s) and featured in Craig, Fahy & Robertson's book *Early Colonial Furniture in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*
- John Glover hunt in the Tasmanian Club
- luxury ferry cruise down the beautiful D'Entrecasteaux Channel
- huon pine carpentry, colonial furniture, Australiana and scones with jam and cream at *Craigleigh*
- a world class scrimshaw collection
- a private guided tour of two heritage houses at Battery Point.

6.
Fairfield, built by Thomas Archer 1830s, with 1850s extensions designed by William Archer

7.
Fairfield, shearing shed and outbuildings

8.
Fairfield, huon pine fireplace surround,1850s

downstairs rooms with two attics and an external kitchen. The house was extended in the 1830s and again in 1852 for Joseph Archer, to designs by his brother William (both sons of Thomas).[2] William is credited as the first Australian-born colonial architect.

We were able to examine closely the William Archer extension and the many original and early outbuildings. The stables, the barn with its blacksmith's shop, various outbuildings and the shearing shed (built before 1854 and one of the oldest in Tasmania) provided insight into early colonial life. A highlight of the grand two-story extension was the reception room where the carpentry and joinery made extensive use of huon pine.

From *Fairfield* we proceeded to *Streanshalh* where we were welcomed by Judith Nicholson, owner of this famous Corriedale stud near Campbell Town **(plates 9–11)**. Built in the 1830s for Captain Francis Allison (1786–57)[3] who was granted the original 1,000 acres in 1822, *Streanshalh* was probably named after the town or abbey in Britain from where the Allison family emigrated in 1822. After some troubles in Hobart Town in 1827, Captain Allison moved his family to the property and began farming sheep and wheat.

The highlight of the collection was furniture designed and made for specific rooms of the house, where they remain today. James Penman, a convict cabinetmaker from Scotland who worked at *Streanshalh* in the 1840s, made the furniture which is featured in Craig, Fahy & Robertson's book *Early Colonial Furniture in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land.*

From *Streanshalh* we were encouraged to investigate the colonial towns of Ross and Oatlands prior to meeting for dinner at

the historic Tasmanian Club in Hobart.

A highlight of the tour was dinner at the Tasmanian Club **(plates 12–14),** a private gentleman's club established in 1861 and not ordinarily available to non-members. Our host was David Johnstone who (to our later advantage) is a wine merchant, wine educator, international wine judge and wine writer.

Before dinner and while canapés were being served we were urged to inspect the club, and admire the building, furniture and artwork. We were all set the challenge of identifying the two John Glover paintings on display.

Colin Thomas made a welcome speech, Jim Bertouch thanked our hosts and we had the pleasure of listening to Nevin Hurst from Masterpiece Gallery as the dinner speaker.

Nevin, with over 40 years' experience, would be Tasmania's most experienced fine art dealer and valuer. His stories of Tasmania, its history, art and artists and some of the social issues that faced Tasmania in the 19th century kept us entranced.

David presented the dinner and wine, ably assisted by his partner Lindsey. Dinner was a five-course showcase of fresh Tasmanian produce. David matched each course with a superb Tasmanian wine which he described as the courses were being served.

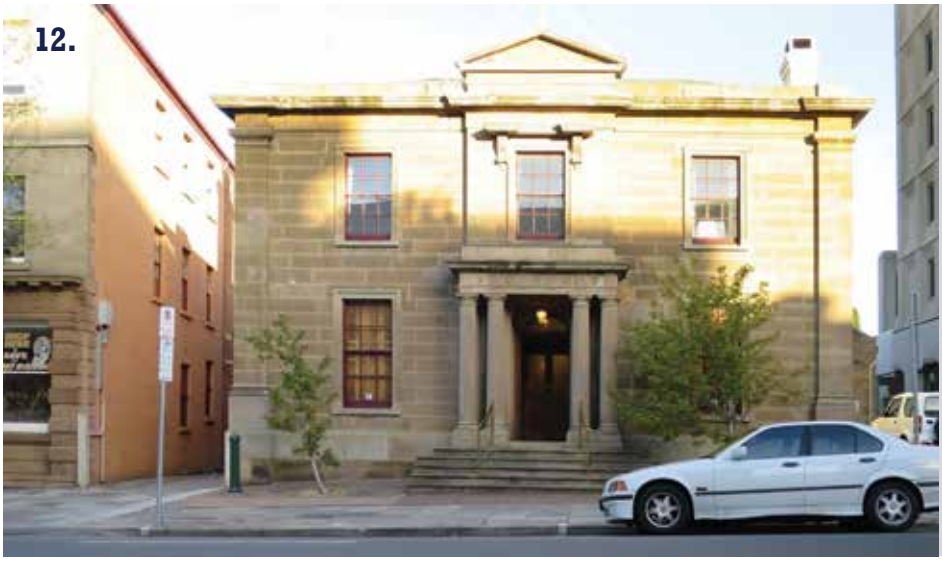
Sunday saw a relaxed start with a guided luxury ferry trip from Sullivan's Cove down the River Derwent across Storm Bay through the D'Entrecasteaux Channel to Woodbridge, where we were treated to a casual lunch, again showcasing Tasmanian produce **(plate 15)**. Then we made a short walk to *Craigleigh,* a coastal weatherboard home currently being modernised while maintaining the original mid-1800s character **(plate 16)**.

At *Craigleigh,* Greg and Anne Edwards (whose family have lived at *Craigleigh* since the 1870s) welcomed us. After Greg and Anne introduced us to the property, we were able to examine their impressive collection of colonial furniture, pottery, artworks, Australiana and the extensive use of huon pine in the remodelling. Greg and Anne provided

9.
Judith Nicholson welcomes us to *Streanshalh,* Campbell Town

10.
Cedar bookcase and secretaire bookcase by Penman flanking a fireplace at *Streanshalh,* Campbell Town

11.
Cedar sideboard by Penman at *Streanshalh,* Campbell Town



12.
Tasmanian Club, Hobart

13.
Nevin Hirst and Colin Thomas
at the Tasmanian Club, Hobart

14.
Dinner at the Tasmanian Club, Hobart

a wonderful display and a delicious afternoon Devonshire tea which we were encouraged to walk off in their extensive cottage garden.

From *Craigleigh* we boarded a luxury coach for the trip to the final event of the day, a viewing and barbecue at the Bellerive home of tour host Colin Thomas. Food, beer and wine were again provided by David and Lindsey Johnstone; gourmet barbecue is not an unreasonable description. Colin's home in Bellerive is probably better described as a living museum or, better still, a family home that doubles as a showcase for rare and extremely high quality early colonial furniture and artworks **(plates 17–18)**.

Colin provided a guided tour describing the items, their significance and provenance. Colin then presented an impromptu master class in picture frames by early Tasmanians including Robin Vaughan Hood; he explained how picture frames are themselves works of art and can be useful in determining provenance of the artworks they contain and protect.

The *pièce de résistance* was Colin's extraordinary collection of scrimshaw and associated whaling items. His collection of scrimshaw is one of the best private collections in the world.

After a speech by Jim Bertouch acknowledging the contributions of many people, especially tour organiser and tour host Colin Thomas, tour organisers Peter Woof and Andrew Simpson, and David and Lindsey Johnstone for their food, wine and access to the Tasmanian Club, we made our way to our respective lodgings.

Monday morning saw the group in historic Battery Point with the opportunity to have a private guided tour of *Narryna,*[4] the fine Greek Revival town house built by Captain Andrew Haig in 1837–40 to designs by John Lee Archer **(plates 19–22)**. Scott Carlin, manager of house museums at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, led the tour.

As well as an overview of the house, furniture, artwork and artefacts in *Narryna,* Scott gave an interesting insight

into the intricacies, considerations and complications associated with preserving and presenting historic buildings. One of the issues Scott highlighted was associated with choosing a design and colours and then production of wallpaper appropriate for use in the restoration and preservation of *Narryna*. After our visit Scott and his team completed the hall refurbishment with a reproduction c1840 wallpaper. They have also chosen a design that echoes the *Woolmers* dining room for the upcoming refurbishment of *Narryna's* reception rooms and dining room.

After *Narryna,* Scott led us on a short stroll to *Markree*[5] house museum and garden **(plate 23)**. *Markree* was built in 1926 for Cecil and Ruth Baldwin. The house, collection and garden reflect the influence of the Arts & Crafts Movement. Cecil Baldwin, who had studied at the Burnley School of Horticulture, Melbourne, laid out *Markree's* rare 1920s Arts & Crafts garden. *Markree* specialises in early 20th-century social history and design (1900–50).

And so ended this wonderful tour.

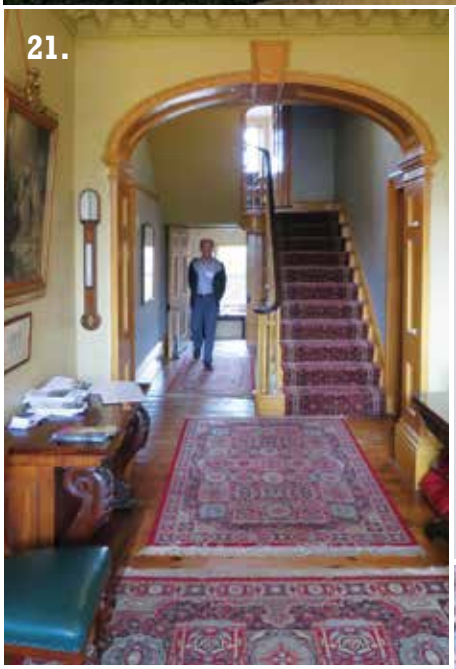
Judy and Ian Higson were two of the 40 Australiana Society members who took part in the 2015 Tassie Tour. Their interest in Australian colonial furniture was continually stimulated during the tour. Judy is a committee member of the Australiana Society.

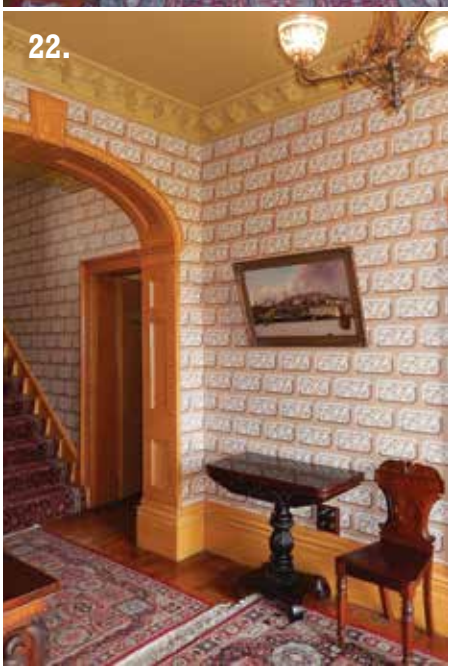
15.
Ferry on the Derwent

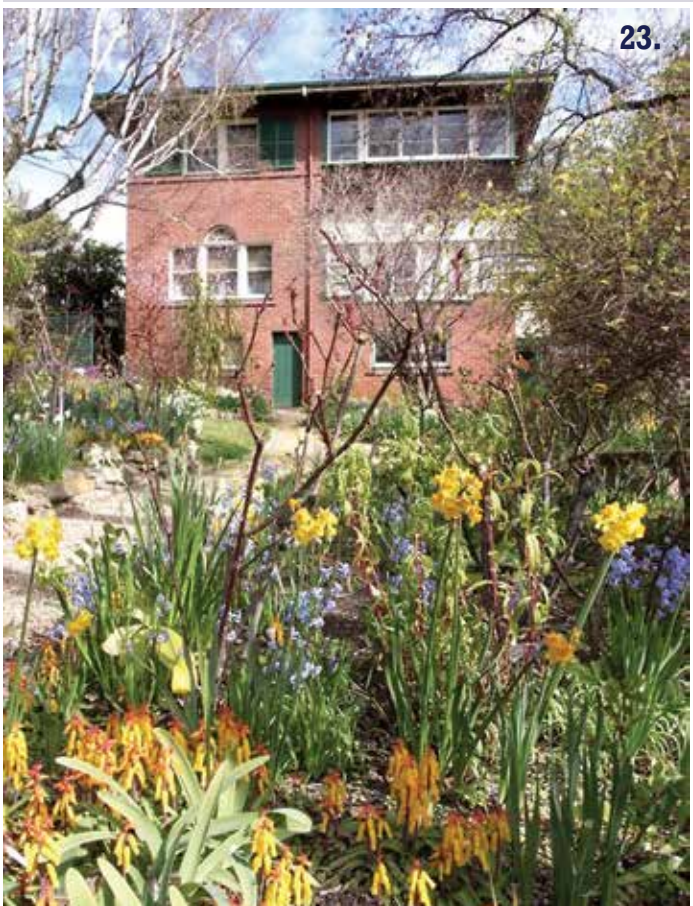
16.
Craigleigh, Woodbridge

17.
Colin Thomas with members at his house in Bellerive

18.
It doesn't get better than this: members enjoying the company, Tasmanian wine and produce at Bellerive







19.
Narrynya, designed by John Lee Archer at Battery Point, 1837–40

20.
Narrynya, a bedroom with huon pine furniture

21.
Narrynya, entry hall

22.
Narrynya, the hall newly decorated with reproduction wallpaper

23.
Markree, Battery Point, 1926, with its garden laid out by owner Cecil Baldwin

NOTES

1 Australian Government – Department of the Environment - Australian Heritage Database.
2 *ADB* vol 1, 25f.
3 http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/allison-william-race-1698
4 http://www.narryna.com.au/
5 http://tmag.tas.gov.au/visitor_information/markree_museum

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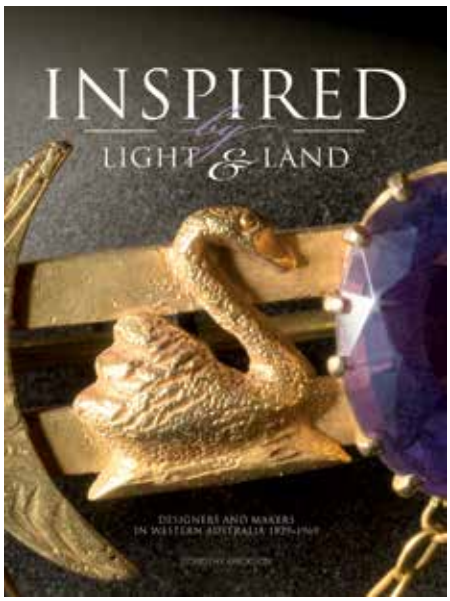


REVIEW BY EVA CZERNIS-RYL

Dorothy Erickson, *Inspired by Light & Land. Designers and Makers in Western Australia,* Western Australian Museum, Welshpool WA 2015. Hardcover, 491 pages, 423 colour and b/w photographs, chronology, bibliography, index, $90. ISBN 978-1-920843-19-9

Published as the first of two hardcover volumes (the second will cover the period from 1950 to now), this is Dr Dorothy Erickson's most ambitious publishing venture. Exploring the work of designers and makers in Western Australia since the founding of the Swan River Colony in 1829 until 1969, it is her most significant contribution to the history of decorative arts and design in Australia.

The book delves into the history of applied arts practised in Western Australia in its first 140 years: furniture, woodwork and pokerwork, wildflower paintings, needlework, embroidery and woolwork pictures, ceramics and china painting, jewellery and metalwork as well as stained glass, graphic design, book illustration and printed textiles. Interior design, aspects of architecture and even boat building complement the impressive spectrum of creative pursuits discussed.

While essentially maintaining chronological continuum, this well designed book is organised into seven thematic chapters to highlight distinctive Western Australian developments. The first chapter covers the early colonial period from 1829 to 1849, and the second chapter examines convict contributions and work crafted prior to the gold fever era of 1890–1910, the subject of the third chapter. An extensive discussion of what Erickson calls the Domestic Art Movement precedes two chapters that survey various creative activities and changing fortunes of the years between 1919 and 1949: "Boom, Depression and War" discusses handcrafted works of leading makers, and "Post Depression and War" looks at commercial production of ceramics and jewellery, which met with somewhat limited interest in Western Australia, and the output of amateur makers who trained at private art schools and Perth Technical College or practised their craft as members of The Western Australian Women's Society of Fine Arts and Crafts and Country Women's Association. The volume concludes with "The Renaissance of the Artist Craftsman" of the period 1950–70.

Although envisaged as an introduction to the subject, this lavishly illustrated book is comprehensive enough to engage the reader in a lively narrative of the history of Western Australia's portable heritage and interior decoration. Images of objects are interspersed with contextual paintings and photographs, revealing individual and collective stories carefully reconstructed from archival records, family papers and letters, exhibition catalogues and press reports. The wealth of information provided is a result of decades of painstaking research and Erickson's commitment to documenting the richness of creative practices in Western Australia.

As demonstrated in her other landmark and out-of-print publication *Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia: A History*, Erickson is as much interested in objects as in people who designed, made and used them. This is partly because of her background: a descendant of a Western Australian gold miner, and the daughter of eminent wildflower painter and historian Dr Rica Erickson, she has been a practising studio jeweller since the 1970s. Erickson grew up with the stories she writes about in the book and was herself a pioneer of the post-war crafts movement introduced in the last chapter. The result is a wonderfully rich tapestry of a book in which multi-angled perspectives are skilfully interwoven so that the reader gets a real sense not only of the significance of objects discussed but also of these people's lives, their aspirations and achievements.

The book's scope and structure mean that some areas are covered in more detail than others, and that a few subjects overlap, resulting in some repetition. I have no problem with this, as this approach helps to highlight some of the most fascinating characters in the survey. Take for example the Calcutta-born Henry Prinsep whose art tutor in London was George Frederick Watts, RA. A Perth civil servant and artist who moved in the highest social circles in the 1880s, he taught art, played violin, wrote poetry and designed and painted striking interiors and sets for dramatic productions. He was probably as charismatic as but less "artistic" than the legendary artist James W R Linton who, after arriving in Perth from London in 1898, led by teaching and example the modern handicraft revival in the first two decades of the 20th century.

Another popular and influential figure was Ferenc (Francis) Kotai, a Hungarian potter who came to Western Australia in 1950, soon becoming an inspiring teacher at the Fremantle Technical College, mentoring the post-war generation of potters. You will have no difficulty in finding interesting women too: from Bessie Mabel Rischbieth, a designer-maker who was also one of Australia's most influential feminists, to the wonderfully creative ceramicist Flora Landells, the modernist textile designer Helen Grey-Smith and the ceramic sculptor and painter Marina Shaw, who was once described as Australia's answer to Clarice Cliff.

It is highly likely that you will see for the first time in this book a rare photograph of the Iron Palace on the Green or the 1881 Perth International Exhibition building (Henry Prinsep painted its dome's interior). Photography, a keenly pursued art form in the colony from at least the 1850s, featured prominently in the exhibition which followed those in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide; this exhibition is where "the excellent design and manufacture" of furniture by Smith & Co as well as the talents of the jeweller Frederick Mason, among others, were recognised by First Order of Merit awards.

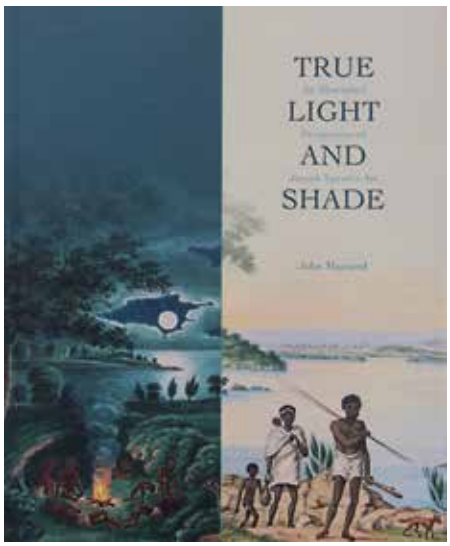
Similarly, it is not well known that Western Australia had its own pavilion at the Paris Universal Exposition of 1900. Alongside gold and other minerals which filled a special court, William Howitt's carved and marquetry furniture and an entire wall of wildflower paintings by Lady Forrest took pride of place, asserting Western Australia's patriotism and identity.

In any tome of almost 500 pages, readers are always grateful for clear navigational signposts which facilitate information finding. For most of the time, breaking up each of the seven chapters into thematic essays or sections fulfils this role successfully. I was left however with a feeling that this editorial portioning was at times excessive, seemingly imposed late in the process and now causing confusion. One example is the section entitled "The Glasgow Exhibition 1902". Right from the beginning it continues the narrative of the preceding section which is dedicated to the 1900 Paris exhibition. There is no information here about the Glasgow show, however we learn that the talented May Creeth, a wildflower painter who is first discussed, exhibited in Paris alongside several others like the furniture makers Charles and Herbert Locke who won a silver medal. Eventually we find a mention that both also had "exhibits sent to Glasgow".

Several other makers reviewed in this section (including my favourite, New Norcia's Spanish woodworker Juan Casellas) had no connection with the Glasgow Exhibition, while we learn that the stone and woodcarver Edward G. Madeley in fact won a medal at the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition. Finally, bearing in mind that the last chapter "The Renaissance of the Artist Craftsman" covers the period 1950–70, shouldn't the discussion of Robin and Helen McArthur's work of the 1980s and 1990s wait patiently for its turn in what I am sure will be an equally splendid volume?

Apart from the above minor quibbles about editorial imperfections, this ground-breaking book is an outstanding achievement and an invaluable addition to the existing literature on the history of decorative arts and design in Australia. You will enjoy reading it. One hopes that this publication will inspire similar historical surveys of designers and makers who lived and worked in other states.

Eva Czernis-Ryl curated the current exhibition *A Fine Possession: Jewellery and Identity* at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, and edited *Brilliant: Australian Gold and Silver 1851–1950* for Powerhouse Publishing in 2011.



REVIEW BY JOHN RAMSLAND

John Maynard,
True Light and Shade
An Aboriginal Perspective of Joseph Lycett's Art,
NLA Publishing, ACT, 2014.
Soft cover, 172 pp $49.99.
ISBN 978-0-642-27708-4

Over the last 20 years or so interest in convict artist Joseph Lycett (1775–1828) has steadily quickened and heightened in Australian popular culture through the influence of various published works and exhibitions. He is now held in high regard by art and cultural historians.

John Maynard's magnificent book sheds fresh light and sharper insights on the true nature of the continuing Aboriginal presence in the landscape depicted by Lycett, now regarded as a significant creative and decorative artist of the early colonial period. He was a valued recorder of what he saw in the infant prison colony.

In the Bicentennial Year, 1988, another celebrated Aborigine, the late Burnum Burnum (Harry Penrith), made a fleeting, well-intentioned attempt at interpreting Lycett's paintings from an Aboriginal perspective using five of his artworks to

illustrate relevant parts of his attractive book, *Burnum Burnum's Aboriginal Australia. A Traveller's Guide* (edited by David Stewart),[1] that sweeps across the continent in its valiant attempt to be holistic. The artworks are presented in colour and enhance Burnum Burnum's book and its perspective.

Unfortunately, some of the editing is careless, flawed in nature and ahistorical. One of the works, "Aborigines feeding from beached whales" (1820), had been accidently reversed losing its geographic placement. The caption is wrong: the stranded whale and occasional Aboriginal banquet scene is not on Nobby's Ocean Beach since the Newcastle breakwater on which the artificial beach was developed was not yet fully constructed.

Maynard, on the other hand, correctly places this watercolour at Bar Beach. He points out:

> The scene is unquestionably present-day Bar [Ocean] Beach (just south of Newcastle) with its distinctive rocks being battered by waves on the left, viewed from the cliffs that lead to Dixon Park on the right.

The distinctive rocks depicted in the painting can indeed still be identified in the same placement, along with the rugged cliff face to the left. It demonstrates Lycett's power to record in visual terms a historical event he had observed in the Newcastle district of the Hunter Valley, NSW. This kind of historical accuracy and insight is the hallmark of John Maynard's singular achievement and can be found throughout the book. In another work, "Aborigines feeding from beached whales" (c 1820), the place is incorrectly identified as Susan Gilmore Beach – the terrain is wrong.[2]

As a Worimi man, Professor Maynard brings his own accumulated knowledge and insight into a fine visual and verbal exploration of Lycett's most telling artworks, particularly emphasising those found in *The Lycett Album*,[3] a sketchbook of 20 watercolours and gouache paintings showing the life and country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples of the Newcastle district and the Eora people of Sydney in the period between 1816 and 1822. They are innovatively presented to create a well-founded analysis of how and why Lycett portrayed Aboriginal economic activities and rituals in the manner he did.

The methodology of presenting the images as a whole first and then breaking them up into important segments for discussion is a technique that works perfectly. In the Bar Beach scene, intensive consideration of its various cultural features runs for eight magnificently presented pages that fascinate the reader's imagination.

Each of Lycett's artworks chosen by Maynard is presented in a similar fashion throughout this superbly conceived volume. The author has set a very high standard for other authors to emulate in dealing historically with colonial art.

John Maynard – recently honoured with the award of a Fellowship of the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences – argues (page 14) with conviction that:

> Joseph Lycett's work captures Aboriginal land and culture, not frozen in time but ongoing, both prior to his work and continuing to the present. This understanding challenges the deeply entrenched misconception that Aboriginal land, culture and place are locked into the ancient past, somehow frozen in time and space.

As an eminent Australian historian of Indigenous issues, Maynard places Lycett's visual work into the context of contemporary and other writers especially of the Hunter where the artist completed many of his works concerning Aborigines, such as the Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld, William Scott, Robert Dawson, Edward Parry, Lieutenant Coke – all of whom had a strong association with local Aboriginal individuals and clans. Their descriptions, biases and views are calibrated neatly against Lycett's existing visual representations in a most appropriate, praiseworthy and skilfully analytic manner.

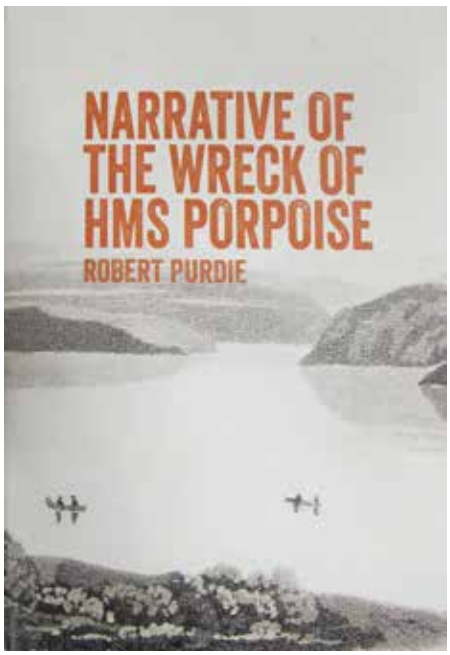
As Maynard has acknowledged, local Newcastle historian John Turner was a pioneer in Lycett studies, who, however, does not make an in-depth analysis of the depiction of Aborigines in the artist's work.[4] In his entry on Joseph Lycett in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Rex Rienits does not even mention that the artist gave Aborigines a prominent place in his artworks[5] – a case of conscious, or unconscious, amnesia, even of writing Aborigines out of Australian history.

Clearly, John Maynard has comprehensively filled an important gap and in so doing has restored a living knowledge of the artist's most significant subject – the economic, cultural and ritual activities of the First People of the Australian continent. Thus John Maynard's impressive book is a fitting companion to (editor) John McPhee's outstanding work, *Joseph Lycett. Convict Artist*, in providing a compelling revisionary perspective.

John Ramsland OAM is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Newcastle, NSW.

NOTES

1 Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1988, pp 32f, 35, 36, 37, 57.
2 John McPhee (ed.), *Joseph Lycett Convict Artist*, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Sydney 2006, p 108.
3 Collection: National Library of Australia, Canberra.
4 John Turner, *Joseph Lycett. Governor Macquarie's convict artist*, Hunter History Publications, Newcastle, 1997, pp 14, 17, 82, 88f, 92f, 108.
5 Douglas Pike (gen.ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol 2, Melbourne University Press, Carlton 1967, p 140f.



REVIEW BY PAUL DONNELLY

Robert Purdie (edited and with an introduction by Matthew Fishburn), *Narrative of the wreck of HMS Porpoise,* Hordern House, Potts Point NSW 2014. Hardcover, 137 pp, 225 x 155 mm, $35. ISBN 875567 73 7.

Hordern House continues their excellent service in the publication of early colonial history by releasing Robert Purdie's *Narrative of the Wreck of HMS Porpoise* hot on the heels of Elizabeth Ellis's book on *The Sydney Punchbowl* in the Mitchell Library. Here the subject is a first-hand description of the foundering of HMS *Porpoise*, wrecked on 17 August 1803 together with HMS *Cato* on the then unchartered Great Barrier Reef, when returning Matthew Flinders to London with his first batch of precious surveying charts.

This characteristically well-bound hardcover publication by Hordern House brings together the account originally published anonymously in eight instalments of the *Naval Chronicle* spanning 1806–7. Through evaluating a number of clues within the narrative and comparing them with the ship's muster, Fishburn for the first time narrows the potential candidates of authorship of this romp to an individual. He identifies the author as the surgeon's mate on HMS *Investigator*, a young Scot, Robert Purdie, whose name can now join Flinders' as the only eye-witness accounts of this event.

Identifying the author is an important achievement in itself and for the reader it, for the first time, obligingly conjures up a mental image of him. Purdie was 24 at the time of the wreck and his account portrays a sensitive and curious young man cognisant of his participation in history and motivated to record it for posterity. Purdie's narrative is of the ilk of other first-hand accounts of the period by Watkin Tench and William Dawes.

While the wreck of the *Porpoise* is a strong focus of the book, Purdie's account, published as it was in instalments in the *Naval Chronicle*, appears to have served as a vehicle for him to muse on a surprisingly wide range of subjects: from coral formation and its part in the creation of islands, to the celebrated mystery of La Perouse's fate, and Sydney's potential as a future abode of choice.

Purdie has much to say about the young town of Sydney and the extent of its environs as far as the Blue Mountains, beyond which was still a mystery of much interest to him. Of an economist's bent, he considered Sydney had many advantages for its potential natural and mineral resources as well as the "mild and equable climate" which he felt was better than "all places he had seen" and which cumulatively would see the colony sooner than later "being able to support itself".

His commentaries on the convict population in particular betray an enlightened and sensitive character. Purdie divides Sydney's population into three broad classes: convicts, settlers and native born and he is as sanguine about the convicts as he is about the weather. His generous summation of those transported was that the majority had "excellent dispositions" though due to "a moment of idleness or thoughtlessness have been misled; and in an unlucky moment committed some crime, which, though not of a black moral tendency, has so far offended against the laws as to cause their transportation." Not a blind idealist however, he gladly concedes a minority were subject to "rascality … for the sake of being wicked and mischievous".

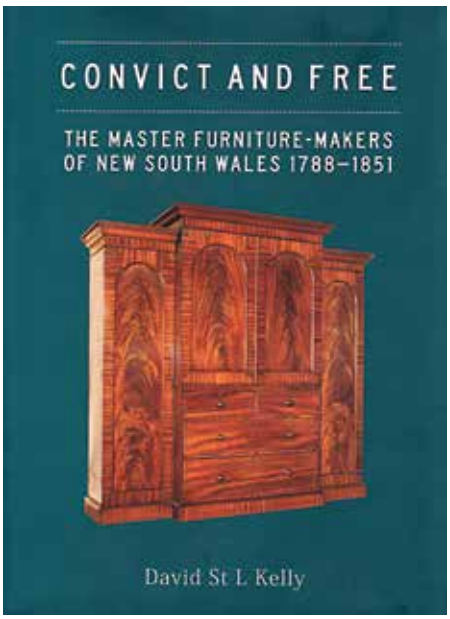
Purdie's magnanimous character is again betrayed when he encounters the bleached remains of a shipwreck which he guessed to be of European origin, and more specifically La Perouse who, regardless of the French Wars and Flinders' incarceration at Mauritius, he nobly notes "may be justly styled the French Cook".

The return voyage to Britain on the *Rolla* is rushed in comparison but still awash with his intelligent observations and insights on peoples, nature, and geology. After he reached on 7 October 1804 the "chops of the Channel," one gets the impression that the experience of arriving home paled in comparison to the adventure he had in getting there: "I will henceforth look back on the voyage in the *Investigator*, with its appendix in the *Porpoise*, with feelings of adoration, gratitude, and delight."

This highly enjoyable book is helpfully supplemented by the editor with notes elaborating on people, events and obscurities in the original text.

Dr Paul Donnelly is a curator at the Powerhouse site of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney, responsible for Australian ceramics and glass, furniture, 20th-century design, numismatics and antiquities.

Book reviews



REVIEW BY JOHN WADE

David St L Kelly, *Convict and Free. The Master Furniture Makers of New South Wales 1788–1851,* Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2014. Hardcover, 377 pp, 294 x 218 cm, $90 ISBN 978-1-925003-16-1

David Kelly sets out in this book to chart the history of 100 or so master cabinet-makers working in New South Wales up to 1850. His introduction discusses that bland sentence in some detail, meticulously defining those terms and the parameters of his research. Then Kelly outlines the structure of the book, sources and various other points to help the reader; it is both essential and illuminating to read the introduction, as well as amusing to see him struggle to try to set strict guidelines when the data, cantankerously, defies his definitions and conventions.

He gathers the evidence from many sources, the most important being the searchable, digitised records of newspapers made available on the National Library of Australia's Trove website (trove.nla.gov.au), to which more newspapers – particularly regional ones – are being added all the time. Trove has made the researcher's task so much easier and comprehensive today. Other information is gleaned from musters, shipping records, State Records, Births Deaths and Marriages, court records and secondary sources. Several cabinetmakers previously discussed in the pages of *Australiana* get fuller treatment here.

Each cabinetmaker entry is treated in exactly the same manner, under similar headings. Much of the information is qualified, presented according to the rules of evidence – as you would expect from a distinguished lawyer. Kelly has mined the sources and distilled from them the personal lives of individual furniture makers, their business, their products, their clients and their employees.

David Kelly's book is a magnificent achievement in compiling, assessing and ordering the information about early cabinetmakers. He has succeeded in presenting and adding to – in a handy format – the information about the well-known cabinetmakers, as well as adding some new ones. Moreover, he envisages this book at a work in progress; he plans, with the help of comments and information from readers, to update the information, to add new material (including information on several more previously unknown cabinet-makers) and to issue the revisions as a supplement on disc.

Some will complain that the paucity of illustrations, the rigorous approach and the extensive use of footnoted sources makes the book too scholarly, even dry. That view is hard to justify with such a cast of colourful characters and events paraded through the text; who can forget the venomous abuse and violent clash between cabinet-maker James Templeton and the jeweller James Watt in 1839 (p 201f), previously exposed in Kelly's article in *Australiana* in August 2011?

Australiana pot-boiler picture books have long since been replaced by comprehensive studies, notably by authors such as Kevin Fahy, synthesising our state of knowledge. Anyone who thinks Australiana encompasses only products such as vegemite and Akubras (soon to be made with Russian rabbit fur) is plain ignorant.

This book should be regarded as a source of information to mine. Kelly is already compiling a second book, growing out of the research presented here, which will focus on the furniture. Kelly – possibly the only person to read this book right through – is in a unique position to understand the complex workings of the colonial furniture industry. We can expect his next book to address the structure of the industry, which comprised many specialist workers, who diversified into activities such as undertaking (to make better use of their horses, stables and carts) and importing for survival. An overall examination of the human resource issues and economic factors will add to our understanding of the industry.

It is too much for one person to compile histories of each cabinetmaker, illustrating many examples from their workshops – workshops which employed up to 60 workers. That's a task for all of us, expanding the material provided here.

Inevitably and in spite of the best of intentions some errors have slipped through – for instance, Kevin Fahy is promoted to AO instead of AM (a nice tribute from the author!) and Caroline Simpson and Christina Simpson are confused on one occasion. Minor glitches are hardly surprising in nearly 400 pages. They should not be allowed to detract from the immensity of his achievement.

Publication of this research is an interactive process, so if you can contribute, contact David Kelly at colonial@colonialhill.com

John Wade worked at Sydney University, several museums, an auction house and in magazine publishing. He now edits *Australiana* and runs a small cattle farm near Grenfell NSW.

President's report

Australiana Society Annual Report 2015

JIM BERTOUCH

It gives me great pleasure to present my report to the AGM.

This AGM is important because tonight we will be voting on revised Rules of the Society. The old rules had been in place since 31 March 2001 and over time had become less practical, particularly with regard to the makeup and numbers on the committee. Additionally, we need to expand the objects of the Society and update references to comply with current legislation. The new rules reflect the views of all members of the committee and I am particularly indebted to Michel Reymond who has overseen the process since I first drew attention to the need for change at last year's AGM.

The Society continues to be very active and in the last 12 months we have held many meetings, presentations and inspections. We started with a visit to the Mosman Art Gallery to see the Hilda Rix Nicholas exhibition and the Balnaves collection of art. Julie Petersen conducted the tour and we had great support from our members.

Next was a visit to the Powerhouse Museum with Eva Czernis-Ryl who took us around the jewellery exhibition which included examples of Aboriginal jewellery through to the fabulous gold objects from the mid to late 19th century and on to the ultimate contemporary works made from ring pulls and other familiar objects.

In October we heard a presentation by Dorothy Erickson, a long-time member and supporter of the Society and a very prolific author. She presented on Western Australian furniture makers, highlighting objects made from jarrah with examples from Government House and from private collections.

At Christmas we had a very successful evening at *Lindesay* in Darling Point with drinks and food courtesy of Annette and Bill Blinco. We listened to a thought provoking talk by renowned heritage architect Howard Tanner before Bill conducted us on a tour of the house.

In February we met at La Capannina restaurant in Milson's Point for our annual lecture and dinner. We listened to a very interesting presentation titled "And the band played on" by Robert Holden, on the music and songs of the First World War. He showed some great images and reminded us of the words of so many songs like "It's a long way to Tipperary."

March was a full month with three different events starting with an inspection of Australian pottery belonging to Richard Mackay. He generously allowed us to see the collection *in situ* in his own home before it was sold at auction.

Shortly after this, a group of 40 members met in Launceston for a tour of Tasmanian houses, properties and collections over the following four days. The tour was fully subscribed and an exceptionally successful event, with excellent feedback as well as a very important development for the Society to which I will refer later. We are particularly indebted to Colin Thomas and Peter Woof who organised the tour and to all those generous people who allowed us into their homes to view their precious collections of art, furniture, scrimshaw and other Australiana and Tasmaniana.

On the last weekend in March we went to Manly Art Gallery to hear Stephen Bowers, ex-director of the Jam Factory in Adelaide, talk about the inspiration behind his wonderful pots and plates decorated with cheeky Australian icons. These are now in most public collections around the country, and the retrospective exhibition was wonderful to see.

Finally, in possibly the most unpleasant weather seen in Sydney for many years, a dedicated group met in Woollahra to hear Anne Schofield give a preview of her Australian jewellery exhibition commemorating the Great War, and starring a beautiful "Coo-ee" brooch.

Keep an eye on the website and your email for future events, inspections and tours. The committee has a lot of plans and this includes consideration of how we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Society in three years' time.

Tonight I want to make two important announcements. From 2016, the Annual Lecture which is held close to Australia Day will be re-named the Kevin Fahy Annual Lecture in honour of Kevin who was one of the Society's founders, our president and editor of *Australiana* as well as a prolific author. Of course he was one of the gurus on Australian furniture. Michael Lech suggested the name change

which has been enthusiastically supported by Kevin's family.

My second announcement is that following the tour of Tasmania, a group of members from that state followed up on my discussions and want to form a Tasmanian chapter of the Society. This is great news and fulfils one of my long term plans when I took over as President. I hope that other states will follow the lead.

On a more sobering note I have to report that our membership has dipped slightly to 322, which includes 30 institutions. Unfortunately 49 people have not renewed their membership from 2014. So if you know someone who hasn't re-joined, please try and convince them to change their minds. I will be writing to each of these ex-members as well. Just think, if every current member signed up one more member we would easily surpass 500 members. Don't forget that gift subscriptions are available through our website so you can join up someone else, of course as long as you pay the subscription!

This brings me to our magazine which really is the showpiece of the Society. It continues to go from strength to strength with our editor John Wade doing a fantastic job, as does our designer Kylie Kennedy. Every issue is full of excellently researched articles, and your contribution, no matter how small, is always welcome. We are grateful to Peter Walker Fine Art for encouraging contributions by sponsoring an annual award for the article judged best by our eminent judge, Elizabeth Ellis.

Society events in the last 12 months

30 Apr 2014	Australiana Society Event & AGM
25 Jun 2014	Hilda Rix Nicholas (and the Balnaves Collection) tour by Julie Petersen at the Mosman Art Gallery
27 Sep 2014	"A fine possession: jewellery and identity" exhibition, Eva Czernis-Ryl, Powerhouse Museum
29 Oct 2014	"19th-century Western Australian furniture makers", Dr Dorothy Erickson, National Trust Centre
05 Dec 2014	Xmas drinks at *Lindesay*, Darling Point courtesy of Annette and Bill Blinco with a talk by architect Howard Tanner
07 Feb 2015	Annual dinner and lecture 2015 by Richard Holden, La Capannina restaurant
09 Mar 2015	Preview of Richard Mackay AM ceramics collection
20–23 Mar 2015	Tasmanian tour 2015, coordinators Colin Thomas and Peter Woof
29 Mar 2015	"Stephen Bowers: Beyond Bravura", artist talk at Manly Art Gallery
21 Apr 2015	Preview of Australian jewellery exhibition, by Anne Schofield AM

I would like to finish by thanking every member of the committee, each of whom puts so much voluntary effort into running this organisation. You may be surprised to learn that we meet every six weeks and it is rare for the meeting to last less than two hours. Our vice president Annette Blinco and secretary Michael Lech have continued to work incredibly hard to help organise visits and inspections and write up the minutes and organise all of the day to day issues.

After 10 years our treasurer Andrew Morris has decided to stand aside and he is going to be very hard to replace. He has always worked hard in the background keeping track of our finances and keeping the committee up to date. I would like to personally thank Andrew for all of his work over so many years.

All of the other committee members continue to contribute to the running of the Society and all of the elements required from the website, yearly advance planning, photography, distributing *Australiana*, postage, book reviews and all manner of details. Thank you to Tim Cha, Judy Higson, Andy Simpson, Michel Reymond, Phillip Black, Paul Donnelly and Leslie Garrett.

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

Treasurer's report

ANDREW MORRIS

The Society's finances have continued to be managed efficiently in the year ended 31 December 2014.

Your Society earned a cash surplus of $7,585 for the 2014 calendar year (an increase on the 2013 surplus of $6,715). While incomes from renewing subscribers remained static, our outgoings were contained. Overall the Society had invested $85,510 cash and investment reserves by year's end (the prior year $77,925).

Personally I would like to thank Michael Lech our secretary and all the committee members for their assistance in my role as honorary treasurer. This will be my last report as treasurer and I thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve in this way during the past several years.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Profit & Loss Statement

	2014	2013
Income		
Subscriptions from Members	18,013.63	18,334.54
Subscriptions from Members (Life)	2,000.00	0.00
Advertising in Australiana	7,327.27	6,653.64
Australia Day & other events	7,885.00	7,700.00
Interest received	2,223.83	2,955.65
Donations received	1,300.00	1,865.00
Sponsorship - Peter Walker Fine Art	400.00	400.00
Sales of *Australiana* (back copies)	709.09	2,004.55
Tour income	0.00	3,381.82
Tour costs	0.00	-2,444.50
Tour - net profit	0.00	937.32
Total Income	**39,858.82**	**40,850.70**
Expenditure - *Australiana*		
Design, production, post, printing & stationery	19,467.78	20,402.35
Editorial fees	5,161.36	5,597.73
Peter Walker writing award	400.00	400.00
	25,029.14	**26,400.08**
Expenditure - General		
Australia Day & other events	3,900.00	4,496.33
Website & internet	823.14	631.40
Membership brochure, publications & flyers	131.82	468.00
Insurance	403.00	462.00
Merchant & bank fees	708.82	722.67
Meeting & event expenses	0.00	250.00
Subscription to RAHS	226.36	452.73
Fair Trading NSW	52.00	252.00
Donation (Australiana Fund)	1,000.00	0.00
	7,245.14	**7,735.13**
Total Expenditure	**32,274.28**	**34,135.21**
SURPLUS FOR YEAR	**$7,584.54**	**$6,715.49**

Balance Sheet

	31/12/14	31/12/13
Assets		
Community Solutions Chq Account (Westpac)	11,683.73	3,415.77
Community Solutions Cash Res Account (Westpac)	5,115.02	5,009.13
Interest Bearing Term Deposit (Westpac)	71,231.98	69,172.18
GST refundable	588.59	939.53
Total Assets	**88,619.32**	**78,536.61**
Less Liabilities		
2015 subs raised/2015 Tas Tour collected in advance	2,672.72	0.00
GST payable	436.36	610.91
NET ASSETS	**85,510.24**	**77,925.70**
Members' Accumulated Funds		
Balance Brought Forward	**77,925.70**	**71,210.21**
Surplus	**7,584.54**	**6,715.49**
MEMBERS' FUNDS	**$85,510.24**	**$77,925.70**

Judge's report

The 2014 Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award

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 most valued member and longstanding supporter of the Australiana Society. The Society is extremely grateful for his continued interest in its activities and in the journal in particular. All articles published in *Australiana* in 2014 are eligible for the 2014 Award.

The four issues of *Australiana* in 2014 maintained the magazine'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 dedicated and uncompromising editorial standards, combined with the promotion of original scholarship and research, continue to provide a rich array of articles of wide-ranging interest. In addition, *Australiana* is always a visual delight, with excellent illustrative material accompanying the articles and high quality image reproduction. And the footnotes always repay careful reading.

The accessibility and relevance of articles in *Australiana* to both experts and novices alike are particularly noteworthy at a time when many of our cultural institutions continue to suffer from ongoing 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 or to curate significant exhibitions with accompanying scholarly catalogues, *Australiana* is increasingly important as an invaluable resource for the dissemination of new research, which is usually undertaken in a private capacity by individual Society members. At the present time, it is the only journal which publishes original research on Australian decorative and fine arts.

The range of articles highlights the diversity of interests of members of the Australiana Society, encompassing many types of decorative and fine arts. Each year's offerings continue to raise the bar and in 2014 there was an outstanding selection from which to choose the annual Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award. This has made the judge's task more difficult, as so many of the articles were of a high standard and all contributed commendable and always fascinating new scholarship and research to their specific subjects.

Eventually, I selected for the 2014 Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award the article entitled "Taking tea in the colonies" by Jim Bertouch. This was published in the August 2014 issue of *Australiana*. In his account of tea drinking and its associated accoutrements in early colonial Australia, Jim presents a fascinating story which skilfully links aspects of economic, social and furniture history.

He provides useful contextualisation in describing how the colonies quickly became part of a network of maritime trade which formed the underpinning of the spread of British mercantile and political interests throughout the Far East. In his more detailed analysis of examples of tea furniture, he draws attention to a colonial Australian teapoy made in Van Diemen's Land for presentation in 1830. This is now held in the little known museum of the Wesleyan Church in Hobart and Jim's account of locating, then viewing it *in situ* describes very well the thrill of the chase with which we all can identify from our own historical hunts.

"Taking tea in the colonies" demonstrates how a dedicated and focused amateur interest (in the best sense) can lead to a most worthwhile, engaging and scholarly contribution in a chosen field.

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

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Secretaire Campaign Chest

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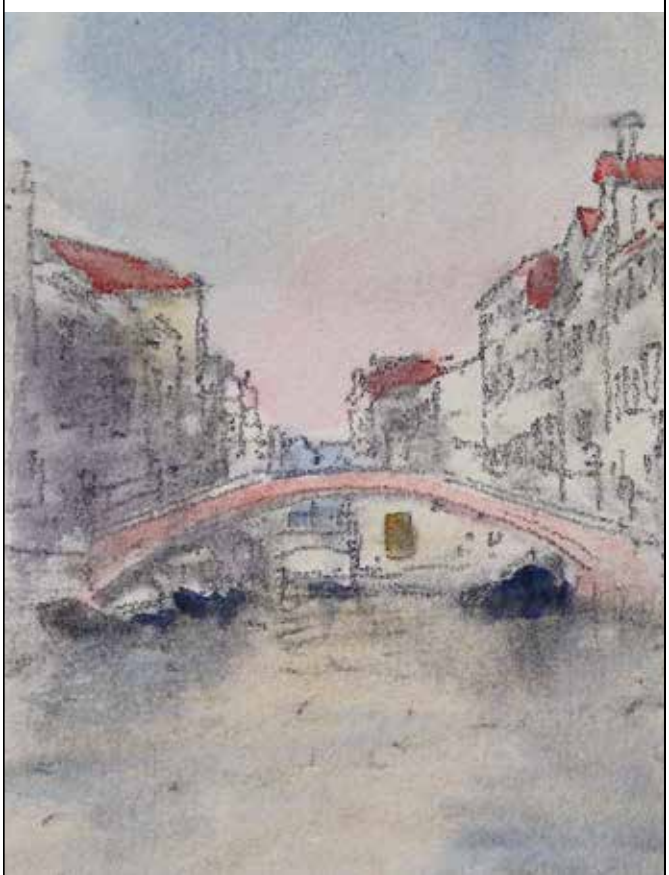
PETER WALKER FINE ART

Mortimer Menpes



A Quiet Canal, Venice, watercolour, 20 x 14 cm, Signed lower right. Several similar scenes can be found illustrated in Menpes's book, *Venice*.

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Three views of an Australian cedar (*Toona australis*) bronze backed hall chair, one of a pair, with finely carved palmetted sides, the back centred by a bronze plaque of the Southern Cross overlaid onto the Union Jack; the outer egg and dart cast rim is in four sections. Made by Daniel Livingstone for either the National Bank of Australasia or the Australasian Insurance Company between 1866 and 1870. For further details please see the article "Daniel Livingstone I Presume?" by J. B. Hawkins published in the *Regional Furniture Society Journal* 2014.

CINOA