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Joseph Nash (English, 1808/9–1878), *International Exhibition, Hyde Park, London, 1862: showing Victorian Section with pillar of gold*, 1863, watercolour, 22.6 x 30.2 cm. The gold specimen case designed by Daniel Livingstone and executed by Geo. Thwaites & Son is in the foreground, with the gold pyramid behind. Collection: State Library of Victoria H5247, presented 1881

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Lady Bowen's Irish harp brooch – a Queensland colonial treasure rediscovered

1.

Johnstone, O'Shannessy & Company, *carte de visite photograph*, Diamantina, Lady Bowen, the wife of Sir George Bowen, Queensland's first Governor, wearing the Irish harp brooch presented to her by the pupils of Brisbane's All Hallows' School in 1867, Melbourne, 1873–79. Collection: National Library of Australia, nla.pic-vn3356220

2.

Flavelle Brothers & Company, *brooch*, Brisbane Qld, 1867, 18-carat gold, emeralds, pearls and malachite. H 6 cm, w 4 cm. Private collection, United Kingdom



In our May 2015 issue, Dianne Byrne identified a brooch presented in 1867 to Lady Bowen, wife of Queensland's first Governor, in a photograph held in the National Library. Further detective work has revealed that the brooch is still held by Lady Bowen's descendants in England. We illustrate it now for the first time.

DIANNE BYRNE

When researching the 'lost' Irish harp brooch presented by the pupils of All Hallows' School, Brisbane, to Lady Bowen, and which I identified in a photograph taken of her while her husband was Governor of Victoria (**plate 1**), I contacted several Bowen descendants to determine if any family member could recall seeing or hearing of this important and intriguing piece.¹

My inquiries were met with consideration and offers of assistance, but no information was forthcoming, until an email arrived from the United Kingdom on the eve of my article's publication. One of Lady Bowen's great great granddaughters had made inquiries among her many cousins and excitedly reported that not only had the brooch survived, but it was a much loved piece, "in the good hands of a great grandson and his wife".

The brooch's owners were intrigued by the interest in their family heirloom, an ornament worn frequently by the wife. They generously forwarded

photographs, making it possible for the piece to be viewed here by an Australian audience for the first time since Lady Bowen left the country in 1879, at the end of Sir George Bowen's tenure as Governor of Victoria (**plates 2 – 6**).

The images show the beauty of the brooch, which Lady Bowen acknowledged in her acceptance speech, as being made in Queensland and "composed of its most valuable productions – gold and precious stones."² They also resolve key questions about the identity of the maker and the inspiration for the design.

The brooch is spectacularly credentialed. It carries an elaborate dedication to Lady Bowen from the pupils of All Hallows' School (**plates 3 – 4**), with a stamped "18" (for 18-carat gold) and a maker's mark "F.B. & Co." for Flavelle Brothers and Company (**plate 5**).

The firm of Flavelle Brothers was established in Sydney by brothers John and Henry Flavelle in 1849 (not 1848 or 1850, as suggested by some sources).³ John Flavelle had started out as a "daguerreotypist" working in Sydney, Hobart and Launceston, producing one-

guinea portraits, which he boasted could be framed and delivered to his clients in just ten minutes.⁴ In March 1846, he went into business with his future brother-in-law, Samuel Brush, importing optical instruments, repairing watches and manufacturing spectacles, often of gold or silver.⁵ He subsequently “retired” from this partnership to team up with his brother Henry, who had established useful business and trade connections in the United Kingdom.⁶

In their early days, the majority of items including jewellery and silver were imported, although they also boasted of fashioning their own wedding rings from high quality Californian gold.⁷ In 1861, attracted by the colony’s expanding population and the wealth generated by recent discoveries of gold and other valuable natural resources, Flavelle’s opened a branch in Brisbane.⁸

The Bowen brooch is a testimony to those riches. Fashioned of Queensland ore, probably from either the Cape River goldfield in North Queensland or from the Mary River diggings, its brightly burnished surface is adorned with incised ornament and embellished with small emeralds and clusters of malachite and pearls (**plate 6**). The green malachite would have come from the copper mines at Peak Downs in Central Queensland, discovered in 1862. The natural saltwater pearls were almost certainly from Moreton Bay, where small pearls were discovered in the 1850s and set in jewellery by the Sydney firm of Hogarth Erichsen & Co as early as 1858.

With the exception of the emeralds (an extravagance reserved for Lady Bowen), the piece perfectly matches a description in the *Brisbane Courier* of a second brooch produced by Flavelle’s Brisbane workshop in 1869 as a prize in a fund-raising Art Union for All Hallows’ School.

A HARP BROOCH (on the Model of Brian Boru’s, preserved at Trinity College, Dublin); of Queensland gold, enchased and engraved; set with Shamrocks of Moreton Bay Pearls, and Peak Downs Malachite.⁹



“Brian Boru’s harp” was a musical instrument, long thought mistakenly to have belonged to Brian Boru, High King of Ireland, who united the Irish tribes against the Vikings in the 10th century. During the Celtic revival of the 18th century, the harp became a symbol of Irish freedom and was surrounded by an array of complex social and political associations. However, by the beginning of the 19th century, as historian Tom Dunne has noted in his study of the iconography of the Irish harp, it was “transformed from a radical symbol to an upper-class British fashion”, an object invested with the romance of Ireland’s ancient bards.¹⁰

This is surely how the cultivated and cosmopolitan Lady Bowen viewed her gift, and the spirit in which it was presented by the Sisters of Mercy, an Irish religious order founded in Dublin in 1831. The nuns placed great emphasis on the arts in their curriculum, and for the most part remained aloof from the political and religious skirmishes which often beset Queensland’s Catholic (male) clergy.¹¹

Apart from its role as an object of artistic and cultural significance, the Bowen brooch occupies a unique place in the history of Queensland’s and Australia’s decorative arts. It is the only gold or silver object so far identified created by Flavelle’s Brisbane workshop in the first decade of its establishment, and it is the only surviving

3.

Reverse of the brooch showing the fittings and presentation inscription

signed piece of jewellery produced in the new colony which can be dated positively to the 1860s. Furthermore, it is the only item of Australian gold or silver known to carry the firm’s maker’s mark before the name was changed to Flavelle Brothers & Roberts in 1868.¹²

Flavelle’s would go on to manufacture other significant Queensland-connected pieces, such as a suite of jewellery made of pearls and Palmer River gold in 1874 for the Marchioness of Normanby, wife of Queensland’s third Governor.¹³ The firm would also popularise the use of Queensland gemstones, promoting the golden carnelian, and producing a brooch of coloured sapphires as a farewell gift for Lady Lamington, wife of Queensland’s eighth Governor, in 1901.¹⁴

These pieces too may also be waiting to be identified. Indeed, a good deal of detective work remains to be carried out before it will be possible to assess the range and importance of Flavelle’s output. The re-emergence of the Bowen brooch is a significant step, providing a superlative example of the firm’s expertise and artistry.

4.



4.

Brooch inscription "Presented to Dear LADY BOWEN / On her departure from Queensland / As a souvenir of affectionate wishes from / the Children of All Hallow's [sic] Convent School / Brisbane, Decr 1867."

5.

Maker's mark "F.B. & Co." for Flavelle Brothers & Company on the reverse

6.

Malachite inlay in the shape of a shamrock decorates the head of the harp

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks go to Helena Drysdale, Lady Bowen's great great granddaughter, whose inquiries led to the rediscovery of the brooch, and to Peter Newman, Lady Bowen's great grandson and his wife Kate, the brooch's present owners and custodians. Their daughter Hattie Newman and her brother William went to great trouble to provide photographs. Karen Johnson, Manager of the Research Library at the Powerhouse Museum, and author Robert Holden enthusiastically helped with the history of Flavelle's.



Dianne Byrne is Curator of Original Materials at the John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland in Brisbane.

She is currently researching 19th-century Queensland presentation gold and silver for her M. Phil. thesis. She can be contacted at dianne.byrne@slq.qld.gov.au.

NOTES

- 1 Dianne Byrne, "Lady Bowen's Irish Harp Brooch – a missing piece of Queensland colonial jewellery", *Australiana* vol 37 no 2, May 2015 pp 6–10.
- 2 *Brisbane Courier* 4 Jan 1868 p 4.
- 3 *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer* 26 May 1849 p 3. The Brisbane branch of Flavelle's 1908 publication, *The Story of an Ancient House*, contains a number of errors regarding the firm's origins. See also A. Regan & T. May (2005), *Flavelle Bros & Co, Opticians and Jewellers, Sydney, NSW* in Museum Victoria Collections <http://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/1957> accessed 10 Sep 2015.
- 4 *Launceston Examiner* 2 Mar 1844 p 1.
- 5 *SMH* 3 Mar 1846 p 1.
- 6 *SMH* 9 Mar 1849 p 1
- 7 *SMH* 6 Nov 1850, p 1.
- 8 *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser* 9 May 1861, p 3; *Courier* (Brisbane) 29 May 1861 p 1.
- 9 *Brisbane Courier*, 27 Jan 1869, p 1.
- 10 Tom Dunne, "Ireland's 'wild harp': a contested symbol", in W. Laffan & C. Monkhouse, eds., *Ireland: Crossroads of Art and Design, 1690–1840*, Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, Yale UP, New Haven & London, 2015, pp 119–125. A model of the Brian Boru harp was exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851; by 1853, Dublin jeweller George Waterhouse was marketing replicas as items of jewellery. A decade later, the harp was so much a part of the popular cultural consciousness of the Victorians that a right-facing image of that instrument was added to the labels of the Guinness Brewing Company in 1862.
- 11 By the later 1860s, the influence of the Celtic Revival had spread to Australia. Advertisements appeared in local newspapers for English-made items such as "Irish bog oak earrings and brooches, chaste designs"; *Argus* 13 Jun 1868 p 1.
- 12 The name Flavelle Brothers & Roberts appears on later pieces. Before 1868, however, no other signed or stamped example of the firm's colonial gold or silverwork has been documented. Even the grand gold and malachite inkstand which Flavelle Bros showed at the London Exhibition of 1862, and which John Hawkins has described as providing evidence "for the first time of the artistic achievements" of the company, does not bear the firm's stamp or any other identifying mark. See John Hawkins, "Australian Exhibits at the London International Exhibition of 1862", *Australian Antique Collector* July–December 1982 p 58.
- 13 *Evening News* (Sydney) 13 Nov 1874 p 2; *Rockhampton Bulletin* 23 Nov 1874 p 2; *Mercury* (Hobart) 31 May 1875 p 3.
- 14 *Brisbane Courier* 22 Jun 1901 p 6.

5.



6.





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Schulim Krimper (1893-1971)
Desk Chair, c. 1955
Sold for \$2,640 IBP

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Miner's Ring

William Barnard, Melbourne, c 1860



Lady's Ring with Kangaroo

Possibly Geelong made, c 1860

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Marguerite Mahood glazed earthenware figure, circa 1935.
Sold for \$27,280, November 2015

A Dynamic Parrying Shield. Sold for \$27,280, July 2014

A gold brooch with Kangaroo, circa 1860.
Sold for \$13,640, November 2014

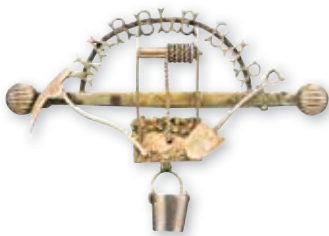
A gold quartz brooch by T.T Jones and Son, circa 1870.
Sold for \$13,640, November 2014

A goldfields brooch, circa 1898.
Sold for \$38,440, November

An important colonial cedar sitting inlaid six-legged
sideboard, circa 1815. Sold for \$124,000, February 2015



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Mattie Furphy – dainty but determined

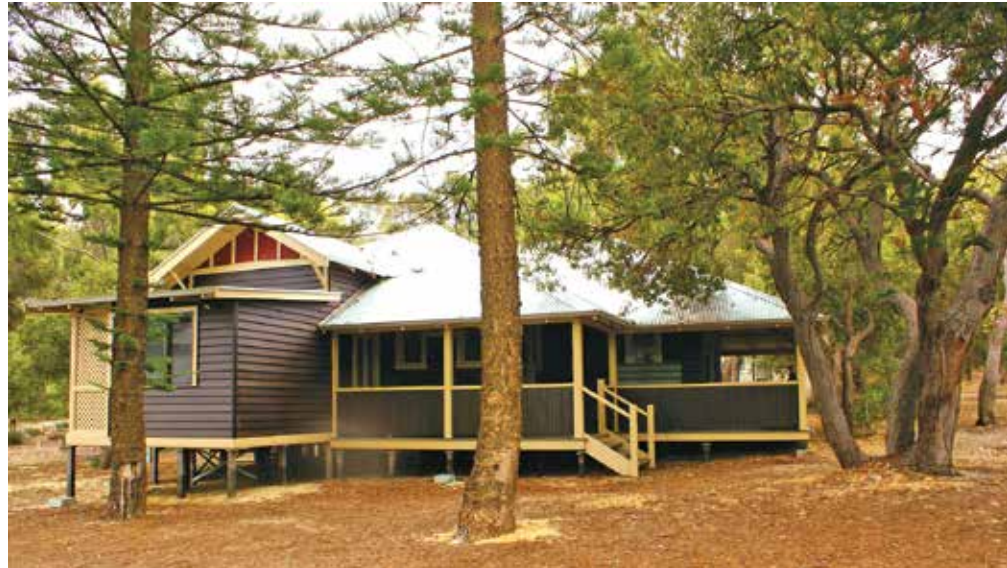
Dorothy Erickson documents the life and work of Mattie Furphy (1878–1948), a Victorian who moved to Perth in 1902 to become a prominent Western Australian artist and designer.

DOROTHY ERICKSON

The Mattie Furphy Centre for Creative Imagining in Swanbourne WA was opened in October 2012 under the auspices of the Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA), who have rescued the house that Mattie had designed and Joseph and Sam Furphy had built. Restored after fundraising, it is now located in Allen Park a few hundred metres across an oval from its original location (**plate 1**). As part of a writer's centre it is intended "to promote awareness of the power of creative imagination and the central role it plays in all spheres of human activity."

But who you ask was Mattie Furphy? She was born Sarah Martha McCausland in 1878 in Victoria and married Sam Furphy, a son of writer Joseph Furphy (Tom Collins) of *Such is Life* fame, a member of the Furphy foundry family of Shepparton who made the water carts used in World War I –around which the soldiers used to spin tall yarns, giving rise to the term "furphy". More importantly, she was an artist and competent metalsmith in Western Australia in the first years of the 20th century.

The discovery of significant amounts of gold in Western Australia in the 1880s and the subsequent influx of both men and money, coincided with a world-wide resurgence of interest in design for the applied arts. The ideals of 19th-century British design reformers such as Henry Cole, John Ruskin and William Morris, and the French architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc had encouraged painters and architects to extend their activities to cover the design and practice of the decorative arts.



According to Stella Tillyard's thoughtful construct in *The Impact of Modernism 1900-1920: Early Modernism and the Arts and Crafts Movement in Edwardian England*, by 1890 the "dictates of fashion had by this time triumphed over the movement of ideas". The Arts and Crafts Movement had melted into the Aesthetic Movement before metamorphosing into early modernism in the 20th century. In England, 'Art' had become fashionable among the upper and upper middle classes, whose accoutrements reflected their 'Aesthetic' sensibilities.

In Perth, in the midst of a gold boom, facilities were expanding rapidly. Perth flaunted a new Stock Exchange, a new Art School, a new Museum and Art Gallery and many many new houses to cater for a population that multiplied four times in a few years. In the Perth art world, it became fashionable to design and make one's own door fittings and a certain amount of one-upmanship was in force. Fittings were made to denote superior aesthetic taste and modernity.



1. The Mattie Furphy Centre for Creative Imagining in its new location in Allen Park in Swanbourne, 2012

2. Sam and Mattie Furphy on their wedding day about 1900



3.

James W. R. Linton with students in the “drawing from the cast” class at Perth Technical School c 1904

4-5.

The drawing room in Sam and Mattie Furphy’s House, Allen Park, Swanbourne. Mattie made the carved detail of the decorative brackets under the plate rail in the drawing room

Bernard Woodward, the curator of the new Museum and Art Gallery, wrote “The work of beautifying our homes must necessarily be slow as it is not a question of money but one of taste.”¹ A few examples of these homes survive and fortuitously Mattie Furphy’s is one. Those of artists James W. R. Linton, Francesco Vanzetti, Herbert Gibbs and Flora Landells did not.

Sam and Mattie came to Western Australia in 1902, soon after their marriage (**plate 2**), to set up a Furphy foundry and in 1905 were joined by his parents. Strong-willed Mattie did not get on with her mother-in-law and spent most of her

time at the Perth Technical Art School (now Central Institute of Technology) where she enrolled in freehand, cast, and model drawing and undertook classes in repoussé. For a tiny, corsetted Edwardian belle the latter was some considerable physical feat.

According to Joseph Furphy, she was at art school five days a week — from 10 am to 10 pm. She studied from 1905 to 1910 and was an outstanding student, winning scholarships which paid for her fees. She and Flora Le Cornu (Landells) were mentioned in the annual reports as energetic and persevering students who stimulated the others. Joseph wrote that later when Mattie attended the school for only one day a week, she spent another out in the bush or along the beach with other advanced students, painting from nature.

The Art Gallery, Museum and Technical Art School in Western Australia were modelled on those of London’s South Kensington complex.² James W. R. Linton, newly arrived from England, had set up the applied arts within the Technical School under a committee which believed that:

Art teaching and art training have long been recognised by all progressive nations as an essential factor in a modern education. Necessity making these no longer





the monopoly of the rich but the privilege of the poorest is well understood and no small part of the hopes of elevating our people rests on bringing art influences into the midst of the homes of the humblest.³

Many local gentlewomen, instead of receiving their art training privately as was customary, began attending the Technical Art School and were joined by others for whom art had previously not been an option (plate 3).

In the first decade of the 20th century, the favoured style in Western Australian metalwork (and the furniture and surroundings to which it was attached) was a version of late Art Nouveau.⁴ This modern style, which had become popular right around Australia by Federation, was international but with distinct regional variations. The chameleon style had a number of names: Stile Liberty, Stile Inglese, Studio Stil, Moderne Style, Jugendstil, Belgische Stil, and Wiener Sezession. To these should be added the styles known in Australia as “Federation”. The local version had much in common with the 20th-century manifestations — the Darmstadt Jugendstil, Viennese Secession and the Glasgow style which was influenced by Art Workers’ Guild member and architect Charles Frances Annesley Voysey (1857–1941), whose own style was influenced by Japan. Voysey was the most widely-imitated of English designers

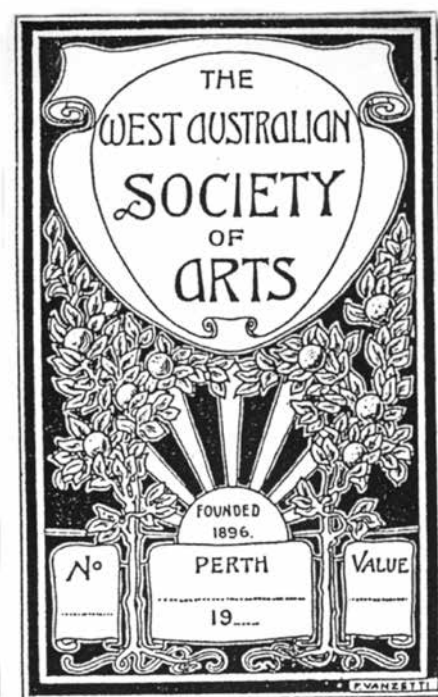
outside the country. He was regarded as the “fountainhead” of Art Nouveau.⁵

James W. R. Linton placed an emphasis on drawing and design in the course. In this he was following the methods of his own training and the tenets of Walter Crane whose article “The Language of Line of Design” published in *The Magazine of Art* c 1899 and in his books, defined “the art of design” as “the adaptation of forms to spaces, objects, and materials” and who was emphatic that:

Line, whatever its value to the painter, is to the designer the very nerve and fibre of life, since the whole value of his work depends upon the constructive use and quality of his line, both for its strength and beauty.⁶

Mattie obviously applied these dictums when designing the details of her house, which was built in stages on wildflower-clad sand dunes on the corner of what is now Clement and Marmion Streets, Swanbourne between 1908 and 1920. She designed and made delightful beaten-copper panels and fingerplates for the doors, candle sconces, overmantels and wooden shelf brackets ornamented with quandongs to complement the quandong finger plates in the drawing room (plates 4–5).

Everything was coordinated. The entrance hall featured repoussé kangaroo paw flowers



ACCEPTED DESIGN FOR THE SOCIETY'S BOOKPLATE.

6. Stained glass windows probably by Barnett Bros. to designs by Mattie in Mattie Furphy's house, Allen Park, Swanbourne
7. The Franco-British Exhibition Diploma of Honour awarded to Mattie Furphy, Katherine Armstrong, Ernestina Levinson and Flora le Cornu
8. Francesco Vanzetti's bookplate for the WA Society of Arts



9–11.

Mattie Furphy's repoussé copper, Quandong and Kangaroo Paw motif door panels now installed at Tom Collins House but originally made for her own house. The carpentry was by Joseph Furphy. Collection Fellowship of Australian Writers (Western Australian Branch), Tom Collins House, Swanbourne



with the same motif in the stained glass windows (**plate 6**), while the dining room was ornamented with grape motifs. An enamelled repoussé hall mirror featured a banksia. These were all designed under the influence of James W. R. Linton, the art master at the Technical School, who wanted the students to design and make new modern work and not copy old styles.

When the student work was exhibited at the Chamber of Manufactures' exhibition in Perth in 1906 the applied arts, including repoussé, were singled out for praise. Being one of the outstanding students, Mattie also showed in the school's exhibit at the Women's Work Exhibition in Perth in 1907 with Flora Landells, Ernestina Levinson and Catherine Armstrong. The school's exhibit consisted of drawings, paintings, art needlework, dressmaking, and woodcarving. As Mattie had won the prize for drawing from the cast in 1905, it is probable that her exhibit included drawings.

This exhibit went to the 1907 national exhibition in Melbourne as a non-competitive entry and was reduced and forwarded to the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908, where it won the Grand Prix and a Diploma of Honour (**plate 7**).⁷ Few of Mattie's paintings have been traced but her metalwork is preserved in Tom Collins' House and the adjacent Mattie Furphy House in Allen Park Historic Village. Her forté appears to have been repoussé.

In one set of repoussé copper door panels, the quandong is treated rather after the manner of the fruiting pomegranate trees in Francesco Vanzetti's bookplate design also used for the Society of Arts' exhibition catalogue of 1904 (**plate 8**). This fruiting tree was a local development of an international motif. Furphy's quandongs are the most successful of her three designs for door panels (**plates 9–11**). The dictates of Walter Crane, via the medium of Linton, are used to adapt the form to fit the chosen rectilinear shape. The chasing and repoussé are crisp and the background smoothly treated to recede.

Furphy did not follow the dictate to be modern in the largest piece of metalwork (**plate 12**). The overmantel featuring wyverns appears to have come straight out of Owen Jones's 1850s *Grammar of Ornament* which was in the school library. The overmantel is however a tour-de-force masterfully executed. The design, used a motif favoured by members of the Aesthetic Movement, and is somewhat recidivous. Joseph Furphy was not very impressed. Describing its making he wrote:

... for the last couple of weeks she has been spending an hour or so every day at her Art work. Not painting, sad to say, but embossing copper panels and plaquets for her overmantel. One panel of that work – about a yard square – took her nearly a year to belt into shape, and the shape was a couple of hideous wyverns glaring at each other. Which is supposed to be highest Art.⁸

Furphy made a large copper-framed wall mirror which features a domed repoussé and pierced banksia motif set over a background of turquoise enamel. This rather large and plain piece is relieved by small turquoise enamelled rondels at each corner. According to Jean Lang, the Furphys had a small enamelling kiln set up at their foundry in Fremantle and these were probably enamelled there.⁹ The foundry may also have had a wax furnace for burning out moulds for sculpture, as the foundry cast special equipment Linton needed, such as raising-stakes. The Furphys and Lintons became friends.

One of Mattie Furphy's most successful works was a striking pair of candle sconces in brass and copper (plate 13). Smoothly domed hemispheres of brass are juxtaposed against repoussé copper back plates. These circular plates have five swirling leaf and berry motifs, chased and repoussé in low relief. The copper sections are given a satisfying deep red patina which contrasts with the polished yellow of the brass reflectors. The candles are held by fabricated brass fittings attached by rivets to the base of the circular copper plate. Fortunately these attractive pieces are preserved in Tom Collins House, the headquarters of the Fellowship of Writers in Swanbourne, with her other work but are now in need of conservation work which the Fellowship are endeavouring to get funding to undertake.

Most of the metalwork and doors were transferred to what is now Tom Collins House in 1939 when Sam and Mattie moved to live there and remained in the house when Sam Furphy later gave it to the Fellowship of Australian Writers. They are fine examples of the work made in the first decade of the 20th century and remain a memorial to Mattie who died on 25 July 1948.

Both of Mattie's homes have been heritage listed by the Heritage Council of Western Australia and reside in Allen Park. Tom Collins House had to be moved to make way for a freeway and became the first house in Western Australia to retain heritage listing after being moved. Mattie's own home fell

prey to developers when the last of the family moved out and was saved by a concerted effort of concerned people and moved across the park near to Tom Collins House in what has almost become a heritage village. Both properties are used and maintained by the Fellowship of Writers (Western Australian Branch) for fellowship meetings and to house writers in residence. They hope Mattie's work will inspire other creative endeavours.

Dr Dorothy Erickson has written several books fundamental to understanding the development of design and decorative arts in Western Australia from the first British settlement in 1829 to today. She is a frequent contributor to *Australiana*, and her latest book, *Inspired by Light & Land. Designers and Makers in Western Australia*, is reviewed in this issue.

NOTES

- 1 Bernard Woodward, *Guide to the Arts, and Arts and Crafts: with a catalogue of the Sculptures, Paintings and Black and White Collections* published in 1904 by the committee of the Western Australian Museum and Art Gallery, p 56.
- 2 This now comprises the Natural History Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Royal College of Art, Imperial College etc.
- 3 *Annual Report* 1904-5, np.
- 4 *The Studio* 26 (1903) featured the work of Austrian and Scottish makers exhibited at the First International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Art held in Turin, Italy, in 1902. This work is generally described as Art Nouveau.
- 5 Hugh Osborne ed., *Oxford Companion to the Decorative Arts*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975, p 812. Although he stressed tradition, Voysey had a dislike of historical revivals and pioneered simplicity in interior decoration.
- 6 Walter Crane's influential style is often classed under the general Art Nouveau banner and a major analysis of his work by Georges Lemman was published in 1891 in *L'Art Nouveau*. About 1895 he and Lewis Day, both contributors to the old style, denounced the term, trying to project an air of robust probity to dissociate themselves from the "degenerates" and Oscar Wilde, whose trial in 1895 coincided with the publication of Max Nordau's *Degeneration*.
- 7 *Annual Report and Prospectus* 1909, p 22.
- 8 Quoted in Lang, Jean. *At the Toss of a Coin*, Perth: Tom Collins Press, p 30.
- 9 *Ibid*, p 46.



12.

Mattie Furphy's fireplace surround now in Tom Collins House, Swanbourne. The repoussé metalwork was originally completed and installed in Mattie Furphy's house

13.

Candle sconce, polished brass and repoussé copper, c.1906, 32 cm wide by Mattie Furphy. Collection Fellowship of Australian Writers (Western Australian Branch), Tom Collins House, Swanbourne

The cabinet maker and the carver: George Thwaites and Daniel Livingstone

ROBERT D LA NAUZE

Prestigious Melbourne cabinet maker Geo. Thwaites & Son operated from 1842 to 1889, providing high-class furniture for Victoria's mansions, homesteads and prominent institutional and public buildings. Today the firm is best remembered for its contracts to furnish *Government House* in 1854 and again in 1875 and for supplying bookcases to Sir Redmond Barry. Cabinet makers worked with other trades as necessary. George Thwaites & Sons collaborated with the wood carver and ornamental metal maker Daniel Livingstone during the 1860s. Together they produced some of Australia's great Gothic Revival furniture and a series of unusual hall chairs.



1.

Peter McLean, cabinet maker, Felix Terlecki and Pilickowski (Albert Pilichowski?), carvers, *sideboard*, 1860–1873, h 351, w 340 d 92.5 cm, sold by Sotheby's Australia 25 October 2010 lot 311. Collection: Garangula Gallery, Jugiong NSW; photo courtesy Sotheby's Australia

In a remarkable series of articles published in London's *Morning Chronicle*, also published in three volumes in 1851 as *London Labour and the London Poor*, journalist Henry Mayhew (1812–1887) provided *inter alia* a detailed account of the London woodworking trades in the middle of the 19th century.¹ His reports demonstrated the high degree of specialisation of craftsmen and their interdependence in making quality furniture. Large establishments engaged general cabinet makers, chair-makers, bedstead-makers, upholsterers, wood carvers, polishers, sawyers for planks and veneers; each of these trades had its own association.

In colonial Victoria, partly from necessity and partly from the gold rush induced influx of skilled and semi-skilled workers, the demarcation between these trades was less observed. Nonetheless, in a number of cases we can identify where integration and collaboration between trades produced notable pieces of furniture.

Trade collaboration in Victoria

A classic Victorian example is the well-known sideboard or buffet made by cabinet maker Peter McLean, exhibited at the 1866 Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition and later at the 1873 London Exhibition (**plate 1**). The buffet, on which McLean had been working since about 1860, is renowned for its ornate carvings of Australian aborigines and fauna, plus historical and allegorical figures.² However, it is puzzling that the men who carved the sideboard are not better known, for it is the cooperation between the cabinet maker and the carvers that endowed the piece with its uniqueness.³

While McLean designed and manufactured the sideboard, “Messrs. F. Terlecki and Pilickowski” executed the carvings.⁴ Felix Terlecki, a Pole, who had taken part in the 1848–49 Hungarian war, had been educated as a gentleman in England before “he turned the proficiency he had acquired in music and ornamental design into a means with which to earn a living.”⁵ Felix had arrived in Melbourne



in 1856, where he and his brother Peter established a wood-carving business in 1856 and provided ornamental carvings for churches, banks and to cabinet makers requiring furniture decorations.⁶ Felix died on 23 February 1869, leaving a widow and five children, while his brother Peter died two months later. “Pilickowski” is more elusive but is very likely Albert Pilichowski, “native of Poland, political exile and Victorian colonist, well known and highly respected by his friends in Melbourne” who died at sea on 17 August 1864, returning from London on board the *Star of Peace*.⁷

In another example, George Thwaites entered into a productive relationship with the wood carver Angus Maclean whose activities are better known. Angus had served his apprenticeship in figure, flower and ornamental carving in Glasgow and quickly rose to the position of manager of Thomas Kay and Co. Drawn to the Victorian goldfields in late 1852, he returned to Melbourne in 1854 and was engaged by Geo. Thwaites & Son to provide decorations in colonial woods for the furniture being made for Sir Charles Hotham’s residence, *Toorak House*. Some of these pieces are still in service in the formal rooms of the present *Government House* and deserve a more detailed study in time.

2.

Attributed to Daniel Livingstone and Geo. Thwaites & Son, the first series of “target” hall chairs of Australian cedar with backs attached directly to the seat, as used in Victorian banks and institutions c 1856-c 1870.

- a-c. National Australia Bank Heritage Collection
- d. National Bank of Australasia, 270 Collins St, Melbourne, c 1890. State Library of Victoria, image no. H82.1228

3.

Attributed to Daniel Livingstone and Geo. Thwaites & Son, “target” hall chairs of Australian cedar, used in Victorian banks and institutions c 1856-c 1870 showing the evolving design. From left

- a. Colonial Bank of Australasia c 1856. National Australia Bank Heritage Collection
- b. Colonial Bank of Australasia c 1856. Private collection
- c. unknown bank or institution c 1856-1860. Author’s collection
- d. Bank of Victoria 1862. Collection: J B Hawkins Antiques
- e. unknown bank or institution, probably the Australasian Insurance Co. c 1865-70. Collection: J B Hawkins Antiques

George Thwaites the cabinet maker

George Thwaites (1791–1865) was born on 15 August 1791 at Kirkleatham, Yorkshire, the second surviving son of Thomas Thwaites, a joiner, and Mary Cooper. In 1813, George married Elizabeth Wilkinson in London, where he was working as a journeyman cabinet maker. From 1825 to 1841 he operated a cabinet making workshop both alone and in partnerships. In late 1841, he left London for Port Phillip with his wife, three sons George jr, Thomas Henry and John, a daughter Louisa and daughter-in-law Eliza.

His three sons entered the woodworking trade. Apprenticed to their father, they helped to establish the firm of Geo. Thwaites & Son in early pre-gold Melbourne. It seems likely that George jr concentrated on the timber side of the business, Thomas Henry on upholstery and John on cabinet making. George jr left the business for farming in the late 1850s and on George senior's death in August 1865, Thomas Henry became the owner.

Throughout the 1840s, Thwaites's firm made furniture for speculative sale but they preferred to take specific orders. Given the social hierarchy of the times and the colony's determination to show it was no backwater of culture and taste, the *Toorak House* commission was no ordinary contract. Neither the largest nor the most expensive of their commissions, nonetheless the furnishing of the governor's residence was of such immense symbolic significance that it established Geo. Thwaites & Son as Victoria's premier cabinet-maker. Henceforth furniture from Thwaites would not only stand for quality but would also broadcast the superior social standing of its owner.

By the early 1850s, their reputation for quality meant that they were specifically mentioned in auction advertisements of second-hand household furniture. From these sales, it is clear that the Thwaites were to fit out the homes of those who claimed to be gentry, and the mansions of those who had made good as merchants and pastoralists.

In the aftermath of the gold rush, many Melbourne institutions – government

buildings, churches, public library, banks and insurance offices – were built in grand style and scale. Geo. Thwaites & Son were engaged in supplying furniture and fitting out many of such public buildings and private board rooms. In 1876, Geo. Thwaites & Son were again chosen to furnish rooms at the newly built *Government House*; furniture which is still used.

Daniel Livingstone the carver and metalworker

The 24-year-old Daniel Livingstone (c 1828–1885) arrived in Melbourne in December 1852 aboard the *Moselle*. Possibly, like Angus Maclean, he spent time on the gold fields. From the only known biographical account of Livingstone, in an eclectic report of the 1866 Intercolonial Exhibition clearly based on information he had provided, he had established a wood carving business by early 1853.

.... it will be sufficient to state that the decorations of the fittings and furniture of the new Houses of Parliament, and, almost without exception, of all the new banking houses and public buildings of Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat, Sandhurst, Castlemaine, &c, besides of a deal of church work, and numerous private houses, have been turned out of Mr. Livingstone's workshop⁸

It goes on to describe the number of men and trades employed in his workshop:

Mr. Livingstone employs nearly always five or six carvers, two patternmakers, five or six ironfounders; others, brass and zinc founders, apprentices at carving and founding, a lot of boys, and all those who attend on such manufactures.

Livingstone was more than just a carver. About 1863, Livingstone had branched out into iron and zinc ornamental casting. Specific examples cited in the

report were the railings of the Odd Fellows Hall in Swanston Street; St Enoch's Church in Collins Street, the "fine front railing before Mr. Ramsden's terrace, near Fitzroy-gardens" and the entrance gates to Thomas B. Payne's house at South Yarra.

In 1864, Livingstone commenced making bronze fittings for the embellishment of office fitouts. For a brief period Livingstone played an important role as a pattern maker and founder of iron lace and other ornamental cast iron products, working initially in conjunction with Joseph Laughton of the Vulcan Foundry. In January 1873, Livingstone became insolvent and his Nizam foundry, the land and machinery, were put up for auction.⁹

Furbishing the banks: "target" chairs

The first example of the association between cabinet maker and carver is in fitting out banks and commercial establishments, about which John Hawkins recently outlined some details.¹⁰ Over the past 15 years, Hawkins has put together a remarkable collection of early Australian 'hall' chairs that were used primarily in Victorian banks built during the glorious two decades after the gold rush of 1851. Hawkins' chairs are complemented by those in the collection of banking memorabilia held by the National Australia Bank (NAB, successor to the Bank of Victoria, the Colonial Bank of Australasia and the National Bank of Australasia) and that owned by the author.

Owing to the concentric circular patterns on the backs on these chairs, Hawkins called them "target" hall or bank chairs and identified 13 variations on this theme. The chairs are constructed of Australian cedar, without arms, and with a turned circular back. The chairs may be subdivided into two basic designs, each series exhibiting increasing embellishment over time. The first series of hall chairs are conventionally constructed, with solid single-piece turned and carved backs attached at the seat (**plate 2**).¹¹



This article concentrates on the second and more elaborate series of chairs that have heavy circular “target” backs fixed centrally to the back uprights (**plate 3**) – apparently a unique design in British and Australian hall chairs.¹² These are the chairs associated with the collaboration between Livingstone and Thwaites. All these chairs have front legs characteristic of chairs from the workshop of Geo. Thwaites & Son, apart from the CBA chair (**plate 3a**). The chairs are solid, reliable and strong – qualities the bank would like to project to its customers – as well as being surprisingly comfortable.

The discovery of gold in 1851 saw the profits of the three existing banks operating in Victoria increase substantially. Unable to resist such profits, capitalists launched six new banks of which three were locally owned. The first of the local banks was the Bank of Victoria, founded in 1853, followed in 1856 by the Colonial Bank of Australasia and in 1858 by the National Bank of Australasia.¹³

On 10 July 1855, Alexander Gibb convened a meeting in a room of the Imperial Hotel to discuss proposals for a new bank “on the Scottish Principle”, the Colonial Bank of Australasia.¹⁴ By December, the directors had purchased the Grand Imperial Hotel and engaged the 26-year-old architect Lloyd Tayler to undertake the modifications to the cellar and the bar to fit out the bank in appropriate style. The bank opened its doors at 10 o’clock on Monday, 14 April 1856 and “no doubt the directors anxiously peered into the office to see if business was brisk.”¹⁵

Perhaps they also noted the bank chairs for, according to Hawkins, it seems highly likely that the CBA chair (**plate 3a**) provides the archetype for this family of chairs. These are the simplest of these designs and have the CBA monogram carved on the “target” back.

In addition to the unadorned CBA chair, there is a more expansive variation using the same CBA monogram (**plate**

4.

Banking chamber of the Bank of Victoria, Collins St, Melbourne 1909. The counters, tables, chairs and other fittings were made by Geo. Thwaites & Son and Daniel Livingstone in 1862. From *The Australasian Decorator and Painter*, 1 March 1909

5.

Chair of Australian cedar with back centred by a bronze plaque of the Southern Cross overlaid onto the Union Jack, the outer egg-and-dart cast rim in four sections. Probably cast and carved by Daniel Livingstone and Geo. Thwaites & Son for the Australasian Insurance Company's new offices in Collins Street, 1864-66. Collection: J B Hawkins Antiques

3b), and a similar chair without the monogram (plate 3c). On these, an evolutionary development has taken place on the target backs which now show carved egg-and-dart external and acanthus internal decorations, while the brackets and fluted front legs have carved foliage. Perhaps these were made for another important location within the bank, or some time later.

The Bank of Victoria was backed by the wealthy Henry Miller, who modestly confessed that everything he touched turned to gold which, in this instance, proved the case. In 1859, some six years after its inception, the directors purchased for their new headquarters the building owned by the Melbourne Club on Collins Street and appointed Alfred Louis Smith as architect. His winning design was based on the *Palazzo Cornaro* in Venice. In December 1860 they called tenders for its construction. The building was partly erected by R Huckson, though after Huckson's insolvency, Lawrence & Cain completed it.¹⁶

Chairing the 19th half-yearly meeting of shareholders held in August 1862, Henry Miller hoped that the new building would be completed in time for the next meeting.¹⁷ But come December, the shareholders were unable to meet there. While the outside of the new building was impressive, the cathedral-like banking chamber was incomplete. There the 72-year-old George Thwaites, his sons (Thomas Henry and John), Daniel Livingstone and their staff were striving to fit out the handsomest of banking chambers. The fit out of the circular banking chamber included carved counters, a central writing table and distinctive cedar chairs of unique design (plate 3d).¹⁸

All the fittings are of cedar, beautifully carved, especially the counter, which is of a semi-circular form. In one corner of the banking chamber, a space has been partitioned off, for a gold weighing-room. It was intended to have a gallery at the entrance side of the Chamber, and abutting on the Mezzanine, but this has

not as yet been carried out. the other [staircase leads] to the bank manager's apartment on the first floor on which are comprised a handsome dining-room and drawing-room, looking over Collins street. The carved woodwork which ornaments various parts of the interior of the building has been executed by Mr Livingstone, Mr Thwaites being the contractor for it.¹⁹

Nearly 50 years later, the Bank of Victoria redecorated its headquarters in 1909, but retained the richly carved Thwaites-made oval table, chairs, cedar banking counters together with architraves and dado (plate 4).²⁰ The rear legs of these chairs, carved with palmettes, are shaped from single pieces of cedar which, together with the circular back with an unusually expressed egg-and-dart carving on the rim and the raised moulded centre, display simple elegance and considerable development of the original design.²¹

Chairs with bronze decoration

The last chair (plates 3e & 5) is revolutionary: it has the addition of a circular cast bronze egg-and-dart rim and an insert depicting the Southern Cross on the Union Jack surrounded by a laurel wreath.

Livingstone's first use of ornamental bronze can be dated c 1864-5, from the description of his work at the 1866 Intercolonial Exhibition.

The brass or bronze work produced in this establishment is of more recent origin, and dates its commencement from the requirements of the builders of the New Australasian Insurance office. The bronze fittings there are familiar, and the success and actual achievement of economy in connexion therewith has opened up a trade which extends to other colonies, the result being, also, the greater success of the architect and decorator.²²

It may be possible to pinpoint the date when Livingstone felt sufficiently confident to advertise his ability to cast bronze for hall seats. For a brief period from September to December 1864, Livingstone advertised his wares under the heading "Ornamental Iron and Bronze Work". The initial wording indicates that he was willing to cast "Gates, Balconies, Verandahs, Balusters, Pillars, Pedestals, Vases, Cemetery Railings, Brackets, &c." On 20 September, the wording changed to "... cemetery railings, garden and hall seats, hat and umbrella stands, &c."²³ Was the addition of "hall seats" by chance due to Livingstone's rising confidence in casting ornamental bronze or merely a reference to cast iron seating?

Close examination of a photograph of Livingstone's display at the 1866 Intercolonial Exhibition reveals a casting for the outer bronze rim of the chair (plate 6), as well as a notice indicating that by the end of 1866 Livingstone had undertaken three sub-contracts for the addition of ornamental bronze to fit out offices, a skill that he was putting to good use in collaboration with Geo. Thwaites & Son. These contracts for fitting out institutional buildings c 1864-66 were for the Australasian Insurance Company (claimed as the first use of bronze in fitting out a colonial commercial building), the head office of the Commercial Bank of Australasia and another unidentified Commercial Bank site, all of which required the collaboration of the cabinet maker and carver/founder.²⁴

The Australasian Insurance Company hired the architects Austin & Ellis to design their new head office. James Lawrence, who had recently completed the Bank of Victoria where he had engaged Thwaites and Livingstone, constructed the three-story building. Above, a projecting cornice was surmounted by a balustrade, with a large coat of arms in the centre, executed in bronze by Livingstone. Contemporary etchings of the new building reveal the oval shield contains the Southern Cross flanked by a rampant lion and unicorn.²⁵



The VICTORIAN EXHIBITION in MELBOURNE, for the "WORLD'S FAIR," 1862.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETORS, AT THE "HERALD" OFFICE, MELBOURNE.

On the ground floor is fitted up the general or public office, which is a spacious and lofty room. The fittings are especially noticeable. The enrichments of panels in the counter-front are not, as has hitherto been usual, carved in cedar; bronze metal has been introduced by the architects with a very happy effect, and what was at first deemed but an experiment is pronounced by competent judges to be highly successful, thanks to the artistic design and the skill in workmanship. Each panel contains a shield with five stars forming the Southern Cross – the emblem of the company – arranged thereon, surrounded by a laurel wreath, and executed in bold relief.²⁶

Hawkins' unusual chairs with the bronze inserts, having the five stars forming the Southern Cross surrounded by a laurel wreath executed in bold relief, align with the description of

the panels for the banking counters described above. While it is not clear if the Union Jack fits the press description of "a shield", the laurel wreath on Hawkins' chairs rather than the acanthus decorations on the other chairs singles out the Australian Insurance Company as the most likely purchaser of this suite.

At the time, many organisations were using the Southern Cross and the Union Jack on their coats of arms, on banknotes, stationery, etc. so that there are potentially other candidates for their purchase. For instance: the two commissions for the Commercial Bank of Australasia in 1866; the Southern Cross Permanent Building and Investment Society whose president was Sir Redmond Barry and chairman E L Montefiore, who was also the secretary of the Australasian Insurance Company, in 1868; or, as Hawkins suggested,²⁷ the National Bank of Australasia in 1870.

Irrespective of their origin, the chairs with the bronze additions are seemingly

6.

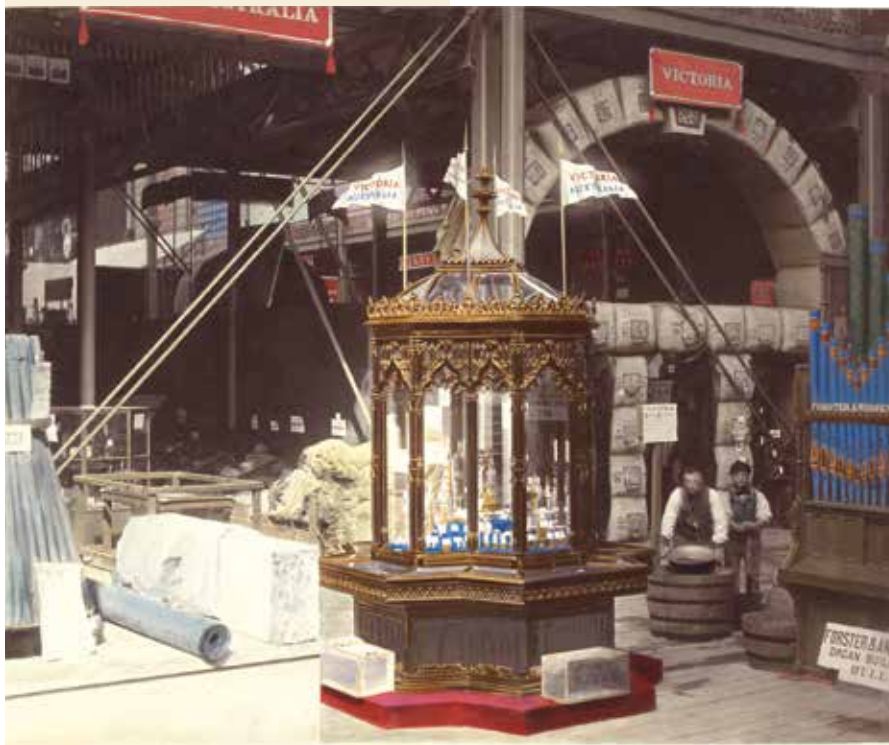
Unknown photographer, [*Intercolonial Exhibition 1866–7*, exhibit by D. Livingstone of Victoria & Swanston Sts, Melbourne, of ornamental iron, bronze and zinc work], albumen silver print.

The circular metal casting suitable for a target chair is in the centre of the image.

Collection: State Library of Victoria H4074

7.

Samuel Calvert after a Nicholas Chevalier sketch, *The Victorian section of the 1861 Intercolonial Exhibition, Melbourne*, etching. Collection: State Library of Victoria H4955/17



8.

London Stereoscopic and Photographic Co., *Assembling the Victorian exhibits at the International Exhibition, London, 1862*. The gold specimen case flying “Victoria Australia” flags, behind men demonstrating gold panning and in the background the exhibit entry arch made from wool bales. Collection: State Library of Victoria H37246

unique among British and Australian hall chairs. Perhaps because the chairs were awkward, heavy, difficult to move and liable to tip over, the design was not subsequently pursued. Nevertheless, they were “an indulgence created for an over-rich society who could afford to go one step further.”²⁸

The Victorian gold showcase

The second example of the collaboration between Livingstone and Thwaites resulted in one of Australia’s great pieces of Gothic Revival furniture: the ornate showcase for displaying samples of gold at the 1861 Intercolonial Exhibition in Melbourne

that was shipped for the same purpose to London for the 1862 International Exhibition and subsequently disappeared.

Catalogue item 436, submitted by the Commissioners of the Victorian Exhibition, was an elaborate case of Gothic design, for exhibiting a collection of alluvial and quartz-gold specimens designed by “Mr. Daniel Livingstone, executed by Messrs. Thwaites and Son, Little Collins Street, Melbourne”. However, at the opening of the Melbourne exhibition on 1 October 1861, the case to house the gold was nowhere to be seen, much to the public’s disappointment.²⁹

The idea for a gold case must have occurred to the Commissioners late in their planning, as it was not until June that they held a competition for its design. Livingstone pocketed £15 for his winning entry much to the disappointment of “A COMPETITOR” who complained anonymously in the newspaper that the advertised second prize had not been awarded. In a riposte the next day, Livingstone claimed that his entries had gained *both first and second prize* and that “A COMPETITOR” could see these designs himself at Thwaites’s manufactory where the case was now under construction.³⁰

In early November, the press was reporting that:

The upper portion of the long-expected gold case is now fixed, and displays a picturesque Gothic design by Mr. Livingstone [sic], executed by Messrs Thwaites and Son. This magnificent piece of furniture is worthy of receiving the gold treasures of the colony. It is expected that the banks will make an exhibition of gold Saturday, showing the bulk brought down [from Bendigo] by escort.³¹

The completed case displayed 800 oz (25 kg) of alluvial gold, gold nuggets and a gold and red gum presentation inkstand. The specimen case won first class certificates for Geo. Thwaites & Son and Daniel Livingstone.³²

Nicholas Chevalier captured the interior of the exhibition hall in a sketch published as an etching by Samuel Calvert (plate 7).³³ Chevalier has carefully composed a picture of a number of the exhibits that gained first class certificates. Central and towering above them is a ‘gold’ pyramid, designed by J G Knight and built by T. Riley. The gold specimen case is prominent. A couple peer at the first class display of models of fountains submitted by McKennel and Scurry, while a fountain designed and manufactured in the colony by John McKay bursts forth in the right foreground. On the left is one of three first class cast iron rustic garden chairs manufactured by D. McKenzie of Punt Road, South Yarra.

For the colonials in Victoria, especially those of British origin, the London exhibitions of 1862, 1873 and 1886 were markers against which to measure and promote their progress. They chose the story of gold as the narrative to illustrate this. The London International Exhibition of 1862 has particular significance, for it articulated for the first time the nexus between Victoria and gold. Real gold specimens, the gold case and the large facsimile gold pyramid were central in this depiction. It “was received with such success, establishing a seductive theme, which echoed through the rest of the century.”³⁴

9.

Joseph Nash (English, 1808/9–1878), *International Exhibition, Hyde Park, London, 1862: showing Victorian Section with pillar of gold, 1863*, watercolour, 22.6 x 30.2 cm. The gold specimen case designed by Livingstone and executed by Geo. Thwaites & Son is in the foreground, with the gold pyramid behind. Collection: State Library of Victoria H5247, presented 1881



But as the gold case and other exhibits were being packed for shipping to the World's Fair, this success was not assured. No doubt pleased with their Melbourne success, here at last Thwaites and Livingstone had the opportunity to demonstrate to the world their prowess as cabinet maker and carver.

The 1862 London International Exhibition was held in the purpose-built hall on the Royal Horticultural Society's South Kensington gardens. Over six months, more than six million people visited the exhibition and had the opportunity of seeing the gold case. The *Popular Guide to the International Exhibition* noted³⁵

in a rich gothic case, formed of native woods of the colony, are specimens of gold dust, from various diggings, and small nuggets. These are the real metal itself, the value of the contents of the case being between £80,000 and £90,000. "Case" is an understatement (**plate**

8). On a plinth, the gold samples were displayed behind glass in an elaborately carved pedestal and surmounted with an intricately carved lacework display case. Around the central case are twelve glassed compartments. The cabinet, 15 ft (4.6 m) high and 9 ft (2.7 m) square, towered over the viewers. Four triangular flags, proudly declaring "Victoria Australia", fluttered over the case like a merry-go-round in a fair ground (**plate 9**), beckoning those entering from Exhibition Road to view the magic metal within.

An object of scarcely less interest than the gold pyramid is a beautiful octagonal case made of woods of the colony, containing samples of gold found in almost all the mining districts of the country. ... The metal is exhibited in the fine dust, in the coarser particles, lumps about the size of peas, and in the shape of small

nuggets. ... there are models shown of many of the large nuggets which have rewarded the labour and the patience of the miner ... Here may be seen "The Welcome Nugget" ...³⁶

The gold and red gum presentation inkstand exhibited in the case in Melbourne had also made the journey to London and was safely installed in the case. The inkstand attracted a great deal of attention, contrary to Governor Barkly's perception that London would be more sympathetic to displays of "commercial enterprise, the mechanical ingenuity, and the practical industry of a community of British origin" than to magnificence of taste and luxury as might be found in Paris.³⁷

However, the inkstand's designer was not British-born but Hungarian. The cosmopolitan Ernest Leviny had worked in Vienna, Paris and London before trying his hand "as a gentleman miner"



10.

10. J B Waring, *Goldsmith's work from Australia*, chromolithograph 20.1 x 29.9 cm. The massive gold and red gum inkstand by Ernest Leviny, Castlemaine, Victoria, is shown front centre. From *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition 1862*, plate 292. Private collection

The University Council's furniture

Key to Victoria's successful exhibition was its commissioner, Sir Redmond Barry (1813–80). The indefatigable Justice Barry was also the first chancellor of the University of Melbourne. In October 1864, the building committee of the council of the fledgling university met to discuss tenders for making furniture for the Council room to designs provided by the university's architect, Joseph Reed. Both Barry and Reed had attended the 1862 International Exhibition. Probably at Barry's request, Reed's designs were for an oak suite in Gothic revival style consisting of chairs, a large and a small table and two large "chancellor's chairs".

They awarded the contract Geo. Thwaites & Son, conditional "on signing an agreement to make chairs and tables specified according to the drawings already made by Mr Reed and that the work be done to his satisfaction within two months".³⁹

The impressive carved oak suite now consists of 19 chairs, two large ornate "chancellor's chairs" (plate 11), two foot-stools, a large table to seat the 20 councillors (plate 12), and a small companion table for the secretary to the council. Nineteen is an unusual number to

order, so the original number of chairs may have been 20 or 24. This suite of superb quality is among the most important Gothic revival furniture in Australia and remains largely intact, though dispersed at various locations at the University.

The richly carved Gothic revival chairs and tables displayed the gravitas expected by the University chancellor and councillors, familiar to many of these men who were themselves in the process of acquiring furniture displaying such outward signs of success. The solidity of oak furniture and their ancient design echo two of Barry's recurring themes: they hark back to the mother country and her great, old universities, while alluding to the permanence and future greatness of the University of Melbourne. Indeed, the acanthus leaf, oak leaf and acorn motifs expressed in many different forms on the chairs symbolise enduring life, antiquity and strength.⁴⁰

The University building committee minutes and the University system of vouchers maintained for payment of contractors enables the progress of the construction of this suite to be tracked. By March 1865, £160 of the tendered price of £270 had been paid to Thwaites, when the building committee agreed that a further £15 be given "to Mr Thwaites beyond the sum agreed to in the original contract in order that the carving may be done by Livingstone".⁴¹ One wonders why a sub-contract for the services of Livingstone was required at this late stage, though it is probable that he was engaged to undertake the more difficult and ornate carving on the chancellor's chairs. As the original contract had specified a two-month delivery, it is even plausible that the larger chairs were an afterthought – two of the proposed chairs being replaced by the more intricate chancellor's chairs – requiring the services of a master carver. This could explain in part the subsequent delay in completing the contract, though at the time Geo. Thwaites & Son appears to have been exceptionally busy completing contracts for banks and other institutional work which also involved Livingstone.

on the Castlemaine fields in 1852. His masterpiece was first displayed at the 1858 Victorian Industrial Society Exhibition before workmen employed on the Melbourne to Wodonga railway purchased it for £700 for presentation to the contractor J V A Bruce. In London, J B Waring illustrated it as an example of Australian goldsmiths' skills for his monumental chromo-lithographical work *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition 1862* (plate 10).³⁸



The council chamber housing this furniture no longer exists but a single image in a photo-collage published in 1897 enables us to see how it was deployed (**plate 13**). Nine councillor chairs were set along each side of the large table and at one end the lower of the two chancellor's chairs (for the vice-chancellor). At the head of the table, the chancellor's chair is mounted on a dais to further enhance its importance. Around this table, many of the early decisions regarding the university were made.

It is unclear if Barry had in mind from the outset the possibility of using the chairs for ceremonial occasions, but their first appearance can be traced to the 1867 annual commencement ceremony.⁴² For the next 75 years, the chancellor's chairs, the council chairs and the small table were used on ceremonial occasions at the University until their use was abandoned after the 1952 fire which destroyed Wilson Hall. The students at the commencement ceremonies were renowned for their "exuberance of their spirits" that found "vent in noisy demonstrations of applause or disapproval, ludicrous interruptions, and irreverent chaff... very amusing to everyone but the victims of their jibes".

In 1880, staff, students and their families crowded into the library (**plate 14**):

The propriety of excluding the undergraduates from the hall altogether on the occasion of the annual commencement has more than once been seriously considered. This year, however, the professorial board hit upon a plan by which the youngsters were completely checkmated. Instead of penning them up together in one portion of the hall where they enjoyed comparative immunity while indulging in horse-play, they were thrown promiscuously amongst the company, and, as might have been expected, the presence of ladies and the fact that they necessarily became so segregated, had the desired effect. With little exception, the proceedings, of which our artist gives an illustration, may be said to have been most orderly.⁴³

The collaborators split

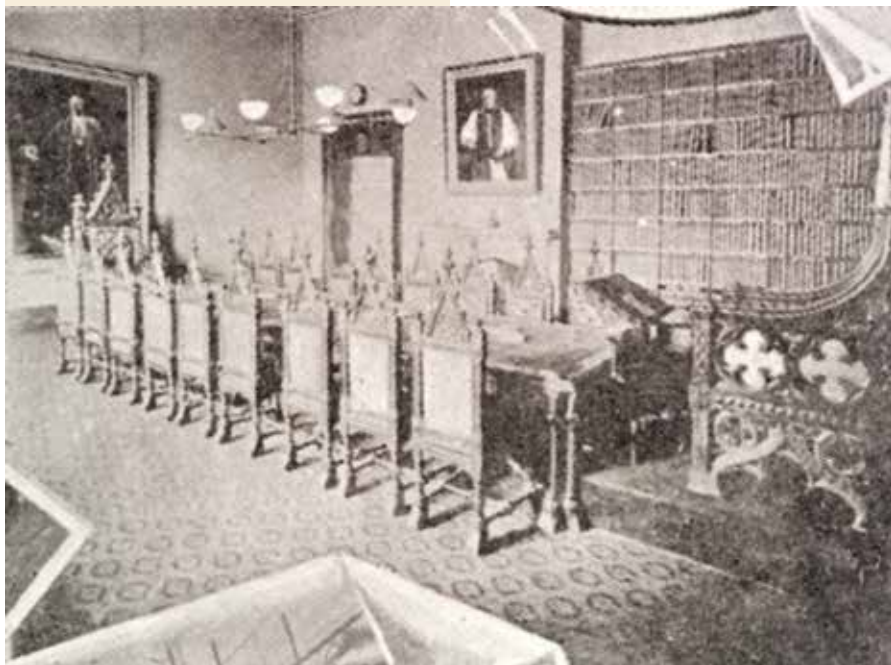
By 1865, the focus of Livingstone's endeavours was moving from wood carving to pattern making and the production of ornamental iron, zinc and brass works, including the use of these materials in furniture. Livingstone collaborated on casting ornamental ironwork with Joseph Laughton of the Vulcan Foundry in a Beckett Street; Livingstone designed the patterns which were cut by his workmen.

11.

Geo. Thwaites & Son, makers, Daniel Livingstone (attributed) carver, *The University of Melbourne Chancellor's chairs and foot stools* 1864-5. Oak, acanthus, oak leaf and acorn motifs, finials of oak leaves and a pediment containing a quatrefoil with a shield and large finial. Quatrefoils are incorporated beneath the seat on each of the four sides and also under the arms. Throne heights 220 & 210 cm. Collection: University of Melbourne

12.

Geo. Thwaites & Son, makers, *The University of Melbourne Council table*, 1864-65. Oak, inlaid with three sections of leather with gold embossed edging, 76 x 544 x 148 cm. The corner legs have carved and quilled columns surmounted by a classical capital. Collection: University of Melbourne



13.

The University of Melbourne Council Chamber c 1890 showing deployment of the council furniture. Image from a photo-montage in the commemoration supplement of *Alma Mater*, Nov 1897. Collection: University of Melbourne Archives UMA/1/7387

Iron palisades and such like form the bulk of the goods turned out, but a considerable quantity of ornaments are also made, which are adapted for cabinet work. All kinds of openwork, each as friezes, can be made better of iron than of wood, and the former material is also preferred as legs for hall tables, and many, other kinds of furniture. Cabinet makers, can therefore, now supply, themselves with articles required in their business, which were not previously obtainable in the colony.⁴⁴

A little later, Livingstone established the Nizam Foundry on his property on the corner of Swanston and Victoria Streets, presumably not only to cast iron products but also to cast zinc and bronze. No details have been found apart from advertisements in 1873 when his business was in financial difficulties and his “estate”, including the Nizam Foundry, was put up for sale to pay his debts.⁴⁵

Perhaps the more profitable side of his business was the ornamental cast iron work undertaken with Laughton that produced items such as the new ornate iron verandah in Swanston Street reported in 1868⁴⁶ and the iron gates and fences around the public library.⁴⁷ Livingstone’s last known major application of bronze was fitting out the new National Bank of Australasia headquarters in 1870, in conjunction with cabinet maker James McEwan.

While bronze work continued to be used to embellish office fittings and fixtures, its use on chairs appears to have been quite limited. Perhaps the target chairs with the bronze additions are unique survivors.

George Thwaites died in August 1865 and while Geo. Thwaites & Son were to continue to operate under his

son, Thomas Henry Thwaites, no later collaboration with Livingstone has been identified. Livingstone appears to have left Melbourne in 1873 but although his death notice indicates that he relocated to Sydney, he appears not to have undertaken further carving or casting activities under his own name. He died suddenly on 1 October 1885 at the Essendon home of Thomas Jennings, a former ironmonger.⁴⁸

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the guidance and mentoring of John Hawkins of J B Hawkins Antiques whose knowledge and private collection has formed the basis of much of the conjecture in the text about the hall chairs; to Helen Cadzow, curator of the heritage collection of the National Australia Bank for access to their collection of bank chairs; to Jason Benjamin of the University of Melbourne for access to Council furniture at the University of Melbourne and to Margot Jones of the State Library of Victoria for her support and encouragement.

To attribute is “to regard as belonging to or appropriate to” and the author is conscious that care must be taken in attributing the design or making of items. He accepts this responsibility though he is not infallible.



Robert La Nauze graduated from Melbourne University with a PhD in Chemical Engineering in 1972. His book,

Engineer to Marvellous Melbourne: the Life and Times of William Thwaites, published by Australian Scholarly Publishing, was short listed for the Victorian History Awards in 2012. He is currently writing a book on Geo. Thwaites & Son and may be contacted at rob@robsart.info.

14.

Samuel Calvert, *Annual Commencement Day at the University*, published in *The Illustrated Australian News*, 8 May 1880 p 65. The Thwaites-Livingstone chairs are shown in use in the University Library. Collection: State Library of Victoria SLV IAN08/05/80/65



NOTES

- 1 Henry Mayhew, in *The Unknown Mayhew: Selections from the Morning Chronicle 1849–1850*, eds. E P Thompson and E Yeo, London, Merlin Press 1971.
- 2 Sotheby's Australia 25 Oct 2010 lot 311.
- 3 A later example, involving even more specialist trades, is the Strasburg Clock model in the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney; see Andrew Montana, "Richard Batholomew Smith's Wunderkammer", *Australiana* vol 37 no 3 August 2015 pp 5–9.
- 4 *Argus* 29 Nov 1866 p 5; *Australasian* 1 Dec 1866 p 19.
- 5 *Ballarat Star*, 26 Feb 1869 p 4; *Leader* 27 Feb 1869 p 10.
- 6 The Terlecki brothers had a workshop in Lygon Street, Carlton. Felix carved and donated the cedar lectern eagle at St Jude's Church, Carlton; *Illustrated Australian News* 20 Jul 1867 p 4.
- 7 *Argus* 31 Aug 1864 p 4. *Star of Peace* arrived in Melbourne on 29 August.
- 8 *Argus* 17 Dec 1866 p 5.
- 9 *Argus* 14 Jan 1873 p 3.
- 10 John B Hawkins, 'Daniel Livingstone, I presume', *Regional Furniture*, 28, 2014 pp 142–157.
- 11 The design may have links to a hall chair in the pattern book of W. Smee & Sons, 1850. Several of the chairs are from branches of the Bank of Victoria c 1855, while a more ornate development of this design with carved and fluted front legs, fluted skirt and carving on the rear of the target back is known to have come from National Bank of Australasia head office that was fitted out by the Daniel Livingstone and James McEwan in 1870. See *Argus* 11 Aug 1870 p 6.
- 12 John B Hawkins *pers comm*. Sep 2015.
- 13 Geoffrey Blainey, *Gold and Paper*, Melbourne, Georgian House, 1958 p 3.
- 14 *Ibid* p 4.
- 15 *Ibid*.
- 16 *Illustrated Melbourne Post* 22 Aug 1863 p 8; R. McNicoll, *The Early Years of the Melbourne Club*, Melbourne, Hawthorn Press, 1976 pp 39f, 63f, 85–87; *Argus* 7 Dec 1860 p 8.
- 17 *Argus* 6 Aug 1862 p 6.
- 18 *Argus* 18 Jun 1861 p 5; *Age* 13 Jan 1863 p 5.
- 19 *Age* 13 Jan 1863 p 5.
- 20 *Australasian Decorator and Painter* 1 Mar 1909 p 136f.
- 21 *Age* 13 Jan 1863 p 5.
- 22 *Argus* 17 Dec 1866 p 5.
- 23 *Argus* 17 Sep 1864 p 8; 20 Sep 1864 p 8.
- 24 The three instances can be ascertained by detailed examination of the photograph of Livingstone's display at the 1866 Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition held by the State Library of Victoria, acc no. H4074 (**plate 6**).
- 25 Samuel Calvert, *Australasian Insurance Company Head Office*, etching, State Library of Victoria IMP25/11/64/13.
- 26 *Argus* 30 Jan 1866 p 5.
- 27 John B Hawkins, 'Daniel Livingstone, I presume', *Regional Furniture*, 28, 2014 p 156f.
- 28 John B Hawkins, *pers comm*, Sep 2015.
- 29 *Argus* 2 Oct 1861 p 5; *Bendigo Advertiser* 4 Nov 1861 p 3.
- 30 *Argus* 15 Jun 1861 p 8; 9 Aug 1861 p 7; 10 Aug 1861 p 7; 11 Nov 1861 p 5; 4 Dec 1861 p 4.
- 31 *Argus* 7 Nov 1861 p 4.
- 32 Anon, *Catalogue of the Victorian Exhibition 1861, with Prefatory Essays ... and Jurors' Awards*, Melbourne, Clarkson Shallard & Co, pp 266, 297.
- 33 *Illustrated Melbourne Post* Feb 1862 p 13.
- 34 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_world%27s_fairs accessed 26 February 2015; J. Sweet, "Beyond local significance: Victorian gold at the London international exhibition, 1862", in *Deeper leads: new approaches to Victorian goldfields history*, Ballarat Heritage Services, Ballarat Vic, pp 185–202.
- 35 Anon, *Popular Guide to the International Exhibition*, London, W H Smith & Son, 1862 p 116.
- 36 *Morning Post* 29 Oct 1862 p 2.
- 37 Henry Barkly, *Catalogue of the Victorian Exhibition, 1861*, with preparatory essays indicating the progress, resources and physical characteristics of the Colony, Melbourne, John Ferres, Government Printer, 1861 p 31f.
- 38 John B Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition 1862*, London, Day & Son, 1863, plate 292; Terence Lane, "Ernest Leviny" in *Gold and Civilisation*, Sydney & Canberra, Art Exhibitions Australia & National Museum of Australia, 2001 p 82f.
- 39 *University of Melbourne Building Committee minutes, meeting 191*, 24 Oct 1864, item 3. University of Melbourne Archives 1963.0045.
- 40 Robert D La Nauze, "Antiquity and Strength: George Thwaites and the University of Melbourne Council's Gothic revival furniture", *Collections*, issue 15, December 2014 p 6.
- 41 University of Melbourne Building Committee Minutes, meeting 194, 27 Mar 1865 item 3, University of Melbourne Archives.
- 42 *Argus* 20 May 1867 p 3.
- 43 *Illustrated Australian News* 8 May 1880 p 74.
- 44 *Age* 18 Jul 1865 p 6.
- 45 *Argus* 14 Jan 1873 p 3.
- 46 *Telegraph, St Kilda, Prahran and South Yarra Guardian* 12 Sep 1868 p 1.
- 47 *Argus* 13 Mar 1873 p 5.
- 48 *Age* 2 Oct 1885 p 1; *SMH* 5 Oct 1885 p 1.



1.

J J Cohen & Son, maker, John Black Carmichael (1803–1857), engraver, and unknown engraver, *presentation champion's boxing belt three-panel buckle*, Sydney 1847, with later 1886 inscription. Silver, formed, chased, repousséed, engraved.

Buckle 16 x 30 cm, weight 680.38 g. National Gallery of Australia 2014.1006, purchased 2014.

This belt was first presented on 23 June 1847 and inscribed "This belt is presented to Isaac Reid, a native of Nottingham, England, as a token of the approbation – in which he is held by numerous friends, who, on April 6, 1847, witnessed his manly conduct in the successful struggle with George Huff for the championship of New South Wales. Sydney, June, 1847." In 1886, the original inscription was erased, the buckle re-engraved and re-presented "This Belt is presented by L. Foley to Peter Jackson Champion Boxer of Australia 2nd October 1886."

The Champion's Belt of Isaac Reid, heavyweight prize-fighter

The National Gallery of Australia holds a three-piece silver buckle that originally formed the central element of a Champion's Boxing Belt presented to prize-fighter Isaac Reid in 1847 (**plate 1**). This remarkable belt was made by Sydney silversmiths J.J. Cohen & Son¹ and engraved by John Carmichael.^{2,3}

Until recently significant details relating to the origins and history of the belt had remained obscure. What words were engraved on the main plate when it was first presented? Was there a complete description of the original belt? What became of it after the champion's untimely death only months after his triumph? How did the belt come into the possession of boxer Larry Foley in 1886?

Writing in 1979, John Houstone, the well-known authority on early Australian silver, described the buckle as follows:

[The buckle] consists of a heavy octagonal main plate with a hinged smaller plate on each side, all three with applied cast borders decorated with roses, shamrocks and thistles. On the face of the main plate there is a skilful engraving of the standing figure of a prize-fighter crowned with a laurel wreath, and with the figure of Victory above holding a scroll reading 'Champion of New South Wales'. Behind the prize-fighter is the rope and posts of a prize ring and in the background a northerly view of Sydney Harbour showing the Heads and surrounding headlands from Chowder Bay, with the Macquarie Lighthouse and flagpole clearly visible on South Head.⁴

The beautiful and accurately rendered harbour scene locates the champion in

Sydney and is a clear reference to the bare-knuckle prize-fight between Isaac Reid, known as Big Ike, and George Huff,⁵ the Parramatta Lad, which was held on Tuesday 6 April 1847, on what is now Clifton Gardens beach.^{6,7}

Contemporary accounts describe the belt as elegantly embroidered, a “costly and unique specimen of colonial design and manufacture”.⁸ John Houstone considered that Carmichael’s figure of the prize-fighter is a portrait of Reid.⁹ The three silver plates comprising the buckle were set on a band of “dark-blue velvet edged with silver braid”, together with the word “CHAMPION in solid silver letters” forming the fastening at the back.^{10,11} Below the scene is inscribed “Drawn & Engd / by J. Carmichael.” ; originally it also bore this text:

This belt is presented to Isaac Reid, a native of Nottingham, England, as a token of the approbation – in which he is held by numerous friends, who, on April 6, 1847, witnessed his manly conduct in the successful struggle with George Huff for the championship of New South Wales. Sydney, June, 1847.¹²

Prize-fighting was illegal, contestants risked arrest, heavy fines and possible gaol. The time, date, and place (often changed at the last minute)¹³ of a bout was usually whispered about the town. Although lengthy reports were published after the event!

Sometime before the bout, Huff, the existing champion,¹⁴ and Reid¹⁵ signed an agreement to conduct a “fair stand-up fight”. Both were robust, muscular men, Reid standing six-foot (183 cm) and Huff six-foot 2½ inches (189 cm).¹⁶ Huff was the heavily backed favourite.

Thousands attended the bout. Such was the excitement and interest among Sydneysiders that the steamers departing the wharf¹⁷ were “densely crowded from stem to stern, and followed by numberless boats”.¹⁸

Shortly before 11 o’clock, Reid’s cabbage-tree castor came floating across the ropes. Huff’s quickly followed. The men entered the ring, crossed arms, and began the fight. The fierce, bruising contest lasted one hour and 28 minutes. At the 63rd round with Huff again on the sand,¹⁹ Reid’s seconds appealed to the referees who declared Big Ike the victor.

While the fight had taken place in April 1847, it took some weeks for the Champion’s Belt to be designed, manufactured and engraved. One of the editors of Bell’s Life presented the belt to Reid on 23 June at the tennis court in Sussex Street.²⁰ Five months later Reid, aged 29, died of bronchitis at Yass NSW on 1 December 1847;²¹ Bell’s Life commented that

The spirit of the lion, and the meekness of the lamb, were in Read [sic] happily blended, and seemingly, at his bidding, either could be promptly brought into play; no exhibition of cowardly ruffianism has ever sullied his renown.²²

Reid’s background

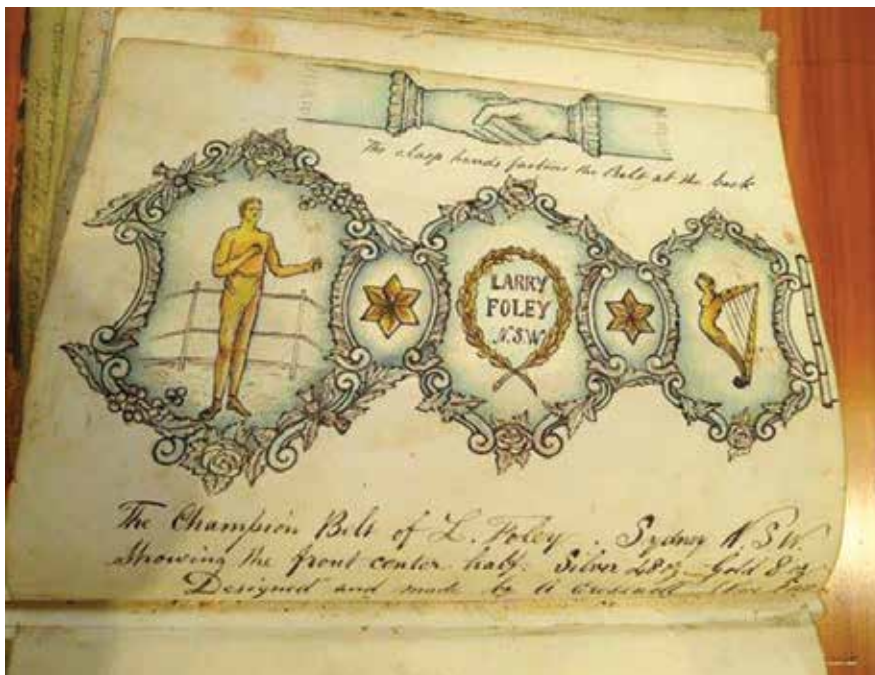
On 30 June 1834, Reid, a 17-year-old cloth dyer, had been convicted at Nottinghamshire Assizes for picking pockets and because of a previous six-month sentence he was given life. Reid arrived in Sydney by *Henry Porcher* on 2 January 1835 and immediately transferred to the hulk *Phoenix*,²³ moored in Sydney’s Lavender Bay. Reid had a ruddy complexion, fair hair and grey eyes and on his lower right arm a tattoo, incorporating the letters IR–AD above a woman’s head and arms.²⁴

In December 1835 in Sydney, Reid was convicted of robbery in company,²⁵ given a seven-year sentence and sent to Norfolk Island. By 1841, Reid, described as a boatman, had been moved to Patterson (near Newcastle) from where he was later sent to Sydney to step upon the treadmill.²⁶ Reid’s application to marry on 28 November 1843 was denied as he was “in the Government employ”.²⁷



2-3.

The back of the belt with the engraved inscription, probably by Carmichael, “J.J. Cohen & Son / Makers / Sydney.” National Gallery of Australia 2014.1006



4.

Alfred John Cresswell (England c 1838 – Australia 1917), design for boxing belt, “The Champion Belt of L. Foley, Sydney N.S.W. Showing the front center half. Silver 48 oz Gold 8 Oz. Designed and made by A Cresswell Price £100.” Watercolour, c 1879. This drawing is part of a portfolio of 114 designs. Photo courtesy Mossgreen Auctions, lot 145, sale 19 May 2015

Reid was part of Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell’s arduous fourth expedition that left Sydney in December 1845. The party explored as far west as the Barcoo River in NSW and as far north as Mount Douglas in Queensland, before returning to Sydney some 12 months later. Of the 28 men who accompanied Mitchell, 23 were convicts.²⁸ Reid’s inclusion in Mitchell’s

expedition as “sailor and chainman” allowed him to obtain his ticket of leave in January 1847.

The belt’s later history

After Reid’s death in 1847 the belt passed to Huff, and despite his defeat at the hands of John “Black” Perry²⁹ in 1849, it remained in his keeping.

There appears to have been no further heavyweight title fight until Larry Foley³⁰ defeated Abe Hicken in the last bare-knuckle fight in Australia in 1879, becoming the heavyweight champion of Australia. Foley was duly presented with an elaborate, heavy silver and gold belt, with three panels, one showing a boxer, the centre one with “Larry Foley N.S.W.” in gold letters within a wreath, and the third with a gold Irish harp, designed and made by Sydney silversmith Alfred Cresswell (plate 4).^{31,32,33}

In 1886 Foley purchased the complete and intact 1847 Champion’s Belt from Huff who was then in his late 60s, and described as an “old champion of the prize ring” suffering from failing eyesight but otherwise in excellent health.³⁴

Foley, an important and influential force in Australian boxing, displayed the newly acquired Champions’ Belt in his White Horse Hotel and Gymnasium in

George Street, alongside his own belt³⁵ where it was “quickly recognised by old Bill Sparke, Dave Ingram, and other lights of the P.R. [Prize Ring].”³⁶

During the 1880s, William F. Corbett,³⁷ an all-round champion athlete and one of the founders of the Sydney Gymnasium Club, became acquainted with a former seaman, Peter Jackson.³⁸ Corbett instigated Jackson’s training regime in preparation for his fight with Tom Lees in 1886. “Professor” Jackson, the Black Prince, won that bout. A week later Foley presented Jackson with the ‘recycled’³⁹ Champion’s Belt.⁴⁰

At first, Foley had offered a facsimile of his own belt; however, after he obtained the 1847 Champion’s Belt from Huff, he announced that it would be substituted.⁴¹ The original belt was disassembled, the solid silver letters spelling out the word “CHAMPION” removed, and the inscription celebrating Reid’s achievement 39 years earlier erased. The revised inscription reads:

*This Belt is presented by L. Foley to
Peter Jackson Champion Boxer of
Australia 2nd October 1886.*

Huff had retained the Champion’s Belt in its original form despite frequent hard times. Huff may not have parted with it had he realised Foley did not intend to retain the belt intact and on permanent display at the White Horse.

Subsequently, the reworked Champion’s Belt became one of Jackson’s most prized possessions. It always accompanied him as he travelled the world, to England, America, his birthplace St Croix in the West Indies and then back to Australia. Jackson died of tuberculosis in Roma, Queensland in 1901.⁴²

By 1910 the belt was reported to be in Bill Corbett’s possession.⁴³ Corbett had a long career as a renowned sports commentator, writing for the Sunday Times, Sun, The Referee and The Arrow, until his death in 1923.⁴⁴

The silver three-piece buckle of the Champion’s Belt’s made its next appearance at Christie’s, Melbourne in 1977 and now forms part of the Houstone Collection of early Australian silver⁴⁵ held by the National Gallery of Australia.

SOME 19TH-CENTURY BOXING BELTS MADE IN SYDNEY

DATE	RECIPIENT	MAKER	BELT TYPE	FATE
1846	William Sparkes ⁴⁴ Middleweight	Richard Lamb ⁴⁵	Presentation by admirers & supporters	Lost
1847	Isaac Reid Heavyweight	J.J. Cohen & Son	Champion of NSW*	NGA
1848	Patrick Sinclair ⁴⁶ Middleweight	J.J. Cohen & Son	Presentation by William Nash	Stolen late 1860s
1879	Laurence Foley Heavyweight	Alfred Creswell	Champion of Australia "Knuckle"	Lost. Creswell's drawing exists
1886	Peter Jackson Heavyweight	J.J. Cohen & Son	Champion of Australia* "Glove"	NGA
1890	George Dawson ⁴⁷ Lightweight	William Kerr ⁴⁸	Champion of Australia by The Referee ⁴⁹	Last seen 1922

*Same item altered and re-presented 1886.

NOTES

- John Joel Cohen born 1799 Manchester, England died 11 June 1853 Sydney NSW; his son Francis worked with his father from about 1839.
- Bell's Life in Sydney* 12 Jun 1847 p 3; 26 Jun 1847 p 2; *Bell's Life in Sydney* 26 Jun 1847 p 4.
- Isaac Reid/Read/Reed, born c 1818 UK died 1847 Yass NSW. The name inscribed on the buckle was Reid. Alias Big Ike/Port Phillip Pet/Melbourne Pet.
- John Houstone, "A Pugilistic Antique. Researching a rare piece of Australian silver", *Australasian Antique Collector* no 19 1979 pp 86-89.
- George Huff/Hough, currier/tanner, born 1818 Parramatta NSW died 1893 Penrith NSW. Both parents convicts, Joseph Huff (d 1841) *Gatton*, Mary Amelia Harlow (1787-1841) *Wanstead*. Huff married Anne Alderson 10 Nov 1843 at Parramatta. Huff's death certificate NSW BDM 12211/1893 incorrectly records his mother's name as Alderson. The name inscribed on the buckle was Huff.
- The Australian* 6 Apr 1847 p 3 (printed the day of the bout) reported that two steamers departed at 4:30am that morning. *The Australian* 8 Apr 1847 p 3 gives the location of the fight as "Manley (sic) Beach, near the Quarantine ground"; *Bell's Life in Sydney* 10 Apr 1847 p 2 gives the (correct) location as Middle Harbour.
- John Houstone's investigations conducted over many years, confirm the location of the bout was Clifton Gardens. There is a position on the headland above the beach where the view to the east is identical to the engraved scene. Houston's notes, files and photographs of the location and view to the east are held by the NGA.
- Bell's Life in Sydney* 12 Jun 1847 p 3; 26 Jun 1847 p 2.
- Houstone *op cit.* "being a convincing likeness to a sketch of him in *Bell's Life in Sydney* 10 April 1847", p 2.
- Evening News* 19 Jul 1886 p 3.
- Bob Petersen, *Gentleman Bruiser: A Life of the Boxer Peter Jackson*, 2005.
- Evening News* 19 Jul 1886 p 3.
- See note 49.
- Hough [sic] (Huff) had defeated Edward 'Ned' Chalker for the Championship of Australia on 19 February 1846 near Lane Cove, *Morning Chronicle* 21 Feb 1846 p 2.
- Referee* 11 Mar 1937 p 2.
- Maitland Mercury* 10 Apr 1847 p 3.
- Most likely Kellick's Wharf, Darling Harbour.
- Bell's Life in Sydney* 10 Apr 1847 p 2.
- Houstone *op cit.* "In these early days [of pugilism] a round was completed when a fighter was knocked down"
- Bell's Life*, 26 Jun 1847 p 2.
- Ancestry: Convict Indents, NSW Convict Death Register; *Bell's Life in Sydney* 12 Jun 1847 p 3; 26 Jun 1847 p 2; 10 Jul 1847 p 2; 11 Dec 1847 p 2.
- Bell's Life* 11 Dec 1847 p 2.
- Ancestry: NSW Australia Gaol Description & Entrance Books 1818-1930.
- Ancestry: Convict Indents, Gaol Description & Entrance Books.
- Australian* 22 Dec 1835 p 2; Ancestry: Sydney Courts: with Roger Noon (free), Adam Reilly (convict).
- Ancestry: Gaol Description & Entrance Books.
- Ancestry: Convict Application to Marry. Sarah Dillon came free *Augustine*.
- Maitland Mercury* 10 Apr 1847 p 3; William Foster, *Sir Thomas Livingston Mitchell and his world 1792-1855*.
- Armidale Express* 30 Mar 1867 p 2. John "Black" Perry, born c 1819 died 21 Mar 1867 Sydney NSW.
- Laurence (Larry) Foley, born 1849 near Bathurst NSW died 1917 Sydney NSW. *ADB* <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/foley-laurence-larry-3544> (accessed 19 May 2015); Kenneth Roberts, *Captain of the Push*, Lansdowne, Melbourne 1963.
- Houstone *op cit.*
- Creswell's preparatory drawing, which still exists, notes 48 oz silver and 8 oz gold. Mossgreen Auctions 19 May 2015 lot 145.
- Alfred John Creswell, born c 1838 UK died 1917 Sydney NSW. Arrived Sydney between 1871-1879.
- Nepean Times* 24 Jul 1886 p 2.
- Houstone *op cit*; *Evening News* 19 Jul 1886 p 3; *Nepean Times* 24 Jul 1886 p 2.
- William Sparke/Sparkes and Dave Ingram were well-known middleweight pugilists of Reid's time. The editor of *Bell's Life* had presented the middleweight Sparkes with his own belt, made by Richard Lamb, on 18 March 1846, described in *Bell's Life* 21 Mar 1846 p 2.
- William Francis Corbett, born 1857 Woolloomooloo NSW died 1923 Bondi NSW; *SMH* 30 Oct 1923 p 6.
- Peter Jackson, born 1861 St Croix, West Indies died 1901 Roma Qld. Jackson worked on ships from a young age and was said to be a cook/steward when he jumped ship in Sydney early 1880s; Petersen, *op cit.*
- Maitland Mercury* 17 Jul 1886 p 12S; Essays edited by Colleen Aycock, Mark Scott, *The First Black Boxing Championships: Essays on Fighters of the 1800s to the 1920s*.
- SMH* 30 Oct 1923 p 6.
- Evening News* 27 Sep 1886 p 3
- Petersen, *op cit.*
- Examiner* (Tas) 7 Jan 1910 p 2.

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of Australia <http://nga.gov.au/Home/Default.cfm>.

- 46 William Sparkes born 1818 Sydney NSW died 1889 Leichhardt NSW; *Hawkesbury Courier* 6 Feb 1845 p 2; *Bell's Life* 21 Mar 1846 p 2; *Braidwood Dispatch* 12 Feb 1889 p 3.
- 47 Richard Lamb born 9 Mar 1803 UK died 19 Jun 1875 Sydney NSW.
- 48 Patrick Sinclair born c 1811 Dublin, Ireland died 1876 Melbourne, Vic; *Bell's Life* 10 Jun 1848 p 2; *Cornwall Chronicle* 21 Oct 1848 p 108; *Evening News* 13 Jan 1871 p 2.
- 49 In a comedy of miscommunication, spectators and (sometimes) the protagonists, could become confused where the action was to take place. In April 1848 a match was arranged between middleweights, William "Fighting Bill" Sparkes and the Paddy Sinclair, the *Enfield General*. On Wednesday 19th, the steamers *Phoenix*, carrying Sinclair and his supporters, *Brothers* and *Fairy Queen* filled with spectators, set out from Sydney and in order to confuse the authorities headed first towards Lane Cove. The trio of steamers then turned and made for the Heads before reaching the intended destination of "big Manly Beach" about 10am. Sparkes and his supporters had arrived earlier but left having noticed inquisitive police about. The passengers were disembarking when "traps"

were sighted on the beach. Spectators scrambled aboard again and the little fleet cruised back down the harbour and loitered about Bradley's Head, as if engaged in nothing more than a harbour cruise. By 2 pm the steamers were again off Manly Beach. The crowd waded ashore and the ropes and stakes of the ring were fixed up. Sinclair waited until half past three but Sparkes did not appear. By and by a message came from Sparkes, he was ready to fight, and waiting – at Lane Cove. The pair eventually met the following month and by August J.J. Cohen had produced "a magnificent belt" for the winner Paddy Sinclair (see table). *Bell's Life* in Sydney 29 Apr 1848 p 1; 24 Jun 1848 p 2; 10 Jun 1848 p 2; *Hobarton Guardian* 19 Aug 1848 p3; *The Cornwall Chronicle* 21 Oct 1848 p 108.

50 George Dawson born 1867 Dark Corner, NSW died 1947 USA; *Referee* 13 Aug 1890 p 8; *Capricornian* 18 Mar 1922 pp 28, 29.

51 William Kerr born 1838 Ireland died 1896 Sydney NSW.

52 Illustrated *The Referee* 13 Aug 1890 p 1 & 8.



Karen Eaton has worked for a major merchant bank, import/export firms, a leading dairy co-operative and the NSW Department of Education. During the 1980s, together with her husband, she worked a beef cattle property. Since her retirement Karen has indulged her passion for colonial history, particularly in relation to Sydney. A keen photographer, mostly of Australian native flora, she lives on the NSW North Coast. Karen can be contacted at eaton.karen@icloud.com.

1.
Ernest Worrall's
khaki keepsake,
front, 29 x 21cm



Ernest Worrall and his Anglo-Boer War khaki keepsake

Dr Annette Gero's article "Wartime quilts" in the May 2015 *Australiana* stimulated Peter Lane to contact her about an Anglo-Boer War keepsake. Trooper Ernest Worrall of South Australia had drawn images and words on this rather small scrap of khaki fabric in 1902. Mementoes of that war are rare and Dr Gero included it in her exhibition at the Manly Art Gallery and Museum. Here Peter reconstructs the sad life of Trooper Worrall.

PETER LANE

Ernest Worrall (c 1877–1949) had an awful family background and a very humble life. He enlisted in the 2nd Battalion, Australian Commonwealth

Horse in January 1902 to fight in South Africa. He was there only a matter of months when hostilities ceased. Despite his limited education, he wrote down his feelings about being far from home. He penned those words on a remnant of his khaki shirt, and embellished this

fragment of cloth with drawings of symbols of the war. He later went on to serve in the First World War.

Worrall's life is difficult to pin down with any degree of accuracy as he and his family probably squatted or rented a single room for a large part of his life,

2.

Ernest Worrall's khaki keepsake, back.



as was the custom of the very poor. He stated in his enlistment documents that he was born in 1877 in the Melbourne suburb of Collingwood. These documents did not record his parents.

When Ernest was ten, Joseph Smith Worrall, a plasterer who was most likely his father, attempted to hang himself at Collingwood while under the influence of alcohol.¹ Joseph was remanded at the City Court for medical treatment, and was discharged on paying £2 costs.²

A few months later, at Riverton (100 km north of Adelaide) Ernest Worrall's mother, who by this time was known as Margaret Anderson, was found guilty of using indecent language.³ A little later, in December 1887 Ernest's step-father, Charles Anderson, was charged for threatening Margaret's life, and afterwards cutting his own throat. At that time Margaret had been married to him four years. On the day of the incident, he was drunk and threatened her in her greengrocery shop. Margaret added that Charles had "often ill-used me and I am in fear of my life when he is drunk". He was found guilty.⁴

In Riverton six months later, three youths, Worrall (Ernest or Joseph, his brother), Ware and Wilson stole 20 ounces of tobacco and stole a penny out of a box which they prized open. It was agreed that the parents should pay for the stolen goods.⁵

Ernest's brother Joseph was described in court in April 1894 as a person addicted to intoxicating liquors and was locked up for drunkenness. At his trial his mother accused him of often being drunk, that he was in danger of injuring

himself and that he disturbed the peace of his family.⁶

Seven months later Ernest's mother was killed in an accident at Winkler's Crossing near Riverton. She was crossing a railway line in a covered van at night and was hit by a goods train. A coroner's inquest found that no one was to blame for the accident.⁷

The Worrall brothers continued to be in trouble after her death. Two years after her demise Joseph and T. Flinn were charged with profane and indecent language and were fined.⁸

In January 1900 Ernest was in trouble with the law for having disobeyed an order of the Court to contribute towards the support of his child. He was sentenced to three months imprisonment.⁹ At the end of his time in prison he fronted up to court again to explain the matter and stated

He was out of work in consequence of his imprisonment, but was quite willing to do his best to comply with the order of the Court, and had actually promised to marry the mother of the child, but the girl had taken no notice of it.

Worrall promised to pay as soon as he obtained work.¹⁰

On 6 January 1902 Ernest Worrall, then about 25 years old, enlisted in Adelaide, and stated he was living at Riverton. He was a drover, single, a Roman Catholic, 5'6" tall with blue eyes and falsely claimed he had never been in gaol.¹¹ His unit was the 2nd Battalion, Australian Commonwealth Horse and Worrall held the rank of private (he referred to himself as a trooper on the khaki keepsake and on his tombstone).¹²

Worrall, like all other privates was given half pay up to the date of embarkation then full pay of five shillings a day. While in Adelaide the members of the 2nd Battalion were housed in the Machinery Hall of the Jubilee Exhibition Building on North Terrace.¹³

The Australian Commonwealth Horse (ACH) was the first expeditionary military unit established by the newly formed Commonwealth. The 2nd Battalion sailed on 20 February 1902 from Port Adelaide on the *Manchester Merchant* and on 14 March docked at Durban. It conducted patrols against the Boers during the last great drive that ultimately ended the war. The ACH suffered no fatal casualties in action, although 28 men died from illness. The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the ACH together with the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC) were formed into an Australian Brigade.

From Durban the Australians were sent north by train via Ladysmith, Elandslaagte and Dundee to Newcastle. By 22 March over 1,000 Australians moved into camp with another 1,000 New Zealanders in the vicinity of Mount Majuba. The brigade subsequently took part in the great Eastern Drive which aimed to encircle de Wet and Louis Botha in northern Natal, however severe weather allowed the Boers to escape. At any rate the ACH played only a secondary role in the drive, consigned mainly to holding the Drakensberg ranges. During late March and early April the ACH were deployed to outposts to block the mountain passes, while a large column drove the Boers towards a line of blockhouses. Apart from minor skirmishes with unseen Boer snipers the Australians saw little action. The Australians were subsequently sent to western Transvaal, joining Colonel Thornycroft's Field Force at Klerksdorp. The column – which was predominantly Australian and included the Third New South Wales Bushmen, Haslee's Scouts (an irregular unit composed of Australians), the AAMC, the Eighth New Zealand Brigade and Thornycroft's own regular mounted infantry – advanced as part of General Ian Hamilton's force numbering 20,000 men in the great Western Drive. The advance aimed to drive de la Rey back against a chain of blockhouses between Klerksdorp–Ventersdorp and proved to be the last of the war. The drive began on 19 April, but halted soon after, following news that peace negotiations were progressing. On 21 April the ACH moved out of camp and turned away from the blockhouse line towards the western railway, with orders to destroy crops and mealie fields and to push the Boers back towards the railway barrier. On 7 May the Australians again advanced, driving forward over four successive days across dry and

open country over a large front. Ultimately the drive succeeded with few incidents, significantly diminished the Boer supplies in the area, and leading to the capture of thousands of head of livestock, nearly 200 wagons and 7,000 rounds of ammunition. Although hundreds escaped, 367 Boers were captured after becoming trapped, although only one was killed. There were no Australian casualties. The continued success of the blockhouse system, coupled with the approaching winter and shortages of food and clothing forced the Boer leaders to re-open peace negotiations. As such with the war all but over the ACH set up camp along the Klerksdorp–Ventersdorp blockhouse line, and although they continued to send out patrols they had little to do but await the inevitable peace. Despite seeing limited combat, Australian conduct in the field was considered to have been of a high standard, both in terms of military efficiency and discipline. Indeed the ACH showed a level of professionalism perhaps unseen in previous Australian contingents. Negotiations continued, with the Boer leaders again meeting their British counterparts at Vereeniging, between Pretoria and Kroonstad. ...On 31 May the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed and the war came to an end...¹⁴

On 5 July the Battalion left Durban on the *Norfolk* and arrived back in Adelaide on 31 July 1902.

Worrall made his khaki keepsake sometime between 31 May 1902 and 5 July 1902, probably a period of boredom and homesickness. The ACH were the first Australian troops to wear the Rising Sun badge (this issue is dated 1902) and the now famous military symbol was incorporated in Worrall's khaki keepsake (**plate 1**). Other drawings on the khaki include a Union Jack with ER (Edward VII) in the centre, a bust of Paul Kruger, the leader of the Boers,



3.

Ernest Worrall's AIF headstone, West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide

being stabbed (he was not killed: he died of natural causes in 1904), a Lee-Enfield rifle with a fixed bayonet (commonly called a .303 due to its bore size in inches) and near it the words "Halt who comes there - oom Paul". Paul Kruger was often called "oom Paul" (Uncle Paul).

A heart with clasped hands of friendship and at its sides two wreaths framing letters 'BW' (probably Bridget Worrall, his wife) and 'EW', five lucky horse shoes, (although the gap is facing downwards for bad luck!) and within them a riding boot, a horse head, a riding crop with the words 'Good Luck', a horse bit, the head of a dog (?), and branches with leaves, not all coloured. Some threads have been pulled to frame the central design as well as around the outer edge.

Worrall's khaki poem within the central design

Souvenir 1902 British War
Commenced October 11th 1899
1900.1901.1902.

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*From one alone across the sea
Torn from my coat I send thee
A peice [sic] of old War Worn Khaki
With Luck and love from one alone
To you Friends in your Sweet Home*
From E Worrall on Service in last SA
Commonwealth Contingent S. Africa

The underside bears a drawing of Paul Kruger and “oom Paul” below (**plate 2**).

Worrall was not eligible for an Anglo-Boer War service decoration as he enlisted too late to receive the Queen Victoria medal, while Edward VII medals were given only if the recipient had been issued a Queen’s medal. Today this seems rather odd but that was the way the military issued medals then.

South Australian street directories record that in 1915 and 1916 an E Worrall described as a fitter was living in Exeter. It is not clear if this was our Ernest Worrall.

Worrall attempted to enlist in the First World War but was rejected as unfit. A few months after the first failed Australian conscription vote of October

1916, he re-applied and was accepted into the 9th Light Horse Regiment, 27th Reinforcement as a private. By this time he was 40 years old and married to Bridget Alice and they were living at 63 Carrington Street, Adelaide (incorrectly spelt on the enlistment form as Barrington Street).

His unit embarked from Sydney on board HMAT A15 *Port Sydney* on 9 May 1917.¹⁵ He disembarked at Suez in June and saw all his active service in the Middle East. Worrall spent time in a number of hospitals but was not wounded. Shortly after the armistice he returned to Adelaide on the *Margha* and was discharged on 28 February 1919. His army file reveals that he was suffering from neurasthenia, a form of shell shock where the patient experiences severe fatigue.

In 1939 Bridget died and was buried in West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide in an unmarked grave.¹⁶ Throughout the Second World War he was living at 12 Byron Place, Adelaide. Both this house and his First World War house have long since been demolished.

In November 1949 Ernest Worrall was found dead in the Adelaide parklands behind the City Baths, near the River Torrens and at the time he was reported as having no fixed abode.¹⁷ Worrall, aged 74, died of natural causes.¹⁸ He was given a military funeral and was interred in the AIF section of the West Terrace Cemetery.

NOTES

- 1 *Portland Guardian* 16 Mar 1887 p 2.
- 2 *Argus* 7 Apr 1887 p 9.
- 3 *Burra Record* 12 Jul 1887 p 3.
- 4 *Burra Record* 16 Dec 1887 p 2.
- 5 *SA Weekly Chronicle* 14 Jul 1888 p 23.
- 6 *Kapunda Herald* 24 April 1894 p 3.
- 7 *SA Register* 23 Nov 1894 p 7.
- 8 *Kapunda Herald* 6 Jun 1896 p 3.
- 9 *SA Register* 20 Jan 1900 p 11.
- 10 *SA Register* 20 Apr 1900 p 3.
- 11 <http://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/browse/records/135787>
- 12 AWM reference, Murray page number 381, service number 1060.
- 13 *Chronicle* 11 Jan 1902 p 37.
- 14 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Commonwealth_Horse
- 15 Australian National Archives, WWI Service records, Regiment number 3312.
- 16 *Advertiser* 12 Dec 1939 p 8.
- 17 *Mail* 26 Nov 1949 p 8.
- 18 *Advertiser* 28 Nov 1949 p 12.

German trench art from Victoria

Seldom do prisoner of war trench art objects indicate where they were made. One that does is carved from wood in the shape of continental Australia, with the words and date “Murchison den [the] 24.8.1941” together with a stylised Australian coat of arms.

PETER LANE

Murchison was Prisoner of War Camp 13, near Shepparton in Victoria. It was one of the four WWII POW camps around Tatura; three other camps nearby held civilians who were deemed, often wrongly, to have enemy sympathies.

Camp 13 held POWs from Field-Marshal Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps, Luftwaffe crews captured in North Africa, and the crew of the German raider HSK *Kormoran*, which had sunk the Australian cruiser HMAS *Sydney* off the Western Australian coast in 1941. The camp also held Italians and Japanese; the latter arrived there after the Cowra breakout. Officers were located at nearby *Dhurringile*, a 65-room mansion.

Camp 13 was octagonal in shape and one square mile in size, and while relatively comfortable and with sufficient food available, prisoners made numerous attempts to escape. To help counteract this, all internees in the camp had to wear burgundy-coloured clothing.

The first to arrive at the camp were some 4,000 Italian POWs who arrived in Australia on the *Queen Mary* in early 1941. The first Germans to arrive at the camp sailed from North Africa on the *Queen Elizabeth* and embarked at Sydney on 23 August 1941. The ship must have docked at Sydney early on that day and all or some of the POWs travelled overnight to reach the camp by the following day; a prudent security transfer of prisoners. The date on the trench art map is 24 August 1941,

indicating it was made by a German soldier of the Afrika Korps, who recorded the date of his arrival at Murchison.

Workshops

A shop was set up for woodworking and it had sharp tools and saws that were counted and stored every day. This is where the wooden map, along with other trench art objects, would have most likely been made. Other shops were set up for boot making, tailoring, laundering and haircutting. The POWs were paid either three pence an hour with a maximum of two shillings a day for skilled work or half that for unskilled work.

The trench art items were undoubtedly made unofficially and traded with other internees or guards for money, cigarettes or favours. The currency system was Australian but they used specially minted and printed POW coins and banknotes. The camp was set up to be self-sufficient, as much as possible. To earn extra income and help the war effort, internees were also engaged in cutting firewood for the camps and for use in the hospitals in Melbourne, as well as working on nearby farms.

Today at the Camp 13 site there is an HSK *Kormoran* Memorial and at the Tatura Cemetery is the official German War Cemetery for Australia. *Dhurringile* is now HM Prison Dhurringile.

Provenance

Maker unknown, and from the estate of camp guard Jim Jones; unfortunately Jones is a very common name and

as this man would have simply enlisted into the AIF and been sent to Murchison to be a guard, we are unable to identify him readily. Trove has large numbers of Jim Joneses but none could be identified as the Murchison guard. A Queensland dealer purchased the carving and placed it in his stall at Paddington Antique Market, Brisbane around 2012.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much of this article is based on Lurline and Arthur Knee's book *Marched in, seven internment and prisoner of war camps in the Tatura area during World War 2*, printed by Rodney Printers, Tatura, Victoria, c 1980s.



Peter Lane is an Adelaide collector, frequent contributor, and Honorary Numismatist at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.



1.

Unknown German prisoner of war, carved wooden Art Deco style map of continental Australia and within it a square with “Murchison den [the] 24/8/1941” in three lines, flanked by a kangaroo and emu. The carving while almost two dimensional has been made by a highly competent and artistic wood carver at Murchison POW Camp, Victoria, during WWII. The object stands upright, h 15 w 13 cm. Private collection

Book review



REVIEW BY JOHN WADE

Sasha Grishin, *S.T. Gill and his audiences*, National Library of Australia/State Library of Victoria, Canberra 2015. Hard cover, 256 pages, colour and b&w photographs, 250 x 220 mm. ISBN: 978-0-642-27873-9, \$39.99

Samuel Thomas Gill died melodramatically, aged 62, on the steps on the Melbourne Post Office at half past four on Wednesday 27 October 1880. A policeman recorded that he “was in a most filthy state and covered with vermin” while a search of the pockets found pills which identified him. An autopsy revealed that he had died of heart disease, and noted that he “was in the habit of drinking to excess”. No-one wrote an obituary.

Professor Grishin believes that “STG” was neglected partly because of his perceived alcoholism, and here aims to rehabilitate the reputation of the artist whose output exceeds 2,700 recorded items.

In watercolours and lithographs, STG recorded life in the city and the bush: the grand buildings of “marvellous Melbourne” and the copper mines of

South Australia, the gold miners washing gold, the policeman inspecting licences. He drew the clothing they wore, the tools they used, the decimated forests they chopped down. Men, women and children toil, or enjoy entertainments. A lucky find meant a few struck it rich, and they parade their new wealth on the streets of cities.

Some of his earlier works are aimed at an audience in Britain eager to see the turbulent reality of life in Australia. He carefully depicts his characters with an eye to detail, likewise for the setting. Humour bursts through, whether through an exaggerated gesture or carefully observed details. Animals frequently appear in the foreground, not as decorative items but often as commentators, as in a Greek chorus.

Gill knew that his audiences (buyers) did not care that his work was not shown by galleries nor lauded by critics, nor did he paint portraits for his bread and butter. He drew or painted what he saw around him, producing modest art that could be hung in the cottages and huts which were often adorned with engravings from the illustrated newspapers. His caricatures might have been uncomfortable for the toffs, but would have struck a chord with the ordinary folk who would respond to, for instance, “The Man who Grumbles & pays” – a florid, grossly fat and pretentious John Bull figure flanked by his look-alike bulldog, and whose shadow ominously falls across the thin, forlorn, ragged man who turns to peek at him, outside a “Soup House”.

Grishin observes that three late works from the year Gill died are among his best. “Doing the Block. Gt Collins St” (cover) shows the fine citizens of Melbourne parading in the afternoon, mostly in couples, past an expensive music shop, while two dogs do the canine version of the parade – and sniff each other. These are proof that, while STG may have been sick, he had not lost his skill.

The vibrant illustrations, spanning 40 years of work, are many times shown

both full-frame and in a detail so you can better appreciate them. Grishin’s text complements the images: lively, erudite, informative, well researched, enjoyable to read and immensely revealing about life in colonial Australia.



John Wade has worked as a university lecturer, museum curator, auction cataloguer, magazine editor, hotel owner and grazier. He has served the Australiana Society as editor of *Australiana*

1978–88 and 1998–2016, and as president 1999–2008.



REVIEW BY EVA CZERNIS-RYL

Christine Erratt, *Hendrik Forster Silversmith Designer Maker*, Forster Studios, Calulu Vic 2014. Softcover, 112 pages, 76 colour and 86 b&w photographs, artist’s resumé, marks. ISBN: 978-0646-92599-8. Available from parkerpressbooks.com.au \$35.

During the second decade of the new millennium, many pioneers of the crafts

movement in Australia, which began to flourish in the 1970s, will celebrate four decades of working in studio practices with their chosen materials. Anniversaries, as the movement's historian Dr Grace Cochrane notes in her introduction to this book, are opportunities to pause and reflect, and there is no better way of recording these unique artistic journeys and the extraordinary creativity of the era than in well researched and well written publications.

Many of Australia's craftspeople who established their careers in the 1970s were highly skilled designer-makers who migrated from Europe seeking new opportunities and a new start in a different cultural environment. Moving from Germany in 1974, Munich-born silversmith Hendrik Forster was already well acquainted with Australia, where he had stayed as a young craft teacher in the late 1960s, in Perth and Melbourne.

In Australia he found his vocation and decided to pursue a career in metalsmithing. Four years later, equipped with his new diploma from the Academy for Fine Arts in Munich (Akademie der Bildenden Künste München), and his freshly minted title of an apprentice from Munich's Guild of Goldsmithing and Silversmithing, Forster settled at Belgrave in the Dandenong Ranges south-east of Melbourne. Here in his small workshop in a bush setting, he began to put into practice his skills, design principles and work ethics acquired under his two eminent Academy professors, Franz Rickert and Hermann Jünger.

Hendrik Forster's silverware attests that the philosophy of the Bauhaus, Germany's influential art and design school, and its "form follows function" credo championed by Rickert, have consistently – although not religiously – informed Forster's approach to designing and making silver articles, as well as his later sculptures, ever since. Forster, like Rickert, creates precise paper models rather than drawings to test his designs and to ensure that the form is reduced

to its very essence. He achieves this by taking away each of the paper elements that are not essential for the form to survive and make the intended impact.

Before the results of this meticulous design process were shown in Forster's first solo exhibition at the end of 1974, and in many other shows – group and solo – that followed, we learn of an interesting early distraction from his minimalist course. It may be news to even the most ardent followers of Forster that he worked briefly with Matcham Skipper (1921–2011), that notoriously bohemian sculptor and jeweller from the Montsalvat artists' colony at Eltham north-east of Melbourne. Forster helped Skipper make jewellery for an exhibition and their Rodin-inspired cast-silver bracelet is now in the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney.

Following collaboration with the figuratively inclined Matcham, Hendrik travelled with the Arts Train, a project of the Victorian Council of Adult Education, to teach arts and crafts to communities across Victoria. This prolonged exposure to rural Victoria resulted in some figurative jewellery designs of his own such as those shown in his *Australian Bird Brooches* exhibition in 1979, with some delightful renditions of the sulphur-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*). While this was only a brief departure from his continuing passion for purely functionalist design, from then on his silver hollowware – covered tea and coffee pots and ginger jars – began incorporating handles and knobs fashioned from Australian timbers, particularly red gum and jarrah.

The 1980s were prolific, intense and creative with many exhibitions, museum acquisitions and commissions, many enabled through the unprecedented support from the Crafts Board of the Australia Council set up in 1973. Among the most prestigious commissions were the Royal Wedding gift of 20 octagonal silver underplates for Prince Charles and Lady

Diana Spencer in 1981, and the silver tableware for the new Parliament House in Canberra in 1987. These were interspersed with significant acquisitions by state galleries and museums.

Whether taking us on a journey detailing Forster's life and work in the 1980s or in the decades since (and some exquisite surprises await you there), Christine Erratt does a sterling job in keeping us both informed and interested. The Forster story she reconstructs reflects not only her impressive research but also her admiration for Forster's working philosophy and masterly skills as a craftsman. It demonstrates her deep interest in Forster as a gifted German migrant turned into an influential teacher and one of Australia's most accomplished goldsmiths and silversmiths of his generation.

From the beginning, Erratt establishes herself as Forster's chronicler rather than a design critic or historian assessing his significance in the history of contemporary arts and design. Having collected all the required evidence – much of it through countless interviews with friends, collaborators and former students – and a fine selection of high quality colour photographs of objects, step by step Erratt documents Forster's creative life, thoughts and reflections. She leaves the reader to form an opinion.

This book is not unlike a story related to friends gathered around the fireplace on a cold winter evening; it is warm and personal and we nod in agreement when we hear that the approach required to enjoy some of the more arduous processes of silversmithing requires "the right kind of Zen".



Eva Czernis-Ryl is a frequent contributor to *Australiana* and a curator at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney, where she organised the current award-winning exhibition *A Fine Possession jewellery and identity*.

Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award winners

At the Australiana Society's Annual General Meeting on 2 September 1999, the President announced "An innovation this year has been the Australiana Writing Awards sponsored by Peter R Walker Pty Ltd Dealers in Fine Art for the best article submitted to *Australiana* for publication this year and next." (*Australiana*, Nov 1999, p.107).

Peter Walker Fine Art in Adelaide continues to sponsor the awards, which are encouragement and recognition for our valued authors. Michael Lech compiled this list of winners.

YEAR	AUTHOR	ARTICLE	JOURNAL ISSUE	JUDGE
1999	John Hawkins	A royal visitor: the Duke of Edinburgh K.G. [three parts]	May, Aug & Nov 1999	Kevin Fahy & John Wade
2000	John Hawkins	Julius Hogarth: behind the shopfront. Part 1: the first bankruptcy 1861 & Julius Hogarth: behind the shopfront. Part 2: the second and third bankruptcies	May & Aug 2000	Kevin Fahy
2001	R.A. Fredman	Dates and doubts. A review of current Australian nineteenth century furniture dating	Feb 2001	Kevin Fahy
2002	Robyn Lake & Therese Mulford	A stranger to the town: the life of colonial painter Frederick Strange	Aug 2002	Kevin Fahy AM
2003	Robyn Lake	George Peck purveyor of the fine arts	Nov 2003	Kevin Fahy AM
2003*	Andrew Morris	Charles Henry Theodore Costantini; convict, surgeon, artist & ... forger?	Aug 2003	Kevin Fahy AM
2004	Robert M Warneke	A scrimshaw box in the Clyde Bank Collection and its conjectural Australian significance	May 2004	Kevin Fahy AM
2004*	John Edwards	Edward Baker Boulton (1812-1895): a watercolorist rediscovered	Aug 2004	Kevin Fahy AM
2005	Ruth Dwyer	The pledge of her affection	Nov 2005	Kevin Fahy AM
2006	Roslyn Maguire	Angelo Tornaghi's tiles	Nov 2006	Australiana Society committee
2007-09		No award		
2010	Robyn Lake	Bound for Van Diemen's Land: Scottish cabinet maker Alexander Watson and the tools of his trade	Feb 2010	Elizabeth Ellis OAM
2011	Dr Dorothy Erickson	William Howitt: woodcarver of distinction	Nov 2011	Elizabeth Ellis OAM
2012	Christine Erratt	Ceremonial maces of Australian universities [2 parts]	Feb & May 2012	Elizabeth Ellis OAM
2013**	Joy Hughes	George III's gifts to the Governors of New South Wales	May 2013	Elizabeth Ellis OAM
2013**	Dr Rosemary Annable	Upholding king and church	May 2013	Elizabeth Ellis OAM
2014	Dr James Bertouch	Taking tea in the colonies	Aug 2014	Elizabeth Ellis OAM

*In 2003 and 2004, an "encouragement award" was given as well as the major award. ** Joint winners.



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Shepherd's Bush Market, Saturday Morning, 1936
Pen, ink and watercolour
Signed lower left and lower right
35.7 x 45.4 cm

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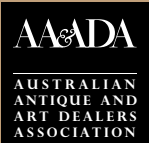
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William Lodewyk Crowther (1817–1885) was a surgeon, naturalist, parliamentarian and Premier. For many years as a minor he trapped birds and animals, taking 493 Tasmanian bird skins and two Tasmanian devils to England, then selling his collection to Lord Derby to pay his fees as a student at Sir Thomas's Hospital London. His right to practice at the Hobart General Hospital was suspended in March 1869 for his illicitly removing the head of the last surviving full-blood Aboriginal man, William Lanney. It is believed that he sent the head to the Royal College of Surgeons in London.



Crowther made a great deal of money out of whaling; his ships *Offley*, *Isabella*, *Sapphire*, *Velocity* and *Elizabeth Jane* widely fished the Southern Ocean. In the same year as the Lanney saga he sent a full-size skeleton of a sperm whale to the Royal College of Surgeons who awarded him their gold medal and later elected him an honorary fellow. The whale skeleton was subsequently hung from the ceiling of their main exhibition gallery, but destroyed in the Second World War when the building was bombed.



These teeth provide a most interesting historical link with this a most interesting Tasmanian.