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INDEX
An index to *Australiana* is available on the website.

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All articles appearing in *Australiana* are eligible for the annual Peter Walker Fine Art writing award sponsored by Peter Walker Fine Art, Adelaide

contents

DESIGN
Kylie Kennedy, Reconstruct Design 0402 417 871

PRINTERS
Scott Williams, Point Graphics 0414 242 244

COVER
The broad range of Australiana collected by Kevin Fahy includes a six-legged cedar sideboard, a bust of the explorer Robert O'Hara Burke, a Thomas Woolner plaster medallion of W C Wentworth, Tasmanian cedar chairs, scrimshaw teeth, pottery, paintings and prints. Photo JFL Imaging - 0401 134 488

Carmichael's George Street, Sydney 1828–1829

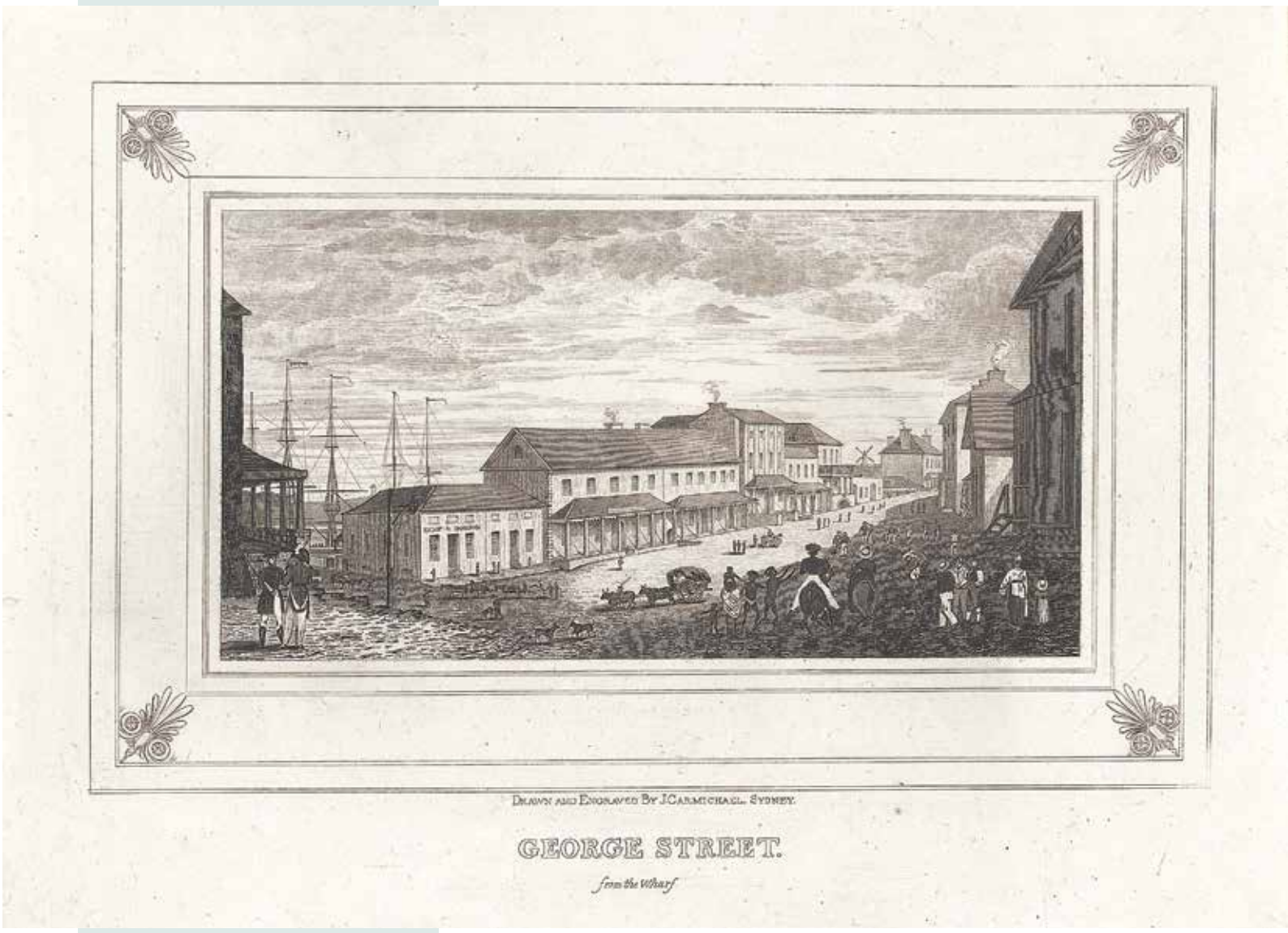
1.
John Carmichael (1803–1857), *George Street from the wharf*, 1829, from "Select views of Sydney, New South Wales. Drawn and engraved by John Carmichael", engraving. Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2006

Those familiar with the capital of New South Wales will know George Street, Sydney Cove and The Rocks. Karen Eaton deconstructs John Carmichael's engraving *George Street from the Wharf* and explores in detail its five main elements – George Street, the King's Wharf, the Commissariat Stores, Kemp & Dobson's chandlery, and the Australian Hotel – during the years 1828 and 1829.

KAREN EATON

The engraving, executed by the Edinburgh-born John Carmichael,[1] is a valuable record of Sydney in the late 1820s. Drawn sometime between July and December 1828[2] and focusing mainly on the buildings on the eastern side of Sydney's main thoroughfare, it was included in *Select Views of Sydney*, a set of six colonial scenes published by the artist in May the following year **(plate 1)**.[3]

Although titled *George Street from the Wharf*, neither the King's Wharf nor the waterfront can be seen. Only the masts



of two partly obscured vessels are visible, one a three-masted ship[4] the other a smaller two-masted brig.

Porters push hand-barrows; a bullock team and wagon, horses and carts make their way to and from the wharf while men stand about in the street, gesturing and conversing with one another. A woman and a young girl walk together heading south. A small dog barks and rushes at the horse of a slim-waisted woman riding side-saddle; one member of an Aboriginal family group gestures to her riding companion, an officer in uniform. Both riders carry on seemingly unperturbed.

To the left stand an officer and a soldier before the mostly obscured Commissariat Stores. A single street lamp appears nearby. On the opposite corner of the passage is Kemp & Dobson's chandlery, adjacent to the Australian Hotel.

A windmill can be seen in the distance, an almost whimsical structure erected above a wheat store and theatre, the vanes supporting multiple small sails. This is Barnet Levey's windmill, the subject of much comment at the time, considered a danger to adjacent buildings, and "likely to frighten the horses".[5]

George Street

Commencing at Dawes' Point, George Street provided access to the shipyards, wharves, and dockyard that had been built on the western edge of Sydney Cove. Along this shore, sandstone outcrops and little sandy beaches still remained. The Cove sometimes had as many as 15 or 20 ships riding at anchor. To the south of the King's Wharf was the smaller Liverpool Wharf. From about this point the land curved around across a muddy flat toward the point where the Tank Stream entered the Cove. The sea walls and landfill that gave Circular Quay its present form were constructed much later.

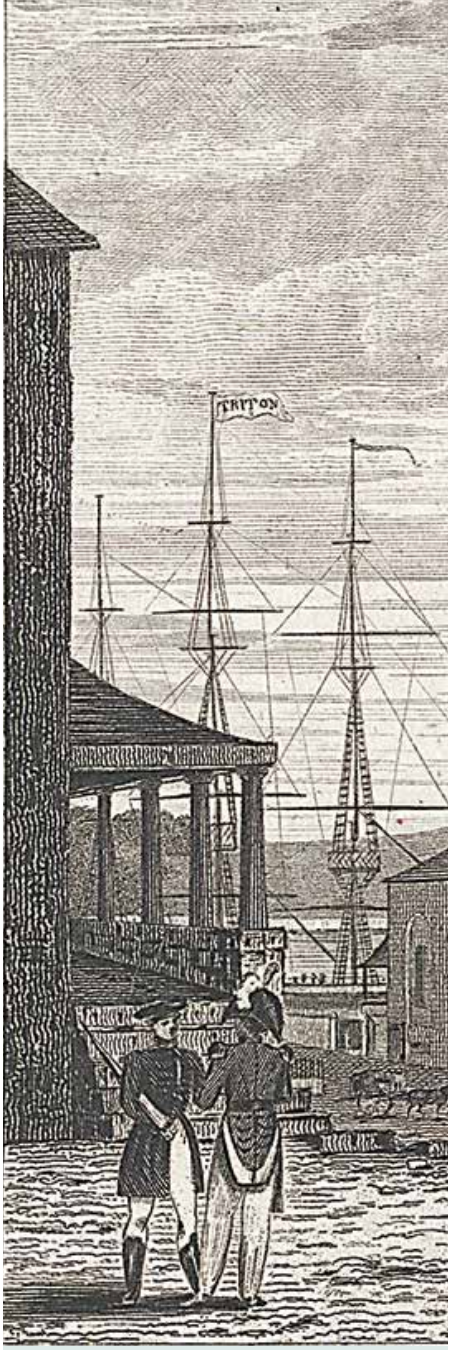
In an everyday scene, one could expect to see convict work-gangs garbed in Parramatta woollens or ragged grey and yellow jackets[6] shuffling past (iron shackles clanking, jangling), red-coated soldiers marching to fife and drum, thirsty sailors, strutting military officers, many Eora kinsfolk, canny top-hatted merchants, shipwrights, carpenters, porters, labourers, sturdy bullocks hauling creaking wagons, high-stepping horses (well-groomed), weary plodding nags, roaming mongrel dogs,[7] innkeepers, shopkeepers, housekeepers, milliners and dressmakers (with pretty bonnet ribbons), inky-fingered clerks (most all wet behind the ears),[8] harried servants, ambling butchers' boys and oyster sellers crying all day long, "Oysters HO! ALL FAT! fat and good oysters, HO! six-pence a pint."[9,10]

The King's Wharf

By 1828, after nearly four decades of use, the King's Wharf was in dire need of repair.[11] Originally known as the Hospital Wharf, it was in place when the Second Fleet arrived in June 1790. It later became known as the King's Wharf and after Victoria's accession in 1837 as the Queen's Wharf.[12] It was newly timbered in 1828, by public contract, but not before "a crevice formed by the evil juxtaposition of two planks" caused one gentleman to break his leg.[13] Very near the wharf was a brick building used for customs purposes[14] along with a number of other small, roughly built warehouses, utilised by merchants and shipowners.[15]

The wharf was rarely without a vessel alongside, labourers and seamen handling government and commercial cargoes. Van Diemen's Land traders landed scruffy "ragamufin" sheep, exchanging them on the spot for large sums of "Sydney paper money".[16] Letters, parcels, newspapers and accounts of ships sighted or confirmed lost were received at the wharf with gladness or despair. Newly arrived convicts were marched from the wharf along George Street to the barracks, on their way passing the market place, the well-used two-person pillory[17] and the gaol. Wide-eyed immigrants disembarked taking their first steps in a new country.[18]

Gunpowder was handled at the wharf "with the same indifference as



2.
John Carmichael, *George Street from the wharf*, 1829, detail of the Commissariat Stores

3.
Chinese export porcelain punch bowl with view of Sydney, c 1820. The Commissariat Stores are the four-storied yellow (sandstone) building on the right. Collection: Mitchell Library, gift from W.A. Little 1926

other merchandise"[19] and the volatile powder used in an offhand manner. In November 1829, a water-well was made near the King's Wharf using the expedient method of blasting the well-shaft, sending rock and stones flying high "into the very centre of the [George] street".[20]

Between jobs, porters smoked their pipes, stuffing them under their hats when not in use, and congregating about the entrance to the passageway on the lookout for work. The resulting jumble of horses, carts and men keen to be first to get a job "interrupted business". By July 1829 the traffic jams created such a nuisance that a "sort of fence, about two feet high with an iron palisade on top, was knocked up" near the Commissariat Stores to keep the passage clear.[21]

A considerable number of sailors "sufficient to man four or five whalers"[22] who had either been discharged or jumped ship loitered about, garbed in dark jackets and white "trowsers with a broad tuck at the bottom"[23] on the lookout for work.[24]

Thieving from the wharf and vessels in the Cove was rife. "Wharf-rogues" would assume an "air of business", go on board a vessel and pilfer what they could.[25] One fellow, convicted of stealing a pair of oars, was sentenced to three months' gaol, and on the "last day of his imprisonment to be publicly whipped from the Police-Office to the King's Wharf".[26]

Gruff and sinewy watermen, who rowed passengers to and from ships at anchor or to another wharf or bay, gathered about their boats on the sandy beach near the King's Wharf[27] calling in loud, raucous voices, "Boat your Honour? Boat Sir?" The watermen's fees, thought by many to be exorbitant, "one-dollar for less than 10 minutes!" caused discontent and eventually a system of licensing was introduced in early 1829.[28]

Impromptu fish-markets were often conducted on the wharf, buyers and sellers haggling over plentiful "snappers, bream and whiting". Often Aboriginal fisherwomen, sometimes together with their menfolk,[29] sold their catch at the wharf. In the early summer of 1828 when shoals of mackerel were running, the *Sydney Gazette* reported "Bungaree and others" were quick to take advantage and "nearly a boat load [of mackerel] was sold in little more than five minutes at the King's Wharf … at the rate of two-pence for a dozen".[30]

Commissariat Stores

The Commissariat Stores were two substantial, four-storey government warehouses, the first built in 1810 adjacent to the King's Wharf, the second erected in 1812 fronting George Street **(plates 2–3)**.

In 1932, the lower building, built 120 years before, was described thus:

> This stone building has a frontage of 142 feet with a depth of 60 feet, and consists of three floors and a basement. … A curious feature is that each stone still shows identification marks of the [convict] stonemasons in the shape of a cross, a number, initials, etc. The walls are … remarkable for their solidity. They are over two feet in thickness, the supporting beams 14-inch tough ironbark, roughly hewn, and the windows are protected by iron bars. The doors, staircases, and window frames are of cedar … the basement is flagged; the roofing slates are ¼-inch thick …[31]

By 1828, commercial enterprise supplied much of the colony's needs; however, the Commissariat Stores continued to fulfil a vital role.[32] The Commissariat controlled the purchase and distribution of foodstuffs (fresh and preserved), grains such as wheat and maize, animal fodder, clothing and

footwear, hardware, munitions, sailcloth and liquor.

With the arrival of each convict transport, so the need to organise food and clothing increased. Convicts living in Sydney "on store" were issued their rations on Saturdays on the "green opposite the stores".[33]

Tenders were issued usually for 12 months from 25 December each year. In 1829 tenders were put out for the supply of bread, in varying degrees of quality, for troops, ships of war, Colonial Hospital, Lunatic Asylum, the Gaol, *Phoenix* Hulk, Hyde Park Barracks, the Female Factory, and prisoners out of barracks.[34] Another tender, among other items, called for those constant necessities of administration, reams of paper (foolscap, letter, note and blotting), sealing wax wafers, black and red ink powders, lead pencils and red tape.[35] Another tender required 5,000 lb of tobacco for the Public Service.[36] Even the conveyance of troops and their families was put out to tender.[37] Equipment and supplies for expeditions, undertaken with the approval of the colonial administration, would be requisitioned from the Commissariat.

James Laidley, Deputy Commissary General, was assisted by upwards of 40 officers and clerks, as well as storekeepers, messenger boys, labourers and guards. The officers, together with Laidley, sat together in church every Sunday, always in the same pew.[38]

When both stores, "as sound and stable as when constructed … [having] well withstood the effects of time and weathering",[39] were demolished in 1939,[40] "barred windows, cellars and all",[41] they were the oldest existing government buildings in NSW.[42]

The "foundation stone" of the second Commissariat Store was set above the doorway and inscribed **(plate 4)**

> ERECTED
> IN THE YEAR 1812
> L. MACQUARIE ESQR
> GOVERNOR

After the buildings' demolition in 1939, this stone was displayed in front of the former MSB Building, now the Museum of Contemporary Art. The park is currently being re-designed and the stone is presently in storage.

4.
Photograph, façade of the second Commissariat Store with the "foundation stone" above the door, c 1907. Collection: Sir Herman Black Gallery, University of Sydney

Kemp & Dobson

Richard Kemp,[43] sailmaker, and Edward Dobson,[44] dealer, established themselves as ships' chandlers, sailmakers and commission agents in July 1828, leasing Isaac Nichols' warehouse[45] at £250 per annum **(plate 5)**. The Kemp & Dobson sign erected at this time did not remain in place for long.

Freight and passage was organised on behalf of ship owners and captains of vessels.

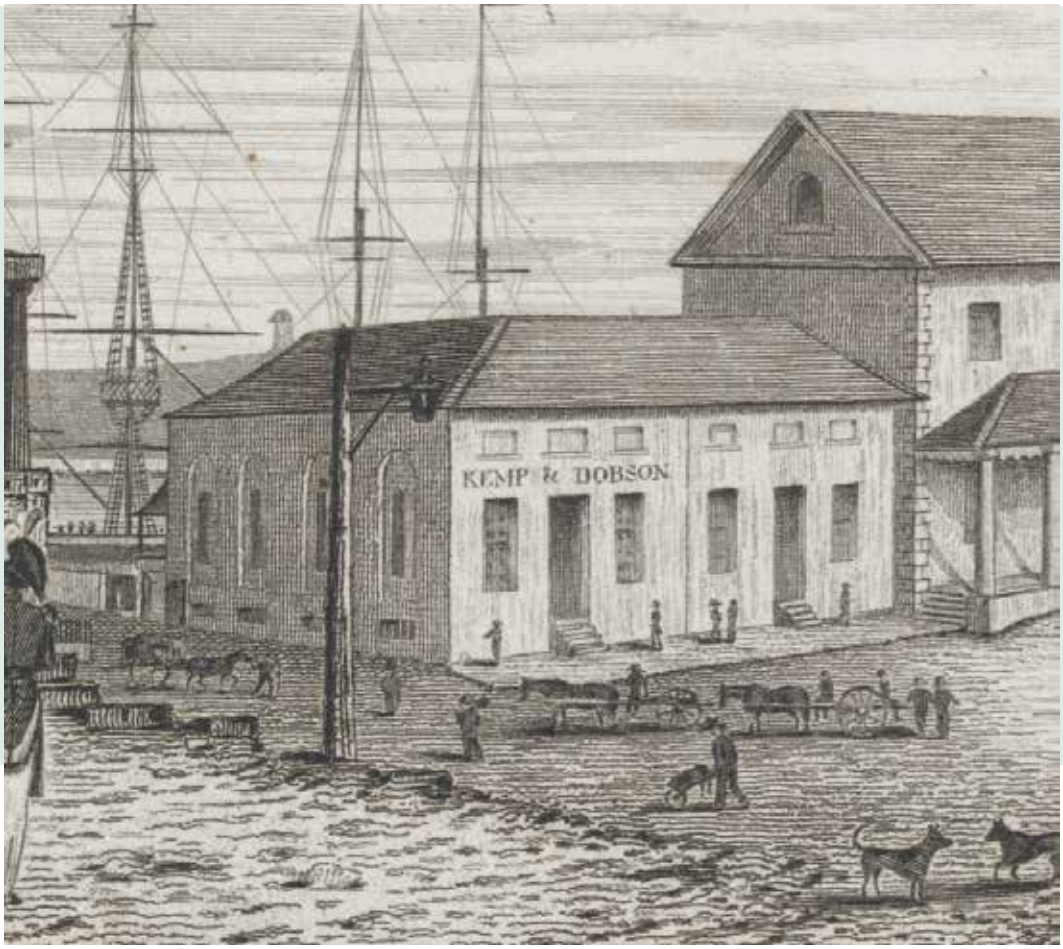
> FOR LAUNCESTON The Cutter *Currency Lass* John Taggart, Master … Will sail on Sunday. For Freight or Passage, apply to the Master on board or to Kemp & Dobson's Stores.[46]

All manner of paraphernalia useful to townsfolk and those intending to put to sea was offered for sale:

> Flinders & King's Charts of New Holland, nautical almanacs – gunpowder, shot in bags, muskets, pistols – tea, sugar, soap – mustard, pepper, vinegar – tobacco English cut, cheroots in boxes, snuff – India made clothes, flannel drawers, cotton shirts – curry combs and sheep shears.[47]

Kemp made sails, which he marked "R Kemp Sailmaker Sydney",[48] as well as tents, cots, hammocks, bags and flags. Also a shipowner, he sold the *Emma Kemp* a "pretty little cutter"[49] named after his eldest daughter, by auction at the wharf in May 1828.[50]

After an enthusiastic beginning Kemp & Dobson's partnership ended in acrimony in March 1829.[51] Kemp abruptly quit the premises and his name on the sign was removed, Dobson's servants also hauled down another sign



5.
John Carmichael, *George Street from the wharf*, 1829, detail of the Kemp & Dobson ships' chandlery

"Richard Kemp, Sailmaker" from over the sail-loft. The following month, Dobson sold off an "extensive assortment of general merchandise".[52] In June, he returned the keys to Kemp with a note stating he had no longer any occasion for the same.

However, the rent due for the quarter remained outstanding and both refused to pay. The landlord Isaac Nichols Jnr[53] first applied to Dobson. Dobson referred Nichols to Kemp, who in turn referred him to Dobson. The affable but by now frustrated Nichols seized a set of stout chain cables in lieu of unpaid rent from Dobson's remaining stock. By September, Andrew Charlton of Van Diemen's Land had taken the premises "for the purpose of commencing as a Corn Factor and Flour Dealer".[54]

The matter of Nichols v Kemp & Dobson came before the court in December 1829, where Nichols, with some candour, revealed that a wager of "a bottle of wine" was pending between him and Dobson on the result of this action, and that he had "offered Dobson a bet of one-dollar" he would lose.'[55] Dobson lost.[56,57]

Australian Hotel

The solid stone building that became the Australian Hotel[58] **(plate 6)** and the adjoining chandler's warehouse were originally the property of Isaac Nichols, Australia's first postmaster.[59] These buildings were demolished in 1889 to make way for a fire station.[60] Their remnant foundation remains beneath First Fleet Park, Circular Quay.[61,62]

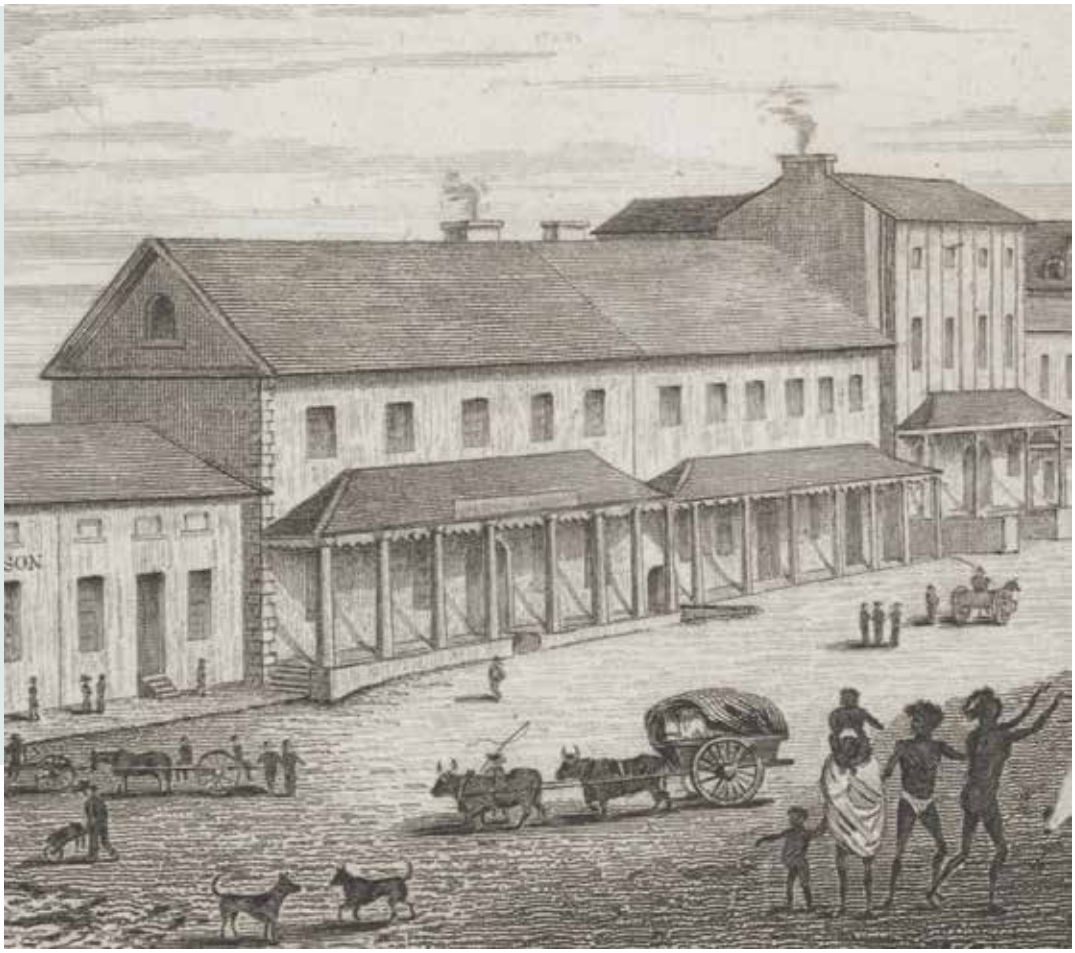
George and Ann Morris opened the Australian Hotel in 1824. Morris, a ticket of leave man, and his steadily increasing family lived on the premises[63] where a meeting room was set up for merchants, ships' captains, owners of vessels and traders.

> … to facilitate the objects of trade and commerce [Morris has] … prepared and fitted up his large room with every convenience as a temporary Exchange, operating in the morning till three in the afternoon with an annual subscription of five-dollars.[64]

During Morris's time and for many years after the Australian Hotel was referred to as the "Chamber of Commerce" or simply the "Exchange".

In April 1828, Morris's eldest daughter, 16-year-old Eliza,[65] married the dashing 27-year-old William Barkus.[66] Only a year before, Barkus, then in command of HM schooner *Alligator,* "discovered the rivers between Soletarre (sic) Isles and the River Tweed" later named the Clarence and Richmond.[67] By the time of his marriage, Barkus was master of the "coppered and copper fastened"[68] cutter *Currency Lass* which plied between the King's Wharf and Van Diemen's Land.[69]

In February 1828 the lease for the busy hotel was renewed at a rental of £950 per annum.[70] By August that year Morris and Ann had moved to the Crown and



6.
John Carmichael, *George Street from the wharf*, 1829, detail of the Australian Hotel (left) and chandlery (right). The Australian Hotel was originally built as Isaac Nichol's house and although the two premises look similar, have the same roof line and abut one another, the chandlery was erected three years later, originally as Mary Reibey's house. The hotel has a ramp and a low arched door for rolling barrels into the cellar

Anchor leaving Barkus and Eliza to run the Australian Hotel. Eliza, who arrived free with her mother and sibling in 1818, had some knowledge of running a tavern, having worked from childhood in her parent's former inn, the Greyhound Inn in Castlereagh Street.

Barkus provided "genteel lodgings" for ships' captains and others, stabling for horses, soups and cold luncheon and the usual ale, wine and spirits. The departures and destinations of vessels were displayed in the "Coffee Room" and an open Registry Book was kept for seamen seeking work. Tradesmen were invited to "submit their cards for the convenience of captains of vessels who may seek their services."[71]

When a death occurred requiring the attention of the Coroner, inquests were held as near to the location of the fatal accident as possible, the corpse being laid out for close examination. Being situated so near the Cove and the wharf, the Australian Hotel had become the venue for numerous coroners' investigations.

An inquest was held on 2 February 1829[72] in the Australian Hotel's largest room, before a Coroner's Jury "composed of respectable householders"[73] and a large crowd of sombre onlookers. The evidence revealed the details of a sudden squall, an upturned boat, the rescue of a child and his father's servant, and the tragic drowning near Pinchgut Island, of Robert Howe,[74] Government Printer and editor of the *Sydney Gazette.* Howe drowned on Thursday 29 January, after which "the bells of Saint James' and Saint Philip's tolled the entire of Friday and Saturday [and on Friday] … the flags of the several vessels in harbour were hoisted half-mast high."[75]

A lover of all things nautical, Barkus proposed forming an "Australian Aquatic Racing Club" in February 1830.[76] However, in May that year he returned to sea as master of the *John Bull* intent on making his fortune in the "sperm whale fishery".[77] Some 18 months later, the John Bull was sighted and reported to be carrying 900 barrels of sperm oil. The ship was never seen again, its fate a mystery.

Then in 1837, accounts were received of the gruesome execution of Barkus and his crew on "Pleasant Island" and of an island chief, the proud custodian of a sextant and broken chronometer believed to have belonged to the *John Bull.*[78] It turned out the ruthless murderers were desperate Irish convicts, previously escaped from Norfolk Island, determined to avoid recapture at any price.

The Rocks

On the western side of George Street the steep steps, crooked lanes and narrow twisting streets of The Rocks gave access to higgledy-piggledy housing where porters, labourers, boatmen and their families, universally thought of as the "lower orders"[79] sought accommodation in rough and ready lodgings. Opposite the Australian Hotel were yet more taverns, a chronometer maker, wine merchant, and the pastry cook Stephen Bax, renowned for his delectable fare (mutton pies, apple tarts, custard cups) and well baked ship-biscuit guaranteed to "keep in all latitudes".[80]

Karen Eaton is descended from several convicts and has worked for a major merchant bank, import / export firms, a leading dairy co-operative and the NSW Education Department. During the 1980s, together with her husband, she worked a beef cattle property. Since her retirement Karen has indulged her passion for colonial history, particularly in relation to Sydney. Last year she contributed a fresh biography of John Carmichael, which won the Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award for the best article published in *Australiana* in 2015. A keen photographer, mostly of Australian native flora, she lives on the NSW North Coast and can be contacted at eaton.karen@icloud.com.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Dr Wayne Johnson of the former Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority helpfully provided information on the Commissariat Store inscribed stone and Barnett Levey's windmill.

Thanks to Michel Reymond for his helpful research relating to John Black Carmichael.

NOTES

Abbreviations

SG *Sydney Gazette*
SH *Sydney Herald*
SMH *Sydney Morning Herald*
Aust *The Australian*
SM *Sydney Monitor*

1 See Karen Eaton, "John Black Carmichael (1803–1857), artist and engraver" *Australiana* vol 37 no 4, November 2015, pp 8–20.
2 Kemp & Dobson signage first put in place July 1828. *Sydney Gazette* commented on Carmichael's drawing on 10 Dec 1828 p 2.
3 *SG* 10 Dec 1828 p 2, *SG* 2 May 1829 p 3.
4 Carmichael included a personal detail; the three-masted vessel is flying a pennant with the name *Triton*, the ship that bought him to Sydney in 1825.
5 Wayne Johnson, *Barnett Levey's Windmill Theatre, George Street (1829),* unpublished report. Building erected by Barnet Levey (1798–1837) in 1826, demolished 1830.
6 *SG* 9 Jan 1828 p 2.
7 *SG* 27 Oct 1829 p 2. Dogs roaming the streets were an "abominable nuisance" causing "great peril" for those on foot and horseback.
8 *SG* 19 Feb 1829 p 2.
9 *Aust* 1 Aug 1828 pp 2-3.
10 *SM* 3 Mar 1829 p 3.
11 *Monitor* 3 Mar 1829 pp 3-4.
12 Ian Hoskins, *Sydney Harbour: a history*, UNSW Press 2009.
13 *Aust* 8 Feb 1828 p 2.
14 *SMH* 8 Oct 1897 p 3.
15 *Monitor* 12 Apr 1828 p 5.
16 *Monitor* 24 Jan 1828 p 7.
17 *SMH* 8 Jul 1882 p 3.
18 *Monitor* 3 Mar 1829 pp 3-4.
19 *Monitor* 10 Jan 1828 p 8.
20 *SG* 28 Nov 1829 p 2.
21 *Aust* 31 Jul 1829 p 3, *SG* 9 Jan 1828 p 2.
22 *Aust* 12 Aug 1828 p 2.
23 *SG* 7 May 1828 p 4 from description of a stolen garment, "made sailor fashion".
24 *Aust* 12 Aug 1828 p 2.
25 *Monitor* 14 Feb 1828 p 4.
26 *SG* 25 Sep 1829 p 3; *Aust.* 25 Sep 1829 p 3; Ancestry: NSW, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, 1818-1930 George Williams, came *City of Edinburgh*.
27 *SMH* 8 Oct 1897 p 3.
28 *SG* 19 Sep 1829 p 3; *Monitor* 6 Mar 1828 p 5, 26 May 1828 p 5; *SM* 17 Feb 1829 p 8.
29 Grace Karskens, *The Colony A History of Early Sydney*, Allen & Unwin 2009, p 436.
30 *SG* 10 Nov 1828 p 2.
31 *SMH* 3 Sep 1932 p 9.
32 The Sydney stores were a distribution point for depots at Port Macquarie, Parramatta and Liverpool.
33 *Cootamundra Herald* 3 Jun 1882 p 2.
34 *SG* 17 Sep 1829 p 1.
35 *Aust* 9 Jun 1829 p 3.
36 *SM* 12 Jan 1829 p 3.
37 *SG* 17 Sep 1829 p 1.
38 *SM* 29 Sep 1828 p 4.
39 *SMH* 3 Sep1932 p 9.
40 Replaced by the Maritime Services Board building now housing the Museum of Contemporary Art.
41 *SMH* 1 Jan 1817 p 6.
42 *SMH* 8 Jan 1930 p 13.
43 Richard Kemp (c1793 GB–1846 Sydney NSW) came free *Atlas* 1819. Prior to 1828 Kemp and John Brown traded as "Brown, Kemp & Co, Kings Wharf" *Monitor* 13 Aug 1827 p 3; their partnership amicably dissolved Jul 1828. *SG* 7 Jul 1828 p 1, *SG* 2 Jul 1828 p 3 partnership Kemp & Dobson.
44 Edward Dobson (c1800– ?). Ancestry: 1828 Census: dealer, Castlereagh Street, came free *Surry* 1823.
45 Warehouse originally built in 1808 by Isaac Nichols at the same time as the house, which later became the Australian Hotel; warehouse occupied by sailmaker John Atkinson from 1823 *SG* 21 Aug 1823 p 3; *SG* 4 Jul 1828 p 3 Kemp & Dobson.
46 *Aust* 5 Sep 1828 p 1.
47 *Aust* 16 Jul 1828 p 1.
48 *Colonist* 9 Jan 1839 p 2. In 1839, when the brig *Isabella* was plundered by a Spanish vessel the villains were pursued by a US sloop-of-war to the Azores and thence to Teneriffe, where the "pirates" were apprehended. The master and crew were convicted, in part, on the evidence that sails found on board were marked "R Kemp Sailmaker Sydney".
49 *SG* 14 Feb 1827 p 2.
50 *Monitor* 5 May 1828 p 2.
51 *SG* 21 Mar 1829 p 3.
52 *SG* 16 Apr, 25 Apr 1829 p 4.
53 Isaac David Nichols (1807–67), son of Isaac Nichols (1770–1819).
54 *SG* 13 Oct 1829 p 3.
55 *SG* 17 Dec 1829 p 2.
56 Macquarie University: Decisions Superior Courts of NSW Kemp v Dobson. http://www.law.mq.edu.au/research/colonial_case_law/nsw/cases/case_index/1829/kemp_v_dobson/ (accessed 4 Jul 2015).
57 In 1829 Nichols was said to receive £1,500 a year in rent for his George Street premises and hoisting gear at the wharf, *SG* 27 Oct 1829 p 2.
58 The Australian Hotel continued as a public house until the 1870s when it became variously a warehouse and retail premises.
59 *Monitor* 13 Aug 1827 p 3.
60 *Truth* 29 Mar 1903 p 8.
61 Mary Reibey (1777 GB–1855 Sydney) at one time occupied the building adjacent to the Australian Hotel, which from 1827 was in the possession of the Scotch Australian Company and demolished in 1889.
62 NSW Office of Environment & Heritage: Godden Mackay Logan, *First Fleet Park The Rocks, Conservation Management Strategy, Final Report*, November 2009.
63 *SG* 12 Aug 1824 p 2, Australian Hotel.
64 *SG* 21 Nov 1825 p 2, Exchange.
65 Eliza Sarah Ennever Morris (UK 1811 – UK 1840). Ancestry: 1828 Census: came free *Friendship* 1818 with two daughters, one dying during the voyage; Biographical Database of Australia (BDA): person ID: B#30001648101 and U#30005036501. Eliza and William Barkus had one child, Ann, (2–6 Jan 1829).
66 William Barkus (c1801– <1839). Ancestry: 1828 Census: came free *Mary Hope* 1827.
67 *SG* 27 Mar 1830 p 2.
68 *Aust* 2 Apr 1828 p 2.
69 *Aust* 2 Apr 1828 p 2.
70 *Aust* 20 Feb 1828 p 3.
71 *SG* 20 Aug 1828 p 4.
72 *Aust* 3 Feb 1829 p 3.
73 *SM* 2 Feb 1829 p 8.
74 *SG* 3 Feb 1829 p 2.
75 *Aust* 3 Feb 1829 p 3, *Monitor* 2 Feb 1829 p 8. Robert Howe was often at odds with others, and not "esteemed for his inconsistencies". Nevertheless, Howe was acknowledged to be a "considerate master, indulgent husband [and] fond father", his death, aged in his early 30s, was a shock and genuinely lamented.
76 *SG* 11 Feb 1830 p 1.
77 *Aust* 14 May 1830 p 4; *SM* 25 Jan 1832 p 2; *SH* 23 Jan 1832 p 3; *Aust* 5 Sep 1837 p 2, 9 Mar 1838 p 3.
78 *Aust* 14 May 1830 p 4.
79 *SM* 26 Oct 1829 p 2.
80 *Monitor* 8 Jun 1827 p 7, 6 Mar 1828 p 1, *Aust* 26 Dec 1829 p 3.

My Uncle Kev

JULIEANNE WATSON

We are so lucky to have such a beloved, wonderful and extraordinary uncle, brother, great uncle and, of course, friend!

Our family are all so touched that the Australiana Society has honoured Kev in this way and we are sure that watching over us this evening he is thrilled! You call him Kevin Fahy AM … but we call him Uncle Kev, WLJ (Kev With the Lolly Jar).

My parents were not able to be here tonight. Kev had three sisters. Judy, my mother, is the last surviving one and Vincent, my father went to school with Kev. I cannot tell you how honoured and grateful they feel about tonight.

The Society meant so much to Kev. It was…and is…such an important band of pioneers with whom to share his passion. But it was more than this: there were great friendships and I can see many of you here tonight.

All of you know that he was so generous in sharing his knowledge of the Australian decorative arts. "John, have you seen this?" "Michel, have you read that?" "Andy, have a look at this piece!" "Julieanne here's a book" (usually bought on remainder… for Kev ALWAYS liked a bargain!) "and why don't we go to this exhibition, or auction…and I can get a car space!"

Family were very important to Kev and he would ring us many times a week, always inquiring how the kids were going, always being there for Sunday lunch, popping in for a chat and a glass of a good red!

I feel so lucky that I was the eldest of the next generation and the only girl in the family, because Kev brought me along to almost everything that interested him for as long as I can remember.

Off we went, saving derelict houses from demolition with fellow enthusiasts like Rachel Roxburgh. Next we went hunting through white elephant stores in Chatswood, visiting antique shops in Woollahra, viewing auction houses down at The Rocks…always looking for undiscovered treasures and of course, the bargain.

Kevin found objects and furniture that would end up in such places as *Old Government House* or *Experiment Farm*. It was always the excitement of the discovery, the human interest of the unfolding story.

When I had a high school project on Parramatta it was Uncle Kev who showed me how to do the research, what books to read (for the younger ones here, there was no such thing as the Internet, Google or Wiki) and then I would get a personal tour, topped off by meeting the curators and getting behind the scenes! We would go to open houses and volunteer as guides: there was *Camden Park*, and our houses of state, through The Australiana Fund (I know that Kev would be as pleased as Punch that the wheel has come full circle, with my good fortune to be working at The Fund!).

Kevin fostered and encouraged my interests at every step – to study fine arts and Australian history, and even when I was studying in London he would write often (again, for the young people this was by aerogramme, not email!). However he would also give me research tasks: "Julieanne could you just pop around to the V & A and find something for me?" I was so lucky to be immersed in all his knowledge and enthusiasm! Spending time with Kev was to be transported into another world!

Many of you will know that he was also mischievous – he had the Irish twinkle in his eye – apart from those bargains there were always deals to report and scandals to recount!

Above all, he was a consummate storyteller. His anecdotes were always entertaining and informative, often fascinating, sometimes scurrilous, and told in perfect style. None of this prevented the Governor of NSW, Marie Bashir, from saying that Kevin Fahy was a National Treasure!

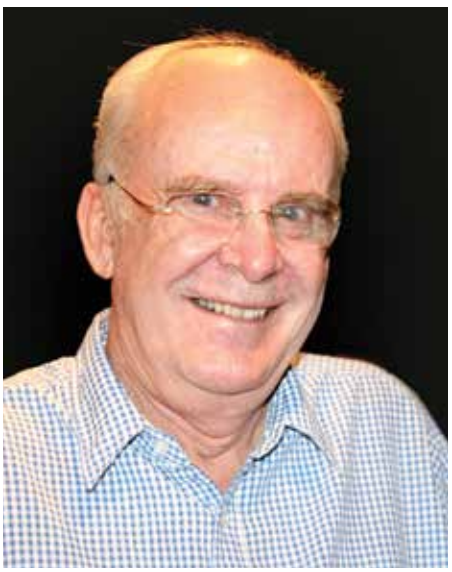
Kevin was an inspiration to our family in how he never once complained after he broke his back skiing. My father was there when Kev took his first steps… after the doctors had said that he would never walk again. Dad always said that he walked purely on courage.

What a man, and what an uncle. I miss Kevin so much, and I miss his phone calls…but maybe not the 11 pm ones!

Julieanne Watson majored in Australian History and Fine Arts for her BA at Macquarie University , then completed a Masters in Museum Studies at the University of Sydney. She worked as a volunteer at MAAS and SLM and is now assistant to The Fine Art Advisor at The Australiana Fund. She and her husband John have four sons. She is a long time member of the Australiana Society and can be contacted at watsonjmt@gmail.com.

KEVIN FAHY (1932–2007)

Friend, patriarch, storyteller, scholar



1.
Kevin Fahy, 2004. Photo John Wade

2.
Kevin's father, Francis Fahy, 1920s

The idea of an annual series of lectures named after Kevin Fahy came from our secretary, Michael Lech. The obvious subject for the first, held in Sydney on 12 March, was Kevin himself. *Australiana* editor and foundation member John Wade chose to talk about him as a friend, patriarch, storyteller and scholar, to round out his story for those who knew him only from his publications.

JOHN WADE

Kevin Fahy is a revered authority on Australian decorative arts and domestic interiors, a prodigious researcher and author on the subject without equal **(plate 1)**. He was, however, much more than that. He opened my eyes to many things, and when I think of him now, it brings a tear.

This is not an authoritative biography. I have flipped through Kevin's publications, drawn on my imperfect memory, and sought reminiscences from his family and friends. Fortunately, Jim Bertouch had the forethought to interview Kevin in depth in 2004; we published an edited version of that oral history in *Australiana*.[1]

Kevin was self-deprecating and neither bragged nor volunteered information about himself unless something triggered it. I discovered that his first home was the Victoria Hotel in Annandale because we drove past it one day and he casually mentioned it. Nevertheless, I hope to explain what shaped Kevin's interests and how Kevin came to be such a force in the study of Australiana.

Friend

It seems incredible that Kevin Fahy died nine years ago, on 2 February 2007. For some months, he had not been his ebullient self, but it never occurred to me that he would die so suddenly, nor that I would be asked to write about him.[2] He was my mentor, colleague and good friend for 30 years.

His qualities were obvious: cheerful, charming, optimistic, curious, enthusiastic, generous, kind, helpful, modest, amusing and well-informed. And though he always walked with a cane, he never, ever, complained about his disability.

Kevin excelled at telling amusing stories – often. He always asked if you'd heard a story before, but I never admitted it because there was always some new embellishment. His nephew Mark Jones – who regarded Kevin as a father figure – alleged that Kevin recited his Patrick White story 46 times.

The story goes like this. The imperious Dame Helen Blaxland (1907–89) was dining with novelist Patrick White, when she observed in her cavalry lisp, "Patwick, your books are so hard to wead." White replied, "Yes, Helen, and they are so hard to wite."

Kevin had a phenomenal knowledge and a capacity to link one story with others. Jenny and I once drove Kevin to visit collectors Carl Gonsalves and Caressa Crouch for lunch. Jenny had just organised the naming of a small park after a dancer. That set Kevin off; all the way from Hunter's Hill to Palm Beach, each suburb would remind him that some pillar of society had kept a

mistress there. He always had the ability to see the history that's all around us.

Only once did I trump Kevin's knowledge. James Broadbent had approached Kevin about his 2003 exhibition *India, China, Australia*. They were discussing the Chinese artefacts at Captain John Piper's splendid *Henrietta Villa* at Point Piper, and Kevin dredged up from his phenomenal memory that at the clearing sale in 1827, two Chinese figures stood in the dome room.

"What a pity", I casually added, "that one had lost its head." I couldn't withstand their withering looks, and had to admit that I'd read it by chance in *The Australian* – that's *The Australian* of 6 June 1827 – just the day before.[3]

Frank Fahy and the Wentworth Hotel

Kevin's father, Francis Joseph Fahy[4] was born in Sydney in 1895, the son of James (1856–1928)[5] from County Clare and Kate from Tipperary (c 1851–1938).[6] Frank **(plate 2)** started work as a porter at the prestigious Wentworth Hotel in Lang Street, Sydney about 1910.

At a time when many people looked

3.
The Wentworth Hotel, Church Hill, Sydney, as rebuilt 1889–90. Illustrated advertisements appear in the Sydney newspapers from November 1890

4.
The New Wentworth Café and Ballroom, 1920. *Sydney Mail* 31 Mar 1920 p 28

5.
Kevin's mother, Mary Ellen ("Nellie") Fahy, 1920s

6.
Professor John Smith, *Drummoyne House*, c 1855, photograph. Collection: Mitchell Library

7.
The Grange, Bathurst. Kevin's mother took her children to stay here with her sister in 1942. In those days the verandahs may not have been bricked up.
Photo John Wade 2016

8.
Kevin in his *Riverview* school uniform with sisters Judy and Helen

9.
The south-western part of the Quadrangle, University of Sydney, housing the Archaeology department, Nicholson Museum and the then Fisher Library, now Maclaurin Hall

to England for history, professed that Australia had none and avoided any mention of a convict ancestor, Kevin thrived on Australia's past, and discovered, for example in his father's workplace, a vivid history.

In 1854, Miss Onges opened a boarding house here in the two-storey dwelling built in 1827, which had once housed the office of *The Australian* newspaper, and which she called Wentworth House. Miss Onges advised that

> FAMILIES from the Hunter contemplating a visit to Sydney, will find every comfort in the way of BOARD and APARTMENTS, on moderate terms, at Miss Onges, Church Hill, opposite St. Philip's, Wentworth House, No. 3.[7]

Mary Hayes purchased the boarding house in 1881,[8] redecorated and renamed it the Wentworth House Family Hotel.[9] When the hotel burned down on Christmas Day 1888, two young Irish boarders died. Mrs Hayes re-built it with an elaborate High Victorian facade designed by architects Tappin, Dennehy & Smart at a cost of £12,000. Her new four-storey Wentworth Hotel opened in 1890 **(plate 3).**

Donald[10] and Hannah Maclurcan, who had run various hotels in Queensland, took over the hotel in 1901.[11] Mrs Maclurcan was renowned for her cookery book, *Mrs Maclurcan's Cookery Book*, first published in Townsville in 1898 where she and her husband ran the Queen's Hotel.[12] Mrs Maclurcan was a prolific self-publicist. Later editions reprint a polite thank-you letter from the wife of the Governor of Queensland, Lady Lamington, to whom she had sent a copy.

Mrs Maclurcan expanded and improved her hotel. She opened the new Wentworth Café and Ballroom in 1920 **(plate 4)**.[13] The NSW Government booked her entire hotel to accommodate the party of Edward Prince of Wales, later Edward VIII, who danced in the new ballroom. Frank Fahy would have seen and possibly "met" the playboy Prince, but life at the Wentworth wasn't all gaiety and glamour. In December 1920, a man stormed in demanding to know the owner of a car parked outside; when Frank Fahy refused to tell him, he behaved "like a madman" and punched Frank to the ground.[14]

Frank grasped the opportunities his position offered. Seeing hotel guests using hire cars, he bought two for himself. Mrs Maclurcan installed another phone line so he could offer an extra service as an SP bookie. Frank's daughter Judy says that by the time he was 23 he owned his first hotel. He also bought several houses in Balmain.[15]

Family

Frank married Mary Ellen (Nellie) Hannan (1901–84) (**plate 5**) at the family church, St Augustine's Balmain, on 1 June 1925; a newspaper report clumsily wrote that "the bride … was led to the altar by her father", Daniel, of the Town Hall Hotel, Balmain.[16] The families were close and the Hannans ran the Railway Hotel at Lidcombe from the later 1920s.[17]

Frank took over the licence of the Victoria Hotel at Annandale in 1930.[18] Their first child Kevin Francis Fahy was born in Duntroon Private Hospital on nearby Johnston Street on 21 December 1932.[19] He was joined by three sisters – Judy (Moran, born 1935 at Duntroon)[20] Helen (Jones, born 1937 at Leichhardt)[21] and Rosilea (Gabriel, born 1943 at KGV.Camperdown).

Kevin and his family had immensely strong and loving bonds. A leader to his three younger sisters, "Kevie" became in turn the patriarch to their nine children. Julieanne Moran, now Watson, – the eldest and the only girl, who most shared his interest in Australiana and who slept in a cedar four poster since she was three – might have seemed to be Uncle Kev's favourite, but he was equally devoted to all his eight nephews.

They moved westwards to a house at 72 Wright's Road, Drummoyne about 1936, a sprawling late Victorian house with lawns stretching down to the Parramatta River. By 1938 Frank was running the Birkenhead Hotel at Drummoyne. On 24 August 1938, "St Joan of Arc Hall, Haberfield, was transformed into a Fairyland, when a Children's Fancy Dress Ball was held," and "thirty little debs were presented to the parish priest, Rev. Father Walsh." Kevin Fahy partnered Pat Day, but a prize eluded him.[22] A year later, on 23 August, the annual ball came round again. This time, Kevin squired Bonnie Bradbury but still no prize.[23]

At Drummoyne, Kevin may have developed his interest in historic houses. He often reflected on *Drummoyne House,* situated at the end of Wright's Road, and its alleged underground tunnel. Merchant William Wright had built *Drummoyne House* in the early 1850s and Professor John Smith photographed it at the time (**plate 6**). It was demolished for the ubiquitous home units in the 1970s.

For part of the war, the family lived in the Birkenhead Hotel. Judy described her father Frank as "a soft man, an angel". Dad went to the races on Saturday and if he won, his euphoria was translated into buying the girls hats, which they never wore. Mum went to Mass on Sunday mornings and the kids were left at the hotel, until the day they went into the bar through a door left unlocked by a cleaner. When Mum got home she realised her children had been drinking something stronger than Mynor cordial. After that, Sunday arrangements were entirely different.

In 1942 the family moved from the vulnerable harbour foreshore at Drummoyne to Bathurst – possibly as a

10.
Eve and Jim Stewart at *Mount Pleasant*, c 1953-4. Stewart Collection, University of New England Heritage Centre, 2013.149.1.29c

11.
The Library, *The Mount*, Bathurst, 1953. Photo Basil Hennessy. The cold and austere room does not hint at the richness of Stewart's personal library. Stewart Collection, University of New England Heritage Centre, 2013.149.1.21c

12.
The Mount, Bathurst, c. 1953. Photo Sid Hagley. Stewart Collection, University of New England Heritage Centre, 2013.149.1.21d

13.
Mount Pleasant as it is today, renamed *Abercrombie House.* Photo John Wade 2016

14.
Kevin and his mother Nellie at Judy and Vincent Moran's wedding, 1958

15.
John Carmichael, *Irrawang Vineyard and Pottery*, from James Maclehose, *Picture of Sydney and Strangers Guide in NSW for 1839*

16.
Moulded pottery mask decoration excavated at the Irrawang Pottery, near Raymond Terrace. Photo John Wade

result of the Japanese midget submarine attack in May – where they lived in the imposing Victorian two-story brick house *The Grange* (now 10 Daly Street) with Mum, her sister Julia Daly and her children **(plate 7)**.[24] The tribe wandered the neighbourhood and got into mischief.

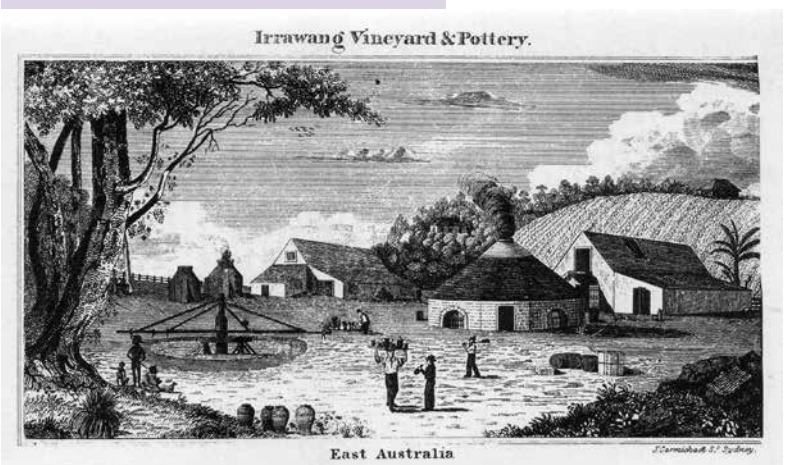
Judy says Kevin was the ring leader and "always up to something". One day they took their six-month old baby cousin with them, and when they returned home without him, the police and priest were called. The elder children were stoic but eventually young Helen burst into tears and confessed that they had killed the baby. Fortunately they hadn't, they had just stuffed him down a hollow tree trunk.

An important member of the Fahy household was Nursie, Dorothy Williams. Kevin and Judy went rapidly through minders until Nursie arrived about 1937. Kevin adored Nursie, who was kind, intelligent and, most significantly, encouraged his reading. She stayed with Nellie and Kevin for 50 years.

As all boys did, Kevin collected stamps. He was still at primary school when he graduated to collecting from op shops and antique shops. Kevin passed his final primary exams at De La Salle College Ashfield in 1944.[25] He was usually joint dux with his best friend Errol Lea-Scarlett. Both went on to St Ignatius College, *Riverview* **(plate 8)**, and Errol, who shared his birthday, went on to become an historian, genealogist and teacher at *Riverview*, from which both boys matriculated to the University of Sydney at the end of 1950.

Life after school

The Korean War began in 1950 and in response the Menzies government introduced National Service in 1951 for all males aged 18. Kevin completed his compulsory National Service in Army intelligence, and spent a year



17.
The dining room at *Government House*, Parramatta. Kevin helped acquire the furnishings for the house.
Photo John Wade

18.
Members of the Australiana Fund, 3 March 1978, at *Yarralumla*. The front row is George Joseph, Andrew Grimwade, Lady Cowen, Sir Zelman Cowen, Mrs Tamie Fraser, Dame Helen Blaxland, Lady McNicoll and Dr Clifford Craig. Kevin is on the left end of the second row. Photo courtesy The Australiana Fund

working in the city, before beginning an arts degree at the University of Sydney **(plate 9)** in 1953.[26] Fine arts did not yet exist at the University of Sydney, so as well as studying history, geography and economics, Kevin enrolled in archaeology in 1954, in the department headed by Professor of Greek and Archaeology A D Trendall (1909–95). Dale Trendall was the world expert in his field of South Italian pottery, and a brilliant communicator who spoke and wrote clearly, entirely free of jargon or obfuscation. He was fiendishly efficient and an accomplished administrator. As a chairman he was unsurpassed at summing up the discussions.

However, Trendall left for the ANU in Canberra in 1954, so the other academic in the department, senior lecturer James Rivers Barrington Stewart (1913–62), became acting head, though he was not appointed Professor until 1960. Classical (art history) archaeologists like Trendall and excavating archaeologists like Stewart are often at odds, but not in their case. Trendall, who revelled in poking about dusty museum stores, including the Nicholson Museum's, described himself as "more a dirty than a dirt archaeologist", and supported Stewart's work.

While Trendall was organised and a prodigious intellect, Stewart was colourful and idiosyncratic. Stewart devised a scheme to solve the problem of inadequate working conditions at Sydney. He basically seceded from the university in 1951 and often took his students, including Kevin, up to the family home near Bathurst, where he was a "gentleman farmer" **(plate 10)**.[27] Students had to feed Eve Stewart's turkeys, and even though conditions in the house were Spartan **(plate 11)**, Stewart had a magnificent library of archaeological books. He was, moreover, the only teacher that I recall Kevin mentioning.

Stewart had inherited the family seat *Mount Pleasant*, northwest of Bathurst on Ophir Road. Lieutenant-Governor General William Stewart had added 12,000 acres to his 3,200 acre land grant made in 1826, and retired there in 1832. His son James had George Allen Mansfield re-design "The Mount" in the 1870s as a Scottish baronial fantasy, perched on a knoll dominating lush paddocks on the flats beneath.

Seven years after Professor Stewart died, in 1969 Rex Morgan bought the dilapidated house, patiently restoring and furnishing it. The Morgan family now organises tours and events at the renamed *Abercrombie House* to help pay its way **(plates 12-13)**.

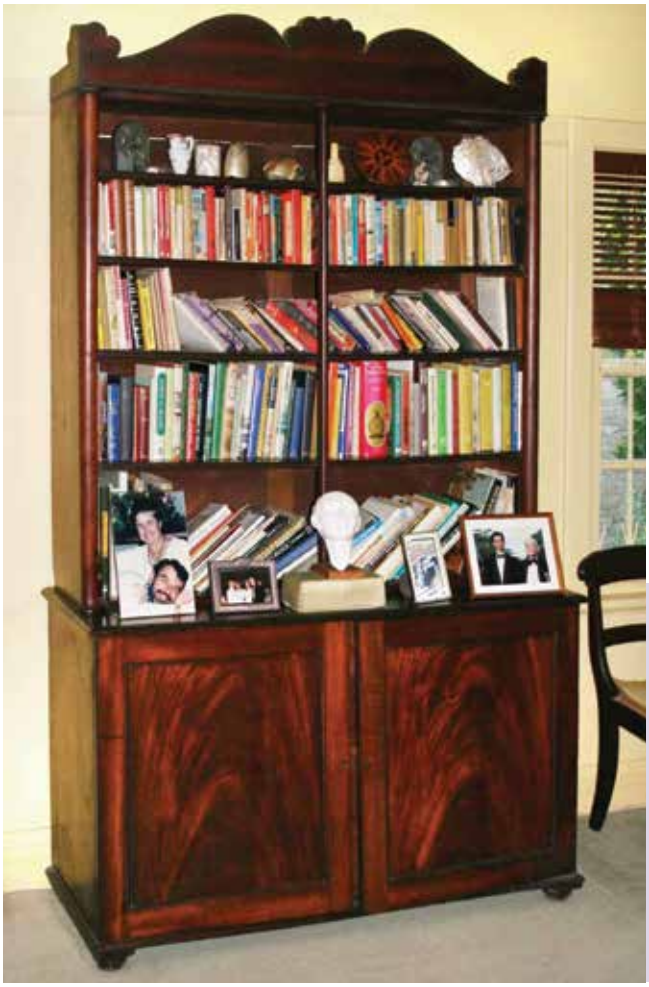
Kevin's university days had all the ingredients that inspired and developed his interest in Australiana. He was surrounded by historic buildings, historic houses and historic interiors. Though he took four history courses, it was his two years of academic training in archaeology that critically combined historical research with the study of artefacts.

Stewart taught small classes, so Kevin armed himself with information, ready for interrogation at any time, and further developed his love of libraries and scholarship. Kevin would have learned how to look at objects and extract stories from them, how to integrate the study of objects and written records, and the thrill of discovery through research. Kevin completed his university studies in 1957.

At university, he met people who shared his interests. They included Leo Schofield, who was one of a group of historic house buffs who paid 10 shillings each to visit *Fernhill* at Mulgoa one summer afternoon. When a grass fire broke out and the students extinguished it with wet wheat sacks, the grateful owner refunded their entry fees.[28]

After university

How did he come to study colonial Australia? Kevin emerged from university with the academic skills to undertake the study of historic artefacts. He was one of



19.
Cedar bookcase that had belonged to the poet Dorothea Mackellar, as used in Kevin's study. Photo John Wade

20.
John Baird, carved shale medallion of W B Dalley, barrister and politician, dated 1885. Photo John Wade

the first to realise the need to learn about our own country's past, that the historical sources he would need to consult were generally and readily available here, and that artefacts were also historical documents.

Kevin's father Frank died the year he graduated with his BA, 1958. His father's hard work, entrepreneurial approach and investments had left the family financially comfortable. The same year, Kevin squired his mother at his sister Judy's wedding to Vincent Moran **(plate 14)**.

Kevin was active in the unsuccessful campaigns to stop the demolition in 1961 of *St Malo,* Didier Joubert's c 1856 historic house at nearby Hunter's Hill, instead of an adjacent pub, to make way for a freeway, and the destruction of Hannibal Macarthur's *The Vineyard (Subiaco),* a few suburbs west at Rydalmere, in the same year, to provide an employees' car park.

Developers were rampant, many houses succumbing to the rage for home units. These events galvanised the National Trust and its influential Women's Committee into action. Kevin joined the National Trust in 1962, serving on eight of the Trust committees. That year, he lent a pair of hall chairs and a cedar corner cupboard from his own collection to the pioneer exhibition of Australiana at Hunter's Hill.[29]

Journalist Terry Ingram reported one of Kevin's forays into collecting in the *Australian Financial Review*. A woman he visited had a cedar four-poster with a Labrador sprawled on it. Kevin, ever the diplomat, admired her dog, Mowbray, to disguise his real interest – the bed. She died soon after, thoughtfully leaving him the item he had singled out – Mowbray.[30]

When he broke his back in a skiing accident in 1963, Kevin's future was perilous. He was not expected to survive, but he and his doctors never gave up. Eventually, he was able to walk, using a cane. When he first attempted to walk, his brother-in-law Vincent Moran said "Kevin walked on courage alone". As it turned out, Mowbray was more help to him than the four-poster bed.

Later, on a visit to the National Gallery of Victoria, he carried round the galleries a whalebone scrimshaw cane he'd bought in Tasmania. Kevin soon noticed people were staring at him. He fumbled with his fly to make sure it was done up. Then he realised they were thinking, "why is a blind man looking at art?"

In 1967, he encouraged Judy Birmingham, senior lecturer in Near Eastern archaeology at the University of Sydney, to excavate in Australia – specifically at James King's pottery at Irrawang near Raymond Terrace, which Kevin had located **(plate 15)**. As a bumptious young student, I excavated on the site for several seasons, and remember Kevin motoring up to inspect the work and the finds **(plate 16)** in his ageing but dignified dark blue Mercedes.

In the 1960s and 1970s Kevin was instrumental in helping furnish *Old Government House, Hambledon Cottage* and *Experiment Farm Cottage* at Parramatta for the National Trust **(plate 17)**. Always charming, amusing and erudite, he worked closely with the formidable ladies ("cherry bows") of the Women's Committee, notably Cherry Jackaman, Dame Helen Blaxland, Joan Furber and Caroline Simpson. In NSW, they, as much as anyone, were responsible for growing our appreciation of Australiana.

He whizzed about seeking furniture for the houses, with a risible budget of maybe $50 to spend without authority. He tried to beat dealers down so he would not have to refer purchases to a committee, and slow down the acquisition process.

The fruitful seventies

Kevin, Nursie and his mother Nellie moved to their 1920s Californian bungalow at 28 Madeline Street, Hunter's Hill in 1970. Two years later came his first book, *Early Colonial Furniture,* compiled with Dr Clifford Craig and Dr E Graeme Robertson. I infer that Cliff provided the introductions to collectors and wrote some text, while Kevin wrote the majority and Graeme took the photos.

John Hawkins organised an exhibition *Australian Silver 1800-1900* held at *Lindesay* at Darling Point for the National Trust in 1973. Kevin, Marjorie Graham and Fred Hodges contributed biographies to the book of the same name. The next year, Kevin wrote an introduction to the reprinted catalogue of the Lithgow Pottery.

Kevin was an organiser and contributor to the broader exhibition *Antiques Australia – First Fleet to Federation* shown from 9–17 October 1976 at *Lindesay*. Publisher David Ell, himself a collector, was quick to see a publishing opportunity and the original small black and white booklet was expanded into a handsome and very successful colour hardback book in 1977. Kevin's furniture chapter was its most substantial essay.

I met Kevin again regularly in 1975, 40 years ago, when I joined the curatorial staff of the old Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Ultimo NSW. My predecessor, Anne Bickford, had recognised the importance of Australian decorative arts and had nominated Kevin and Marjorie Graham as honorary associates to advise in the field of Australiana; Bill Bradshaw was another. Kevin and Marjorie regularly came in to mentor enthusiastic kids like me and my colleague Margie Betteridge. They encouraged us to collect Australiana, to get out and seek material from dealers and auctions, to meet private collectors, to join collector organisations, mount temporary exhibitions and write for publications. At the time, this was pretty revolutionary in the museum, which was then quite antiquated (but about to be re-born under the government of Neville Wran).

Kevin in those days was still working occasional shifts in the family's Railway Hotel at Lidcombe, and I recall going out to meet him working in the bar. His bar work reinforced how to be affable and to get on with everyone. He enjoyed company and would often telephone his friends and family; he would update us on news about Australiana, or tell us where to get a book we should have (especially if it was remaindered).

This period was the heyday of Australiana, and Kevin was one of the great pioneers. He was a foundation vice-president of the Australiana Society, and spoke on "Australiana and the private collector" at the Society's first meeting on 2 December 1978. We shared a double bill which included a show-and-tell. I remember been shown a pot, and commenting that it was usual for makers to put a mark under the base. So I turned it up, and there it was, the inscribed word "Mark". Not the highlight of my career.

Kevin's interests extended to Tamie Fraser's Australiana Fund, also established in 1978 **(plate 18)**, to furnish the Australian government's four official houses in Canberra and Sydney. In those days, the public rooms in places like *Kirribilli House* were drab, shabbily arranged and re-arranged by the spouses of the Governor-General or Prime Minister at the time. Mrs Fraser felt strongly that this was no longer appropriate for houses that were showcased regularly to Australian and foreign dignitaries, and would be opened on occasions for the people to view.

21.
Grace Seccombe, pottery kookaburras, c 1950s, that Kevin bought in an op shop. Photo John Wade

About this time Kevin visited the USA, where the State Department Reception Rooms in Washington DC made a lasting impression. Kevin enthusiastically supported the Australiana Fund in acquiring items that demonstrated Australian craftsmanship to decorate the four official establishments. He contributed some pieces himself.

He also visited Ireland, the family homeland. At the National Museum in Dublin, he asked to see the gold cup presented in 1854 to William Smith O'Brien, the Irish rebel convict who had been given a conditional pardon.[31] They scurried around and found it, embarrassingly stored in a cupboard

22.
The tail end of an Australiana Society visit to Christian da Silva's furniture conservation workshop in 2004: Diana Damjanovic, Caressa Crouch, Kevin Fahy and Carl Gonsalves chatting about Australiana while they stuff copies of *Australiana* magazine into envelopes, suitably fuelled with leftover wine, cheese, biscuits and fruit. Photo John Wade

23.
A proud moment: Kevin Fahy at *Government House* Sydney, with his sisters Judy, Rosilea and Helen, after receiving his AM from Her Excellency the Governor Dame Marie Bashir in 2002

under a sink. Thanks to Kevin, today it's one of just 25 highlights from the decorative arts and history collections in a display called "Curator's Choice".

Collector

While Kevin had some very fine pieces of furniture of his own, notably his cedar secretaire bookcase, his Dorothea Mackellar bookcase **(plate 19)**, sofa table, Clarke work table and his six-legged sideboard, he was not an obsessive collector and his interests were broad.

He had several kerosene shale medallions carved by the Sydney postman John Baird **(plate 20)**, a long case clock with the dial inscribed for Thomas Rudd, Tasmanian silver picture frames, kangaroo bookends and a rustic chair covered with kangaroo fur.

In the 1980s, he gave a collection of Lithgow pottery, two emu eggs carved by Jonaski Takuma, a Liebentritt terracotta plaque and two Australian gold brooches which had belonged to his mother to the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS). He gave a dozen pieces of Australian pottery to the Australiana Fund, and sold 80 pieces to MAAS, a sideboard to the National Gallery of Australia, and a marble-top table to Sydney Living Museums (then known as the Historic Houses Trust of NSW). The National Trust would have received pieces too.

I never met Kevin's mother, which is partly why she has been largely absent from the story so far. When she died in 1984, his old school friend Errol Lea-Scarlett wrote a beautiful, tender letter to her two youngest grandsons.

Errol wrote

> Your grandmother changed little through all those 40 and more years. Her great care in personal appearance, her beautiful hair, the round, smiling face, bright friendly eyes and rich, melodious voice that you knew were all the same in 1942. She was the perfect mould of a lady, reared to be considerate of others while remaining always poised and assured in herself… After the war ended, 'The House', of which Kevin spoke so often, was restored as the family's residence … 72 Wright's Road [was] a spacious, late Victorian home, fronted by terraced lawns separating it from the river. … in The House were many elegant and rare objects … Before long, Kevin's interest in antiques quickened under the impulse of his mother's good taste.

Were not for this letter, which his niece Julieanne Watson showed me, I would never have realised how important Kevin's mother Nellie had been in forming his interest in decorative arts. These words were, remember, written by someone who had met Kevin when they were both just nine years old. With Kevin and his family, you were a friend for life. (Julieanne confided to me that Nanna was her best friend).

Storyteller

Kevin loved exploring people's foibles and was renowned for his practical jokes. One involved the collector and publisher David Ell, then living at Hunter's Hill on a large leafy block. An Indian family moved in next door, and Kevin seized the opportunity to torment David.

Obtaining a copy of the Council papers, he slipped in an extra page – a development application for a Hindu temple next to David – and casually passed it on to David, as any good neighbour would. As Kevin told the story, David engaged a QC to attend the Council meeting, where everyone was nonplussed about the mythical proposal.

Some tales related to his collecting activities, and the ruses necessary to acquire what he wanted. There was the man with the Oatley clock whose amateur painting and singing Kevin had to endure, the meals-on-wheels lady who spied out stuff for him, and of course the completely apocryphal story of the silver wine cooler in a shop window in New York. Or going to see dealer Stan Lipscombe on a Monday morning; a jovial Stan meant he'd had a win at the races on Saturday, and that he might share his good fortune by parting with something at a reasonable price.

Publications

Kevin was of course a foundation member of the Australiana Society, editor of this magazine, committee member and president. He would also pitch in and do the work **(plate 22)** and was always a joy to work with because of his endearing nature as well as his fund of stories and information.

Kevin came to know all the auctioneers and dealers of Australiana. He knew all the curators and major collectors and was happy to help anyone who shared his interests. More often than not, they approached him rather than the other way round; he always replied to genuine enquirers. These connections were invaluable in locating works for illustrations, and led to a series of valuable reference books, with excellent photographs by his friend Andrew Simpson.

All Kevin's books were collaborative works. That says a lot about him as a person – a team player, supportive, encouraging, mentoring, contributing and drawing the best out of his collaborators. Kevin's expertise in Australiana was focused on colonial domestic interiors, and he guided others along that path. That's not to say he wasn't interested in other things.

All his books follow the same successful formula: a general introductory essay canvassing the issues, detailed biographies of individual craftspeople, plus lots of illustrations. The later ones on jewellery and pottery, more than the others, contained a large number of women artists. His work was recognised with the award of an AM in 2002 **(plate 23)**.

Kevin and his collaborators produced definitive books on furniture, jewellery, silver and ceramics. More than anyone, Kevin was responsible for the scholarly study of Australian colonial decorative arts. He had a wonderful capacity to write succinctly and to claim no more than the facts would allow. Since he died, with few exceptions, the flow of books has all but dried up.

Kevin developed heart and lung problems and was admitted to St Vincent's Hospital in late January 2007. When it became clear he would not survive, hospital staff moved the childless, unmarried man to a secluded corner. Family members got on the phone immediately and within a couple of hours, staff were amazed that 30 or 40 tearful people had gathered around Kevin's bed. There would have been more if it hadn't been family only.

Legacy

Kevin's legacy is not just his research, publications and friendships. He transformed the idea of Australiana from the trivial "football, meat pies, kangaroos and Holden cars" to show that there was genuine craftsmanship, style, cultural value and history here. Kevin's works all emphasise the work, skills and creativity of our craftspeople, and the way Australians have been influenced by the native flora, fauna, landscape and local materials. He had an unrivalled capacity to synthesise the state of our knowledge of Australian decorative arts.

Kevin early on realised that knowledge of Australia's past – both through history and its physical remains – helps us understand both the past and the present, and enables us to establish an Australian identity. Not in a way that divides us, or strengthens nationalistic jingoism, but shows us how Australians, of all backgrounds, came together.

Many authors, collectors, conservators, curators, dealers and scholars have contributed to the recognition, preservation and understanding of Australia's artefacts and arts. None has done more than Kevin Fahy. He was a model friend and colleague. If there is one quality that sums up Kevin best, it is selfless. We will remember him with great respect and affection for many years yet.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

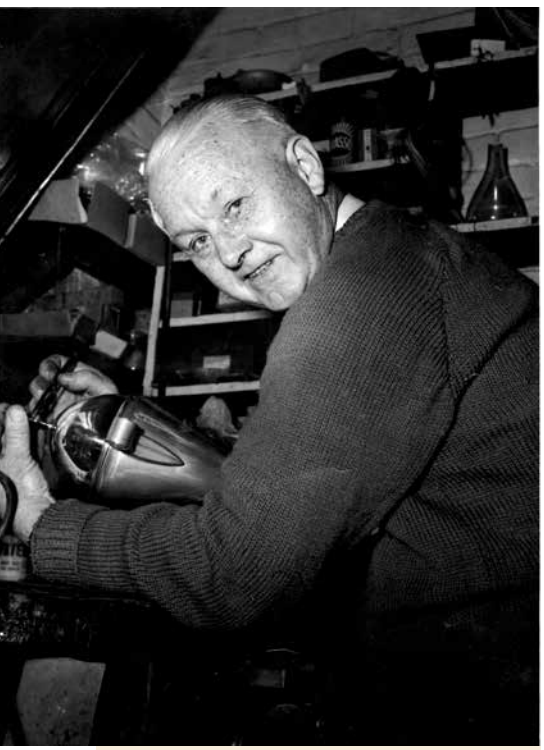
Kevin's family has been very supportive in supplying information and photographs and I would like especially to thank his sister Judy Moran and niece Julieanne Watson.

NOTES

1. James Bertouch, "Kevin Fahy, an interview by Jim Bertouch" *Australiana* May 2010, 32 no 2 pp 20–29; Nov 2010, 32 no 4 pp 32–38; Feb 2011, 33 no 1 pp 30–38.
2. John Wade, *SMH* 3 Mar 2007; John Wade, *Australiana* 2007; *National Trust magazine* 2007.
3. *The Australian* 6 Jun 1827 p 3; see *India, China, Australia* p 166.
4. Son of James (d 1928) and Kate (BDM 29381/1895)
5. *Catholic Press* 1 Mar 1928 p 29.
6. *Catholic Press* 5 Jan 1939 p 15.
7. *Maitland Mercury* 16 Dec 1854 p 2.
8. *Freeman's Journal* 30 Apr 1881 p 16.
9. *SMH* 9 Jun 1882 p 3.
10. c 1852–1 June 1903.
11. "Maclurcan, Hannah (1860–1936)", *ABD Supp* 2005.
12. *N Qld Register* 20 Apr 1898 p 26.
13. *Sydney Mail* 31 Mar 1920 p 28
14. *Evening News* 6 Dec 1920 p 5.
15. He was at the Town Hall Hotel, Balmain in 1928 and 1929 *SMH* 3 Feb 1928 p 11 & 18 Sep 1929 p 11
16. *Freeman's Journal* 11 Jun 1925 p 16; *Catholic Press* 18 Jun 1925 p 21.
17. *SMH* 26 June 1929 p 13.
18. *SMH* 23 Apr 1930 p 10
19. *SMH* 7 Jan 1933 p 12
20. Born 8 Feb 1935; *SMH* 13 Feb 1935 p 12.
21. Born 2 June 1937; *SMH* 12 Jun 1937 p 16.
22. *Catholic Press*, 8 Sept 1938 p 9
23. *Catholic Freeman's Journal* 31 Aug 1939 p 29.
24. Even then the house had probably had its verandahs bricked in, and grounds sold off for Housing Commission fibro cottages.
25. *Catholic Weekly* 25 Jan 1945 p 6.
26. *SMH* 8 Jan 1954 p 9; *SMH* 12 Jan 1854 p 7
27. On the Stewarts, see J. Powell, *Love's Obsession: The Lives and Archaeology of Jim and Eve Stewart*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town SA 2013.
28. Leo Schofield, *Australiana* Nov 1988 p 99.
29. Miriam Hamilton & Jane Kelso, *Australiana* Aug 2011 pp 36-38.
31. *Australiana* May 2002 p 57
31. Kevin Fahy, "The William Smith O'Brien presentation gold cup", *Australian Antique Collector* 21, 1981, pp 115-117.

John Wade trained in archaeology at the University of Sydney, and taught there before joining the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney as curator of decorative arts in 1975. He was a foundation member of the Australiana Society in 1978, edited its publications off and on, and served as president 1999–2006.

Memories of the South Australian jewellery trade



1.
Len Peterson photographed in 1963 with the Thomas Seymour Hill Trophy which he made. The trophy is presented to the winner of the grand final in the South Australian National Football League. *Adelaide Advertiser*, 27 August 1963

Len Peterson (1904–1981) began working at Adelaide jewellers S. Schlank & Co in 1919, and was closely associated with them until they closed in 1970. This is an edited version of his reminiscences, compiled between 1976 and 1980 for the Goldsmiths Guild of SA, giving an insight into the 20th-century Australian jewellery trade – its size, organisation, people, specialisations, products and techniques.

LEONARD WILTON PETERSON

I commenced working at S. Schlank & Co. in September 1919. This was not long after the finish of World War I and all hands and the cook were busy making the peace medals which celebrated the end of World War I. The resulting overtime greatly supplemented my weekly wage of ten shillings.

The firm employed around 95 staff, including warehouse, salesmen, office staff etc. Being a community within ourselves we were more or less isolated from the rest of the trade, and from an early age were made to feel disloyal if caught fraternising with a member of the opposition. This did not help us to know many outsiders. It helped Schlanks even less, for I firmly believe that this policy greatly contributed to their eventual downfall.

Schlank's people

I entered the trade when many of the old hands were dropping out and by the time my six-year apprenticeship was completed there was much evidence of the approach of the Depression. This further thinned the ranks, and many good tradesmen found other avenues, never to return to the trade. Having met and worked with these men I was in a sense a link between the two eras.

In 1919, we had on the staff a most extraordinary old man known as Bumper Harding. His sole occupation was to operate a small swing press, used mainly for making joints and catches, also clipping out the blanks for medals. However when a medal required intricate saw-piercing, he would place up to 12 medals at a time in a clamp of his own design. First he would drill through the whole block of medals and then saw-pierce them all at the same time. The bottom medal would be as accurate as the top one.

Next to him was another elderly gentleman, Bill Mason, a real "Dapper Dan". Bill was never seen unless immaculately dressed including his bowler hat. However, one day after proudly displaying his new hat which he carefully put away under a dust cover, the boys, always ready for a prank, whitewashed the discarded hat and exchanged it for the new. One can only imagine the turmoil that followed.

Bert Stace, a very serious-minded diamond ring maker, sat next to him. He was an excellent tradesman but would never divulge any trade secrets; as a result no apprentice ever stayed long with him. Bert had a heart attack one day while working on his roof, and took his secrets with him.

Horace Clough from Birmingham, a general jeweller, was very versatile. Having a very pleasing tenor voice he could always be heard singing some Welsh air or an English folk song. His brother Bill, another Birmingham import, came out in 1921. With the very minimum of bench tools, most

borrowed from workmates, he would turn out teapots, sugar basins and milk jugs which today are much sought-after collectors' pieces. Any piece one may come across stamped "crown Al" made between 1921 and 1941 can speak for itself.

Arthur Hayes, a most fastidious tradesman and diamond ring maker, later became foreman. Jack Somerville, a good tradesman, did not enjoy good health. Arthur Kenwick, a man perhaps better known than most, left Schlanks and joined forces with Joe Fiddler, situated in Hindmarsh Buildings. Between them they turned out quite a few good tradesmen, notably Bill Stracke and Phil Campbell. Phil's untimely death gave everybody a jolt. John Hale made the annual fishing competition memorial trophy, a masterpiece of workmanship depicting a life-size whiting, to perpetuate Phil's memory.

Darcy McDougall was a Sturt ruckman prior to and during World War I and in late 1919 he went to Melbourne to work. Charlie Keats also left and went to Melbourne to work. Harry Evans, another Birmingham import and a diamond setter, replaced Darcy. Harry was noted for his mill graining. He scorned the use of a milling wheel. He had good reason to, for the beads on his work stood out like the proverbial organ stops. No one ever had a chance to inspect his milling tool as he kept it in his pocket.

George Rettig, a general jeweller, changed jobs quite a few times and eventually settled in with Wendts. He later became 'a teapot man'. When a jeweller reaches old age and still continues to work he often forsakes the blow pipe and wields the soldering iron. I think George reached almost 90 years.

Jack Lyons, a repair man at the time, left Schlanks in 1921 and together with foreman Wally Godfrey went into business on their own account. Jack later bought out Herbert's Jewellers and Wally opened up as a watch repairer in Pirie Street, where he remained till his death. At the beginning of World War II, I met Wally Godfrey who, on learning that I was still keen on my work, graciously gave me his entire plant.

Clem Kavanagh, one of the oldest working members of the trade and still going strong has his own business in Gawler Place. Clem – a very keen runner with the Adelaide Harriers – won state championship races, all distances with the greatest of ease.

Dave Snell was a full-time wedding ring worker; I don't remember Dave doing any other work. Alex McLennon, apart from his trade, devoted nearly all his life to the Hindmarsh Volunteers Fire Brigade until eventually it was absorbed into the major brigades. Fred Cobb, maintenance hand and sand blaster, was a typical old digger who served in World War I.

Alex Elliott, the last of the curb chain makers, commenced working for Schlanks in 1901. His work, although all hand made, had to be seen to be believed. Just prior to his death, at my request he brought in a complete specimen range of all the various types of chains that he had made over a period of 55 years.

Wilco Collins was a repair man. He received more than his share of abuse for the continuous haze of smoke created by burning out the bottling wax from the old bamboo style gold bangles. Wilkie's father was a master plumber, whose business was situated in Waymouth Street, and Wilkie – always a little rough with his work – was often rebuked with the adage "like father like son".

Fred Reiman was often referred to, but never to his face, as the "Fushy King". "Fushy" is a term in the trade for a job carried out unbeknown to the boss. Harold Kutcher, a polisher and another songster, used to sing most of the day at his bench. I often marvelled how a man covered all over with mop fluff, rouge, tripoli and sweat would still sing.

Harold Havelock, a most remarkable man, started with Schlanks about 1913 as a silver plater. Retired under pressure from his family in 1969, he couldn't stand the idleness and began working with Allan Olsen who had previously taken over the factory vacated by Schlanks at Edwardstown.

Fred Fletcher, another polisher, left Schlank & Co. to work in Holden's first plating department. Holden's about that time emanated from the old saddlery firm of Holden & Frost in Grenfell Street. The

2.
An opal pendant which can be adapted as a brooch. Peterson specialised in delicate scroll and twist work with much of his jewellery, and bought this stone on a trip to Andamooka

3.
Three rings, set with amethyst, opal and jade. When he had his own shop, Peterson traded under the name "Petite Jewellery"

4.
Peterson's daughter Lyn brought this cameo back from Italy, to be set in twisted gold wire. Mounting was a tricky job because the cameo was curved and delicate and could have shattered

5.
Green drop ear-rings and pearl drop ear-rings. Lyn bought the twin pearls from Japanese pearl divers in San Diego USA

dapple grey horse standing on the verandah roof was a familiar sight for many years. Three or four years ago, while making a call on Williams, the "Hoof and Horns" people at Prospect, I saw the old horse painted a different colour proudly displaying the latest in harness.

Frank Kelly, machine shop attendant and die maker, weighed well over 20 stone (125 kg). He left Schlanks during the Depression and took a lease on the Waterfall Gully Hotel. Business was quiet and money scarce so it was quite understandable that Frank welcomed two pleasant and well-dressed gentlemen one Sunday morning. They were both good spenders, so the three of them imbibed all day and into the night; before leaving they identified themselves as police officers. Frank then returned to Schlanks. In 1949 Frank slipped on a banana skin in Chesser Street. His legs wouldn't stand up to his enormous weight and one of them broke. He died in hospital a short time after.

One observation that I made is the difference between the apprentices. The young fellows of today are far more dedicated to their work and are always eager to learn. This was not always so and it always puzzled me as a lad that so many boys treated the trade as a bore and changed occupations as soon as their apprenticeship was completed. Few if any made the grade as jewellers, and unfortunately for them they invariably finished up doing unskilled work.

Jack Becker (1904–79) was the one outstanding exception. As lads we started work within a couple of months of each other, being of the same age. Jack being very ambitious soon gave up the bench work and was transferred to the front counter looking after the repair department. This is a move I strongly recommend to any firm handling repairs. How often do we find some young and inexperienced person who has never been in a workshop quoting a customer some trifling amount not knowing until the job reaches the bench hand that all sorts of complications could apply? These misquotes can add up.

Jack Becker started to learn music and was soon teaching, only a couple of lessons ahead of his pupils. He left Schlanks and began working for Cawthornes, then went to the USA to become experienced in the Conn Saxophone Factory in Indiana, for which Allans were the agents. Returning, he began working for Allans and after a while enticed me to join forces with him, as I had been retrenched from Schlanks when the Depression began to affect the jewellery trade.

The experience I gathered among the musical fraternity over the next few years has been of great value to me, serving as a stopgap during the Depression years. Jack left Allans and formed the Adelaide College of Music in 1932, selling out to Harry Green in 1942. He then bought a large drought-stricken sheep station on the WA border which hadn't seen rain for years; within days of the transaction the rain came in abundance. He transferred his attention to the Ninety Mile Desert and with the aid of the CSIRO and trace elements became known as the "man who made the desert bloom". The multi-millionaire was knighted as Sir Ellerton Becker.[1]

After World War II, when jewellers were extremely scarce, Schlanks were able to engage only partly trained men or others who had never been able to make the grade and were trying to stage a comeback.

The Schlank family

Before referring to jewellers other than Schlank employees, I will briefly refer to the Schlank family. Originally the firm was known as P. Faulk & Co in Gawler Place, a partnership established in 1864, with Salis Schlank managing the Adelaide business. They later built the building in Chesser Street, excepting that it was a single storey. Their business was registered as a druggist but also catered for jewellery repairs, gilding and silver plating.

For good measure they also extracted teeth. I decided one day to give my section a clean up starting with an old cupboard. There I found an old pill box containing a partly decayed tooth with a note explaining that this was the first tooth extracted by Faulk & Co. This was probably over 100 years old. I gave it to Dudley Schlank who lost it the same day.

In 1878, the partnership dissolved. Salis Schlank acquired the Adelaide firm and concentrated more seriously as a manufacturer of jewellery.[2] Salis had four sons, Mick, Alf, Tott and Lew. The latter three seldom came into the factory but looked after the administration. Mick was more at home among the workmen and eventually acquired most of the shares, the others dropping out about the early 1930s.

Mick was the most colourful of all the family having a booming voice which frightened the boys but he was really very kind-hearted. Being colour-blind it was nothing unusual to see him dress up in a new suit with one green sock and one brown. It became necessary when he decided to help out in the jewellery department to keep an eye on him as emeralds and diamonds were all the same to him, colourwise. He also held the SA heavyweight championship boxing belt for a while until being flattened by Ern Waddy; this was a remarkable feat for a man of 40.

The Schlank family being German Jews, it was natural that pork was taboo on their menu as far as Mick was concerned. However, his wife being of a different faith would prepare the family meal and Mick having a hearty appetite would often compliment her on the way she would cook the veal. This was generally followed by a sly wink between Dudley and his mother.

Mick had a son, Dudley, and three daughters. Dudley carried on business after his father's death in 1950 and not being interested in jewellery concentrated on the badge work for which he showed great aptitude. His overwhelming desire for perfection did not always prove profitable, as it became almost an obsession to produce a perfect, flawless badge. Even the football badges which were usually thrown away after each footy season had to be perfect. The result was that hundredweights of near-perfect badges, which many opposition firms would have been proud to make, were cluttering the workshop and became a problem.

In the late 1950s, when the building underwent some alterations and extensions, and it became necessary to knock a hole in the wall of the top floor, someone thought of a way to dispose of the badges. The cavity walls were filled with thousands of badges of all descriptions where they still remain. Someone will get a surprise one day. Dudley had two sons and one daughter; John the elder son worked for several years in the factory but knew no more when he left than when he started.

Dodgy practices

An incident in 1921 caused quite a little anxiety among a few of the employees. Schlanks had a standing order for the SA Cricket Association badges. These were all numbered on the backs and a strict check was kept to see that any that did not conform to standard were destroyed under supervision. This, however, did not stop the workmen from stamping a few with duplicate numbers and, as the batch reached the final stages of gilding and boxing, these were slipped out again. This practice was kept in moderation, and apart from letting a few through the Adelaide Oval gates on the cheap, actually did no one any harm.

However one employee went too far and lent his badge to a mate. He in turn got into a fight at the Kensington Oval and in the scuffle the medal was ripped off his watch chain. Later picked up and taken to the SACA office, they contacted the owner of that number – who was at that moment wearing his on his lapel.

All hell broke loose. Mick Schlank came into the workshop, switched off all motors and assembled the whole staff. Surveying each member for some time he eventually said in a very solemn voice "Gentlemen, we have a thief in our midst." No one spoke but everyone squirmed and for many years afterwards that phrase became a by-word among the men.

From time to time one would hear people remark "Don't take your watch to So and So or he'll take out the jewels" or "Joe Blow switches the diamonds." Fortunately people seem to have outgrown these beliefs but I would like to mention two examples which intrigued me.

During my early apprenticeship I worked under a diamond setter. One day he showed me a small straw-coloured diamond with a chip in it which he purchased for 5/-. I expressed the opinion that he had been robbed, but was assured that given time the diamond would grow. After a week or so I peeped into the phonograph needle tin which housed the diamond, and sure enough the diamond was slightly larger, also the chip had vanished. Some days later it had grown still larger and the straw was a little paler. After this I carefully watched to see what was going on. Each diamond sent in for setting was carefully examined and where appropriate, was promptly switched and when large enough it was made into a single stone ring, and brought a fair price. Fortunately for him he knew when to stop, for the larger the stone became, the greater the repercussions had he been caught.

The other instance I believe was fairly widely practised, and, although illegal, did not really harm anyone. Gold sovereigns were in circulation then, so when a jeweller found that his gilding bath was getting weak it was a common practice to replace his anode with a couple of sovereigns and put the old one on the cathode terminal. This had the effect of removing a few grains of gold from each coin without any noticeable difference to its appearance while at the same time restocking his bath.

The Depression

The Depression lasted for quite a few years and naturally hit the luxury lines, jewellery being one of the first to suffer. As time went by, those thrown out of work got further behind with their rent and bills of all kinds remained unpaid. Corner shops could not cope with the credit which was demanded from them and they in turn went broke. Evictions were common-place and families were thrown together sharing their homes.

6.
Cameo brooch and matching ear-rings, and malachite pendant, all set in gold

Others in an attempt to preserve their independence began to put up shacks, and it seemed that all building regulations were waived for a time.

Gold fever seemed to stir the settlers into activity. I don't think that any of them struck it rich, but most eked out enough alluvial gold to supplement their weekly rations. Harold Rogers was among the gold buyers who used to visit the fossickers almost weekly to buy their gold. I worked for Rogers during the early stages of the war and the only gold that he ever issued to me was the proceeds of these trips. I was quite impressed by the size of these nuggets, however the quality was poor as it contained much impurity. It was always treated as 22 carat and even after adding the alloy it invariably cracked during rolling and most times was further reduced to nine carat. I learned to appreciate good quality gold after I left him.

During 1921 Mick Schlank took a trip aboard with the idea of expanding the electro-plating department. On the eve of his departure the firm gave him a good old fashioned send off at the Aurora Hotel. Mick brought back from Birmingham hundredweights of spoon and fork stampings. They were stamped A1 and then came the long and tiresome job of filing off the stamping fins before they reached the polishers, with never less than four men working on them at the same time. The fins were particularly bad between the forks of the prongs; too much pressure and they would bead and the file would clog up. I soon learned that a light, even pressure on the file brought results and that is where I learned to file.

On this trip Mick brought back a large set of powered rollers which I understand were the largest of their kind in Australia at the time, together with a spare pair of rollers, which up to a year ago had never been unpacked. Shortly afterwards, Bill Clough arrived from Birmingham, also Nellie McCormack who was a burnishing expert. Up till then I had never seen burnishing applied to teapots, jugs, trays etc and, come to think of it, I have never seen it since. This burnishing process was accomplished with a variety of tools of all shapes, enabling one to get into the most inaccessible places, and used continuously with water. Apart from the high gloss which is far more striking than any mop polishing, it has the effect of hardening the silver or gold plating, making it an almost permanent finish.

Outworkers

I don't think many in the trade would remember Mr Owens, who was partly retired when I started work. Mr Owens had a small enamelling business at the rear of his house at Kent Town and as lads we were often sent out with jobs that were beyond the capability of our own staff. He employed the traditional method of gas furnace firing and could cope with jobs such as enamel watch dials, intricate monograms and miniatures. Always dapper in appearance with a spotless apron and a baker's style cap, he cut quite a picturesque figure.

Another versatile tradesman, Bill Coward, worked as a hand engraver, die setter, vitreous enameller and expert at all. Many of the jewellers' carat punches around town today were made by Coward. I had known him for many years before realising that he had the use of only one eye.

During the war years I had a signet ring die made for me by Reg Dorling, a well known and skilful engraver at the time, and for many years afterwards. The steel was of unknown origin and as a result no engineering firm would undertake the hardening process; to prove their point, Southcotts showed me a book of steel formulae which looked the size of a family bible and each page had at least five or six different formulas. In desperation I went to one of the last remaining blacksmiths at Mitcham. Ten minutes later I walked out with the die hardened and tempered and it is still in good order today. The present generation will never know what an asset a village blacksmith used to be.

World War II

Then came the Second World War. The Depression had already taken its toll and many men were sacked, never to return to the trade. Some never went to work again, as the Depression lasted years.

One era had passed and with it the last of Nellie Stewart and bamboo-style bangles, aqua necklets, buckle and gypsy rings, wishbone and Mizpah brooches. Mizpah means "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from the other." New styles of jewellery seemed to creep into the trade, notably the filigree diamond ring.

As the war progressed the trade came to a standstill, for manufacturing was frozen and remained so for a few years. Most jewellers attended a general meeting called in 1941 at the Oriental Hotel. A resolution was passed that we all apply for work in the munition factories. Quite a lot of members complied, others agreed but changed their minds.

Having previously left the musical profession, I was working for Harold Rogers. I left him and started working for Holdens, doing work on anti-tank guns. I was soon disillusioned; like many others I found that the system of "cost-plus" resulted in factories holding back work during the week days, leaving us to cool our heels the best way we could, and then being asked to work overtime on Saturdays and Sundays. This gave us time-and-a-half for Saturdays and double time on Sundays. In other words, the more time we wasted the more overtime became available and the more profit the munitions factories made. This is the sort of practice that both promotes and prolongs wars. I voiced my disapproval loud enough and often enough, that although I was pegged, the powers that be were glad to get rid of me. Publicity was the last thing they wanted.

Other jewellers

I made the acquaintance of many jewellers whom I had not previously met. A lot of well known and elderly jewellers had emanated from A. Macrow and Son, such as Alf Pitt, who had premises in Chesser Street and with him Archie Daws, Eric and Mick Annells and Stan Couts. Every one of them had at some time or other worked for Harold Rogers.

Roy Beckwith, although not a jeweller in the true sense, made quite an impact on the trade. During the first war and for sometime afterwards he conducted a kiosk in the centre of Adelaide Arcade, where, with a pair of round nose pliers and side nippers, he would fashion name brooches out of rolled gold wire while the customer waited.[3] He later bought out Oscar Tucker's jewellery shop and concentrated on lodge jewels. His experience with a couple of con men made headlines a few years back. He was shown half a dozen bars of fine gold and one of them was left with him for testing. This specimen was genuine but the other bars proved to be gold-plated lead.

Jimmy Hearn was another colourful character during and after the first war. He employed quite a few jewellers from time to time and had at one stage a shop at the corner of Adelaide Arcade and Gay's Arcade. His benches were lined up against the windows and created a never-ending stream of onlookers. People never seem to tire of watching hand crafts of any kind.

George Liddel and Harry Frearson had gone into partnership with Jimmy Hearn. My own brother, Cleve, began at the trade during the first war under Hearn and Frearson. Cleve was a few years my senior and although he did not remain long at the trade, the discussions at home gave me an interest in the trade activities even before I became involved myself. Cleve's workmates used to joke about the absent-minded old ladies who used to walk through the arcade with their umbrellas still up, their only indication as to the weather outside. Harry Frearson seemed to slip out of circulation for many years, but Schlanks engaged him late in life as a joint and catch man, badge work being their main line. He remained with them up till his death, all agreeing that he was the most conscientious worker of all time.

Some of the jewellers followed in their father's or grandfather's footsteps. Len Muller succeeded his father as a craftsman, and is being followed by his son Jeff. I mention Len in particular for his untiring work in the Guild activities and his dedication to the interests of the young apprentices. Furthermore he gave me the happy idea of compiling this narrative.

There were very many more jewellers around at the time but the majority of these somehow did not seem to cross my path.

It is now some time since I started to write, having put it aside from time to time. I have just learned of the death of Harold Havelock whom I mentioned earlier. Clem Kavanagh has also passed on after a sudden heart attack. I feel rather saddened as those two men were active members of the trade at the time I left school to start work. Both these men were very kind and helpful to me as a lad and I feel that with their passing my last link with the old school has finally snapped.

I have a smattering of recollections regarding the smaller manufacturers, but unfortunately some of the larger establishments seem to have escaped me. Macrows turned out many fine tradesmen. Stevensons were one of the largest retailers, Perrimans and MacDougalls both manufacturers on a large scale and even today one often comes across some of the heavier type of jewellery bearing their stamp.

Cole & Tuffly occupied most of the bottom floor of what was then known as Burmeister Buildings in Hindmarsh Square. They had quite a large staff of good tradesmen and carried out almost exclusively trade work. Wendts of course were one of the earliest firms in Adelaide and the only one of the above mentioned that is still functioning.

Basse was quite a sizeable retailer. The only link I can recall with Basse was the order that they secured for the wedding present for Princess Mary in 1921. This in turn was passed over to Schlanks who had the equipment to tackle it. The present consisted of an 18 carat tray weighing 80 ounces (2.27kg), a large enamelled piping shrike in the centre, wheat sheaves and grapes together with some symbol of industry that I can't recall. The making of the gold tray was preceded by another stamping in German silver.

7.
Brooch set with South Australian malachite, a copper mineral

As could be expected the gold tray stretched rather badly and required repeated hammering to square it up. The hammer marks presented quite a problem but were smoothed off with wet pumice stone. This was the first time I had seen this trick done and I have applied this from time to time ever since. When both trays were finished it was obvious that the cheaper job was far superior as regards looks, having had a smooth passage through the workshop. Bill Spence somehow or other acquired the replica and as far as I know, it may still be in the possession of his family.

I have always endeavoured to keep to the traditional, if old fashioned, methods of manufacturing. This has in many ways proved unprofitable by today's standards, but the pleasure derived by doing exactly what I like doing best amply compensates me. It is very gratifying that so many young jewellers and apprentices have called on me to discuss some of the old methods used in this fascinating trade.

Techniques of the jewellery trade

The workshop – or more correctly the factory – was complete within itself, but like many large establishments, many employees were only a spoke in a wheel, as they spent all or most of their lives in one particular branch of the trade. Although they became expert at their work, they were never able to follow a job through from start to finish. This did not apply to men who had learned the trade elsewhere, possibly from a small workshop.

I have seen female apprentices who started work polishing jewellery and completed their apprenticeship doing just that. Others spent all their life in an electroplating department. Some were lucky enough to follow through all branches and apart from finding the work interesting were equipped to go into business on their own account. Repetitive work becomes very boring to some, others prefer it, so it takes all kinds. In later years I learned that girls were far more contented with repetitive work than boys were.

The methods employed by Schlanks were almost identical to the methods used in most parts of the world. At one time I had a book written by George Gee which had worldwide circulation and, although it was extremely old, one could trace their methods from the book.[4] I will endeavour to describe these methods and although the styles have greatly changed in recent times, the basic methods of manufacturing jewellery remain very much the same. This will be very familiar to jewellers, but it should interest those who are not acquainted with the working of gold and silver.

Firstly the price of precious metals is always high and all precautions must be taken to reduce any loss to a minimum. Every time a piece of emery paper touches gold or silver, it becomes impregnated and must be saved. Even the water used for washing hands was emptied into a barrel and the daily task was to siphon off most of the water; this was always done first thing in the morning before the liquid became stirred up. The resulting sludge over a period was very rich in precious metals and was eventually dried out and melted. The floor sweep was also saved and when sufficient was accumulated was boxed up and sent over to Birmingham for refining. Today we have firms in Australia which cater for this work.

In some instances the more fastidious workman kept the various qualities of gold separate and remelted it as required, but in a large shop it often proved more profitable to put all qualities into one container. This is known in the trade as "lemel" and consists of filings and off-cuts. Often base metals and even lead gets mixed in. If lead gets into the melting pot with gold, the whole lot becomes unworkable as it cracks every time it is put through the rollers.

The process of refining had always to be carried out in a glassed-in chamber with an effective flue, as the fumes are very dangerous. The first task is to remove any steel or iron filings with a magnet. To each ounce (28 gm) of lemel a half ounce (14 gm) of silver is added and the whole is melted together. Today the method would be to roll the mixture into thin wafer-like strips but the old method was to pour the molten mass into a tub of water that had floating straw on the surface. This would granulate the mixture. It was then placed in a bowl, covered with nitric acid and warmed over the gas. The silver in the alloy and any other impurities dissolved and became suspended. The gold remained at the bottom as a dark sludge. This was melted and was pure, 24 carat gold.

To recover the silver which was previously added, strips of copper are placed in the solution. Immediately the silver adheres to the copper and then precipitates as pure silver. This can be melted as solid or re-dissolved in nitric; when dried out it becomes silver nitrate crystals and is used for silver plating. If one wants to go to the extreme, one can recover the copper by placing an iron bar in the solution. This process is somewhat slower but when dried out the residue is copper sulphate or blue stone.

Occasionally it is necessary to perform an assay, by melting lemel into four or five crucibles each containing up to eight ounces (224 gm) of gold of unknown quality. After the slugs of gold have hardened but not yet cooled, they are chilled off in water, thereby shattering the crucibles but keeping the gold intact. As the various ingredients of an alloy have varying specific gravities it is necessary to get a good average quality test and for that reason a fine drill is put through the slugs from top to bottom. The drillings are kept separate and weighed into small heaps of five grains (324 mg). Each heap is treated similarly to the refining process previously mentioned and then accurately weighed.

The relative weights before and after refining determines the carat. Having four or five different tests is similar to having several time keepers, and then comparing their stop watches to work out an average time.

An interesting court case happened just prior to my entry into the trade. Jewellery firm J.J. Everitt of Mt Gambier disputed the quality of the gold in a batch of jewellery S. Schlank & Co. made for them. They claimed that the jewellery, which was all stamped nine carat, was below quality and Schlanks were eventually brought to court. The government analyst assayed a portion of the jewellery and proved that the gold was not up to standard – but to such a minute degree that the judge dismissed the case. It was later established that the gold used was what is termed "old gold" melted down from second hand jewellery. The discrepancy was due to the inclusion of the solder from the original joints, which diluted the quality.

In any trade where articles are mass produced, it is always necessary to employ short cuts to cut down time. One such regularly used instance was in making cuff links. At that time cuff links were worn almost exclusively, and buttons on sleeves were to my knowledge unheard of, so it was not unusual to see an order for links that would fill a kerosene or fruit case. As each pair had two eye rings and six connecting links, it meant that a small pellet of solder had to be placed on each join.

8.
White opal ring

This time was considerably reduced by making the wire with a solder core, not unlike resin core lead solder. The method of doing this was to cast a piece of silver rod approximately 18 inches (45 cm) long by two inches (5 cm) thick. This was drilled from end to end approximately ¼ inch (6 mm) in diameter, then an equal length of silver solder ¼ inch thick was forced into the hole. The rod was then passed through the grooved rollers. As the thickness was progressively reduced, the length considerably increased.

Eventually when thin enough, the wire was passed through the draw plates and drawn even further with the solder core still in the same relative thickness; by this time the wire would be anything up to 100 yards (91 m) long. After being wound onto an oval spit it was cut into separate links. The soldering process was simply reduced to blowing a fine pointed flame on to the joint and the solder would flow, making a neat join, considerably cutting down on time.

"Rolled gold" is a term loosely applied to a form of jewellery that was not quite the genuine article. However, rolled gold is actually a thin layer of gold on a base of silver or, in some cases, copper. These base sheets could be of any given thickness, but usually about ¼ inch (6 mm). This is firmly hard soldered face to face with a sheet of nine carat gold which is only one tenth of its thickness; after passing this through the steel rollers many times, the thickness is eventually reduced to any workable gauge, somewhere about 26 standard gauge (0.4 mm); strangely this rolled gold still keeps its relative thickness to the silver or copper backing. This type of jewellery is quite satisfactory for both appearance and durability. While the gold remains unbroken it is quite as good as solid gold but in time, when the vulnerable corners start to wear, the copper or silver begins to show through.

Jewellers who can remember back to the Depression days recall the gold buyers who were going from house to house buying jewellery and some of the tactics they employed. In those days, and up till recent times, troy weight which comprised grains and pennyweights was always used.[5] A favourite trick when an attractive parcel of jewellery was offered would be for the buyer to say that he had brought his scales but had left his pennyweights at home, but would overcome the problem by using pennies. Now a penny in unworn condition would weigh exactly six pennyweights and the unsuspecting house wife would fall for this trap.

That in itself was bad enough but the tragedy was the enormous quantity of the most exquisite jewellery that was ripped apart and can never be replaced. The stones would be thrown into a tin and the gold into the melting pot. I have seen jewellery made by master craftsmen of by-gone days broken up for the sake of the gold. Today collectors and antique dealers are paying exorbitant prices for similar pieces. Many young people have been deprived of fine examples of craftsmanship that they should have inherited from their grandparents.

9.
Len Peterson's beam balance, for accurate weighing

10.
His second set of scales

Apart from the Chesser Street factory, Schlanks also had quite a sizeable machine shop at the rear of the National Hotel in Pirie Street East, now know as the Tivoli. All the machinery was of a heavy nature and included guillotines, drop hammers, presses and rollers of all sizes. Much of the work done here had no bearing on the Chesser Street factory, but Chesser Street depended to a large extent on these facilities for the heavy die work etc.

One of the orders that continued for some years was for the rear windows in the old soft-top touring cars. They were of the male and female system and were sent to Chesser Street to have the threaded studs soldered to them. They were then nickel plated, fitted with an unbaked rubber gasket, and delivered to Holdens. At that time Holdens were essentially motor body builders and had their premises situated in King William Street South, Adelaide, before they moved to Woodville.

Later Schlanks purchased two cottages in Little Rundle Street, Kent Town. This land was to provide room for a more modern machine shop. On the morning that the wreckers moved in, Dudley Schlank phoned me to hurry out from the Chesser Street shop to see the cottages. The iron had just been removed from the roof, leaving beneath a complete roof of stringy bark shingles. The windows were all of mullion type. Inside there was a complete absence of doors or door frames but low arches between rooms requiring one to duck his head on entering each room. If ever a cottage deserved to have a National Trust classification this was it, but I have never yet met a bulldozer with a conscience, and in an hour or so it was a useless heap or rubble.

The enamelling department played an important part in the factory. To start from scratch and learn this particular branch of the trade, there would be almost as much involved as the complete jewellery manufacturing process. The range of articles that require enamelling is almost limitless but the chief orders which are handled today comprise football, soccer and cricket badges, lodge jewels, college and school badges etc. Many interstate firms are now substituting the original vitreous enamel with plastic or resin based synthetics which are then spray lacquered. This method serves its purpose for seasonal badges but any work of a permanent nature should always be done in the conventional way.

The process can be briefly outlined. The enamel was purchased in lump form similar to broken glass. There were basic colours which had to be blended and also varying melting points. Strangely the transparent colours would withstand considerably more heat than the opaque colours, as well as being acid resistant. The opaque colours in most cases had to be frequently neutralised in a caustic bath during the many processes. The rough base material was crushed in a heavy dolly pot, and the steel chippings were removed by a magnet. Then the long and tedious task of grinding to a fine powder with a pestle and mortar began; today this process is done with a ball mill. The job of applying the wet powdered enamel was done by girls, who for some reason or other don't become as bored with this work as boys do. When it was dry, the badges were placed on a steel tray and baked in a gas furnace, but recently this practice has been altered and the heat from a gas torch is applied to the back of the badge. The grinding process was carried out with the aid of wet carborundum stones. Each badge was ground down until the lettering showed through and finally after much washing to remove the grit, the enamel was glazed by a further heating over the gas.

In the 1920s, I worked for a few years

in this department when I was busy studying the violin. My ambition was eventually to play in one of the picture theatre orchestras; I was also being coached to follow the picture scores. Of course this all came to a sudden stop a few years later when the talkies were introduced, and although for some time afterwards the program was part silent and part talkies the latter soon took over, the year being 1929.

In 1925 I was working in the enamelling department and Mick Schlank was trying out another of his varied ventures. This time it was a sideshow racing game registered as Neddies Ltd on the foreshore at Semaphore. It comprised a horseshoe-shaped course and a row of horses; each competitor had to turn a handle and keep up a uniform speed to win – too fast or too slow and the horse would fall back. This proved quite a profitable venture until someone introduced a similar attraction and sales started to drop off. Mick then decided to install an orchestra and asked me to organise a five piece band. I don't ever remember being more nervous, so many things I imagined could go wrong.

I must have had my mind more on the band than my work on the opening day for, while I was filing down the badges with a wet carborundum file, I didn't notice that I was gradually filing down the tips of my fingers on my left hand. The process was so gradual that I didn't become aware until I saw them bleeding. I eventually overcame the problem to an extent by wearing three rubber finger stalls frequently dipped in talc powder. If anyone can't imagine what it is like for a nervous young man doing his first professional engagement to play under those conditions, he lacks imagination.

Back to the enamelling. To prepare the metal for enamelling, it is necessary to dip it in acid. The metal is called "gilding metal", though "red metal" was what most of the old-timers called it. Apart from gold and silver, this metal is used almost exclusively. These days hobbyists work with sheet copper but the results are never as good.

The dip is a concoction of sulphuric, nitric and hydrochloric acids. Great care has to be taken not to inhale the heavy, dark brown fumes generated. After a certain amount of work goes through the solution, it loses its bite and although only half-spent is of no further use, so was put into glass jars and bottles. Its disposal soon became a major problem and the shelves all became crowded. Any collapse of a shelf would be disastrous, as it would soon eat through the floor and do untold damage on the next floor.

This was in 1925, when Adelaide had a very wet season culminating in a cloud burst for which no one could remember its equal. At the time, the T & G Building was being built and the basement excavations were just completed. In a very short time, the raging torrent which raced down Grenfell Street filled the basement completely. Chesser Street was flooded and joined forces with Grenfell Street, providing the answer to our acid problem. Dudley Schlank and I made seemingly endless trips downstairs and emptied all the jars of acid into the gutter. It seemed a very simple solution at first but caused us quite a little concern as the acid turned milky white on contact with the water. We followed its course right to King William Street. Everyone wondered what it was but no-one knew where it came from – and this is the first time I have ever mentioned it.

Yet another of Mick Schlank's ventures was his Golden Cascade. This started with a small hand-operated gold washing machine not unlike a blacksmith's coke forge. Being highly geared, it rotated a heavy dish at high speed. The dish had a series of fins which successfully trapped any gold. Owing to its high specific gravity, the gold would cling to the underside of the fins and all the waste material would flow over.

The initial trials were carried out on the abandoned dumps of the old Echunga gold fields. My brother Norm helped locate the likely looking spots, as he was familiar with this locality and had always been a keen gold fossicker. Later Mick experimented by adding additional dishes which were progressively larger. Eventually the whole structure reached a height of something like 20 feet (6 m) and, of course, was motorised.

It became necessary to float a company to work it, the idea being to work over the old dumps, for the machine was quite capable of recovering gold which had been left behind many years before through more primitive handling methods. Unfortunately the high transport charges were a stumbling block as this coincided with the early stages of the Depression.

Eventually the machine was dismantled and stored where it remained for many years and forgotten. As late as 1955 his son Dudley asked me if I remembered where it was kept as he had an attractive offer for its rights, his father having died a few years previously. When I was unable to offer any help, he contacted one or two of the original shareholders. He learned that they had sold it to Brown's scrap metal merchants – the price received hardly paid for the cartage.

Should I have the opportunity of having my time over again, I would cover the same ground the second time around.

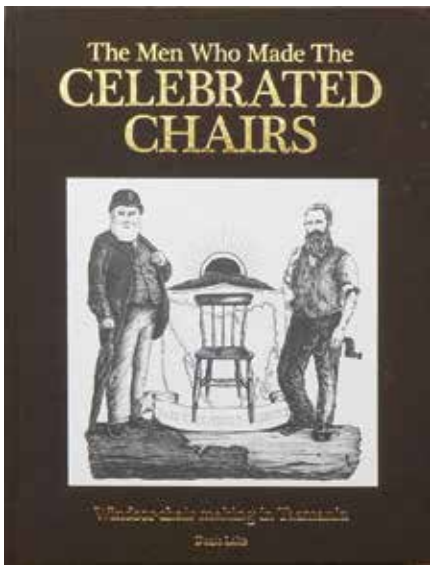
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Len Peterson's daughter Lyn Sharp for providing the manuscript and photographs, and her daughter-in-law Carolyn Sharp for the photographs of jewellery held by various members of the family. Copies of the original text are in the State Library of South Australia. His tools, including his two punches bearing his initials L.W.P. were passed on to a young jeweller he was teaching at the time of his death.
Lyn wrote of her father : "He was a modest man but he loved and took pride in his work and loved sharing it, and it would give me and my family great pleasure to see his contribution acknowledged in such a way."

NOTES

1 His knighthood was "purchased" by his bailing out the Australian Academy of Science; *ADB* vol 13 p 147f.
2 J B Hawkins, *Nineteenth century Australian silver*, vol 2, pp 196-205.
3 For a similar wire worker, see "Mac the wire king", *Australiana* vol 35 no 3, August 2013, pp 30-34.
4 George Edward Gee wrote a number of handbooks on jewellery and metalworking, which often ran through several editions, such as *The Practical Goldworker* (1877), *The Goldsmith's Handbook* (1881), *The Hall-marking of Jewellery* (1882), *The Silversmith's Handbook* (1885) and *The Jeweller's Assistant* (1892).
5 24 grains = 1 pennyweight, 20 pennyweights = 1 troy ounce.

Book review



REVIEW BY JOHN WADE

Denis Lake, *The Men who made the Celebrated Chairs. Windsor chair-making in Tasmania*, **Pagunta Press, Launceston. Hardback, 173 pp, 257 x 199 mm, many illustrations, index, $99. ISBN 978 0 9945386 2 8**

The Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston claims that Peddle chairs are "Tasmania's best known antique", so that probably justifies a book about them. And who better to compile it than Denis Lake, a Launceston furniture restorer, who can combine research with his detailed practical knowledge of furniture making.

George Peddle (1855–1933), a Windsor chair maker originally from High Wycombe, 50 km west of London, arrived in Hobart in 1884, where he established a workshop at Austin's Ferry before moving his operations to Launceston in 1888, then to Nabowla 35 km to the north-east in 1894. George's brother-in-law Harry Hearn (1856–1932) joined him at Nabowla in 1895.

Both men made these spindle chairs with solid dished seats by hand, the legs and back struts turned on a treadle lathe from "green" blackwood which was then left to dry before assembly. The stretchers always have a "double H" configuration.

After examining hundreds of chairs, Lake distinguishes the works of George (a Hobart-made chair with unusual arcaded top-rail is shown here) and Harry by their characteristic turnings, illustrated in chapter 12. A nine-minute YouTube video of him at the lathe, on the website of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, is well worth watching to see the turning process.

Lake examines Peddle's businesses, including his sawmills, and the competition he faced from local and imported chairs, particularly the Austrian bentwood chairs and the American factory-made imports (I seem to recall Sydney cabinetmakers complaining about these US imports in the 1840s, and claiming that then they were being churned out cheaply in US gaols). A whole chapter is devoted to the use of the chairs, shown in photographs of railway staff (Peddle supplied chairs to the Tasmanian Government Railways), offices, consulting rooms, libraries, meeting rooms and schools.

Newspaper reports, family records and others' reminiscences round out the picture of family life, including how Reverend Campbell discreetly conveyed to George Peddle the tragic news that his son George Jr had been listed as killed in action at Passchendaele in France in 1917. That the family held onto a belief that he might just be missing and still alive is heart-breaking to read.

Another chapter is devoted to the chair-making process, including the differences between the properties of English elm and Tasmanian blackwood, the tools and machinery used, even the animal glue. All of this helps to distinguish Peddle and Hearn chairs from similar Tasmanian examples – including those made by Denis Lake. He identifies nine different patterns of the genuine chairs, plus another six "exceptions", and outlines the deductive process of identifying a genuine chair – an important consideration when their price has risen from $10 in 1960 to as much as $3,000 today.

This book is a comprehensive, well illustrated and well thought though story of these chairs, their makers, users and copiers, and essential for the furniture collector. Congratulations to all involved.

Order your copy directly from Denis Lake 03 6344 8694 or celebratedchairs@gmail.com for $99 including post and packing in Australia.

Denis Lake will be speaking about Peddle chairs at the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery in Launceston on Sunday 28 August, enquiries 03 6323 3798.
His book will be launched at *Narryna* in Hobart on Friday 9 September, followed by a seminar and exhibition, enquiries 03 6234 2791 or check our website www.australiana.org.au

George Peddle, *Hobart-pattern blackwood dining chair*.
Collection: Milford McArthur, Tasmania

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Jim Bertouch

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

The Society continues to be very active and in the last 12 months there have been several meetings, presentations and inspections.

As many of you know, the Annual Lecture has been re-named the Kevin Fahy Lecture in honour of Kevin who was one of the founders of the society, previous president of the society, frequent contributor and editor of *Australiana*, as well as being a prolific author and well known expert, indeed guru, on Australiana. And who better to give the inaugural lecture than John Wade, the current editor of *Australiana*, who was also one of the founding members of the society and a long time friend and colleague of Kevin's. John gave a most enjoyable and thoroughly researched presentation on Kevin with some very entertaining anecdotes about his family life. Kevin's niece Julieanne Watson introduced the talk and brought along a whole group of family members to the dinner which was well attended by our members.

Other events in the last 12 months have included a visit to Macquarie Bank headquarters to see their outstanding collection of art and coins, a talk by Annette Gero on Australian quilts as part of the quilt exhibition at Manly Art Gallery, Christmas drinks at Pat Corrigan's apartment in Darling Point to view his extensive collection of Australian art, and of course tonight's talk by Dr Anne Watson on the Sydney Opera House and what happened after the original architect Jørn Utzon left. Coming up later this year are visits to the Marrickville workshop of WJ Sanders, who specialise in metalwork restoration, and a visit to the Great Synagogue in Sydney organised by Graham Barnett.

You will recall that in last year's report I announced that a small group of members from Tasmania had followed up on my discussion and formed a Tasmanian chapter of the society. This has now been formalised as a subcommittee of the society with Colin Thomas as chair and Anne Edwards as secretary. Colin has added Scott Carlin, Gemma Webberly and Robert Henley to the subcommittee and they are planning local meetings which will include a book launch on the subject of Peddle chairs to be held at *Narryna* in Hobart on 9 September.

At the time I mentioned that I hoped that other states would follow the Tasmanian lead. So I am very pleased to announce that South Australia now has an Australiana study group led by Peter Lane and his wife Janis. Meetings are held on the first Thursday night of every month and judging by the photos of the objects shown, this is shaping up very well. So if any member is visiting Adelaide they should contact Peter to arrange to attend. Our secretary Michael Lech can provide his contact details.

And of course I will be encouraging other states to follow the lead to set up local chapters, with the twofold aims of increasing awareness of our heritage and more importantly increasing our membership.

At present our membership is stable at about 330, which includes 30 institutions. But there are some non-renewals so if you know of someone who hasn't re-joined, please try and convince them to change their minds. If every current member signed up one more person we would easily have more than 600 members. Don't forget that gift subscriptions are available through our website so you can join up someone else, of course as long as you pay the due amount!

We have again been successful in signing up new members at our stand and display of Australiana at the AAADA fair at Randwick Racecourse and we intend to keep doing this to promote the society.

This brings me to our journal which continues to be of the highest quality. This year we added a new banner line on the front cover "Researching, preserving and collecting Australia's heritage" and all the articles now feature a photo of the author. We are indebted to our editor John Wade and our designer Kylie Kennedy who do a fantastic job so that every issue is full of excellently researched and presented articles. So write that article that you have had in the back of your mind for years.

To help prospective authors and prospective members we are now publishing, in full, on the website the article that has won the most recent Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award. Now it is possible for web browsers to see an example of the style and quality of published articles, so we are hoping this will inspire people to join and perhaps to write an article.

I would like to thank every member of the committee, each of whom puts so much effort into all the tasks required to run this organisation. Those tasks include writing up the minutes of meetings, event planning, managing the website, providing balance sheets, producing yearly advance planning, photography, distribution of journals, postage, book reviews and all manner of details. And all of this is voluntary unpaid work. So on behalf of all members I would like to thank our committee members Annette Blinco, Michael Lech, Tim Cha, Judy Higson, Andy Simpson, Michel Reymond, Phillip Black, Paul Donnelly, Lesley Garrett and George Lawrence.

And if anyone feels so motivated by my comments that they would like to help, please feel free to contact any committee member.

As far as the future is concerned, the committee has a lot of plans and has already put together a blueprint for the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the society in 2018/9, which will include a display of Australiana, with associated lectures and events and another tour to Tasmania.

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

Treasurer's report

The Australiana Society Inc ABN 13 402 033 474

Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 December 2015

	2015 $	2014 $
Income		
Membership fees	21,178	20,014
Advertising in *Australiana*	7,473	7,327
Events income	4,890	7,885
Events expenses	-12,193	-3,900
Donations	2,580	1,300
Tasmania tour income	22,818	-
Tasmania tour expenses	-4,398	-
Sponsorship	-	400
Sales	511	709
Production costs - *Australiana*	-19,558	-19,468
Editorial costs - *Australiana*	-6,286	-5,161
Writing awards	-	-400
Interest received	1,944	2,224
Total income	18,960	10,930
Expenses		
Bank and merchant fees	1,136	710
Donations	-	1,000
Filing fees	98	52
Insurance	410	403
Legal fee and rule change expenses	1,843	-
Membership expenses	123	132
Printing, postage, stationery	253	-
Subscriptions	-	226
Website and internet	3,518	823
Total expenses	7,383	3,346
Profit from activities	11,576	**7,584**
Opening retained profits	85,510	77,926
Net profit attributable to the association	11,576	7,584
Closing retained profits	**97,086**	**85,510**

These financial statements are unaudited.

Detailed Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2015

	2015 $	2014 $
Current Assets		
Cash Assets		
Cash in bank - working account	30,117	11,684
Cash in bank - reserve account	5,182	5,115
Cash in bank - term deposit	73,075	71,232
	108,374	88,031
Other		
Prepayments	1,365	-
Total Current Assets	**109,739**	**88,031**
Total Assets	**109,739**	**88,031**
Current Liabilities		
Payables		
Unsecured:		
Membership fees in advance	11,768	2,673
	11,768	2,673
Current Tax Liabilities		
GST collected and payable to ATO	1,658	436
GST paid and refundable by ATO	-774	-588
	884	-152
Total Current Liabilities	**12,652**	**2,521**
Total Liabilities	**12,652**	**2,521**
Net Assets	**97,086**	**85,510**
Members' Funds		
Accumulated surplus	97,086	85,510
Total Members' Funds	**97,086**	**85,510**

These financial statements are unaudited.

Judge's Report

The 2015 Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award

Elizabeth Ellis

The Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award is an annual award generously sponsored by Peter Walker Fine Art of Walkerville, South Australia. Peter Walker is a valued member and longstanding supporter of the Australiana Society. The Society is most grateful for his continued interest in its activities and in *Australiana* in particular. All articles published in *Australiana* volume 37 in 2015 are eligible for the 2015 Award.

The four issues of *Australiana* in 2015 maintained, indeed surpassed, the journal's always excellent quality in the scope and presentation of its content and in its outstanding production and design. The scrupulous and uncompromising editorial standards of the journal, combined with the promotion of original scholarship and research, continue to provide issues of wide-ranging interests. In addition, the journal is always a visual delight with excellent, carefully chosen illustrative material accompanying the articles and high quality image reproduction. And the footnotes always repay careful reading; they are a credit to the authors' dedication and perseverance.

The accessibility and relevance of articles in *Australiana* both for experts and novices alike are particularly worthy of note at a time when many of our cultural institutions continue to suffer from ongoing financial constraints, the loss of many of their long term specialist staff, and a crisis of direction. With diminished capacity of institutional staff to undertake detailed investigations into their collection items or to curate substantial exhibitions with accompanying scholarly catalogues, *Australiana* plays a significant role as an invaluable resource for the dissemination of new research which is usually undertaken in a private capacity by individual society members. Right now it is the only periodical which publishes original research on Australian decorative and fine arts and is a shining light in what is an otherwise depressing scene.

The range of articles highlights the diversity of interests of members of the Australiana Society, encompassing many aspects of decorative and fine arts. Each year's offerings continue to raise the bar and in 2015 there was an exceptional selection from which to choose the Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award. This has made the judge's task more difficult with so many articles of a high standard and I would like to sincerely congratulate all contributors in 2015 for their commendable and always fascinating new scholarship and research, and investigations and corrections to previously-held misconceptions.

With such a splendid array to choose from, it seems almost invidious to select a few articles for particular commendation, but I would like to note the following for their outstanding achievements: "The Fereday service" by Susan Knop and Michel Reymond (February 2015 issue); "Lady Bowen's Irish harp brooch – a missing piece of Queensland colonial jewellery" by Dianne Byrne and "Adrian Feint's flowers and fishermen: the Lesley Godden collection" by Catriona Quinn (both May 2015 issue);"John Black Carmichael (1803–1857), artist and engraver" by Karen Eaton and "The prism of provenance: the Landau collection of Krimper furniture" by Catriona Quinn (both November 2015).

My final choice for the 2015 Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award is Karen Eaton's comprehensive research on the Scottish-born deaf artist and engraver John Black Carmichael who, as Karen elucidates, had a prolific career in NSW for almost three decades in the first half of the 19th century. This is the first full biographical account of this neglected but notable artist and engraver. It is especially pleasing to note that his portrait of the young colonial Thomas Meehan, reproduced for the first time since 1921, and for the first time in colour, on the cover of *Australiana,* has now been acquired by the Mitchell Library.

Elizabeth Ellis OAM judges the awards and is the Emeritus Curator, Mitchell Library

An important consequence of Karen Eaton's article on John Carmichael was the rediscovery of his 1828 watercolour portrait of Thomas Meehan, which had previously been known only from a black and white photo taken by the NSW Government Printer's office.

Sydney print dealer Josef Lebovic located the painting and arranged its purchase by the current Mitchell Librarian Richard Neville, who succeeded our judge, Elizabeth Ellis, in that role. **JW**

Colonial Rarities

and other Curiosities

Colonial Huon pine and blackwood occasional table featuring spattrie work of indigenous ferns.Tasmanian origin, c 1880s, 19th century patina, h 74 cm, diam 58 cm.

See Kevin Fahy & Andrew Simpson, *Australian Furniture -Pictorial History and Dictionary 1788-1938* p 453 for an example and description of spattrie work.

By appointment
Philip Wheatley, Newcastle NSW

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bpw@colonialrarities.com

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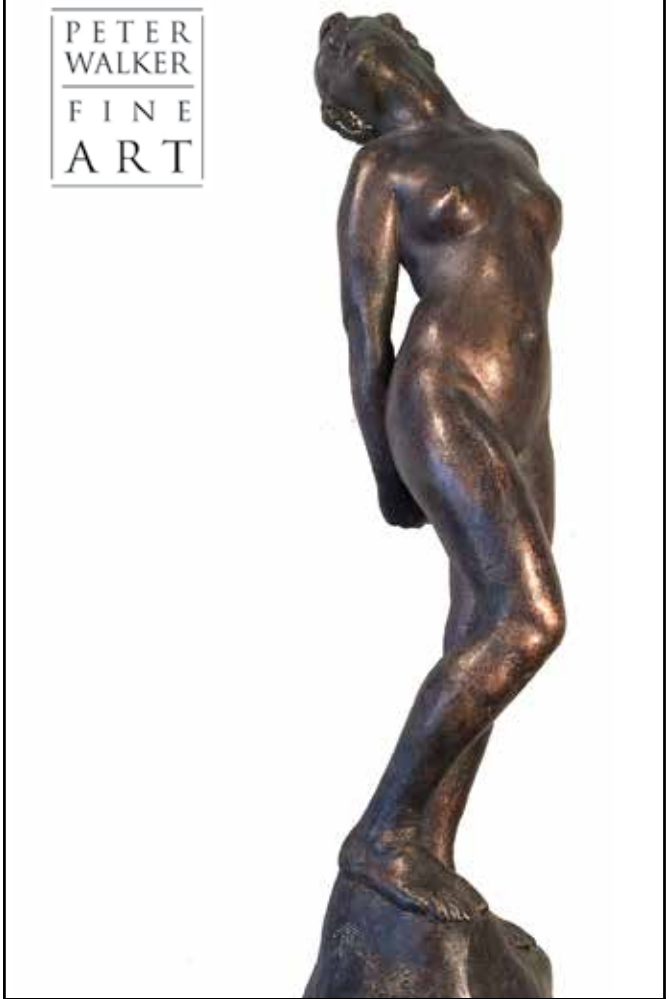
PETER WALKER FINE ART



Harold Parker

(Aust 1873-1962)

The Snow Maiden, 1928
Plaster with bronze patina
Signed and dated
50 cm high

Exhibited: Paris Salon des Artistes Français, 1930.
Anthony Hordern's, Sydney, 1930, No. 4.
Fine Art Society, Melb 1933, No.4, 100gns.

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A fine contemporary bronze bust of King George V by Sir Edgar Bertram Mackennal KCVO.
Incorporated in the plinth is a note of thanks from the King penned on the day of his Coronation, 22 June 1911, from Buckingham Palace. Mackennal was the first Australian sculptor to be knighted; he designed the British coinage introduced for the new reign in 1910 having previously designed the medals for the London Olympic Games in 1908. He was the first Australian artist to be made an Associate of the Royal Academy.