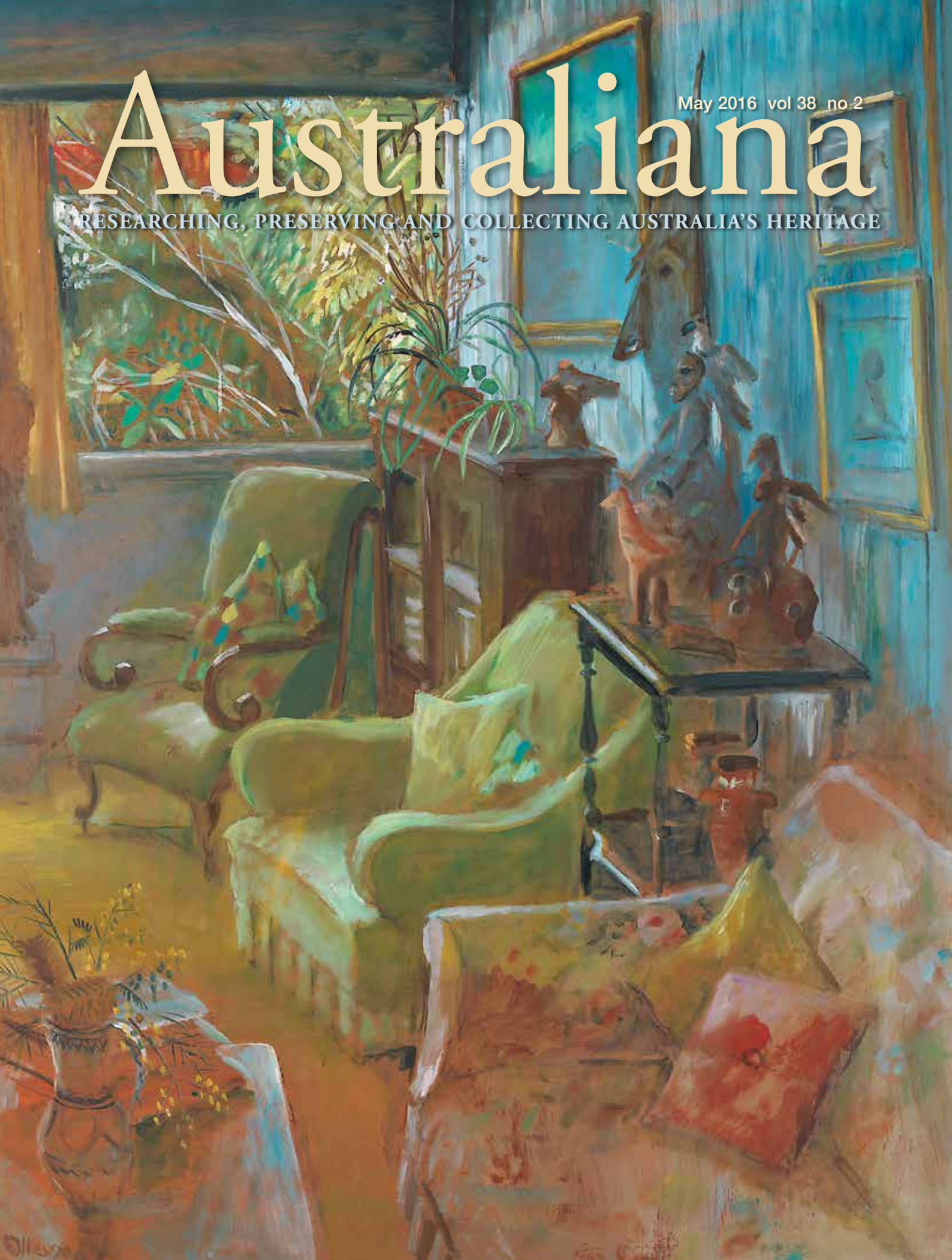


May 2016 vol 38 no 2

Australiana

RESEARCHING, PRESERVING AND COLLECTING AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE





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This important Australian cedar bracket foot chest of drawers was made in Sydney, in the style of an English chest of the 1760-80 period, and is the only known Australian example with these features. It has been made from re-purposed timber which suggests it may have been created by a cabinetmaker working in the Lumber Yard, with access to such timber, and made during off duty hours. It survives with its original brass plate handles and escutcheons, c. 1800.

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COVER

Margaret Olley (1923–2011), *Interior IV* 1970. Oil on composition board, 121.5 x 91.5 cm.
Collection: Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, gift of the Margaret Olley Art Trust through the
Queensland Art Gallery Foundation 2002

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The Olley Project and the problems of identification

The much-loved artist Margaret Olley is commemorated in the Tweed Regional Art Gallery at Murwillumbah, which established the Margaret Olley Art Centre and displays some of her paintings and her re-created studio. Glenn Cooke is adding his personal tribute to Olley, in the form of an illustrated database of Olley's art.

GLENN R. COOKE

The Margaret Olley Art Trust is sponsoring an illustrated database of Olley's oeuvre to establish a visual record of her career and works. It is based on the list of works exhibited during her lifetime which Glenn Cooke supplied, expanded with images of her paintings from her archives and from those of her agent, Philip Bacon Galleries. Works in public collections, auctions and dealer galleries are being added from the web.

The database includes about 1,500 images and 3,000 records, out of her

estimated total output of about 5,000 paintings. Images include scans from catalogues, photographs and colour transparencies of varying quality so the presentation, clarity and colour balance of the images may be quite discrepant: that is not an issue as the primary aim of the exercise is identification, not reproduction.

Margaret Hannah Olley AC (1923–2011) is remembered as a well respected, and in her later years venerated, member of the Australian art community. Margaret was born in Lismore NSW on 24 June 1923 and began her connection with Queensland when the young Margaret and her family moved to a cane farm at Tully. In 1937 she was sent as a boarder to Somerville House which was (and is) recognised as one of the best girls' schools in Brisbane.

There, art mistress Caroline Barker recognised her talent. Margaret won several art prizes at the school, and Barker persuaded her parents to send her to art

school. She enrolled at Brisbane's Central Technical College in 1941 but was dissatisfied with the tuition and, again on Barker's advice, transferred to East Sydney Technical College in 1943. Olley graduated with first class honours in 1945.

During this period she permeated the Sydney art scene and established lifelong friendships including fellow Brisbane artist Margaret Cilento, Donald Friend, David Strachan and Anne Wienholt. Margaret was runner-up for the NSW Travelling Art Scholarship in 1948, but Anne Wienholt (who had received the scholarship herself in 1944 and came from a pastoral family) sent her the money to travel abroad. She departed Australia for Europe in 1949, studied in Paris at the Académie de la Grand Chaumière, and toured extensively 1950–51.

Her French works were first exhibited at Moreton Galleries in Brisbane 4–8 July 1950, the first of an extensive series

1.

Washstand with wildflowers I 1990

2.

Washstand with wildflowers II 1990





of solo exhibitions in her home town. Olley returned to live in Brisbane after the death of her father in 1953. She conducted an antique shop in 1959 and, on recovering from alcoholism, began a period of intense creativity.

The years 1962–65 were productive. Olley was awarded nine prizes for her painting and achieved her peak public recognition. Her 1962 solo exhibition at the Johnstone Gallery sold to a value of £3,000, doubling the previous record for a female artist and receiving nationwide publicity. Consequently she was able to buy a house in Paddington NSW near David Strachan's residence, and later another in Duxford Street. She attended the opening of her exhibition at the Von Bertouch Gallery, Newcastle in 1964 and was delighted with the city; she described herself as "living in a basket" between it, Brisbane and Sydney during the 1970s.

Brisbane ceased to be a centre of her activities after November 1980, when fire destroyed the family home *Farndon*, Hill End, together with Olley's early paintings and memorabilia. She moved permanently to Sydney but continued her association with Brisbane by exhibiting with the Philip Bacon Galleries, which has represented her work since 1975.

Olley single-handedly revived the tradition of still life and interior paintings through the second half of the 20th century. Despite this role and the significance of Brisbane as the place

where she established her national profile, Olley never received the recognition of a survey exhibition at the Queensland Art Gallery. She was the focus of two exhibitions generated in Sydney and which came to Brisbane, one curated by the S H Ervin Gallery in 1990 and another from the Art Gallery of NSW in 1997 both of which were shown not at the Queensland Art Gallery but at the Brisbane City Art Gallery and Museum.

The Olley project

From that time I determined that I would start gathering information and documentation on Olley's oeuvre, as my own personal acknowledgement of her significance to Queensland.

From the start the task had its difficulties. It was no simple job to locate exhibition catalogues, even for an artist as prominent as Olley. Two catalogues were particularly elusive: that for Anna Simons Gallery, Canberra in 1976 was eventually located by Steven Miller, Head of the Archive and Research Library, AGNSW in a box of uncatalogued material, and that at the Holdsworth Gallery, Sydney in 1978 was found in the John Cooper collection at the Fryer Library, University of Queensland.

Two exhibitions remain undocumented, her exhibition of monotypes at the Librarie Paul Morihien, Paris in 1952 and the "New Guinea paintings", shown at the

3.

Cornflowers and pomegranates 1990

4.

Evening cornflowers 1990
(image cropped right)

home of her cousin Geoff Elworthy, in Port Moresby in 1970. Catalogues may not have been produced.

Matching works with their original exhibition history is an issue. Olley's early works, especially those on paper, are rarely a problem as they are mostly inscribed with their title, date and her signature. Her early oils were not inscribed but they were signed and dated, so they are a relatively easy to identify from exhibition catalogues, even though dimensions were never given until 1970.

Later, in common with many artists, she ceased dating her work so she could present older, unsold works in current exhibitions. This makes attributing a work to an exhibition particularly difficult, as photographs or transparencies are largely unidentified. Guesses (hopefully intelligent) have had to be made. I made the assumption that paintings exhibited at the end of a year were painted in that year whereas those shown early in a year were probably painted in the previous year. Of course, many of her surviving paintings were not exhibited at all.



Titles are especially problematic as they may have been mis-remembered, while dealers and auctioneers have added their own variations. Olley rarely used titles as specific as *Catherine Hill wildflowers*; over decades she used bland titles such as *Still life, evening*. Olley used the same subject or setting on many occasions and many of her titles are simply of one or other of the fruit or flowers depicted in her compositions.

While *Mandarins* or *Ranunculus* may be a distinctive title in a particular

exhibition, its repetition over decades causes problems. Olley's usual formula was to identify first the flower (sometimes the flower can be a minor element) and then another object depicted in the painting (usually fruit). Olley frequently painted in series, as her titles *Marigolds and limes I* and *Marigolds and limes II* indicate. Sometimes not!

Olley's October 1990 exhibition at the Australian Galleries, Collingwood included *Washstand with wildflowers* with dimensions 68 x 92 cm (cat. 16). At her exhibition at the Australian Galleries, Paddington, a year later, cat. 20 was also titled *Washstand with wildflowers* with almost identical dimensions 69 x 91 cm (**plates 1–2**).

Apart from the background shading, the principal difference is the apple placed on the cloth. So which is which? Luckily a transparency was obtained which shows **plate 2** was that

exhibited in 1991 but probably painted a year earlier. Such visual confirmation is the exception. To distinguish them more readily the former is identified as *Washstand with wildflowers I* and the latter as *Washstand with wildflowers II*.

The 1991 exhibition reveals another difficulty, when very similar paintings are given different names (**plates 3–4**). Even someone as familiar with Olley's work as Barry Pearce, author of two books on Olley, doesn't get it right at times. *Cornflowers and pomegranates* 1991 (**plate 4**) is reproduced in colour over a two-page spread in Barry Pearce's 2012 publication for the Beagle Press (pp 152–3). The image does contain cornflowers and pomegranates, but a complete visual record of this exhibition from the Australian Galleries reveals that it is actually cat. 19, *Evening cornflowers*. The dimensions are identical (69 x 91 cm) and the images almost so, except that the green chest on which the arrangement sits is given greater prominence in the latter. Confirmation like this is rare, as colour transparencies were usually made for only the key works in an exhibition. The colour discrepancy is obvious as the images are from different sources.

Evening cornflowers brings forward the point that Olley painted many of her still lifes and interiors under different



5.
Yellow room with screen, day I 1998

6.
Yellow room with screen, day II 1998

7.
Spider lilies 1962

light conditions, such as morning or night, which can be very difficult to differentiate. This is especially true in regard to the paintings created in David Strachan's house in the 1970s, and the paintings of the Yellow Room in her own house in Duxford Street. Nearly 70 records in the database relate to the Yellow Room. The identification of some of the records is secure as the works were reproduced in exhibition catalogues.

These paintings can be differentiated into four distinct groups:

1. those where the composition focuses on the pink vase on the wine table in front of the screen
2. those where a group of white ceramics is placed on a rectangular table in front of the screen
3. those where a chest of drawers is placed in front of the fireplace
4. later works which include a blue armchair in the composition.

I think that *Yellow room with screen, day I* (plate 5) is correctly identified but the other painting is of a similar square format and contains identical elements, save that Olley's point of view has shifted to the left (plate 6). I am unsure which one of the possible variations it may be, so in the meantime I have identified it as *Yellow room with screen, day II* and hope that the owner of the painting will be able to clarify its original title. Some of the images in the database are correctly matched with their records but many records and images are open to doubt.

Confusion with titles is compounded by dealers, auction houses and indeed Olley herself when it comes to identifying flowers. The painting from 1962 (plate 7) depicts an arrangement of spider lilies (*Hymenocallis littoralis*) with acalypha and Virginia creeper leaves, all of which are common garden plants in Brisbane. The 1964 painting (plate 8) was wrongly identified as spider lilies when Sotheby's auctioned it in 1996; it is a branch of white bauhinia (*Bauhinia aculeate*), an equally common tree in Brisbane gardens. On her walks around her home in Hill End, Olley used to pick flowers and leaves which became the subjects of her paintings. When she moved to Sydney, the bunches of single flowers she pictured were usually supplied by florists.

Goodman's Sydney titled a still life painting as "*Green and gold*" (plate 9) when auctioned in 1997 (lot 123), but Olley never named her works after colour combinations. Eva Breuer Art Dealer, Sydney, later sold it under this title. When I came across the title *Crotolaria* in Olley's exhibition at the Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney in 1982, I wasn't familiar with the plant and so made a search, to discover that these were the yellow pea-like flowers depicted. A painting titled *Crotolaria* was included in an exhibition with the Philip Bacon Galleries seven years later but the dimensions were a little different.

Lot 24 in Deutscher and Hackett's Sydney auction on 29 November



8.
White Bauhinia 1964

9.
Crotolaria 1982

10.
Marigolds and limes II 1975





11.

Pink lupins 1991

12.

(Red ranunculus with Chardin calendar), image reversed

2007 shows how it is possible to work through the painting to clarify/correct the title (**plate 10**). Savill Gallery, Sydney subsequently included it in “Modern Australian Paintings”, 20 May–21 June 2008 (cat. 31) with the descriptive title *Still life with flowers in a blue and white jug* c 1975; its details were given as oil on board, 75 x 100 cm, signed lower right Olley and the provenance as private collection, Brisbane from c 1975 then by descent.

Olley used “still life” throughout her career, and it appears some 150 times in the total list of her exhibited work. However as we noted, Olley usually maintained a convention of giving the dominant title role to the flowers depicted (even if they were a minor element in the composition) then adding the identity of the fruit or other object thus: [*Flower with/ and fruit/object*].

As the provenance stated private collection, Brisbane c. 1975, it was probably acquired from the Philip Bacon Galleries. In fact, 1975 was his first exhibition of Olley’s works. Luckily dealers mostly have been consistent with including dimensions of works in their catalogues after 1970. The dimensions 75 x 100 cm

translate to the imperial measurements 29½ x 39½”, so similar-sized works in this exhibition are:

10. Marigolds and limes II
30” x 40” \$850
11. Artichokes
30” x 40” \$850
12. Black kettle and fennel
30” x 40” \$850
13. Wild flowers and strawberries
30” x 40” \$850
14. Bananas
30” x 40” \$850

The only likely candidate is cat. 10 *Marigolds and limes II*. But is *Still life with flowers in a blue and white jug* the same work, as the pink flesh of the fruit in the bowl identifies them not as limes but as guavas? Well yes! It is an understandable mistake if one had to describe the painting from a black and white photograph, which was the standard at the time. A better title for Olley would be *Marigolds and guavas II*. How similar do you think Cat 9 in the same exhibition *Marigolds and limes I* 30x48” \$900 will be?

More than 60 exhibited works have marigolds in the title. However, Olley painted two distinct varieties of marigolds: the large-flowered African marigolds *Tagetes erecta* and the small-flowered French marigolds *Tagetes patula* – although both species are actually native to Mexico and Central America. The so-called African marigolds are the most familiar in gardens and with the public, so I decided to identify them simply as “marigolds” and use “French

marigolds” for those with small flowers. So the final title more specifically becomes *French marigolds and guavas II*; to avoid any further confusion and to indicate that it is an adjusted title, it is shown in brackets thus: (*French marigolds and guavas II*). Searching the database under the exhibited title “*Marigolds and limes II*” or under the auction title “*Still life with flowers in a blue and white jug*” will still find it.

Here are two images of still lives, which each contain a calendar depicting Jean Chardin’s *The house of cards* (1737) from Washington’s National Gallery of Art (**plates 11-12**). That on the left entitled *Pink lupins* was shown at the Australian Galleries, Paddington NSW in 1991, but probably executed earlier. You can just make out Olley’s signature on the bottom left of *Pink lupins*, which suggests that the image of the other painting has been flipped in the scanning. The latter painting does not appear to be listed in Olley’s exhibited works, so I have identified it following the Olley formula (*Flower with/ and fruit/object*) by titling it (*Red ranunculus with Chardin calendar*) until the original title comes to light.

Olley was nothing if not consistent in her titles. In Olley’s 1979 exhibition at the Philip Bacon Galleries, the painting on the left (**plate 13**) was listed as:

27. Cherry thief \$750

As Olley submitted unsold works to a subsequent exhibition five months later at Canberra’s Solander Gallery exhibition, we have:



15. Cherry thief
21 x 33" \$750

The price suggests that it is the same work. At Olley's exhibition at the Holdsworth Galleries Sydney in October 1980 was another work:

24. Cherry thief \$950

The \$200 price differential suggests that it is a different work (plate 14), so the paintings have been distinguished as *Cherry thief I* and *Cherry thief II*.

The painting (plate 15) is dated to the period 1979–1980 as it includes the vintage glass bottles that appear in other paintings of that time. But is it the work that was shown in the Holdsworth 1980 exhibition or a different work entirely? I don't know yet, but I have identified it as (*Cherry thief III*).

The thief was included as cat. 35 in Holdsworth Galleries October 1978 exhibition is it actually one of the above? *Cherries and roses* (plate 16), cat. 31 in Holdsworth's October 1980 exhibition, depicts another cherry thief and this link is mentioned as additional detail in the database record.

That isn't the end of it as Olley used figures of birds and cherries in later years. *Bowl of red cherries* (plate 17) was included in Deutscher and Hackett's May 2015 auction with the note that a label from the Australian Galleries, Sydney was attached. The technique and treatment confirms that it is a later work but there are no titles in the exhibitions at Australian Galleries, Sydney in 1991, 1995 and 1997 which suggest the subject of the painting, so it was probably sold independently: it has been given (*Cherry thief IV*) as its title.

The other painting (plate 18) appeared at Sotheby's April 1996, lot 48 as *Still life with cherries and cornflowers*. With Olley's disregard for titles it could simply have been called "Cornflowers" or "Cherries" but has been given (*Cherry thief V*) as a

working title. A search of the database for *Still life with cherries and cornflowers* will still locate the painting.

Then there are titles which are delightfully bizarre and which you could never guess even if you could search for descriptions of the key elements. Pick a title for the above (plate 19)! It was exhibited at the Holdsworth Gallery, Sydney in 1978 (cat. 6) as *The trophy* Olley called it after the tiny metal footed cup in the foreground!

The way forward

This project is the beginning of a *catalogue raisonné* of Olley's work. The database provides an additional resource for the Margaret Olley Art Centre, Tweed Regional Art Gallery, Murwillumbah and can be viewed on

13.

Cherry thief I 1979

14.

Cherry thief II

15.

(*Cherry thief III*) c 1979-80





16.
Cherries and roses 1978

17.
(Cherry thief IV)

18.
(Cherry thief V)

19.
The trophy 1978

exhibition information, the known provenance, location and a good quality digital image. Current ownership details will appear on the public record only as, for example, "Private collection, Hobart".

The illustrations used in this article have been extracted from more than 1,500 images currently in the database, despite being low-resolution and variable in colour and clarity. This is quite deliberate as they are indicative of issues surrounding identification rather than being a good quality representation the work itself. The use of these images for private research is freely given but all copyright requests must be addressed to the Margaret Olley Art Trust via Philip Bacon Galleries.

Many records in the database at present are incomplete or inaccurate. Your contributions will improve the record for all. I would be delighted to hear from you, but a digital image is essential!



Glenn R Cooke
BA (Melbourne)
1977, MA (GWU,
Washington DC)
1979 ARGG is the
Co-ordinator of
The Olley Project.
He was appointed
as the first Curator
of Decorative

Arts at the Queensland Art Gallery in 1981 and retired as Research Curator, Queensland Heritage in 2013. He is the author of *L.J. Harvey and his school* and has published extensively on aspects of the fine and decorative arts. Glenn remains an enthusiastic collector, gardener and ballroom dancer.

The Olley Project page at that website of the Gallery or that of the Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane.

The Margaret Olley Art Trust would appreciate the support of Olley's many collectors to develop the project. If you have a painting by Olley, please contact theolleyproject@gmail.com and provide details such as title, inscriptions, dimensions,



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Australian cedar partners' desk, with maker's label for Hudson Bros, Redfern NSW, c 1905.

Hudson Bros timber yard and manufactory in Regent St burned down on 8 October 1898. The spectacular blaze was attributed to a spark from a passing steam locomotive.



Exhibition

Bling: 19th century goldfields jewellery

Jewellery dealer Anne Schofield, who performed the official opening of the exhibition

Bling: 19th century goldfields jewellery at the Museum of Australian Democracy at

Ballarat on 16 April, kindly let us publish her address.



1.

Gold ring, cast, engraved 'BALLARAT' with crossed pick and shovel, leaves and gold rocker cradle, marked W&W for Leopold Wagner & Samuel Woollett, Ballarat 1854. Private collection

2.

Gold brooch with windlass and miners' tools supported on branches, NSW c 1854. Collection Trevor Hancock

3.

Pair of ear pendants with polished malachite set in gold, attributed to J M Wendt, Adelaide, c 1860-70. Collection Trevor Hancock

ANNE SCHOFIELD

It is a great honour to be asked to open this important exhibition *Bling: 19th century goldfields jewellery*, at this historic Eureka site.

I remember visiting Ballarat and Bendigo in the 1980s when Kevin Fahy and I were researching our book *Australian Jewellery 19th and Early 20th Century*. I was impressed by the many magnificent 19th-century buildings, built during the prosperous years following the gold rush and the 'gold fever' which gripped the town in the 1850s and 60s. I was fascinated by the tales of the goldfields and the jewellery which was made as souvenirs of a find.

I started to make a collection of goldfields jewellery, which was later passed on to the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney and to some keen collectors who started collecting after publication of the book. Many of them have kindly lent pieces to this exhibition.

The exhibition highlights the importance of the discovery of gold in one year, 1851, at three separate locations in Victoria and NSW. This discovery was one of the most significant events which occurred in Australia during the 19th century. It changed this country from being merely a penal colony to being a recognised nation.

Not only did it bring great wealth and prosperity, it also brought huge numbers of people from every corner of the earth. In a mere 20 years the population rose from 400,000 in 1850 to over 1,600,000 in

1870. Some came to try their luck on the goldfields, others came to set up businesses in the goldfields towns – Ballarat, Bendigo and Castlemaine in Victoria; Bathurst, Hill End and Gulgong in NSW. Some jewellers set up shops in the goldfields towns, turning locally found nuggets into brooches and stick pins as souvenirs of a lucky find for the lucky diggers. Some were not so lucky – Mrs Charles Clacy found a 10 year old girl outside her dying grandfather's tent, crying "He's killed himself digging for gold and he never got none and he said he'll dig till he dies."

Among the immigrants were gold and silversmiths who had completed apprenticeships and received excellent training in their home countries in the UK and in Europe and who set up businesses in the big cities – Julius Hogarth and Conrad Erichsen (Sydney); Edward Fischer (Geelong); Ernest Leviny (Castlemaine); Henry Steiner, Joachim Matthias Wendt and Charles Firnhaber (Adelaide). Items made by all these jewellers are shown here in this exhibition.

They employed their considerable skills to create beautiful jewels showing Australian fauna (the much loved kangaroo and emu, snakes, dingoes, kookaburras and lyrebirds) and Australian flora, such as banksia and native pear, sometimes incorporating a piece of gold-bearing quartz, similar to the one in this exhibition.

Later in the century, in 1895, a second big discovery of gold in Western Australia heralded another wave of prosperity for the country. West Australian goldfields jewels often add the name of the mine in a semi-circle above – such as Boulder, Hannan's,

Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, Leonora, Yalgoo, Bullfinch and Poseidon.

My thanks to all those who have contributed to this fascinating exhibition, to private collectors and lenders, and to the team at Eureka, led by director Jane Smith and curator Cash Brown, who have worked tirelessly for several months to gather the key objects and stories for this exhibition.

I have great pleasure in declaring the exhibition open!

4.

Gold pick and shovel brooch with nuggets, Western Australia c 1900. Private collection



Bling: 19th century goldfields jewellery is on display at the Museum of Australian Democracy, on the site of the Eureka Stockade, at 102 Stawell St, Ballarat, Victoria until 4 July 2016. The exhibition is open every day from 10 till 5, entry \$12 (\$8 concession).

With over 200 examples of Australian gold jewellery on display, it

is the largest exhibition of this material seen in more than 100 years – in fact since the gold rushes. The vast majority of the items come from private collections across Australia, so they have rarely been shown before.

The exhibition traces the development of gold jewellery in Australia from the early 1850s until the early 20th century. The later examples

are shown alongside similar material manufactured in Canada, the USA, South Africa and Britain.

The superbly illustrated 160-page catalogue with essays by Dr Linda Young, Trevor Hancock, Dr Dorothy Erickson, Cash Brown, Linda Evangelista, Katrina Banyai and local elders is available for \$35.

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Edwin Foss Duffield: a colonial-born craftsman

Trove and family histories have recently revealed information about Edwin Foss Duffield (1846–1922), a colonial-born craftsman of distinction in Western Australia. He commenced working in Fremantle in the late 1860s as a cabinet maker and undertaker, and a number of pieces of furniture from his workshop survive.

DOROTHY ERICKSON

Edwin Foss Duffield was the grandson of Exeter-born John Hole Duffield (1797–1859) one of the early settlers at the Swan River colony. John Hole Duffield had arrived in the *Warrior* in March 1830, to be followed by his wife Charlotte Foss (1797/8–1865) and four children in December 1831 on the *Egyptian*. Three of their offspring had died young in England, while another four were born in Western Australia.¹

John Hole Duffield must have brought considerable goods, as he was

granted 500 acres (202 ha) of land near Fremantle and more in the Murray district further south. His property *Bicton*, named after a parish in Devon near his birthplace of Exeter, is today a suburb of Perth. John Duffield was a cooper, carpenter and contractor, who established a commercial vineyard at *Bicton* and exported the first cask of wine from the colony to a friend in England in 1848.²

His family claimed that he was the first to find gold in Western Australia, near Toodyay in 1849.³ He became a wealthy brewer, wine merchant, proprietor of the Albion Hotel and expanded his holdings with land at

Harvey and town lots in Fremantle. His youngest son, James Hole Duffield (1839–1860) and a labourer John Luff died when a well they were sinking at *Bicton* collapsed on them on 22 March 1860.⁴

His eponymous son John Hole Duffield jr (1819–1894) was a jack-of-all-trades who became a schoolmaster to Aborigines, mail contractor and general dealer. In 1842 he married Sarah (1824–1908) daughter of another early settler, William Glyde, an indentured servant of Thomas Peel.

Edwin Foss Duffield (1846–1922) was born at Fremantle, their first son to survive childhood, and given the



1-3.

Edwin Foss Duffield (1846–1922), jarrah chiffonier in Sampson House, Fremantle. Collection National Trust of Australia (WA). Photos D. Erickson



name of his own father's elder brother (1817–1831), who had died aged 13 at Plymouth, after his grandfather had sailed for Western Australia. By the time he was old enough to consider an occupation, his father had inherited half his father's 'Bicton Estate' and could apprentice him to a good master. The successful entrepreneur George Lazenby⁵ (1807–1895) was chosen and Edwin became a cabinet maker, upholsterer and undertaker.

By February 1868 he had established his own enterprise in Market Street, styled "E. F. Duffield cabinet maker &c.", when his first advertisement appears in the *Fremantle Herald*,⁶ (later expanded to "cabinet maker upholsterer and undertaker") thanking "the inhabitants of Fremantle and the country at large, for the patronage and support he has received since commencing business" (plate 4). The same advertisement runs in the weekly *Herald* until 1 January 1870, when he changes the format; this is his major advertising spend, Trove recording 437 advertisements in the *Herald* up till 1883, and another in the following year when he seeks "a good strong lad" as an apprentice.⁷

At the Loan Exhibition of Art and Industry held in Perth's Town Hall from 6–10 September 1870 – the first

E. F. DUFFIELD,
CABINET MAKER
UPHOLSTERER
 AND
Undertaker,
Market Street, Fremantle.

BEGS to thank the inhabitants of Fremantle and the country at large, for the patronage and support he has received since commencing business, and hopes by strict attention to merit a continuance of their kind patronage.

N. B. All orders punctually attended to, and executed in a workmanlike manner, on the most moderate terms.

Fremantle, 3rd October, 1868.

such exhibition held in the colony of Western Australia – Duffield was one of four craftsmen singled out for their fine woodwork; the others were the consummate craftsman Joseph Hamblin⁸ (1820 UK–1899), Isidore Oriol (1825 Spain–1912) and Hookum Chan⁹ (c. 1800 India–1903). Duffield's exhibits included a sandalwood whatnot, an inlaid cabinet and two wooden boxes he had made for Mr G W Leake, and attracted comments in the Perth and Fremantle press.

The *Perth Gazette* commended his whatnot but thought his inlay work

4.

Advertisement for E F Duffield, *Herald* (Fremantle) 24 October 1868 page 1.

5.

Edwin Foss Duffield (1846–1922), detail of the top of the pair to the table pictured. A similar table was exhibited in London in 1862. A third is held by the Duffield family and a fourth was auctioned recently. Photo D. Erickson

6.

Edwin Foss Duffield (1846–1922), one of at least two inlaid tables made for the Leake family. Photo D. Erickson

pedestrian in comparison to that of Hookum Chan:

Mr. Duffield had a very pretty and chastely designed "What-not" of sandalwood, the workmanship of which we thought better than that of the inlaid cabinet (No. 372) or of the two inlaid boxes (Nos. 383 and 324) exhibited by Mr. Leake, but also of Mr. Duffield's workmanship, exhibiting no originality of design. The contrary appeared to us to be the case with two small specimens





Drawing Room. Grass Valley.

7.

The pair to the G W Leake games table exhibited in London in 1862 made by Edwin Foss Duffield, seen in the *Grass Valley* homestead at York, photographed c 1880s. Aesthetic movement overtones can be seen with the Japanese screen, peacock feathers and Oriental porcelain

8.

Edwin Foss Duffield (1846–1922), games table of various woods, McKenzies Auction June 2013 lot 250. At least three more like this exist in Western Australia. Courtesy McKenzies Auctioneers

(Nos. 421 and 423) the productions of Hookham Chan; the former is a work-box, the top of which is inlaid in a geometrical design exhibiting a greater amount of good art than any other cabinet work exhibited, while certainly the workmanship was noways inferior; the same might be said of the cotton stand although the design was far more simple and required much less thought.¹⁰

Fremantle's *Herald* took a more charitable view, describing G W Leake's "Sandalwood, Shea [sic] Oak and Banksea [sic]" box made by Duffield as being a "a beautiful piece of workmanship" and thought his "inlaid wood cabinet manufactured of sandalwood, shea [sic] oak, rasperry [sic] jam and mahogany deserves honorable mention."¹¹

Edwin was well known as a cabinet maker in the 1870s servicing the people of Fremantle, but then expanded his interests. From 1878 until 1884 he had an agency in Geraldton, initially through Philip Duffield (possibly a cousin) and later through William Jose's Trefusis Aerated Waters and Cordial Manufactory.¹² A hundred advertisements in Geraldton's weekly *Victorian Express* advised that the agency could obtain works from the Fremantle "cabinet & furniture maker, upholsterer and carpenter" promptly by coastal ship.

In 1878 Edwin donated a parcel of "work done" for sale at the Perth Orphanage Bazaar held at *Government House*.¹³ Duffield fitted out the new Fremantle Grammar School building in 1886. The building was handed over to the governors on the evening of Friday 22 January, and Duffield's workmen installed the furniture and fittings over



the weekend, in time for the school's opening on Monday 25 January.¹⁴ The year before, George Pyke, an apprentice aged about 20 whom he had trained, sailed with the Sydney contingent to fight in the Sudan.¹⁵

In October and November 1886, Duffield placed several advertisements, offering "a first-class opportunity" to lease or purchase his business and premises.¹⁶ In December, Duffield and Frank Herbert Snook (1868–1923) announced that Snook has leased Duffield's premises. Both hope that Snook, in continuing the business of cabinet making, undertaking etc, will be accorded the same patronage as Duffield.¹⁷

Four years later, in December 1890, Duffield again offered the workshops in Market Street, next to the National Hotel, for lease.¹⁸ Snook's obituary says that "he did a very successful trade for three or four years" but, "tiring of this occupation, he sold out advantageously" and became a builder in Southern Cross.¹⁹

A chiffonier (plates 1–3) of Duffield's making is in *Samson House*, the National Trust property in Fremantle. This was the home of Sir W. Frederick Samson (1892–1974), Mayor of Fremantle and grandson of early settler Lionel, who

donated it to the state so that it became part of the Western Australian Museum before being given to the National Trust. The furniture would have been made for his father Michael Samson, a prominent Fremantle wine merchant.

Other pieces, such as a games table made from various Australian woods, are still held by the family²⁰ and others by descendants of the Leake family (**plates 6–8**). All the games tables seen are slightly different in height or minor details. Another unidentified games table, but clearly by the same hand, was sold for \$3,600 at auction at McKenzies in Claremont, a suburb of Perth in June 2013 (**plate 9**). MacKenzies also sold a table which bore Duffield's stamp (**plates 10–11**).

St John's Church of England in Fremantle has a carved bookcase by Duffield which was presented by Thelma and David Johnson, while dealers Lauder & Howard in Fremantle had a console whatnot attributed to Duffield (**plate 12**). Apart from that, few pieces have yet been identified.

Edwin had married the wealthy George Lazenby's daughter Adeline (1848–1917) at Serpentine in 1869. Their first child Frank (1870–1927) was baptised in 1870. In all they had three sons and seven daughters. Duffield became a landowner and a pillar of society in Fremantle. He was an ardent supporter of St John's Anglican Church in Fremantle, as his parents had been before him,²¹ becoming a church warden. He was also an officer of the Fremantle Odd Fellows Lodge.

He was Acting Town Clerk when the Town Clerk, his brother-in-law, was on holiday.²² He was a director of the Fremantle Gas Company for 36 years, returning officer for elections in 1897, director of the Fremantle Building and Benefit Society in 1910²³ and patron of the Fremantle Bowling Club, where he possibly spent considerable time after his wife died in January 1917, leaving an estate of £351 to her husband.²⁴

It was not all work and no play. In 1874 he owned a cutter, *Scud*. His

income in retirement may have come from four valuable Fremantle town lots that he sold in 1920.²⁵

The Duffields lived at *Wanilyah*, 180 Beach Street, Fremantle where he died on 2 November 1922. The newspapers described him as "The deceased occupied a prominent position in the commercial life of the Port. ... He was of a retiring disposition, unostentatious ...".²⁶ A memorial service was held for him in St John's Fremantle on Sunday 5 November and a stained glass window in honour of Edwin and Adeline Duffield was dedicated in St John's on Sunday 18 January 1931. Since then he appears to have slipped from all but the family's memory. This may redress the situation.

9.

Edwin Foss Duffield (1846–1922), jarrah chiffonier, McKenzie's Auction November 2013 lot 202. Courtesy McKenzies Auctioneers

10.

Edwin Foss Duffield (1846–1922), jarrah table, McKenzies Auction November 2013, lot 203. Courtesy McKenzies Auctioneers



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11.

Duffield's ink stamp on the underside of the jarrah table reads EDWIN F. DUFFIELD / Cabinet Maker &c / MARKET STREET / FREMANTLE. Courtesy McKenzies Auctioneers

12.

This jarrah console whatnot may have been made by Duffield. Lauder & Howard illustrated it in *An Introduction to Western Australian Colonial Furniture* published in 1988 and exhibited it in 2010. Photograph by Victor France courtesy Lauder & Howard, Fremantle

NOTES

- 1 www.tuckerjr.com/getperson.php?personID=16562&tree=Tucker-Eatch, accessed 10 Feb 2016.
- 2 *SA Register* 22 Sep 1849 p 2. In 1868, he advertised various wines made by Philip Webster of Fremantle for sale, e.g. *Herald* (Fremantle) 9 Oct 1868 p 2.
- 3 *West Australian* 3 Apr 1931 p 9.
- 4 *Perth Gazette* 30 Mar 1860 p 2.
- 5 www.daa0.org.au/bio/george-lazenby/biography, accessed 10 Feb 2016
- 6 *Herald* (Fremantle) 15 Feb 1868 p 2.
- 7 *Herald* (Fremantle) 3 May 1884 p 2.
- 8 *Australiana* vol 36 no 3, Aug 2014, pp 4–10.
- 9 *Australiana* vol 35 no 2, May 2013, pp 18–23.
- 10 *Perth Gazette & West Australian Times* 16 Sep 1870 p 3. G W Leake was a major exhibitor at the event, held to support a fund for destitute women.
- 11 *Herald* (Fremantle) 10 Sept 1870 p 1s. The Hon George Walpole Leake QC (d 1895) was a member of the prominent legal family.
- 12 *Victorian Express* (Geraldton) 25 Sep 1878 p 2; 2 Apr 1884 p 1. William Jose was formerly a Norfolk St, Fremantle storekeeper.
- 13 *Inquirer & Commercial News* 18 Dec 1878 p 4.
- 14 *Western Mail* 30 Jan 1886 p 34.
- 15 *Herald* (Fremantle) 11 Apr 1885 p 2.
- 16 *Daily News* 18 Oct 1886 p 3.
- 17 *Inquirer & Commercial News* 15 Dec 1886 p 7.
- 18 *Ibid.* 24 Dec 1890 p 2; 2 Jan 1891 p 2.
- 19 *Kalgoorlie Miner* 19 Jul 1923 p 8
- 20 Family member Maudie Wagner had a chess table made by E. F. Duffield using various Western Australian woods.
- 21 *West Australian* 17 Jan 1931 p 12.
- 22 *West Australian* 5 Sep 5 1888 p 3.
- 23 *West Australian* 23 Aug 23 1910 p 4.
- 24 *Sunday Times* 21 Jan 1917 p 1; 22 Jul 1917 p 16s.
- 25 *Daily News* 23 Jun 1920 p 1.
- 26 *Daily News* 3 Nov 1922 p 10; 4 Nov 1922 p 16.



Dorothy Erickson is a jeweller and historian who lives in Perth, WA. She has exhibited internationally since 1979 with work in prestigious museums around the world. She is also an art critic and writer on art, crafts and design so when, through illness, she was unable to continue making jewellery for a time in the

1980s she undertook a PhD in art history. She has since published four books: *Art and Design in Western Australia: Perth Technical College 1900–2000*; *A Joy Forever: The Story of Kings Park*; *Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia: A History*; and *Inspired by Light and Land: Designers and Makers in Western Australia 1829–1969*.

Dorothy has just discovered that her great great grandfather, who migrated to Victoria in 1842, was a cabinetmaker in the UK and Melbourne before he took up land. She may be contacted at dorotheerickson@ozemail.com.au.



Rare Australian Colonial sewing
box on stand, *circa* 1850s.



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George Richard Addis, watchmaker and jeweller: his Victorian & Tasmanian years



George Richard Addis (1864–1937) is best known as one of Western Australia's leading late 19th- and early 20th-century goldfields jewellers, whose Western Australian work has been documented by Dorothy Erickson.¹ Many jewellers however worked in different colonies, and here Michel Reymond records for the first time Addis's family background and his work in the eastern colonies.

1.

John Wheeler, photographer, *View of Castlemaine from Bowden Street*, c.1864. Collection: Castlemaine Art Gallery & Historical Museum. Published in Geoff Hocking, *Castlemaine. From Camp to City*, New Chum Press, 2007

MICHEL REYMOND

George Addis's father James Clement Addis was born at Heywood in Herefordshire and was baptised on 28 January 1827 at Callow in Herefordshire.² According to family tradition, the family were Herefordshire farmers who had Shire horses, a breed of heavy draught horses.³ The English census of 1841 records James working as a farm servant at Twyford near Callow,⁴ before he emigrated to South Australia in 1849.⁵

In South Australia, James followed the family tradition, taking up farming on a property known as *Rose Hill* at

Gawler Hills where he also became a general carrier.⁶ Gawler, the second town established in South Australia in 1836, was noted for its intellectual life, becoming known as the "Colonial Athens." Gawler became the centre for the nearby copper-mining towns of Kapunda and Burra, as well as the Barossa Valley, and horse drawn trams were one of its features.⁷

After 1850 James made a number of trips from Adelaide to Melbourne, meeting his future wife Mary Jane Stone there. They were married at St George's Church, Adelaide, on 16 March 1854.⁸ In the following year their first child, a daughter, was born but she died later that year.⁹

Although several occurrences of gold had been found in Australia before 1851, it was the gold found in 1851, first in New South Wales and later in the same year in Victoria, that started the gold rush. South Australia was immediately impacted, when many men left to try their luck on the goldfields, joining increasing numbers of arriving overseas immigrants.

The 1850s also saw South Australia suffer from drought, and its effects were soon seen in the consequent collapse in property values, with banks on the verge of closing their doors due to losses on mortgages, mines closing and a general decline in economic activity.¹⁰ This likely had an impact on Addis' farming and carrying business, and combined with the death of their first child probably influenced them to leave for what seemed greener pastures in Melbourne, a city which was fast becoming known as "marvellous Melbourne".¹¹

Victoria 1864–1886

From the year of their arrival in Melbourne in 1856 until 1871, eight children were born including George Richard, on 2 July 1864 at *Prospect Cottage* in Lothian Street, North Melbourne where the family resided between 1862 and 1868, before moving to the suburb of Footscray.¹²

While his wife was occupied bringing up and looking after the children, James Addis took up farming again and re-established himself as a general carrier. Both these businesses expanded and prospered with his carrier business occupying rented premises in the city, then he purchased premises in Campbell Street, Castlemaine, a goldfields town about 190 km from Melbourne (**plate 1**).¹³ In addition to his carrier business, he had a wagon and six draught horses, as well as a buggy with two horses.¹⁴

He operated two farms in Central Victoria, one at Winter's Flat near Castlemaine which he purchased and another that he rented at Eddington; on these he ran pigs and cattle as well as growing hay, for which he had a threshing machine. He took an active interest in gold mining, acquiring mining plant and shares in gold mining companies.

2.

John Watt Beattie, photographer, *View of George Street looking north across the Brisbane Section intersection, Launceston, Tasmania, c 1890*. From left, corner three-story Melbourne House 1874 (architect Peter Mills), two-story re-faced Royal Hotel, laneway, then Addis' shop with awning to street, built c 1840s and redecorated in Victorian Italianate style including pointed first floor gable. The sign painted on his shop reads "WALTHAM WATCH DEPOT". Collection Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston QVM:1986:P:0690



deal of money from his farming and carrier business and much of this, perhaps some £5,500, was invested in nearly 50 mostly mining companies,¹⁵ a reflection of the mining fervour that captured the imagination of the gold rush period. If what he had paid for his shares by this time represented their value then his total wealth on paper might have been as much as £10,500.¹⁶ In time these shares might have been good investments, but in June 1872, aged just 46, he died at his Castlemaine premises, intestate, leaving his wife with six surviving children under the age of 16.¹⁷

His subsequent estate papers reveal what must have been a sorry financial state which no doubt caused his family some stress; his shares and other personal assets

comprising personal debts of £3,378 as well as secured debts of £4,447.¹⁸ Of the latter the National Australia Bank was owed £3,337 which was secured over all his shares, then valued at just £600 and "various deeds".¹⁹

His real estate holdings were not included in his estate. Although some moneys were secured and owing on them, it seems when they were later sold, there may have been a small surplus for the family.²⁰ Likely these events had an effect on the family including young George, who was only eight years old at the time of his father's death.

After the estate's administration was completed, according to the family tradition they seem to have moved back



3.

Present day view of George Street looking north across the intersection with Brisbane Street. Addis' former shop was redecorated and rough-cast rendered c 1920s or 30s. Photo Dr Eric Radcliff

4.

Advertisement for G R Addis, *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston), 5 May 1888 p 4

G. R. ADDIS,
*The People's Vendor of all Classes of Watches,
 Clocks, and Jewellery.*
 REPAIRS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION A SPECIALITY. WORK GUARANTEED
 ENGRAVING DONE ON THE PREMISES WITH
 DESPATCH.
 Just Received—A New Assortment of Watches, Clocks,
 and Jewellery.
 Address:
OPPOSITE ACADEMY, GEORGE-STREET.

to Gawler in 1876, but did not stay long, returning to Melbourne by 1879.²¹ Back in Melbourne young George Addis likely learnt the jewellery trade with a Melbourne jewellery firm.

Tasmania 1886–1894

Following his jewellery training, George Addis sailed from Melbourne to Launceston in October 1886²² and in March of the following year he was again there to give evidence as a witness in the case of Sparrow v Ley,²³ the former being a Launceston jeweller. During 1887 he seems to have been making arrangements to move to Launceston to start his own business and open a shop there, making at least

one trip back and forth to Melbourne, likely for this purpose.²⁴ In December of that year the local newspaper reported on the opening:

Mr. G. R. Addis, Watchmaker and Jeweller has commenced business in George Street, opposite the Academy of Music. He intimates to the public that he has a select and well assorted stock of watches, clocks and jewellery, and solicits a fair share of their patronage.²⁵

From 1887 until early 1894 when he left Tasmania for Western Australia, G.R. Addis conducted his jewellery business in George Street, Launceston (plates 2–3). He advertised occasionally in Tasmanian

newspapers, mostly the *Daily Telegraph* (plate 4). He had moved there during the 1880s, a decade that saw an economic boom in the Australian colonies, fuelled by an influx of foreign capital, mainly British, and easily available local credit. Much of this went into a rapidly expanding property market, particularly centred on Melbourne and Sydney.²⁶ During this boom Addis' business expanded, so he enlarged his shop to meet this increasing demand and also advertised for an apprentice.²⁷

While at Launceston, according to family tradition his hobbies included prospecting for gold and gemstones. Addis built up a legendary collection of nuggets which he displayed in his Perth shop window from time to time.

The Launceston *Daily Telegraph* reported that in his business “repairs are made a speciality and engraving is executed in all its branches on the premises”.²⁸ As part of the community, he participated in local events by donating prizes, especially for sporting events. Among his gifts were a handsome pair of ladies bracelets, a gold and pearl bracelet, a trophy in the shape of a horseshoe and stirrup timepiece, and gold studs.²⁹



The *Examiner* also reported that: a tastefully designed gold cross encircled with a hook of the same metal, has been manufactured by Mr G. R. Addis, jeweler, of George-street. In the centre of the cross is a representation of a footballer and football.³⁰

By this time so successful was his business that Addis had made further improvements to his shop in 1890 which the local paper reported on:³¹

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENTS.

— Mr G. Addis, jeweller, has just effected a marked improvement in the enlargement and thorough renovation of his shop in George street, well known as the Waltham Watch Depot. Mr Addis has not been long in business in this city, but few have been more successful, his workmanship being well known for neatness of design and completeness. Mr Addis has now opened one of the best consignments of jewellery in the city, among which are some novel medals, in the shape of enamelled coins, while his jubilee ornaments are alone worth inspection. The window decorations are the work of Mr Howard who has succeeded in making the front of the establishment exceedingly attractive.

At the Tasmanian International Exhibition held in Launceston in 1892, Addis received a highly commended award for his “process of manufacture, and manufactured watches, clocks etc” in the category of gold and silversmiths’ work, bronzes, art castings and repoussé work, clocks and watches.³²

A clever swindle

In January 1892 the *Launceston Examiner* reported on “an audacious and clever fraud which had been perpetuated on a firm of jewellers in the city.”³³ A young man had gone to most of the retail jewellers in Launceston, including George Addis, and in each one had sold the jeweller gold rings which turned out not to be real gold. The rings had every appearance of being solid gold, being of excellent make and colour, marked 18 carat and stamped with the letters “A.G.,” which were claimed to be the initials of Arthur Golding of the firm of Goldings of Hobart. None of the usual tests detected that the rings were not solid gold. It was only when one jeweller, who had bought a ring for melting down, cut it in two that he discovered the ring was copper over which a thick layer of real gold had been applied.³⁴

As a result of prompt newspaper coverage, police arrested the “fraudster” as he was about to leave Launceston. The police searched him, finding three rings and a set of jewellers’ tools. Giving his name as George Watson, he denied he was implicated but later admitted under questioning that he had sold the rings.

Brought before a magistrate, he was charged with obtaining money by false pretences – selling rings as real gold when they were not. In these proceedings among those who gave evidence was George Addis, who said the accused offered him a ring which was marked 18 carat and “A.G.,” but when Addis weighed it, the ring was not the right weight for one of that description. He was also dubious because it gave a dull ringing sound when tested, but after further

5.

G R Addis, gold nugget triple bar brooch, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, c 1900. Length 6.3 cm, weight 14.32 grams. Image courtesy Mossgreen Auctions

conversation with the accused, who told Addis the ring was made at Goldings of Hobart, he decided to buy it. At the conclusion of the evidence the magistrate committed the accused, whose real name was George Hogarth, for trial.³⁵

The subsequent trial was held before a Supreme Court judge and a twelve man jury, all of whose names were subsequently published in the newspaper account of the trial! At the trial William Golding of Hobart gave evidence that the rings in question were not made by him or his brother Arthur Golding, nor were they sold by him but he had bought a similar ring from Hogarth who told him the initials “A.G.” meant Alfred Gaylor, another jeweller in Hobart. Golding did not discover the fraud until he read about it in the newspapers, and he added the rings must have been manufactured by a very expert jeweller.

George Addis again gave evidence, detailing the circumstances of his purchasing rings from Hogarth, who told him he had purchased them at Goldings in Hobart for 50 shillings. None of the jewellers had detected that the rings they had purchased were not real gold, and expressed indignation when this was pointed out. In his defence, Hogarth’s solicitor argued Hogarth had purchased



6.

G R Addis, brooch, Tasmania, 1888-1894. Private collection, photograph Andrew Simpson

7.

G R Addis, brooch, reverse with marks. Private collection, photograph Andrew Simpson



the rings from a man for 10 shillings each, and had openly sold them to jewellers who would most likely find out if they were counterfeit. He argued that, if his client had known the rings were of base metal, he would have sold them to ordinary customers and not to experts. At the case's conclusion, the judge summed up and after a short retirement the jury returned a guilty verdict with a recommendation for mercy on the grounds of Hogarth's previous good character, to which the judge gave effect when he sentenced Hogarth to 18 months imprisonment.³⁶

Western Australia 1894–1937

The 1890s saw the start of a boom and bust period in Australia. In Western Australia, while some gold discoveries had been made earlier, the discoveries around Coolgardie in 1892 started that colony's major gold rushes. Meanwhile in the eastern colonies, a severe economic recession began that would nearly bring down the financial system,

chiefly centred on Melbourne, with bank collapses and which would last for most of that decade.³⁷

By 1892 many banks were failing and had closed their doors.³⁸ Addis' business was undoubtedly affected but he survived. He even offered to purchase for full value bank notes in the Bank of Van Diemen's Land from customers who purchased his goods priced at £1 or more.³⁹ If he made any sales on this basis he would have lost money, for this bank closed its doors on 3 August 1891, never to re-open.⁴⁰

He had also taken an interest in a number of companies, including gold miners, but seemingly unlike his father many of these were as a company director appointed before the company was floated and shares offered to the public.⁴¹ This was against a background of new Tasmanian gold discoveries during the 1880s and 1890s centred largely in northern Tasmania and other areas such as Queenstown, which saw the formation of the Mt Lyell Gold Mining Company in March 1893; Addis

acquired a nearby mining tenement later floated in Melbourne as part of the Price Lyell Mining Company.

While he was surviving these difficult financial times, he made a number of voyages to Melbourne and back. One was to attend his mother's funeral, following her death at her residence in Brunswick Street, North Fitzroy on 10 March 1892.⁴² By the end of 1893, he had decided to leave Tasmania and move to Western Australia; in May 1894 he advertised for all outstanding accounts owing to him to be settled by the end of that month and it's likely that around this time he disposed of his business to a competitor.⁴³

After that he seems to have made some further trips back and forth to Melbourne⁴⁴ before he joined John Chambers and three others from Launceston in travelling to Western Australia to prospect for gold around Coolgardie for about six months. Chambers later related in February 1895 that they had

*prospected nearly all the known places in and around Coolgardie, Hannan's Find, The White Feather, I.O.U. and numerous other localities where the precious metal was known to exist.*⁴⁵

After several weeks without much success they found about 70 oz of gold, four and a half miles (7 km) from Coolgardie. As soon as news of their find became known, a large number of prospectors rushed to the area and a further 300 oz of gold was found before this reef was worked out. After this, very little gold was found while they remained in the area.

Chambers described the conditions under which prospecting and mining took place, the harsh weather conditions, lack of water, and the disease and sickness which affected the miners. While at Coolgardie, he said there was only one “paying mine”, the Bayley’s Reward Claim, where yields were falling fast, and another similar one known as Londonderry. Apart from these two claims, there was not much else except lots of prospectors looking but finding little. Having returned to Tasmania, he advised anyone who was thinking of going “not to do so as the place is already overstocked with miners, prospectors, and others in search of gold.”⁴⁶

Chambers was not in Coolgardie when later in 1895 the Londonderry mine, after wild speculation that it contained a fabulous reef, was floated on the London and Paris stock exchanges, raising £750,000.⁴⁷ On its reopening, no gold was found – a story that would be familiar to those who remember the Poseidon nickel bubble of 1969.

Though Chambers had returned to Tasmania, Addis remained in Western Australia and prospered as a watchmaker and jeweller during the west’s gold rushes which lasted nearly two decades. He specialised in work which incorporated nuggets, goldmining implements and the names of towns or gold mines (plate 5).⁴⁸ Retiring around 1911, he followed in the family tradition and took up farming at Tenterden on the Gordon River where he bred Clydesdales, a breed of draught horse, but a farm accident in 1912 saw him return to the jewellery trade. He died in Perth in 1937.

Tasmanian work

Only one jewellery design is known from Addis’ time in Tasmania, and it is in contrast to his later, better known Western Australian goldfields work. It is a brooch designed as a bunch of grapes and vine leaves (plate 6). The grape branch itself is cast, then engraved, with the leaves formed by repoussé and chasing, then engraved. The grape bunch is made from shot then cast with all parts of the brooch, then soldered together

and bloomed by repeated heating to give an overall soft bloom or finish. It is stamped on a raised plate on the reverse “G.R.ADDIS” and “18C” (plate 7).

This is one of three known examples of the same design, each one slightly different to the other, indicating their individual handmade quality, and likely all made from Tasmanian gold. I hope that this article will flush out other examples of his Tasmanian jewellery.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES

- 1 Dorothy Erickson, *Gold & Silversmithing in Western Australia. A History*, UWAP, Perth 2010 pp 88–93.
- 2 Ancestry Library FHL film no 992075.
- 3 Information from family descendant to Dorothy Erickson.
- 4 England Census 1841 online.
- 5 Jill Statton (ed.), *Biographical Index of South Australians 1836-1885* p 8 under Addis Jas. Clement. He is first recorded in the *South Australian Register* on 8 Oct 1850 sailing from Adelaide to Melbourne. No prior shipping record of his arrival seems to survive.
- 6 *Op cit* n 3.
- 7 Robert Reason, *Bounty Nineteenth-century South Australian Gold and Silver*, Art Gallery of South Australia Adelaide 2012 p 21.
- 8 See *South Australian Register* 1850-1853 under Addis; S.A. Marriages 16-3-1854 Reg. No. 20/150.
- 9 S.A. Births 25-1-1855; S.A. Deaths 17-12-1855 no. 4/90.
- 10 *Op cit* n 7.
- 11 For example, *SMH* 19 Nov 1853 p 6.
- 12 *Op cit* n 2 under George Richard Addis,

information from L. Andel.

- 13 Details of his assets taken from the inventory in his estate papers; VPRS 28/p 2 Unit 10, File 10/220; VPRS 28/PO Unit 114.
- 14 *Ibid* 12.
- 15 *Op cit* n 12, where his shares are individually listed.
- 16 Estimate based on the par value of his listed shares and the stated values of his other assets, *op cit* n 13.
- 17 Death certificate of James Clement Addis, Vic Register no. 650/1872; his estate papers *op cit* n 13. His surviving children were John, James Clement, George Richard, Annie Jane, William and Henry Thomas.
- 18 *Op cit* n 12, amounts include only pounds sterling ignoring shillings and pence.
- 19 *Op cit* n 12.
- 20 For details of real estate see advertisement in *Bendigo Advertiser* 9 Sep 1872 p 4.
- 21 *Op cit* n 3; the *South Australian Register* records Henry Addis and George Addis as leaving Adelaide for Melbourne on 6 Feb 1879. No prior record of the family’s travels to or from Adelaide has been found.
- 22 *Launceston Examiner* 29 Oct 1886 p 2.
- 23 *Launceston Examiner* 7 Mar 1887 p 3.
- 24 *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston) 30 Nov 1887 p 2.
- 25 *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston) 29 Dec 1887 p 2.
- 26 Michael Cannon, *The Land Boomers*, MUP, 1966, reprinted 1995.
- 27 *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston) 22 Feb 1889 p 1, 25 Nov 1889 p 1, 21 Dec 1889 p 4.
- 28 *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston) 3 Mar 1889 p 2.
- 29 *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston) 4 Jul 1889 p 3, 8 Feb 1890 p 2, 5 Mar 1890 p 3, 9 Apr 1889 p 1.
- 30 *Launceston Examiner* 21 Jun 1890 p 2.
- 31 *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston) 27 Aug 1890 p 2.
- 32 *Launceston Examiner* 19 Feb 1892 p 4; *Mercury* 22 Feb 1892 p 4; *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston) 19 Feb 1892 p 3; *Tasmanian* 20 Feb 1892 p 25.
- 33 *Launceston Examiner* 26 Jan 1892 p 2.
- 34 *Ibid* and *Launceston Examiner* 5 Feb 1892 p 3.
- 35 *Ibid*.
- 36 *Ibid* and *Launceston Examiner* 2 Mar 1892 p 3.
- 37 See n 1 and n 26.
- 38 See n 26 for details.
- 39 *Launceston Examiner* 5 Aug 1891 p 1.
- 40 S G Butlin, ed. Judith F Butlin, *The Australian Monetary System 1851–1914*, 1986 p 111.
- 41 Eg *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston) 3 Mar 1888 p 1, *Launceston Examiner* 4 Aug 1891 p 4, and 19 July 1897 p 3.
- 42 *Launceston Examiner* 23 Mar 1892 p 2, 21 Apr 1892 p 2, 22 Mar 1894 p 4.
- 43 *Launceston Examiner* 22 May 1894 p 1.
- 44 *Launceston Examiner* 19 Jun 1894 p 4, 13 Aug 1894 p 4.
- 45 For Chalmers’ account, see *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston) 8 Feb 1895 p 3.
- 46 *Ibid*.
- 47 Londonderry Gold Mine Coolgardie: John Mills, Golden Hole Coolgardie Gold Mine
- 48 See n 1.

Queensland welcomes a portrait of Lord Lamington

The John Oxley Library at the State Library of Queensland has added a portrait of Lord Lamington, Queensland's eighth governor, to its collection of historical works of art.

DIANNE BYRNE

Queensland's eighth Governor (1896–1901), Charles Wallace Alexander Napier Cochrane-Baillie GCMG GCIE (1860–1940), 2nd Baron Lamington of Lanarkshire, Scotland, is depicted in this painting, newly acquired by the State Library of Queensland (**plate 1**).¹

The waist-length portrait was created by Robert Duddingston Herdman

(1863–1922), a second-generation Scottish artist who specialised in portraits of Victorian and Edwardian society. Lord Lamington's mother, wife of the first Baron, commissioned it in 1895 at a cost of 42 guineas. The picture, in its original frame, is accompanied by the artist's receipt.

The year 1895 was a momentous one for the sitter. In June, he married the Honourable Mary Haughton Hozier (1869–1944), the daughter of Lord Newlands, of neighbouring Maudslic

Castle. She was a cousin of the future Clementine Churchill, and a young woman of grace and character. Then in October, he was chosen to succeed Sir Henry Norman as Queensland's last colonial Governor.

Herdman's painting shows a courtly figure who placed great emphasis on public service and personal deportment. He is depicted in profile, wearing elegant outdoor clothing and holding a traditional cap or Tam O'Shanter with a silver clan badge.

After attending Eton and Oxford, the Hon. Charles Cochrane-Baillie (as he was then known) secured a post as an assistant private secretary to the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury. In 1886, he was elected to the House of Commons, and, following the death of his father in 1890, he moved to the House of Lords.

Throughout his life, Lord Lamington was a constant and curious traveller and a faithful emissary of empire, pursuing British interests in China, Vietnam and Thailand before his appointment to Queensland. Afterwards he served as Governor of Bombay (1903–07) and Commissioner of the British Relief Unit in Syria (1919).



1.

Robert Dunningston Herdman (1863–1922), *Charles Wallace Alexander Napier Cochrane-Baillie, 2nd Baron Lamington GCMG*, signed l.l. in black with initials R H and dated 1895, titled in red "Wallace / 2nd Baron Lamington / 1895". Oil on canvas, 74.5 x 62 cm sight size, in original gilt frame. Collection: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland acc 29900



Lord Lamington's tenure in Queensland was marked by political tensions, but also great joy (**plate 2**). Both of the Lamington children were born in the colony, with their son Victor Alexander Brisbane William Cochrane-Baillie (June 1896–1951) receiving his middle name in graceful acknowledgement. Lady Lamington was especially popular with the people of Queensland and the journal which she kept in later life is full of fond recollections of vice-regal tours and her patronages and charitable works.²

The Lamingtons may be best known today for their association with a certain coconut-covered sponge cake³ (**plate 3**) but their presence and influence are commemorated in many places, notably Mount Lamington, a volcano in Papua New Guinea, and Lamington National Park and Lamington Plateau in south-east Queensland

All his life, Lord Lamington maintained a strong interest in the Indian and Islamic worlds. As Governor of Bombay, he took a keen interest in race relations and was a sympathetic supporter of social and medical reforms. He was an inaugural member of the Iran Society and of the British Red Crescent Society and, along with his friend the Aga Khan,

conducted an appeal for aid to the Berber people of the Rif in Morocco who were fighting a colonial war against Spain in 1924.

On 13 March 1940, he was at Caxton Hall (Westminster Town Hall) in London at a meeting of the East India Association to hear an address by Sir Michael O'Dwyer, former Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, on Afghanistan. Political activist Udham Singh, who held O'Dwyer responsible for the death of his brother and sister at the Amritsar massacre in 1919 when British troops fired on non-violent protesters, shot O'Dwyer dead and injured Lord Zetland, Lord Lamington and Louis Dane. Singh faced a two-day trial and was hanged at Pentonville Prison on 31 July.

Lord Lamington's hand was shattered by a bullet, and he died at Lamington House on 16 September 1940 (at the age of 80), six months after being shot by the gunman.

It is disappointing that a painting can't write a tell-all biography. How intriguing it would be to discover where the portrait has been for the past 60 years. Research so far has established that it spent much of its early life in Lamington House in South Lanarkshire, Scotland, a 140-room, Elizabethan-style manor

2.

Photograph, [*The Governor, staff and guests at Government House, Brisbane*], dated August 1899.

Back row, from left: Captain Barton (private secretary to the Administrator of New Guinea), Hon. Richard de Moleyns, Captain Pelham ADC, Mr A. Rawlinson (private secretary to Governor of Tasmania), Sir Edward Stewart-Richardson Bart. ADC, Mr Pascoe William Grenfell Stuart, Captain Arthur Pakenham (ADC to Governor of Victoria). Front row: Mr G. R. Le Hunte (Administrator of New Guinea), Mrs Pakenham, Lord Lamington, Lady Brassey (wife of the Governor of Victoria, Lord Brassey), Lady Lamington, Hon. Victor and Grizel [Grisell] Baillie. In front: Jorrocks and Ting, the Lamingtons' pet dogs. This photograph may have been taken prior to the "At Home" at Government House held on 28 July 1899. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, image number 165990

3.

Postage stamp issued by Australia Post in 2009 as part of a series celebrating "iconic" Australian cakes, biscuits and desserts. Copyright Australian Postal Corporation 2009; designer: Hoyne Design



4.

The library of Lamington House, illustrated in Thomas Hannan, Famous Scottish Houses: the Lowlands, London 1928. Herdman's portrait of Lord Lamington can be seen above the bookcase top left

5.

Lamington House, hand-coloured postcard

completed in the 1850s. A photograph of the library of *Lamington House*, featured in *Famous Scottish Houses: the Lowlands* by Thomas Hannan, published in 1928, shows the portrait hanging above a bookcase (plate 4). It was almost certainly still there when he died in 1940.

It probably remained there during the Second World War when part of the property was taken over to accommodate crippled children, and most likely it was still a fixture in 1951 when Victor Cochrane-Baillie (who succeeded his father as the third Baron Lamington) died in the house at age 55, leaving both the estate and the title without an heir.

The end of the family's life at Lamington is rather a sad story. In 1953, two years after Victor's death, the house was demolished and its contents were dispersed. Perhaps Victor's sister Grisell (1898–1985) kept their father's portrait. The ruins of the house could still be seen as late as 1980, but they have now disappeared (plates 5-6).

The picture-book village of Lamington remains intact however, with its lovely stone cottages situated in the shadow of Tinto Hill, the home of the father of Banjo Paterson (plate 7).

So, Herdman's portrait is something of a survivor. A relic of a distinguished man and a vanished way of life, it still maintains its own relevance and importance however, and is now on loan for an extended period to *Government House* in Brisbane.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks go to Peter and Sheila Forrest, authors and historians of all things vice-regal, who generously allowed me to reproduce their photographs of the former site of *Lamington House* and present-day Lamington village.

The State Library of Queensland holds a variety of material relating to Lord and Lady Lamington, most of it in the collection of the John Oxley Library. Items include original correspondence, photographs and microfilm copies of the Cochrane-Baillie of Lamington papers TR 1973, held by the Mitchell Library in Glasgow.



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NOTES

- 1 Sold by Biddle & Webb Auctions, Birmingham on 5 June 2015, lot 154.
- 2 Lady Lamington (Mary Haughton Hozier Cochrane-Baillie), *Journal*, 1896–1901. Lady Lamington's granddaughters, Mrs Felicity Scrimgeour and Mrs Bridget Leigh presented a facsimile typescript to the Queensland

Government. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland acc 2292.

- 3 The debate on the origins of the Lamington cake has raged for many years. For the most recent perspective see Maurice French, *The Lamington enigma: a survey of the evidence*, Toowoomba, Tabletop Publishing, 2013.

6.

The site of *Lamington House*, demolished in 1953. Photograph Peter and Sheila Forrest

7.

The picturesque village of Lamington. Photograph Peter and Sheila Forrest

CONVICT AND FREE UPDATE

The first update of David St L Kelly's **CONVICT AND FREE:** *the Master Furniture-makers of NSW 1788–1851* is now available

Brazilian rosewood and cedar conversation couch c 1855, with carving by John Fletcher, Sydney. Collection of Robert Brown, Melbourne



Many of the book's readers generously provided information for this Update, which adds biographies of Thomas Mercier Booth (c 1809–1897) and John McMahon (1801–1850), as well as new information on the furniture makers already covered.

Email the author at colonial@colonialhill.com for a free pdf file of the update, or call the author on 0433 345 303 to make other arrangements for delivery.

Convict and Free: the Master Furniture-makers of NSW is available from Australian Scholarly Publishing www.scholarly.info/book/369/

An early Australian silver gift - its authenticity and context

Jolyon Warwick James traces the story of an Australian colonial silver spoon with a name engraved on the stem, and finds a link with a banker who lived and died at Bronte House overlooking one of Sydney's famous beaches.

JOLYON WARWICK JAMES

A silver fiddle pattern dessert spoon (**plate 1**) with a name and date inscribed along the stem (**plate 2**) might reasonably be considered to be a christening or similar commemorative present to a child. However, to decide if it is just such a gift, a number of questions need to be answered.

Not the least is, when was it inscribed and if for the benefit of the presumed recipient, whom that might be? Authentic silver items can carry later inscriptions – for example when old items are re-used or when an earlier event is later commemorated. Retrospective inscriptions may be misleading – or even be a spurious attempt to “augment” pieces in order to increase interest and value. With this caution in mind we start the investigation.

The spoon

Our spoon is fiddle pattern (after the violin shape of the handle), bears punch marks (**plate 3**) on the reverse and the engraved name “E.S. Ebsworth 1833” along the stem on the front – visible if presented “bowl up” on the table. It weighs 52 grams and is 18 cm long. There is no evidence of any other engraving, nor erasure of an earlier or unwanted inscription such as a crest or initials on the terminal indicating a previous life for the spoon.



1.
An inscribed Australian fiddle pattern silver dessert spoon, length 18 cm (7 inches)

The “RB” mark is for the early 19th-century Australian silversmith Robert Broad, illustrated by John Houstone in *Early Australian Silver*.¹ This mark is a “pseudo” or “look alike” London hallmark. It is, however, clearly distinguishable from the authorised English punches by two particular features. Firstly the *lion passant* is facing the wrong way – to the right, not the left. Secondly, the letter W was never used in the London date letter cycle.

The significance of each mark would, almost certainly, have been unknown to most owners of silver in early 19th-century Australia. Even in England, a broader understanding of the significance of silver marks, outside of the hallmarking authorities and certain officialdom, did not come till much later. It is generally regarded as having started with a lecture entitled “On the Assay Marks of Gold and Silver Plate” by the antiquarian Octavius Morgan to the Society of Antiquaries in London in June 1852 (**plate 4**).² Morgan had only a limited audience; the industrious William Chaffers gave the matter broader currency with his expansive *Hallmarks of Gold and Silver Plate* in 1863.³ Though awareness spread, the meaning of the punch marks probably did not gain wider familiarity till the 20th century.

It was an offence in Britain to forge, imitate or transpose hallmarks and official stamps on silver. A number of

silversmiths were transported to Australia for just such an offence, starting with William Hogg on the First Fleet (1788).⁴ Among others, Jeremiah Garfield⁵ and Alexander Robertson⁶ arrived separately in 1822; both subsequently featured as witnesses in the Sydney trial of Alexander Dick. The latter, a free settler, was, convicted (probably wrongly) in 1829 of receiving stolen goods.⁷

However, it appears that no one interfered with Robert Broad placing his own loose imitation of London marks on his wares in the colony of New South Wales in the 1830s. By using such British “look alike” marks, Broad was simply following in the footsteps of other colonial silversmiths in Sydney, including Samuel Clayton, Jacob Josephson, Walter Harley, James Robertson and Alexander Dick.⁸ The purpose was almost certainly to meet the expectations of their Anglophile consumers, who expected to see a range of letters, symbols, animals etc on their silver as an indication of authenticity. The practice was followed in other colonies almost invariably without any local consequences.⁹

It was a different matter if the items surfaced in England. The 1978 exhibition *Touching Gold and Silver - 500 years of Hallmarks*, held at Goldsmiths Hall in London, displayed from their own collection various silver items bearing “look alike” English marks. These included four Australian wine

labels by Alexander Dick,¹⁰ a Chinese export tankard (described as West Indian)¹¹ and a Canadian fork.¹² The exhibition catalogue listed these under “Non-Precious Metals and Fakes and Forgeries.” Today these items would, more benignly, be described as bearing “pseudo marks” rather than as being “fakes”. They are, in any case, freely sold “in the High Street” and at auction in England without attracting the attention of the Antique Plate Committee, whose task it is to adjudicate and act upon fakes and forgeries.

Robert Broad probably arrived in Sydney on board the *Sovereign* on 21 February 1831.¹³ In July 1832 he advertised that he had relocated his business from George Street and King Streets into Macdonald’s Buildings in George Street.¹⁴ Sydney Directories list him between 1833 and 1839 as a watchmaker, working jeweller and silversmith. The depression of the 1840s drove him into liquidation.¹⁵ However it is clear that in the early 1830s he had a business of some significance. His identifiable output,¹⁶ though not always easy to date precisely, strongly suggests he would have been capable of coming up with a fiddle pattern dessert spoon in 1833.

The inscription

To identify and validate inscriptions on an item of silver, provenance can be important.¹⁷ Knowledge of confirmed previous ownership and history helps in two ways. On the one hand, it may help to expose a dubious or misleading inscription which may have led to a false association with a particular person or event. On the other, provenance may reduce confusion or mis-ascription with an authentic inscription. For example, many unrelated families often used the same crest or motto.¹⁸

In our case we have the disadvantage of no useful provenance. The spoon was purchased in a rural NSW antiques shop, “unrecognised” by the vendor. We do, however, benefit from the inscription being a name and initials, and a relatively distinctive one at that. This helps identify



a single and specific individual to whom it refers. Who was the E.S. Ebsworth who was alive (presumably) in 1833?

The recipient

Searches suggest that the only candidate is Edward Stanley Ebsworth, who was born on 19 February 1832 at Port Stephens NSW¹⁹ to James Edward Ebsworth (c 1803–1874)²⁰ and Anne Coryndon (c 1800–1873)²¹ (plate 5). His sister Marion L. A. Ebsworth was born in 1833.²²

On 10 May 1856, he married Eliza Mitchell (1835–1911), daughter of Francis Mitchell, at St James’ Church²³ and they produced seven children. He was probably known by his second name, Stanley, as the silhouette indicates; Eliza is often listed in birth notices as Mrs E. Stanley Ebsworth, while C E Jenneret misnames him as Edmond Stanley Ebsworth.²⁴

Soon after the marriage, they transferred to Brisbane, where Stanley Ebsworth was manager of the Australian Joint Stock Bank.²⁵ He served on the committee of the Brisbane Hospital²⁶ and as auditor to the Municipal Council,²⁷ a position he resigned in June 1861²⁸ as he was returning to NSW. Two sons were born in Queensland, Edward on 27 March 1857 at the AJS Bank²⁹ and a second son, Francis Stanley, on 28 August 1859.³⁰ Francis Stanley died in 1862, aged just two years, at his maternal grandfather’s house in Woolloomooloo, by

2.

The engraving on the spoon
“E.S. Ebsworth 1833”

3.

The marks on the spoon of Sydney silversmith Robert Broad c 1833:
RB, king’s head, leopard’s head,
W, lion passant

which time his father is listed as the manager of the Joint Stock Bank in Maitland.³¹ On 24 September 1862 he began work as acting accountant at the Goulburn branch of the Bank of NSW,³² and in 1868 was appointed manager of its Bathurst branch.³³

Eliza gave birth to Emmeline in Surry Hills in 1862,³⁴ Louisa on 11 January 1866,³⁵ Millicent on 11 October 1867,³⁶ Alfred at the Bank of NSW at Bathurst on 2 August 1872³⁷ and Norman on 2 January 1878.³⁸ Tragically Alfred, was lost in the Boer War around 1901.³⁹ Stanley is described as a bank inspector in 1885⁴⁰ and banker in 1889.⁴¹

The connection with the White family of *Belltrees* near Scone in the NSW Hunter Valley is of historic and dynastic interest. All three of Stanley and Eliza Ebsworth’s daughters married sons of Francis White and Mary Hannah White (née Cobb). The eldest, Emmeline Eliza Ebsworth (1862–1926), married Hon. James Cobb White MLC on 13 April 1882 at St John’s Anglican Church,

The Archaeological Journal.

JUNE, 1832.

ON THE ASSAY MARKS ON GOLD AND SILVER PLATE.

EVERY person who is possessed of an article of gold or silver plate has most probably observed a small group of marks stamped on some part of it. Few, however, have, I believe, regarded them in any other light than as a proof that the article so marked is made of the metal which it professes to be, and that the metal itself is of a certain purity. And this is, in fact, the real ultimate object and intention of these marks; but besides this, the archaeologist can deduce from them other important and interesting information, as by them he can learn the precise year in which any article bearing these marks was made. It is, therefore, to these marks that I am about to direct attention, with a view to elucidate their history, and peculiar meaning.

There are no articles, in the manufacture of which such extensive frauds can be committed in so small a compass as in those made of the precious metals; and there are no frauds more difficult to be discovered by ordinary persons, since it is only by a minute chemical examination that they can be detected; and but few persons have either the skill or means to perform the necessary operation. This difficulty of detection, and the consequent probable escape from it, have at all times been an inducement to commit such frauds. This we find confirmed in the old story of Hiero's Golden Crown, which, upon the King entertaining suspicions of the fineness of the metal, was referred to Archimedes, who, being well skilled in mechanics and hydrostatics, used the means with which he was most familiar, and detected the fraud by means of the specific gravity of the metal instead of by a chemical analysis, at the time not understood.

Those early times do not concern our present inquiry,

VOL. II.

EBSWORTH FAMILY (Boon) 1840-50



ANNE C. EBSWORTH



JAMES E. EBSWORTH



MARION L. EBSWORTH



E. STANLEY EBSWORTH

S. Port Group P1

4.

Octavius Morgan's pioneering 1852 lecture to the Society of Antiquaries in London

5.

Silhouettes of James and Anne Ebsworth and their children Marion and (Edward) Stanley c 1840-1850 Collection: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

Darlinghurst; they lived at *Edinglassie* near Maitland.⁴² Louisa Maude Ebsworth (1866-1928) married Henry Luke White on 14 April 1887⁴³ and Millicent (1868-1954) married Arthur George White on 19 January 1893⁴⁴.

In the same year as Emmeline's marriage to James, on 22 April 1882 Edward Stanley Ebsworth purchased at auction the "Picturesque cottage" *Bronte House*, gloriously sited overlooking Nelson Bay, in the Municipality of Waverley (plate 6).⁴⁵ He died at *Bronte House* on 26 July 1901.⁴⁶

This Gothick house had been originally designed by Mortimer Lewis and adapted by Robert (later Viscount Sherbrooke) and Georgiana Lowe when they bought the 40-acre (16 ha) estate in 1845.⁴⁷ It passed through a number of hands before becoming the home of the Ebsworths and remaining in their family till acquired by Waverley Council in 1948.⁴⁸

Does what we know of E.S. Ebsworth match up with the Robert Broad dessert spoon bearing (apparently) Ebsworth's name and the year 1833? With respect

to the authenticity of the inscription, the interesting, but apparently nondescript name of E.S. Ebsworth, would be an unlikely choice of a spurious addition to add interest or value. A far better bet would have been the addition of the name of an early Australian governor, an heroic pioneer or similarly illustrious historical figure. The engraving appears consistent with originality (style and wear), and the year, 1833, is compatible with Robert Broad's capabilities. Thus it looks as if the spoon and engraving are probably original and contemporary with one another. But for what purpose?

Placing a name on the stem of a spoon is an unusual way to denote ownership. A far more common way is to engrave a crest, initials or occasionally a coat of arms on the end of the handle. A notable exception to this was George Campbell 1st Marquess and 7th Earl of Breadalbane (1851-1922), who struck his name (collector's mark) "Breadalbane" on items in his collection. In the case of spoons, it was on the back of the stem.⁴⁹

Good examples of this very unusual

practice are the eight Apostle spoons of London 1527, now in the Huntington Library at San Marino, California.⁵⁰ Breadalbane's mark had no initials or date and is found on numerous items. In this instance, straightforward ownership is denoted, not the commemoration of a specific event or occasion.

The gift of a single dessert spoon to a child is practical in terms of its size. It is immediately usable, unlike the larger table spoon, and does not lose its functionality in later life. Not surprisingly, silver dessert spoons were often given as christening gifts by godparents and relatives, frequently sporting the recipient's name and date of the occasion. E.S. Ebsworth was christened at Gloucester NSW on 29 April 1832 when just over two months old.⁵¹ However the engraved year on the spoon, 1833 (with no month or day), suggests, that if it was for Edward Stanley Ebsworth, it may have been a childhood gift (first birthday?) rather than a belated christening present; in either event, not an unreasonable proposition or gift.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion

6.

Joseph Bischoff (c 1832–1903), photographer, [Group of people outside Bronte House, Waverley, NSW], carte-de-visite photograph dated 1872. Bronte House is shown 10 years before Ebsworth's acquisition in 1882. Collection: State Library of NSW SPF/349, digital order number a089348



that the spoon was indeed originally purchased from Robert Broad's shop (or manufactory) in Sydney around 1833. It was then engraved with the recipient's name and the year, and given to the infant Edward Stanley Ebsworth as either a late christening or a first birthday present. It would be interesting to know who the donor was!



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(London) and can be contacted at jolyonwjames@gmail.com.

NOTES

- 1 J.M. Houstone, *Early Australian Silver – the Houstone Collection*, 2012, p 209, mark 2.
- 2 *The Archaeological Journal* June 1852 p 125. For biographical details of Morgan see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Octavius_Swinnerton_Morgan
- 3 See A. Grimwade, *London Goldsmiths 1697–1837, their marks and lives*, 3rd ed 1990 p 1.
- 4 Houstone *op cit* p.8.
- 5 *Ibid* pp 69–70.
- 6 *Ibid* p 86.
- 7 *Ibid* p 57; J M Houstone, "Was Dick guilty?" *Australiana* 23 no 4, November 2001 pp 111-115.
- 8 Houstone 2012 pp 309–311 for their marks.
- 9 See J. McGrew, *Manufacturers' Marks on American Coin Silver* 2004, J. Langdon. *Canadian silversmiths 1700–1900* 1998 reprint, S. Welz, *Cape Silver and Silversmiths* 1976; A. von Ferscht, *Chinese Export Silver 1785 – 1940*; W. Wilkinson, *The makers of Indian Colonial Silver* 2nd ed. 1987; W. Shepherd, *Gold and Silversmithing in 19th and 20th Century New Zealand* 1995 and many others.
- 10 *Touching Gold and Silver - 500 years of Hallmarks* 1998, p 119, item 218.
- 11 *Ibid* item 216
- 12 *Ibid* item 217
- 13 *Houstone* 2012 p 38.
- 14 *Sydney Gazette* 28 Jul 1832 p 1
- 15 *Houstone*, *op cit*. p 38; Sydney had several citizens named "Robert Broad", including a draper in George Street, so it is difficult to distinguish them.
- 16 For example *Houstone op cit* pp 38–40 and J.B. Hawkins *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver* 1990 vol 1 pp 94–97.
- 17 See G. Feigenbaum & I. Reist, *Provenance – an alternate history of art*, 2012.
- 18 *Fairbairns Book of Crests of the families of Great Britain and Ireland*. (re-published Heraldry Today, 1983), p 101, lists nearly 50 families using a lion's head as a family crest. Page 73 shows over 30 families using the motto *Semper Fidelis* (Always Faithful) and a similar number using *Semper Paratus* (Always Ready).
- 19 BDM NSW 738/1832.
- 20 *SMH* 27 Jan 1874 p 1;
- 21 *SMH* 24 Mar 1873 p 1.
- 22 BDM NSW 1265/1833; she died unmarried on 11 July 1911, *SMH* 12 Jul 1911 p 16.
- 23 *Empire* 12 May 1856 p 4. Her death notice wrongly lists her husband as E G. Ebsworth *SMH* 1 Jul 1911 p 1.
- 24 *Cumberland Argus* 5 Feb 1898 p 12.
- 25 *Moreton Bay Courier (MBC)* 20 Aug 1859 p 2
- 26 *MBC* 17 Jan 1857 p 2
- 27 *MBC* 5 Oct 1859 p 2.
- 28 *Courier* 11 Jun 1861 p 2
- 29 *MBC* 28 Mar 1857 p 2; *SMH* 10 Apr 1857 p 1.
- 30 *SMH* 10 Sep 1859 p 1.
- 31 *Empire* 21 Aug 1861 p 3.
- 32 *SMH* 7 Oct 1862 p 2.
- 33 *Queanbeyan Age* 16 May 1868 p 2. *SMH* 11 Dec 1868 p 5.
- 34 *SMH* 21 Nov 1862 p 10.
- 35 *SMH* 20 Jan 1866 p 7.
- 36 *SMH* 14 Oct 1867 p 1.
- 37 *Australian Town & Country Journal* 24 Aug 1872 p 29.
- 38 *SMH* 3 Jan 1878 p 1. He became an auctioneer in Scone, eg *Scone Advocate* 14 Feb 1911 p 3.
- 39 See <http://www.airgale.com.au/ebsworth/d4.htm#i19067> accessed 31 Mar 2016.
- 40 *SMH* 20 May 1885 p 2.
- 41 *SMH* 26 Feb 1889 p 2.
- 42 *SMH* 17 Apr 1882 p 1.
- 43 See <http://www.whosyerdad-e.com/families-w/individual.php?pid=l242&ged=white.ged#> accessed 31 Mar 2016.
- 44 *Australian Dictionary of Biography* ref <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/white-henry-luke-1435> accessed 29 March 2016 and <http://www.airgale.com.au/ebsworth/d4.htm#i19067> accessed 31 Mar 2016.
- 45 Bronte estate was advertised for sale in *SMH* 20 Apr 1882 p 4; *Freeman's Journal* 22 Apr 1882 p 11.
- 46 *SMH* 27 Jul 1901 p 1.
- 47 James Broadbent, *The Australian Colonial House*, Hordern House, Sydney, 1997, pp 216-8.
- 48 Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronte_House accessed 31 Mar 2016.
- 49 For a recent article on Breadalbane, see Colin Fraser, "Early Scottish silver collectors, Breadalbane" *The Finial* vol 25/02 2014, The Silver Spoon Club.
- 50 R.R. Wark, *British Silver in the Huntington Collection* 1978. Item 309 page 130, the Munro Apostle Spoons (total of 13 spoons). Also G.E.P and J.P How, *English and Scottish Silver Spoons – Mediaeval to late Stuart and pre Elizabethan Hallmarks on English Plate* 1953 vol II, chap III, section I, plate 8, p 26. In both instances the spoons are described as London 1527, by the maker "fringed S", who was subsequently identified as William Simpson see T.A. Kent, *London Silver Spoon Makers 1500 – 1697* 1981 p 9.
- 51 Australia Births and Baptisms 1792–1981 Family search <https://familysearch.org/ark:61903/1:1:XTC6-H26> accessed 31 Mar 2016.

The legend of Australian cedar furniture



Since opening an art gallery last year that includes a display of early cedar furniture, Bob Fredman has been fascinated to see that the furniture strikes a strong chord with nearly all visitors. They unfailingly comment on it being beautiful, and especially take an interest when they find out it is all Australian.

Keen to understand more of this phenomenon, here he attempts to provide an explanation. Hence it is not so much an exciting research paper as it is a compendium of facts, observations and thoughts.

1.

Stylised floral motif carved on the half-column of a cabinet, cedar, c 1830. As naturalistic motifs, such as the acanthus, palmette and lotus, got further and further from their sources, the designs became debased and less recognisable

2.

Stylised acanthus flower in profile carved on the back of a chiffonier, cedar, c 1840

3.

Stylised lotus bud carved on the back of a sideboard, cedar, c 1830

R.A. FREDMAN

This is the story of the creation of vernacular Australian furniture. Early Australian furniture is easily identifiable to the trained eye. While the basic shape of any furniture is largely dictated by its purpose, the application of various designs and materials can achieve a different end. The story has a happy ending because we started with a good design and found the materials and the craftsmen that created success.

Furniture designs in the western world have changed significantly with the march of time and some are remembered more favourably than others, so one has to be specific about which style is in focus. This paper refers to the furniture from the first half of the 19th century when the fashion was predominantly for the neoclassical style. While this period does not include the very first Australian-made furniture (if it still exists), it covers the period when the legend of Australian cedar furniture was made.



4.

Carved lion paw foot of a sofa, cedar, c 1840

5.

“Arabian tent” design carved on the door panel of a twin-pedestal sideboard, cedar, c 1830. This design is the forerunner of shield-panel doors



The neoclassical style reached its zenith during the Regency, William IV and Early Victorian periods in Britain. It was the culmination of years of development and was a very popular style in one form or another across Europe during this time. Australia was a British colony so the neoclassical style was inevitably going to be adopted by early Australian, British-trained, cabinetmakers for the construction of our furniture, from the simple to the grand.

The neoclassical style is a derivative of what is termed “classical” style, expressed in the architecture, sculpture and furniture of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. These civilisations placed great importance in developing shape, proportion and embellishment. The neoclassical embellishments that were used are the characteristics of their surviving architecture. It is well established that Egypt was the source of the palmette, animal paw foot, lotus flower, and the winged sun disc. Greece subsequently provided the column capital (in its various forms), scroll, entablature, pediment and acanthus leaf. Rome was the city of the arch, and more columns and pediments. Subsequent designers have also added their own embellishments, such as the acorn and rose, and the “Arabian tent” shape as used for cupboard door panels. Plates 1 to 5 demonstrate some of these.

Much has been written about neoclassical style and the role in Britain of designers such as Smith, King, Smee and many others. However there were three interesting names, well known but rarely acknowledged, that stand out in the annals

of time as key players in bringing the neoclassical style to the western world and thence Australia.

First was a Roman architect-engineer Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, who wrote the earliest recorded treatise on architecture in the first century BC, *De architectura*. In this book Vitruvius advocated that a structure must be *firmitas, utilitas* and *venustas* or solid, useful and beautiful. These are sometimes known as the “Vitruvian virtues”, and appropriately described the task of architects and hence furniture designers thereafter. His name today is associated with the ornate scrollwork (Vitruvian scrolls) that often forms a decorative “running wave” border around a frame. Vitruvius’ work was rediscovered in the 15th century and influenced Renaissance architects.

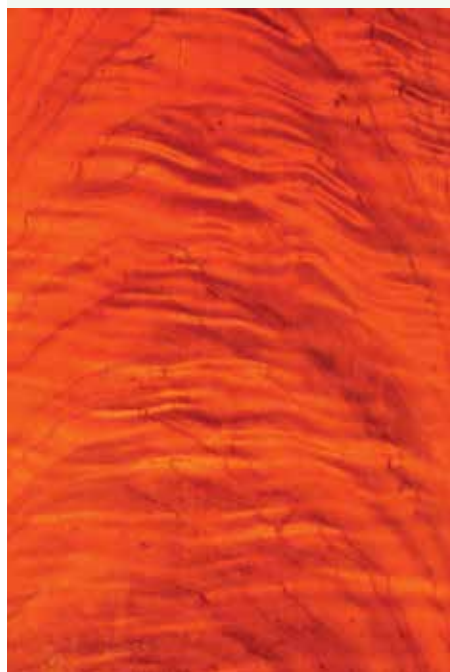
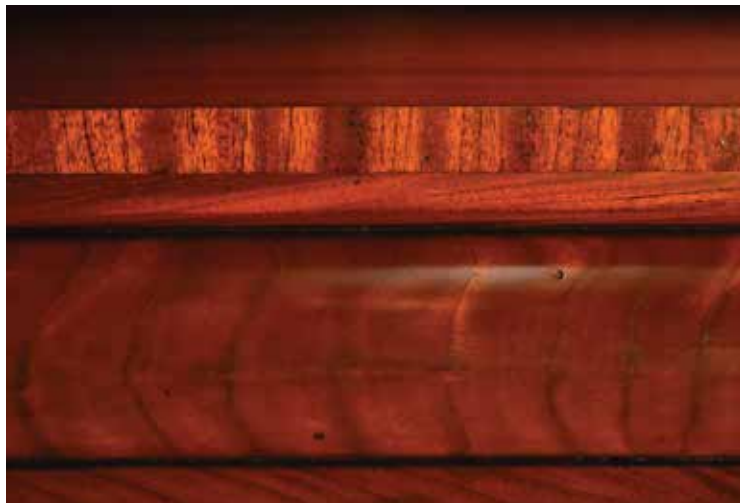
Secondly, in the 16th century Venetian architect Andrea Palladio (1508–1580) wrote a book in four parts called *The Four Books of Architecture*. What was unique in his work was the adaptation of the Greek temple front of columns and pediment to domestic dwellings. This style was soon adopted for furniture. His name is most familiar to owners of neoclassical furniture through the term “palladian pediment”.

Thirdly, a Frenchman named Napoleon made a major impact on furniture design. He is better remembered for his penchant for battles, and losing naval battles to an Englishman named Nelson. However he had an eye for culture and style and took a vast team of scholars with him on his Egyptian military campaign in 1798 in order to record and subsequently publicise

his cultural discoveries. This generated great interest in France for furniture in the Egyptian style. Because France had long been the arbiter of style in Europe, even during the wars, the style quickly permeated to Britain. The Englishman Thomas Hope, who had good French connections, published a book *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration* in 1807 in which he promoted the Egyptian style. This set the scene for many subsequent designers as the neoclassical style evolved.

Other styles coexisted in the period after Thomas Hope. Designer George Smith’s book *The Cabinetmaker’s and Upholsterer’s Guide* (1826) included illustrated options for decorating in the Greek, Egyptian, Etruscan, Roman, Gothic, and French styles. Aspects of all of these carried on, especially the Gothic, spearheaded by Pugin. However the Egyptian/Greek/Roman model known as neoclassicism has been by far the most enduring in Australia.

The neoclassical style had a relatively long existence in Britain and Australia after the start of the 19th century. For example, Thomas King’s pattern book *The Modern Style of Cabinet Work Exemplified* (1829) was reissued unaltered in 1862. In fact the Greek facade and embellishments were still being widely used on public buildings in Australia in the 1930s, to bring a sense of grandeur. Even in the 1960s, Prime



6. Ribbon cedar drawer fronts with scribed edges on a chest of drawers, c 1830

7. Ribbon cedar veneer used as crossbanding on a chiffonier, c 1830

8. Fiddleback cedar used on a door panel on a chiffonier, c 1850

Minister Menzies wanted our National Library to be “something with columns” so architect Walter Bunning obliged. This means that neoclassical style has been etched in our psyche through the familiarity of heritage. It partly explains why today people

find satisfaction in seeing old furniture with neoclassical architecture.

In the formative years of Australian cabinet making, the British and Irish settlers knew well the neoclassical style, but there were limitations on cabinetmakers that soon prevented their furniture being an exact replica of the mother country version. In reality, style was not of any use whatsoever in making a piece of furniture functional; it made it saleable. Consumer wealth did not abound in the colony, so the customer base (on average) dictated furniture that was more functional than overtly stylish.

With functionality more the order of the day, the application of the neoclassical style occurred in a comparatively restrained manner. This was also inevitable because of a shortage of skilled and willing labour such as specialist turners, carvers, moulders, chair makers, veneer cutters and polishers. Another issue in the beginning was the need to find and develop local materials because of the prohibitive cost of importing timber and metal fittings.

Australia was not unique in relation to style shifts that occurred during the migration of neoclassical furniture styles from Europe. Other British settlements such as in Canada, India, New Zealand or Singapore were in a similar situation and it is interesting to compare the differences in furniture from these colonies. In India and Singapore in particular the style was particularly influenced by the interpretations of indigenous woodcarvers. Canadian and New Zealand furniture is closer to the Australian version but dissimilar enough to

be identifiable, probably in part due to the different mix of cultures among the settlers. South African furniture is different again, with a Dutch influence.

The development of a distinct Australian style occurred due to factors mentioned previously and another that relates to one characteristic of the neoclassical style. In contrast to earlier and later furniture styles, the neoclassical style was characterised by broad expanses of flat surface. Without the fancy metal mouldings or the exotic veneers available in Europe to “beautify” and embellish these flat surfaces, Australian cabinetmakers had to rely on a simpler look. Fortunately we had the raw material to do it well.

Australia was blessed by having a tree at hand called red cedar (*Toona ciliata*, formerly *T. australis*). Cabinet makers found that carefully chosen cuts of this timber could almost match the quality of the king of timbers at the time, mahogany, and take a high polish. Finding these cuts was an art form that became the provenance of the sawyers.

The secret to understanding the potential for different cuts is to understand some basic botany. Parts of a tree that are under high stress develop areas of “compression wood”, or “reaction wood” as Americans term it. This wood has a high density almost double the tree average, and has an aligned cell structure that causes the timber to have intense lustre, or hue, when it reflects light. It can be caused by the weight of branches where they join the trunk, for example. Hence while most

9.

Possible cuts of “deadwood” cedar used as door panels on a clothes press, c 1840

10.

Disc of compression wood cedar under an overhead light

11.

The same disc of compression cedar turned 180 degrees under the same light



timber in a red cedar tree is generally light weight or low density, certain parts can have significant areas of compression wood. Cuts made from these areas will end up as stunning feature panels on furniture.

Importantly, other cuts of the same tree could also produce timbers that matched the stability of traditional European carcass timbers such as deal or red pine. The local industry very quickly shed the European model of using different timbers for different parts of a cabinet (for example), and adopted “full cedar” construction. Where the cuts of compression wood were spectacular but may have been too unstable to use in the whole, some cabinetmakers cut them into thick veneers which they glued on to other cedar to create “cedar on cedar” construction. This demonstrates the extraordinary versatility of the timber, which is possibly unique.

Some of the most prized timber for feature panels was compression wood displaying ribbon and fiddleback patterns. Ribbon cedar occurs where the timber

has broad stripes of alternating colour and lustre, parallel to the grain. It makes for beautiful chests of drawers (**plate 6**). Closer stripes made great crossbanding timber (**plate 7**). Fiddleback cedar, where there are finer stripes square to the grain, was used to make bespoke panels for doors (**plate 8**). Compression wood also made the very best chairs, where strength was required from thin members.

The curing of freshly cut timber was a key factor in the production of all good cabinet timbers, especially for compression wood. Lumberyards would have been heavily involved in the long and frustrating process of storing the timber for slow drying to prevent warping, shrinkage and cracking. Given that some early cedar furniture was successfully made using the most remarkable cuts of timber in the whole, it is likely that timber getters would have prized “deadfall” trees that had been very slowly cured through lying on the ground for many years (**plate 9**). Red cedar was safe on the forest floor, as it

does not burn and is largely impervious to degradation by moisture or insects.

The compression wood cuts that cedar trees produced have been a major contributor to the aesthetic qualities of early Australian furniture. Good cuts will change colour or lustre depending on light and viewing angle. Hence the appearance of the furniture is not static, but subtly changing with viewer location. The same piece of cedar compression wood, under the same overhead light, will look differently when rotated 180 degrees (**plates 10–11**).

Lustre can at times be found in other types of trees without compression wood. Huon pine (not a true pine) is a good example. Even true pines such as the kauri (**plate 12**) could produce spectacular cuts if the right sawyer was operating, and the right tree was in the dock.

Cedar found yet another valuable use when carving and turning timber was required. It was adequate for these purposes, albeit not suited to the finest carving or turning due to its open pore structure. This





12.

Pine drawer fronts with lustre on a chest of drawers, c 1900

did not deter our early cabinetmakers and many excellent examples abound.

Sawyers, bullockies, coastal ship operators, lumberyard merchants and cabinetmakers would have all collaborated to supply the type of timber that was needed for jobs. No doubt there was a degree of competition to get the best timber, as occurs in any free market. It is likely that some of the best overall quality cedar for cabinetmaking, and the earliest felled, grew in close proximity to the settlement in Sydney. These trees would have been slow-growing due to the relatively low rainfall and moderate heat in that part of the country. Slow-growing trees would be expected in general have denser timber, and a higher yield of compression wood due to their tendency to spread outward rather than upward. A number of surviving early pieces of furniture are testament to that quality.

As the timber getters moved north from the Sydney environs and up to the “big scrub” of the northern rivers of New South Wales, the trees they were cutting would have been faster growing as they were in rainforest environments, and dense cuts would have been less common. As time passed, the quality of available cedar on average declined and hence more and more furniture came to be made with low density timber. The use of “grain filler”, made with substances like powdered pumice, whiting or talc and pigmented to match the timber, was often necessary to fill the open pores before polishing this timber. A lot of furniture from the mid to late Victorian era displays this characteristic.

The abundance of red cedar, and its

suitability for most cabinetmaking, meant that alternative timbers tended not to be used other than when a different exterior look was sought. Certainly local timbers such as Australian rosewood, casuarina, and imported veneers such as mahogany and rosewood were used for this purpose from time to time, in which case they were veneered on to cedar.

Pine, used extensively in Europe as the carcass timber on furniture, was not used in the same manner in Australia in places where cedar was available. Pine would have been known to be vulnerable to white ant and borers, and cedar did an excellent job as a carcass timber anyway. I do not know of any examples made in Australia of cedar veneered on to pine.

Tasmania of course did not have a local cedar resource, but had plenty of other timbers from which to select. However cedar was apparently found to be so useable that it was ordered in sufficient quantity from the mainland to become the preferred timber for cabinet making in that state;. Presumably the Tasmanian lumberyards had agents in NSW who secured suitable supplies of the right quality and quality, because much early Tasmanian furniture contains good cuts of cedar. South Australia likewise imported cedar, while Western Australia relied on the hard local jarrah.

The impact on eastern Australia of having available local timber that was a suitable substitute for the imported timbers used in most other western countries can not be underestimated. Cedar was of immense value to the development of the Australian economy, as scarce funds

were not expended on shipping in large quantities of timber from around the world. Timber getting became a major employer that opened up the country and assisted the spread of farming, mining, shipping and other industries. I estimate that more than 90 percent of Australian-made formal furniture in the 19th century was made from red cedar, if the available texts are any guide. And furniture was by no means the only industry that used the local cedar, as the building industry also benefitted from having a suitable tree from which to make doors, windows, skirtings and architraves. Vast quantities of cedar trees were felled for these purposes, to the extent that the tree is now rare.

Red cedar has proven durable over time as a furniture timber in Australia. It made furniture that is now synonymous with age and quality. Similarly, the neoclassical style has been durable. The Greeks invented a style that has become almost timeless. I suggest that the unique combination of timber and style in our furniture has engendered Australians with a degree of attachment to it.

In summary, red cedar has enabled us to have and to hold (and to clean!) an inheritance that has become a local legend. This furniture is appreciated by many Australians, and is a joy to own and share.

All pieces illustrated are from the Cedar Light gallery, located in the Noosa hinterland of Queensland. Collectors who are Australiana members are welcome to visit by prior arrangement. For reservations, please email cedarlightgallery@gmail.com.

Bob Fredman is a civil engineer by profession, who runs a small cattle property in Queensland.



He has written numerous articles for *Australiana* on the analysis of 19th-century cedar furniture.

Colonial Rarities

and other Curiosities



Colonial cedar eight drawer chest of drawers c1860

Highly figured cuts of cedar, full barley-twist columns with tulip and inverted tulip turnings to top and bottom of columns, 19th-century patina.

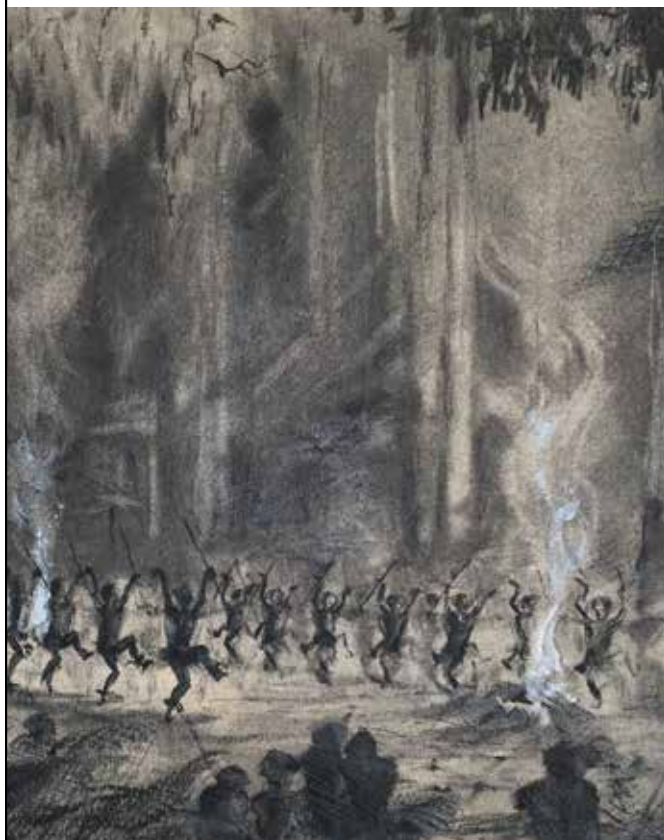
Estate item, having been in the same family for decades.

H 147.5 w 122 d 54.5 cm

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PETER
WALKER
FINE
ART

CONRAD WAGNER



CONRAD WAGNER (1818 - 1919)

Corroboree, Clarence River, 1871

Charcoal on paper

28 x 40 cm

Signed and dated lower left
(detail)

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The English Comic Opera Company of 16 artists arrived in Australia on the *Orsova* in March 1910. The concept of a touring group was the creation of J. C. Williamson, who purchased the franchise to stage the comic operas created by Gilbert and Sullivan and produced by Richard D'Oyly Carte. One of the principal touring singers was Nellie Kavanagh. Her boomerang was inscribed:

*PRESENTED TO MISS NELLIE KAVANAGH. BY A FEW OF THE MELBOURNE "GALLERY-GIRLS."
WITH LOVE AND BEST WISHES. 19.5.11.*

The silver mounts to this 19th-century Victorian stone-adzed boomerang were made by Oliver H. Forster, 204 Smith Street, Collingwood, a second generation member of the family silversmithing and jewellery business.

The journal *Table Talk* makes reference to the giving of presentation boomerangs by the "Gallery Girls" in its issue of Thursday 6 October 1910:



The pretty custom of the gallery girls handing down boomerangs as farewell souvenirs to departing favorites was repeated last Friday in the case of Miss Essie Perrin. They lower the flower-decked weapon by string, which is cut by one of the attendants, who then hands the trophy up. These girls call themselves the "first and last-nighters," and this idea of theirs is very graceful and charming and sends all their favored artists away with a typically Australian memento.

