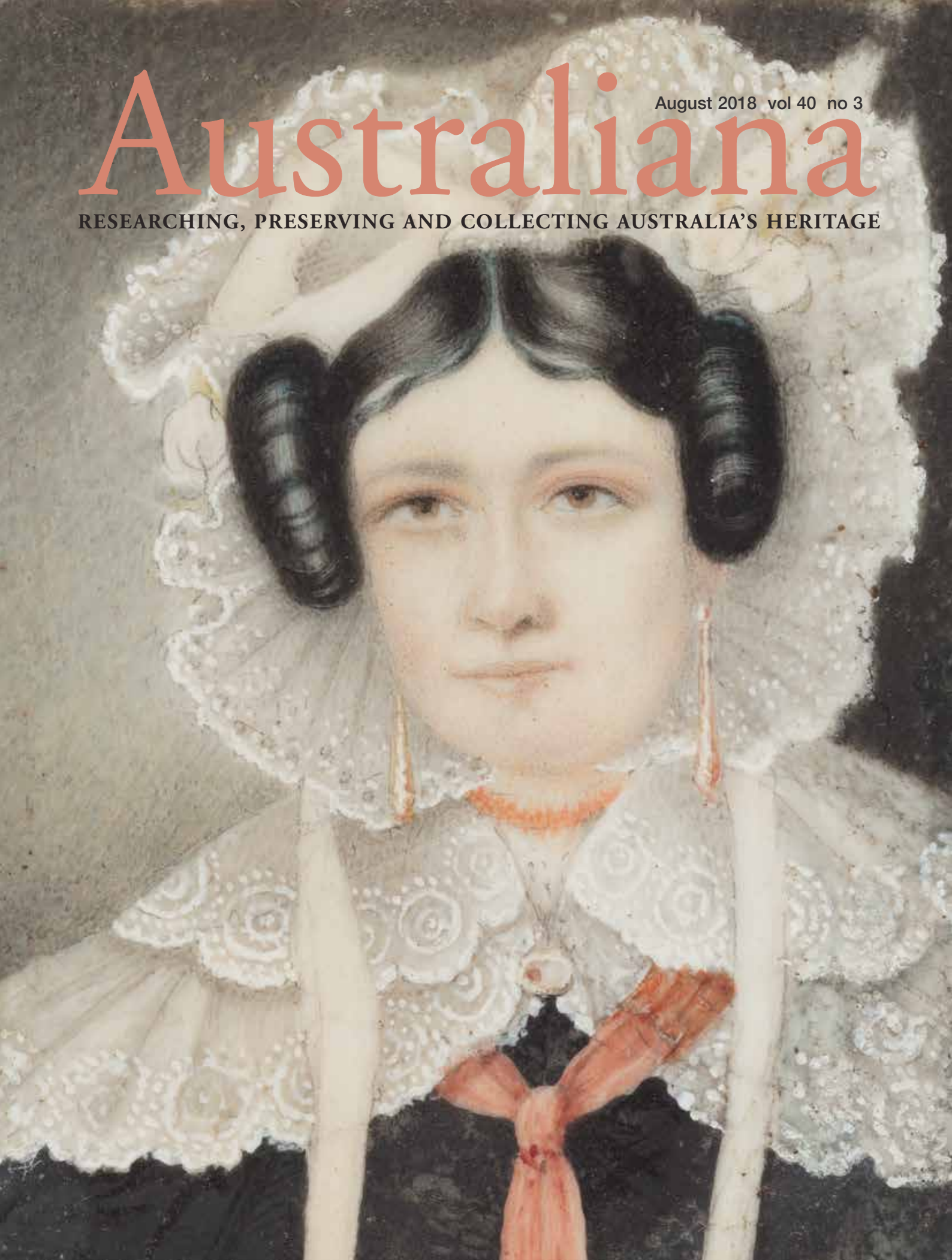


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August 2018 vol 40 no 3

RESEARCHING, PRESERVING AND COLLECTING AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE





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AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE

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COVER

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804 – after 1852), *Mary Ann Turner*, dated May 1835. Watercolour on ivory, 5.75 x 4.75 cm. Identified on the backing paper: 'Mrs Turner / mother of J.A.Turner / my maternal great-grandmother (G.V.D.R.).' Caroline Simpson Collection, Sydney Living Museums

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Dr John White FLS, Surgeon-General of New South Wales: a portrait by Thomas Watling

E CHARLES NELSON

John White was born at Drumaran, County Fermanagh in north-western Ireland about 1756 – not England as is sometimes claimed.¹ He entered the Royal Navy as a surgeon's mate in 1778 and rose to naval surgeon; in this capacity he was appointed to serve as surgeon on the transport *Charlotte* in the First Fleet, which left Portsmouth for New South Wales in 1787.

He served as Surgeon-General of the penal colony established at Sydney Cove, Port Jackson from 1788 to 1794. While living in New South Wales, White adopted Nanberree, an aboriginal boy, and fathered a son by Rachel Turner, a convict who later married Thomas Moore.²

White kept a journal recording events during the voyage and the early months of the colony, from 7 March 1787 to 11 November 1788. This formed the basis of his handsome book, *Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales*, published in London during 1790, and soon translated into German, Swedish and French.³ White described New South Wales as “a country and place so forbidding and so hateful as only to merit execration and curses”.⁴

While at Sydney Cove, John White collected natural history specimens and assembled a series of paintings of plants and animals. After returning to England, White lent these paintings to botanists and zoologists, and permitted copies to be made. Thus, he contributed substantially to early European knowledge of the indigenous flora and fauna of eastern Australia.

After six onerous years, White was allowed leave to depart and he returned to Britain, reaching London on 29 July 1795. On 19 January 1796, having been nominated by

Aylmer Bourke Lambert, John Symmons and James Dickson, White was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London. The Senate of the University of St Andrews in Scotland conferred the degree of Doctor of Medicine on him on 10 March 1797.

White was married twice, and was survived by his second wife and his four children, including his illegitimate, Australian-born son, Captain Andrew Douglas White. Dr John White died on 20 February 1832 aged 75 and is buried in Worthing, Sussex, England.



1.

Thomas Watling (1762– c 1814),
Surgeon General John White RN,
miniature painted in oils on ivory, signed
“T.WATLING pinxt” and “N.S.WALES 1792”,
h 6.5 cm w 5 cm.
Collection: Trevor Kennedy AM, Sydney,
photograph courtesy Gorrings, Lewes UK

Until recently, the only portrait known of Surgeon-General White was as an unidentified individual among a group of medical officers depicted in the watercolour no. 25 by an anonymous artist contained now in the so-called “Watling Collection” held in the Natural History Museum, London.⁵ The painting is entitled “Mr White, Harris, & Laing with a party of Soldiers visiting Botany Bay Colebee at that place where wounded near Botany Bay.” Rex Rienits suggested that White is the central figure, dressed in white breeches, a pale fawn jacket with stand-up collar and a wide-brimmed pale hat.⁶

On 4 December 2007, the auctioneers Gorrings of Lewes, Sussex, offered a “tassie type plaque” of Admiral Lord Nelson together with a miniature portrait of Surgeon-General John White.⁷ The estimate for the pair was £3,000–5,000 but only £200–400 for the miniature, yet the hammer price for the portrait of White, after more than 400 bids, was £90,000 plus 17.5% commission (today about AUD 191,000 including commission).⁸ The unframed miniature, in oil on an oval ivory disc, is signed “T.WATLING pinxt” and dated 1792 (plate 1). It has now returned to Sydney.

Thomas Watling (1762–c 1814), convicted of counterfeiting and sentenced to 14 years’ transportation, arrived in New South Wales on 7 October 1792. The portrait has since the auction attracted the attention of a few art historians and bloggers, but does not appear to have gained the notice of historians of natural history.

The authenticity of the miniature seems incontestable: according to the auctioneers, the sitter’s name and rank was “delicately painted onto a piece of paper which is attached to the back of the miniature.” They said it was put up by a “local general dealer [who] purchased it amongst other items from a family who were emigrating to Australia. They sold him a number of “old colonial” and “old money” items but nothing related to this item.⁹

Watling depicted White “warts and all”. This is not a studio portrait of an important Georgian naval officer in neat, powdered wig and dress uniform. White’s long, sun-bleached natural hair is

dishevelled; his forehead is pale whereas his cheeks and lower face are reddened with sunburn and there is a distinct demarcation between his sunburnt face and his skin above, which was, very probably, usually protected by a wide-brimmed hat.

The sitter wears a dark blue jacket with broad lapels over a white shirt with ruffled front. The stand-up red collar of his jacket accords with the description of the uniform worn by a naval surgeon who served in the West Indies in 1795, although before 1805 naval surgeons did not have an officially sanctioned uniform.¹⁰ Chris Murray commented that the miniature was “not the finest quality, and it’s not an attractive face, though full of character.”¹¹ Watling himself, in a letter to his aunt written from New South Wales, recorded that “My employment is painting for J. W---*, esq. ... The performances are, in consequence such as may be expected from genius in bondage to a very mercenary, sordid person.”¹² His portrait of White, unflattering as it is, seems to reflect Watling’s disdain for his subject.



Dr Charles Nelson received his doctorate from the Australian National University in 1976 for work on *Adenanthos*, a relative of

Banksia, and is an authority on European heathers. He is a collateral descendant of Dr John White, and has long maintained research interests in the history of the botanical exploration of Australia, particularly in the pre-Cook period. Dr Nelson is a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London, as was Dr White, and recently was the recipient of medals from the Royal Horticultural Society (of London) and the RHSI. Born and educated in Northern Ireland, he now lives in Norfolk in the east of England. Email: tippitwitchet@phonecoop.coop

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to Clifford Lonsberry of Gorrings for supplying the digital image.

This is an edited version of an article published in *The Linnean* 32 no 2 October 2016 and has been reproduced with kind permission of The Linnean Society of London, see https://ca1-tls.edcdn.com/Linnean_Vol-32_2_-Oct-2016_web.pdf?mtime=20170314163409.

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Madame Bourdic's little plate

In the 19th century, many artists trained in Europe came to Australia, where the strange new land often impacted on how they saw the world and what they depicted. French china painter Madame Bourdic did not succumb to the Australian environment. She continued to paint china in the academic tradition she had learned in France and Italy, and taught those delicate painting techniques to married and single women students in Melbourne.

1.

Marguerite Charlotte Bourdic (1852–1911), china painter, plate with partly-pierced ledge, painted in the tondo with a putto bearing a basket of flowers amid roses and clouds, three rural scenes in cartouches in the ledge, hard paste porcelain probably French, diam 18.5 cm. Painted inscription overglaze under the base “M Bourdic / Melbourne/1889”, incised number “18/5” in European font. Private collection



MARGARET CARLISLE

Was it years ago in an auction ‘mystery box’ that this porcelain plate (**plate 1**) appeared? Recently a closer look showed, under the base, a signature painted overglaze in script, “M. Bourdic/ Melbourne/ 1889” and the incised number “18/5”, either a factory shape number or the date of manufacture.

Madame Bourdic taught painting on china for close on 25 years in Melbourne, from 1883 to at least 1905, and even gets a passing mention in McCulloch.¹ Newspapers on the National Library’s on-line website Trove supplied a great deal more information, while Trove users

have compiled a substantial “list” of material related to her.²

Marguerite Charlotte Marielle was born in Paris on 10 November 1852 where

As Mademoiselle Marella, [sic] a girl of eighteen, she won distinction for porcelain painting exhibited at the Paris Salon. But long ere this her mother had won fame as an artist, and years earlier her grandfather was the centre of a little group of painters holding particular tenets, before the tide of impressionism swept over French studios.³

In 1881, she was living in Rome, and in May that year, aged 28, she married

pharmacist Clément Louis Marie Bourdic in Paris. She and her husband, “*Conseiller du commerce extérieur de la France*” (French Foreign Trade Adviser), sailed to Melbourne, probably in 1883. After completing his pharmacy registration exams in 1884,⁴ he conducted Bourdic’s Pharmacy at 98 Spencer Street, Melbourne opposite the railway station, from about 1884 until 1903. From 1892 to 1896, Bourdic promoted “St Mach’s Balsamic Water, a certain cure for secret and chronic diseases” in frequent newspaper advertisements.

Soon after her arrival, Mme Bourdic set up a studio to teach china painting in Melbourne. Her first advertisement appeared in August 1883



2.

Detail of painted inscription under plate, "M Bourdic/Melbourne/1889"

PAINTING on Porcelain, Faience, Enamel, Silk, &c.— Lessons given by Madame Bourdic, of Paris, and late of Rome. Apply 37 Cowle-street, Albert Park.⁵

The next month, "just arrived from Rome"⁶, she was exhibiting her works at Freeman's Galleria Romana di Belle Arti (later Roman Gallery of Fine Arts) at 34 Collins Street west,⁷ promoted in a series of advertisements running from 3 September until 8 November.

In December Madame Bourdic took part in the "second annual exhibition of paintings on china and terra cotta by amateurs" at Mr J. T. Buxton's Art Studio in Swanston Street. It is probable that she had brought examples of her art with her to Melbourne; a portrait of Pope Leo XIII and another of the "Madonna after Prudon" (Pierre-Paul Prud'hon, 1758–1823) are mentioned.⁸

By January 1884, Madame Bourdic was offering lessons at the Paris Salon Studio at 128 Collins Street west⁹ but in April she advertised her move to Collins Street east "above Brinsmead's next Rooke's new buildings" in conjunction with Mrs Isabella Farquharson.¹⁰ There on the first floor they offered

Classes in all Branches of Art Instruction CLASSES COMMENCE May 1 for China Painting, Terra-cotta, Silk, Satin, Crystoleum, and Cabinet Work.¹¹

Mrs Farquharson had been giving Crystoleum classes at St Kilda from June 1883.¹² According to Wikipedia,

The crystoleum process was a method of applying colour to an albumen print, popular from c 1880–1910. An albumen print was pasted face down to the inside of a concave piece of glass. Once the adhesive was dry the paper backing was rubbed away leaving only the transparent emulsion on the glass. The image was then coloured by hand using oil paints.

The two women held extensive exhibitions of their work at Sandhurst (Bendigo) in August 1884 and Geelong in 1885.¹³

By July 1885, their studio was at 28 Queen Street, Melbourne. There they taught 70 pupils; an exhibition of the work of some of these women, both married and single, was detailed and 35 of them named in an article in *Table Talk*.¹⁴ Subjects included figures from

mythology, copies of portraits and French masters, birds, fruit, flowers and "a few original paintings".

At the Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition of 1888–9, Madame Bourdic won a jury award, second order of merit for her china painting.¹⁵ At the conclusion of the exhibition, like other exhibitors, she auctioned her numerous exhibits:

THIS DAY. At 2 o'Clock. In the Exhibition. *By Instructions of Madame Bourdic.* ART SALE Of Painted China and Porcelain, Plates, Plaques, Dessert Sets, Ornaments, &c. BAYLEE, SHEVILL and Co. will sell, Without reserve, This elegant exhibit, which received a first award.¹⁶

In 1889, they planned to build a grand new residence at Brighton. Bourdic himself called for tenders:

TENDERS are invited for the ERECTION of a Two-storied Brick RESIDENCE at South-road Brighton Beach until 10th May, 1889. Lowest or any tender not necessarily accepted. Plans and specification may be inspected Mr Bourdic's chemist, 98 Spencer street.¹⁷

The house with its Italianate tower at 65 South Road was probably completed in 1890 and patriotically named Gallia (Latin for Gaul) (**plate 3**).¹⁸

The couple frequently attended and gave diplomatic functions, especially of the French and Italian communities, in Melbourne. Festivities were held at Gallia entertaining the foreign residents of Melbourne, the Italian Opera Company in 1893,¹⁹ and on Bastille Day in 1898 “when not only their French friends but the company included English, Italian and American guests.”²⁰ Unsurprisingly, they also had a white, curly-haired poodle.²¹

About this time, she forwarded a portrait of Sarah Bernhardt to the celebrated French actress in Europe, and notified the press:

Madame Bourdic, the cleverest, if not the only, miniature painter in Melbourne, has received a grateful acknowledgment of her art from Sarah Bernhardt, whose portrait she painted on porcelain. It is her latest photograph, endorsed: “A la charmante Madame Bourdic—Souvenir d’une compatriote et confrère en art—SARAH BERNHARDT.”²²

Lesley Garrett’s article in *Australiana*, “Porcelain Painting in the 1970s and 80s”, shows the need for hard paste porcelain strong enough to withstand repeated exposures in the kiln as the various paint layers were applied.²³ So where did Madame Bourdic source the porcelain blanks she painted, and where did she fire them?

An 1898 article in *Table Talk* discusses her subjects and reveals that the Bourdics imported their own blanks, presumably from France, and that her husband the chemist fired the kiln:

And yet her work might well be considered a treasure in any gallery. A set of dessert plates, each having a different subject and design, may be placed side by side with the examples of the same class that are in the Victorian National Gallery.

A child in Russian costume, a Lady of the Louis Quinze period, the veiled figure of Night raising from a marshy tract, Watteau figures and idyllic incidents are depicted with faultless accuracy in drawing, and the colouring is equally true and harmonious. Even in the bordering of the plate novel effects are secured. One has a concentric design of the rich deep gold; another appears like a succession of iridescent petals, resembling the outer sheath-like leaves of some tropical plant. Others suggest pink roses, tulips or other flowers, and sometimes the effect is perpetuated in the design on the deep part of the plate. Scarcely less lovely than these are some vases adorned with still finer work, and with the colour so modulated over the surface, that a most perfect imitation of Sevres china is secured. The uncommon shape of the vases, and the quality of the porcelain is explained from the fact of M. and Madame Bourdic being their own importers. Then again, the painted porcelain is subjected to the process of firing by M. Bourdic himself who is able to give it every attention.²⁴

The imported blanks that Mme Bourdic painted were, like the plate illustrated here, of hard paste porcelain, and almost certainly French. The National Gallery of Victoria holds a Limoges, France hard paste dessert dish c 1880 showing similar piercing of the border.²⁵

Miss B B Davis, a former pupil of Madame Bourdic,²⁶ in 1902 eulogised her former teacher, and revealed that her china was fired at her home in Brighton:

Much of the imported china is of very inferior quality, a fact which should be recognised that Madame Bourdic has done a great service to Australia by introducing a branch of art, the secrets of which she learned in France and Italy. Madame Bourdic’s “China Baking Oven” at her Brighton mansion is most unique and interesting, but few Melbourne

people know of its existence, and no notice has been taken of the woman who is doing for this particular branch of Art in Australia, what Bernard de Palissy did for France, who created a great industry for the French people. Gradually Australians are recognising the fact that a really handsome piece of painted china, the work of Australian artists, can be secured at a reasonable price.²⁷

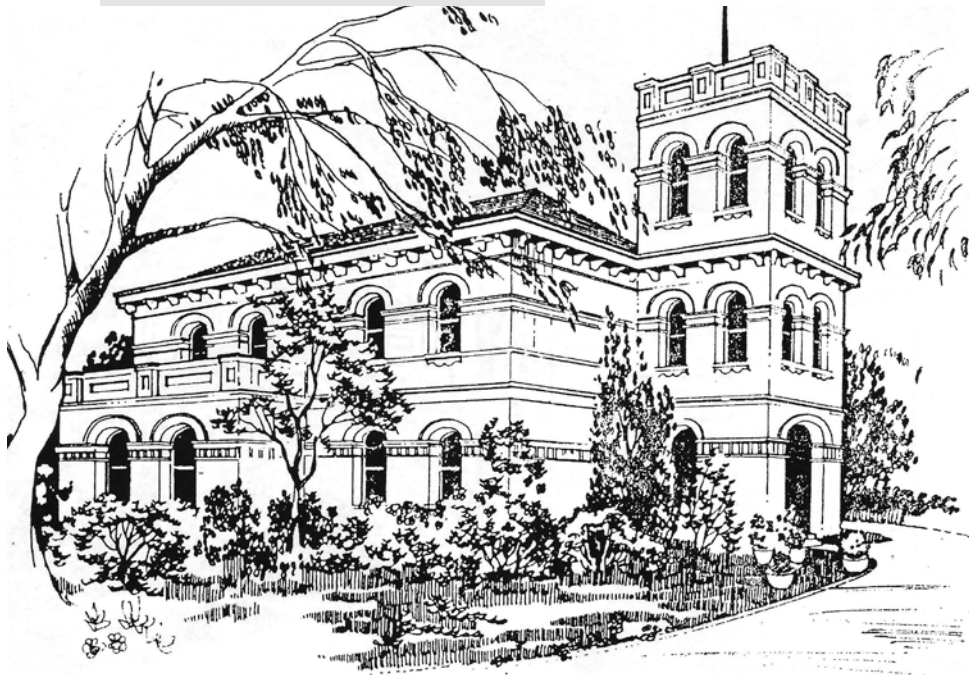
Madame Bourdic, aged 52, was still teaching china painting in February 1905 at her studio, 48 (sic) Queen Street, Melbourne.²⁸ She died at Gallia on 12 August 1911.²⁹

After her death, the French government promoted her widower Clément Bourdic from *Conseiller du commerce extérieur de la France* to *Officier de l’instruction publique* (Public Instruction Officer) in 1914. He remarried before dying on 24 May 1917, leaving his widow and daughter Henriette an estate valued at nearly £5,000.³⁰ Gallia was offered for sale soon after his death, and still stands today. The garden was chosen ‘garden of the week’ in 2001.³¹

Considering that her output must have been extensive, finding further examples of Mme Bourdic’s art has proved elusive. In 1915 a raffle for the Red Cross (Malvern Branch) offered six hand-painted coffee cups and saucers; the painting “was the work of Madame Bourdic, who taught china painting in Melbourne for a quarter of a century.” Tickets were two pence each.³² No examples of Madame Bourdic’s art have been found in on-line collection searches of the National Gallery of Victoria, Museum Victoria, Geelong Gallery, Bendigo Art Gallery, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Hamilton Gallery, National Gallery of Australia nor Powerhouse Museum.

SUMMARY

Madame Bourdic was an extremely competent china painter who brought her traditional European decorating techniques and repertoire with her from France and Italy to Melbourne. Using



3.

Gallia, 65 South Road, Brighton Beach, sketch for sale advertisement for auctioneers Beller & Tallent 1988. Collection: Brighton Historical Society Inc

familiar European hard-paste porcelain blanks, she earned an income from her skilful painting and from teaching in her city studios, where she taught up to 70 mostly amateur students, all women, some married and some not. Her pharmacist husband Clément supported her and helped with the importing of blanks and probably glaze colours, and with technical aspects of firing.

Margaret Carlisle is a retired pharmacist with a long-standing interest in Australiana. You can email her at malecarl@bigpond.net.au

In her new country, she seemed to cling to her French and Italian heritage, both in her art and her life. Here she avoided the “tide of impressionism [that] swept over French studios” in the 1870s and continued to produce delicate china-painting, without, it seems, deviating from the established techniques, styles and subjects that she had been taught in Europe in the 1870s. It would have been what her Victorian market was comfortable with; newspapers frequently called for the public to support colonial artists, such as Mme Bourdic, who could produce work just as good as the imported product.

So far we have no indication that she experimented with local subjects or materials. This was left to the next generation. One of her devoted students, Blanche Barnet Davis (1858–1933), did explore local subjects, but not without a hint of criticism:

Miss Davis imports all her models from France, and decorates them with Australian motifs. It is rather strange, then, to see a Louis XIV Service in copper and yellow lustre with a design beautifully done with the clematis as a motif.³³

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks to Ian Armstrong OAM, Melbourne for information about Gallia.

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- 7 *Age* 7 Sep 1883 p 5.
- 8 *Age* 24 Dec 1883 p 7; *Australasian* 29 Dec 1883 p 18. Henry Hainsselin, Ada Renouf and Emma Minnie A'Beckett also exhibited.
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- 12 *Argus* 30 Jun 1883 p 1.
- 13 *Bendigo Advertiser* 9 Aug 1884 p 2; *Geelong Advertiser* 14 Feb 1885 p 3.
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- 15 *Argus* 19 Jan 1889 p 9.
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- 20 *Table Talk* 15 Jul 1898
- 21 *Brighton Southern Cross* 31 May 1902 p 3.
- 22 *Federalist* (Launceston) 19 Nov 1898 p 2; also *Table Talk* 23 Sep 1898 p 2 (where “Sarah” is mis-spelt).
- 23 Lesley Garrett, “Porcelain Painting in the 1970s and 80s”, *Australiana*, vol 35 no 2 May 2013.
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- 25 National Gallery of Victoria, www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/113079/
- 26 Blanche Barnet Davis 1858–1933, see <https://trove.nla.gov.au/list?id=103197>; *Table Talk* 6 Mar 1902 p 20.
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- 31 Brighton Historical Society Inc. Auction Notices and *Age* 12 Dec 2001.
- 32 *Argus* 14 July 1915 p 6.
- 33 *Age* 6 Oct 1925 p 18

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Moreton Bay pearls in Australian jewellery

Australian colonial artists sought to use local materials and to appropriate local motifs in their artworks for several reasons: to reflect the Australian origin of their work, to distinguish it from the art of other nations, and to foster a stronger sense of connection with the country. Moreton Bay pearls are one of the new, local materials used in jewellery in the 1850s and 1860s, but the study of their use has been neglected up till now. David Bedford looks into the history of the use of Queensland's Moreton Bay pearls and discusses examples used in jewellery made by leading Sydney and Brisbane jewellers.

DAVID BEDFORD

As a child, I enjoyed opening rock oysters for my father to eat, but I never developed a taste for them myself. Perhaps that is some explanation for the fact that, although I completed a biology degree at the University of Queensland, I have until recently been completely ignorant of oysters in Moreton Bay. However, my interest was piqued when reading about the use of Moreton Bay pearls by Sydney jewellers Hogarth and Erichsen, coupled with being able to handle a piece of jewellery attributed to

them with four such pearls (**plate 1**). Because of their small size, these were often known as “seed pearls”.

The thrill of discovering something absolutely new is known to all collectors, and surprisingly that also applies when finding something that is only new to oneself! For me, that thrill included learning that the pearl oyster is a completely different genus, *Pinctada*, to the rock oyster genus *Saccostrea*, the latter commonly known as Sydney Rock Oysters.¹

The story of Moreton Bay pearls is a typical story that has happened throughout Australia: wonderful resources squandered heedlessly. A little

research soon reveals that Moreton Bay once abounded in pearl oysters and that some of them contained such gems.

HISTORICAL RECORDS

The earliest newspaper reference to Moreton Bay pearls that has been located is from 1851, when jeweller Thomas Hale displayed local gold as well as pearls in his shop window in George Street, Sydney.

... Turning from the golden specimens, we come to a beautiful collection of pearls, which Mr. Hale also exhibits. There are about 200, and some of the larger ones are as fine in the quality of the skin, though not in colour, as the famous pearls of Ceylon. They are from the true pearl shells, and have been obtained off Moreton Island, Moreton Bay, by the native blacks, who dive for them...²

A month on, the *Herald* modified its account of the pearls, noting that Henry Watson had sold the pearls to Hale for

1.

Hogarth, Erichsen & Co (attributed), openwork carved and engraved gold brooch, the central tree-fern flanked by a jumping kangaroo and an emu, the frame decorated with foliage and set with four natural Moreton Bay pearls. Sydney c 1860. Private collection, ex Anne Schofield Antiques



£1, and already by October 1851 “some of the pearls have been set in rings and brooches for presents to friends in England.”³

A few days later, the *Moreton Bay Courier* reported

PEARL FISHING. - A party of three persons, engaged in the fishing trade at Moreton Bay, and chiefly employed in procuring young oil and turtle, recently had their attention directed to the value of the pearl oysters that abound in the bay, and, in consequence, have for the last few days been procuring those animals on the beach at Calowndna [Caloundra], near Bribie's island. A note received from one of the party this week states that they had secured some very large pearls of brilliant lustre. A small one, of rather yellowish cast, has been forwarded to Mr. Eldridge.⁴ The aboriginal native who brought up the note stated that the party had found plenty of pearls - “close up a pint pot full;” but of course allowance must be made for his exaggeration... The party above mentioned are fishing in a different part of the bay from that where the pearls lately forwarded to Mr. Hale, in Sydney, were found. That spot was on Stradbroke Island, at the south end of the bay.⁵

The demand for pearls continued in 1853, when surgeon, “chemist and druggist”⁶ Dr Frederick J. Barton of “Queen-street, North Brisbane” advertised “Moreton Bay Pearls. Wanted To Purchase. A Few, as Specimens. Full value will be given, according to Size, Shape, and Colour.”⁷ Whether Dr Barton intended to use these for jewellery or a pseudo-medical purpose is uncertain.

Evidence about market prices and the viability of the trade is far from clear:

Moreton Bay Pearls.- Latterly the search for pearls on the banks in Moreton Bay has been, apparently, abandoned chiefly, we presume, because of the small prices realised



for those forwarded to Sydney. But a gentleman who has recently returned from that city informs us that the valuation fixed by Sydney jewellers upon Moreton Bay pearls is very far from being so small as might be supposed from the rate at which they purchase them. Our informant paid £5 for one of a lot sent from this district, and this pearl having been broken in the attempt to set it, he purchased a ring with three smaller pearls, of yellow shade, for £5; the gold in the ring being probably worth £1. We understand that the Rev. Mr. Stoebart, chaplain to Lords Henry Scott and S. Ker, has in his possession a pearl from Moreton Bay, which, according to the rate of valuation of the Sydney jewellers, should be worth at least £10.⁸

Pearls from Moreton Bay were displayed in Sydney by the Paris Exhibition Commissioners in 1854,⁹ then subsequently at the Paris Exposition of 1855. In 1855 both N Bartley (presumably Nehemiah Bartley, merchant) and I G Levy¹⁰ advertised in

2.

Brush & McDonnell, gold brooch with native flora and fauna and seed pearl. Collection: Trevor Kennedy AM, Sydney

Brisbane that they wanted to buy Moreton Bay pearls.¹¹ On the strength of the response to the pearls shown in the Paris Exposition, the *Moreton Bay Courier* in 1859 advocated the establishment of “pearl fisheries” in Moreton Bay.¹² Thereafter, Moreton Bay pearls were regularly submitted at exhibitions: the Vienna Exhibition in 1873 had “some Moreton Bay pearls set in gold”¹³ while an “enormous Moreton Bay pearl” was shown at the 1878 Paris Exhibition,¹⁴ but these are more in the way of unusual natural specimens, displayed alongside minerals, than jewellery.

In the 20th century, references to Moreton Bay pearls continued in newspapers sporadically. In 1922, the *Brisbane Courier* recorded two significant finds of pearls. The first, in January, stated that



3.

Hogarth, Erichsen & Co, Gold specimen brooch with central oval cartouche of emu and kangaroo flanking a fern tree, framed by two large leaves, and seed pearls, Sydney, c 1860. H L cm, stamped 'HOGARTH / ERICHSEN.' verso. Private collection, Sydney

Moreton Bay Pearls. Although the pearls found in Moreton Bay are generally of the “seed” variety, occasionally a jewel of greater pretensions is discovered. During the recent Christmas holidays a fisherman was the fortunate discoverer of a pearl which has just changed hands at £80.¹⁵

In June the same year, a longer article by “Nut Quad” dwelt in greater detail on the subject of the pearls.¹⁶ He noted that the pearls had often been sent to Sydney for sale. The natural distribution

of the pearls seems to have covered a wide area of the Bay, extending from its southern to its northern limit, as the same article noted that pearls had also been found near the southern end of Stradbroke Island (which, at the time, was one island not the two now in existence).

The last reference that I have found in the newspapers was in the *Courier-Mail* in April 1937, which noted:

PEARLS FOUND IN MORETON BAY

One In Shell Thrown Away At Sandgate.

A pearl shell thrown away by Mr. W. Buckley, son of the proprietor of the Brighton Park Kiosk, at Sandgate, was later opened by a woman for bait for fishing, and found to contain a perfect white pearl valued at £5. A few days later a smaller cream pearl, valued at £1, was found. Mr. Buckley and a friend had been fishing at Brighton Park, and they returned with several shells. Mr. Buckley asked his companion if he

wanted the shells, and when he said he did not they were thrown from the boat on to the beach. Later, a young woman, who was fishing near the kiosk, picked up one of the shells and opened it for bait. A pearl, which rolled out, was white, round, and of perfect lustre. Mrs. Noel Tweddle, of Tara, who is spending a holiday at Sandgate, and who has some knowledge of the value of pearls, valued it at £5. A few days later Mrs. Tweddle [sic] found a smaller cream pearl, which she valued at £1. Mr. S. Buckley, proprietor of the kiosk, said last night that many of the shells were to be found about Sandgate, and his son had opened hundreds without finding a pearl. The shells from which the pearls were obtained were about 2 1/2 or 3in. across. The Director of the Queensland Museum (Mr. Longman) recalled last night that the late Mr. James Clark, a noted authority on pearls, had once told him of having found pearls in Moreton Bay. Mr. Clark had said that all such shells found in the bay should be opened because of the possibility of finding a pearl. The chances of finding one, however, were not great.¹⁷

WHAT HAPPENED?

So, given that some oysters still grow and are in fact farmed in Moreton Bay,¹⁸ why do we no longer see Moreton Bay pearls? The *Atlas of Living Australia* records the pearl oyster as growing in a depth range of below 18 m to about 71 metres, that is, subtidally. The normal edible rock oysters grow intertidally, at much shallower depths.¹⁹

The environmental changes in Moreton Bay have been documented in many places but most recently in 2017 by Daryl McPhee, *Environmental History and Ecology of Moreton Bay*. McPhee makes clear that human activity has removed the subtidal habitat available for these molluscs: “The beds are now subtidally extinct in Moreton Bay.” A similar situation exists all around the eastern Australian coast, but in Moreton

Bay it has been associated with poor land use in the catchment area resulting in extreme siltation during major floods.²⁰

AVAILABILITY OF MORETON BAY PEARLS FOR JEWELLERY

Given the decline in the water quality of Moreton Bay during the latter half of the 19th century, Moreton Bay pearls consequently became increasingly rare. Combined with the ready availability of Western Australian pearls and pearls from other Australian sources after 1861, it would seem that examples of Australian jewellery most likely to contain Moreton Bay pearls will have been made before 1870, with the possible exception of exhibition pieces.

Notes on the Sydney International Exhibition of 1879 claimed that “and some finely mounted colonial pearls which are becoming rather scarce in Sydney through Chinese merchants purchasing them with avidity,”²¹ possibly for ‘medical’ use. However, it is very unlikely that these would have been Moreton Bay pearls as by then commercial pearling was well established in Western Australia. Pearling began in Torres Strait by 1873.²² Brisbane jeweller Charles Allen Brown featured some pearls from Somerset in Cape York in his display at the 1877 Brisbane Exhibition:

The class for jewellery and other ornaments is well represented. Mr. C. A. Brown, of Edward-street, Brisbane, has a glass-case set out with an extremely handsome collection, made exclusively of Queensland materials. In the centre of the case is a large inkstand, with a polished wooden bottom, surrounded by a high silver fern tree, shrubbery, &c, together with the figure of a blackfellow, a couple of emus, and two swans (the latter swimming in a pool in the foreground) made of oxidised silver. Mr. Brown’s display includes a very chaste collection of jewellery, &c, in the manufacture of which trigonias, operculas, nautilus, and other shells, together with pearls

4.

Flavelle Bros, gold brooch presented to Lady Bowen on her departure from Brisbane, 1867, in the form of an Irish harp inset with emeralds and trefoils of Moreton Bay pearls as shamrocks, Brisbane or Sydney, 1867. Private collection, England



from Somerset are made to show to great advantage set in gold and silver. He has also fitted up near his show case, a table at which jewellers are kept at work, and in whose delicate handicraft the visitors to the exhibition manifest considerable interest.²³

Pearls were still being found in Moreton Bay up until 1937, so some later jewellery may contain Moreton Bay pearls; however, the identification of these will be uncertain without an original jeweller’s description or contemporary news account.

AUSTRALIAN JEWELLERY WITH MORETON BAY PEARLS

The *Sydney Morning Herald* in October 1851 recorded that Moreton Bay pearls sent to Thomas Hale in Sydney had been set in rings and brooches as gifts to friends in England.²⁴ Some of those items may remain somewhere in the UK waiting to be discovered. However, unless accompanied by a contemporary

description of the pearls as being from Moreton Bay, attribution will be difficult.

The earliest documented example noted to date, “a Colonial-made ring, of the Turon gold, with a Moreton Bay pearl set in,” was presented by grateful emigrant passengers to Dr William Thompson, Surgeon Superintendent on board the ship *Kate*, sailing from Plymouth to Sydney in 1851.²⁵ The maker is not recorded, though Thomas Hale, recorded in the same newspaper as setting Moreton Bay pearls in rings, would have to be favoured.

ALFRED LORKING

Sydney jeweller Alfred Lorking – the successor to Thomas Hale, who had displayed Moreton Bay pearls in his shop window in George Street, Sydney, and turned out rings and brooches in local gold set with pearls in 1851 – was commissioned to make the presentation gifts for Mrs Keith Stewart (daughter of Governor FitzRoy) before she returned to England on 17 December 1853.



5. Flavelle, Roberts & Sankey (1891-1949), gold bracelet with seed pearls, Queensland, c 1896–1910. Collection: Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, purchased 2011 with funds from the Estate of Kathleen Elizabeth Mowle through the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation

THE Hon. Mrs. KEITH STEWART.— On the eve of this lady's departure from the colony, her female friends have presented her with what we must call a "testimonial," since we know not how else to designate a handsome present of ornaments made of Australian gold. Mr. Lorking, of George-street, having been charged with the delicate commission, has manufactured a pair of massive armlets, a large brooch, and a ring, in which are set three native pearls. These rich and characteristic articles are contained in a case made of Australian tortoiseshell; and the workmanship of the whole does great credit to the colony. On the outside of the case is a gold shield, bearing an appropriate inscription setting forth the occasion of the gift.²⁶

The *Illustrated Sydney News* added

... The articles are contained in an elegant tortoise-shell case, which is also of Australian manufacture, and bears a gold shield, on which is the following inscription: "Presented to the Hon. Mrs. Keith Stewart, by the ladies of New South Wales, as a small token of their esteem and regard. Sydney, December, 1853" ...²⁷

The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney has a brooch with a large cluster of seed pearls representing grapes, in a box labelled A. Lorking late Hale; these may or may not be Moreton Bay pearls.²⁸

Alfred Lorking had arrived in Sydney with his wife on 20 February 1852.²⁹ The following year he took over the business of Thomas Hale, in whose

employ he had been "for some time past".³⁰ Lorking advertised that he would still buy gold, and "...Parties desirous of having their own gold manufactured into article of Jewellery, may rely upon their orders being executed upon the premises on the shortest notice."³¹

Six years later, Lorking, announced his retirement in January 1859; his stock in trade was auctioned by Purkis & Lambert on 28 February 1859,³² so he would have sold this brooch within the period 1853 to 1859. As Lorking acquired Hale's stock in 1853, it is possible but unlikely that it may have been made a year or two earlier by Hale, and retailed by Lorking.

BRUSH & MACDONNELL

A gold brooch now in the Trevor Kennedy collection (plate 2) comes in a fitted box that shows it was retailed by Brush & MacDonnell of George Street, Sydney. The top consists of an oval with kangaroo and emu flanking a tree fern, with a pendant consisting of vine leaves and seed pearl. The style is typical of Hogarth, Erichsen & Co and may have been made by them, about 1858–60.

HOGARTH, ERICHSEN & CO.

Hogarth, Erichsen & Co., always eager to exploit native motifs, native materials and publicity, were among the jewellers to use Moreton Bay pearls, documented as early as October 1857.

... golden bracelet of the most elaborate workmanship ... and the Moreton Bay pearls complete a triumph of artistic skill.³³

Contemporary newspapers describe several other examples by them, and some are extant.

GOLD MANUFACTURES.— We have inspected some articles of jewellery manufactured by Messrs. Hogarth and Erichsen, of George-street, which are superior to anything of the kind we have seen produced in the colony. One of these articles, an armlet of pure gold, is a work of

exquisite beauty. It consists of nine graduated plates linked together, and elaborately worked throughout into a kind of panoramic representation of the principal objects in Australian scenery. On the centre plate there is an aboriginal black standing beside his native grass-tree. The central figures of the smaller plates are the kangaroo, the opossum, the emu and the eagle, interspersed among Australian foliage, of which the rock lily, waratah, gum, native pear and fern are conspicuous. The centre part of the bracelet is ornamented with three gold pendants, the larger one fashioned into a display of native weapons, the smaller representing nine leaves, with Moreton Bay pearls affixed to each as drops. This rich jewel of chased gold is finished with an exact taste highly creditable to the artisans and to the colony. Another of the articles is a brooch of similar workmanship, the centre figures being a kangaroo and an emu, surrounded by vines and ferns. There is a pendant to this jewel also consisting of a "moonstone" delicately set in gold. The other articles are nearly duplicates of those described; the whole have been manufactured to order as presents to persons in Europe.³⁴

The *Sydney Morning Herald* described another piece of Hogarth and Erichsen's work in 1858:

... The third of these brooches, if not the most beautiful, is perhaps the most attractive and represents a white cockatoo sitting in his pride, crest erected, on a native tree, with a Moreton Bay pearl again somewhat oddly introduced in his claw. This, however, is not so incongruous, as the cockatoo is a chartered libertine and picks up unconsidered trifles where he will. The object of introducing these pearls was to exhibit the productions of Australia, and for this purpose and not for meretricious adornment were they introduced into these specimens.³⁵

An extant gold specimen brooch with Australian flora and fauna bears the rare

stamp "HOGARTH / ERICHSEN." on the reverse (plate 3). The central oval cartouche has figures of an emu and kangaroo flanking a fern tree, framed by two large leaves, and seed pearls. It was made in Sydney, c 1857–60.

In May 1860, *The Australian Home Companion and Band of Hope Journal* wrote:

COLONIAL ART.—We observe amongst the many *Objets de Vertus* exhibited in the establishment of Messrs. Hogarth and Erichson, some splendid gold bracelets, ornamented with pearls, and manufactured on the premises from colonial gold; the designs are unique and appropriate, and are well deserving of inspection.³⁶

In September that same year, the *Sydney Morning Herald* recorded an elaborate silver inkstand made "as far as possible of colonial materials":

COLONIAL WORKS OF ART. — Our attention was called yesterday to a beautiful work of art, exhibited in the window of the shop of Messrs. Hogarth and Erichson [sic]. It is an inkstand, and professes to be made as far as possible of colonial materials. The feet of the stand are formed out of hardened colonial fruit. The table is of colonial slate, over which is spread a second entablature of colonial copper, richly ornamented with colonial devices. The centre ornament is of silver, not colonial. It represents a white cedar tree, blasted by some storm, but with something of verdure still growing out of it; the little blossoms, the parasites which cling to it, and the correctly delineated ferns which surround the root of it, and carefully and richly displayed. The little possum on the top of the tree, and the golden images of cockatoos about, leave no doubt as to the nationality of this beautiful ornament. But the most beautiful feature in it remains to be described. At the foot of the tree is seated the figure of an aboriginal mother, sculptured with great art and

beauty and rendered in oxidised silver. She has her piccaninny at her breast, and the net in which it is her wont to carry it waves on her back. The arms of her husband — his tomahawk, his war club — are hung upon a stray branch of the tree above them. This figure forms the seal of the inkstand, and is set with a glorious amethyst. The penholder is made in a linked chain of colonial gold, united at the joints by colonial pearls. Altogether it is a work (both of design and workmanship) worthy of the inspection of all admirers of taste and art.³⁷

In addition to the contemporary descriptions quoted above, recent publications have included a number of items attributed to Hogarth and Erichsen that contain seed pearls, almost certainly from Moreton Bay given the contemporary reports of items they made.

T T JONES

The "Jones" mentioned in 1862 newspapers must be Timothy Tillotson Jones (c 1809–97), watchmaker and jeweller then of 330 George Street.³⁸ He made a gold and enamel Masonic presentation medal in 1862 that the press reported seeing and congratulated the maker on his skill and refinement. The *Herald* praised his jewelled brooch incorporating Moreton Bay pearls:

... At the same time was observed an elegant gold jewelled brooch, the work of the same establishment. A bright gold vine stalk, in a triangular shape, encloses a few leaves exquisitely wrought in dead metal, from which is pendant a cluster of grapes, formed by the small Moreton Bay pearls. A pleasing relief is obtained by the insertion of a small creeper, which, after clinging to the main vine stem, shoots out its pretty emerald flowerets among the grapes and leaves. This article, though displaying more taste than the medal, does not go beyond the excellence of its execution; both are highly creditable to the atelier of the exhibitor.³⁹

FLAVELLE BROS

When All Hallows' School in Brisbane wanted a present in 1867 for their patron Lady Bowen, wife of the departing governor Sir George Bowen, they turned to jewellers Flavelle Bros, who had opened a branch in Brisbane in 1861.⁴⁰ They chose an Irish harp, reflecting the Sisters' Irish origin and Lady Bowen's love of music. It was manufactured of Queensland gold, set with Queensland emeralds, and trefoils of Moreton Bay pearls representing shamrocks (plate 4).

Flavelle Brothers obviously liked the design and its association with Lady Bowen, for two years later, a similar brooch was offered as a prize in a long-running Art Union:

15th Prize.-A Harp Brooch (on the Model of Brian Boru's, preserved at Trinity College, Dublin), of Queensland Gold, enchased and engraved, set with Shamrocks of Moreton Bay Pearls and Peak Downs Malachite (A purchaser has guaranteed to offer £15 for this prize).⁴¹

The Queensland Art Gallery has a gold bracelet retailed by their successors, Flavelle, Roberts & Sankey, with nine linked shells, each set with a seed pearl, with similar detachable pendant (plate 5). The bracelet is dated c 1896–1910, and the pearls are probably from the Torres Strait.⁴²

SUMMARY

This is a partial list of known examples of early jewellery that contains seed pearls or other similar pearls. Curators and collectors may like to examine their early Australian jewellery items, and to suggest the possible source of the pearls in their items. It would be of great interest if any items made in Brisbane have contemporary descriptions as including Moreton Bay pearls.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NOTES

- 1 *Atlas of Living Australia* <http://bie.ala.org.au/species/um:lsid:biodiversity.org.au:afd:taxon:59a4c622-453b-4747-bd08-014e0708586a> accessed 24 Aug 2017.
- 2 *SMH* 6 Sep 1851 p 4, copied in *Moreton Bay Courier* 22 Sep 1851 p 1.
- 3 *SMH* 6 Oct 1851 p 2.
- 4 Presumably Ambrose Eldridge, chemist, druggist and merchant of North Brisbane.
- 5 *MBC* 25 Oct 1851 p 3. Murray Johnstone (ed.), *Brisbane: Moreton Bay Matters*, Brisbane History Group Papers no 19, 2002.
- 6 Obituary, *Courier* 3 Sep 1863 p 2.
- 7 *MBC* 23 Jul 1853 p 3.
- 8 *MBC* 3 Sep 1853 p 2.
- 9 *MBC* 26 Aug 1854 p 1.
- 10 Levi advertised from 1855 to 1857 as chronometer maker, watchmaker and jeweller of Queen St opposite Mr Robertson's store, later opposite the Court House; his wife was a milliner (see eg *MBC* 12 May 1855 p 3) so either might have used pearls.
- 11 *MBC* 24 Nov 1855 p 3.
- 12 *MBC* 25 Jun 1859 p 2.
- 13 *Maryborough Chronicle* 30 Sep 1873 p 2.
- 14 *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton) 1 Aug 1878 p 2.
- 15 *Brisbane Courier* 24 Jan 1922 p 6.
- 16 *Brisbane Courier* 3 Jun 1922 p 17.
- 17 *Courier-Mail* 30 Apr 1937 p 15.
- 18 The Moreton Bay Rock Oyster Company <http://www.moretonbayrockoysters.com.au/> accessed 23 Aug 2017.
- 19 See n 1..
- 20 Daryl McPhee, *Environmental History and Ecology of Moreton Bay*, CSIRO Publishing 2017.
- 21 Government Printer, Sydney 1880; quoted in Anne Schofield & Kevin Fahy, *Australian Jewellery: 19th and early 20th century*. David Ell Press, Sydney 1990 p 65.
- 22 In 1873, F. L. Jardine & Co of Somerset, Cape York, was employing five boats in the

- pearl fishery of Torres Straits, *Telegraph* (Brisbane) 28 Jul 1873 p 3.
- 23 *Brisbane Courier* 23 Aug 1877 p 3.
 - 24 See n 3.
 - 25 *SMH* 11 Oct 1851 p 1.
 - 26 *SMH* 17 Dec 1853 p 7.
 - 27 *Illustrated Sydney News* 17 Dec 1853 p 3.
 - 28 MAAS inv A9871, see <https://collection.maas.museum/object/206188> accessed 22 Nov 2017. Illustrated in E Czernis-Ryl (ed), *Brilliant: Australian Gold and Silver 1851-1950*, Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney 2011 p 24; A. Schofield & K. Fahy, *Australian Jewellery 19th and early 20th century*. David Ell Press, Sydney 1990 p 219.
 - 29 *Empire* 21 Feb 1852 p 2.
 - 30 *Empire* 19 Apr 1853 p 1.
 - 31 *Ibid*.
 - 32 *SMH* 25 Feb 1859 p 6.
 - 33 *SMH* 10 Oct 1857 p 6; also *Empire* 7 Oct 1857 p 5.
 - 34 *Empire* 7 Oct 1857 p 7; *SMH* 10 Oct 1857.
 - 35 *SMH* 10 Jun 1858 p 6.
 - 36 *The Australian Home Companion and Band of Hope Journal* 19 May 1860 p 239.
 - 37 *SMH* 29 Sep 1860 p 6.
 - 38 Michel Reymond, "Timothy Tillston [sic] Jones, Sydney jeweller", *Australiana* 13 no 2, May 1991 p 48f. Death notices give his name as Timothy Tillotson Jones when he died at his home 'Tangley' at Ashfield on 16 July 1897 aged 78; see *DT* 17 Jul 1897 p 1; *SMH* 17 Jul 1897 p 1. A probate notice confirms the spelling *SMH* 20 July 1897 p 1.
 - 39 *SMH* 11 Apr 1862 p 4; *Sydney Mail* 12 Apr 1862 p 4.
 - 40 Dianne Byrne, "Lady Bowen's Irish Harp Brooch – a missing piece of Queensland colonial jewellery" *Australiana* 37 no 2, May 2015 pp 6–10; "Lady Bowen's Irish harp brooch – a Queensland colonial treasure rediscovered" *Australiana* 38 no 1, Feb 2016 pp 4–7.
 - 41 *Brisbane Courier* 27 Jan 1869 p 1 and many other ads.
 - 42 QAGOMA 2011.253a-b.

NOTES FOR AUSTRALIAN OR ENGLISH (OPPOSITE PAGE)

- 1 Cash Brown *Bling 19th century goldfields jewellery*, MADE, Ballarat 2016 p 66.
- 2 British Museum 1978.1002.848.a, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=606447001&objectid=63106 accessed 2 Dec 2017.
- 3 *The Illustrated exhibitor: a tribute to the world's industrial jubilee; comprising sketches by pen and pencil of the principal objects in the Great Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations, 1851*, John Cassell, London c 1851 p 95.
- 4 Lorking imported clocks, brooches and other items of jewellery from Britain, eg *SMH* 27 May 1853 p 4.
- 5 See for instance, the auction of Lola Montez's "massive" Australian jewellery in San Francisco; P Hundley & J Wade, *Australiana* 2007 no 1 pp 5–10.



Australian or English?

A gold brooch similar to the one in MAAS (plate 6), with pearls forming a bunch of grapes, in a private collection (plate 7) was shown in the gold jewellery exhibition *Bling* held in Ballarat in 2016.¹ However, brooches of this form may be English; the heavy grapevine border with gold vine leaves and clusters of seed pearls imitating grapes is also found in a brooch in the British Museum, which is described as English c 1840–1860. The curator notes that

brooches of this type were shown at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, as ‘a new and ingenious [sic] brooch by Messrs Benson of 63 Cornhill’. *Art Journal Catalogue*, p. 95.²

I could not locate this source, but Michael Lech located this reference with an illustration of Benson’s 1851 brooch (plates 8–9):

We give, above, an illustration of a new ingenious brooch exhibited by Messrs. Benson, of 63, Cornhill. It is a clever and graceful adaptation of a conventional idea, and as such deserves particular mention. It is executed in both gold and silver.³

It is unclear if these brooches were imported from England or made by Lorking, using local pearls. Lorking could have seen them at the 1851 Exhibition or in its publications and copied them, or

imported English examples; he certainly imported British brooches.⁴ Australian gold jewellery tends to be more massive than English jewellery and this may be a clue to the origin of an item.⁵ Lorking certainly had or retained Hale’s stock or Brisbane connections, for the gold cup he supplied for presentation to C.G. Plunkett in 1853 came with “an elegant case of Moreton Bay Tortoise-shell”.

6. Alfred Lorking, retailer, gold brooch with vine leaves and bunches of grapes made of seed pearls, English or Australian, c 1853–59. Collection: Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, NSW

7. Gold brooch with seed pearls, English or Australian, c 1860. Private collection

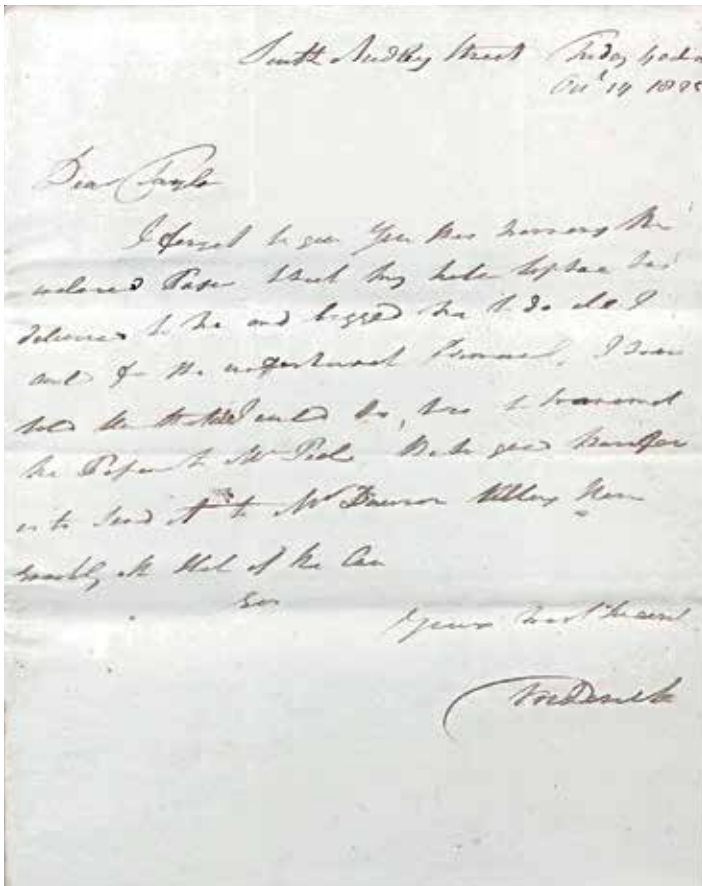
8. An English gold vine brooch with seed pearl grapes together with the 1851 engraving. This is the probable prototype for the seed pearl brooches imported or made by Lorking in Sydney

9. Benson, gold brooch with seed pearls, English, London c 1851. Illustrated in *The illustrated exhibitor : a tribute to the world’s industrial jubilee ; comprising sketches by pen and pencil of the principal objects in the Great Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations, 1851*, John Cassell, London c 1851 p 95



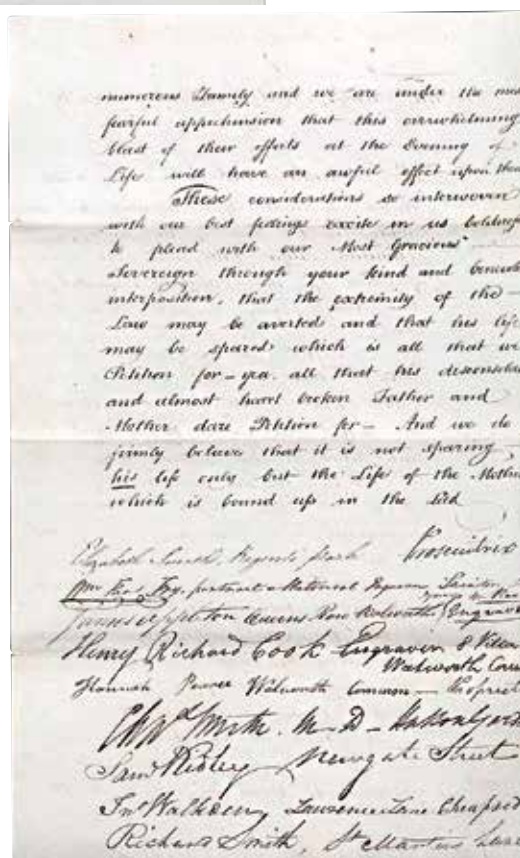
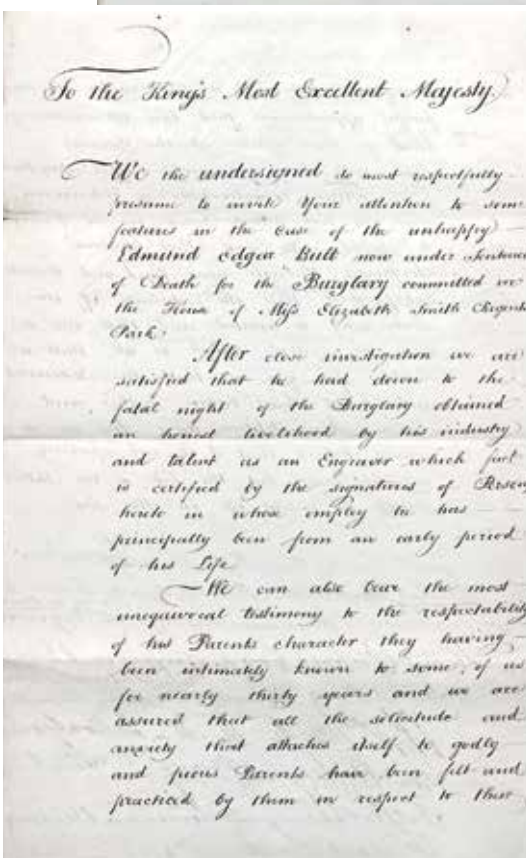
EDMUND EDGAR alias BULT

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804–after 1852), a talented and respectable young London engraver cum cat burglar, ransacked the house of a young lady, only to be apprehended by a police constable while making his getaway. HRH Frederick Duke of York was among those who supported a plea for clemency, and his death sentence was commuted to transportation for life. On arrival in Sydney he was immediately employed as an engraver by the artist Augustus Earle, then by the engraver John Carmichael. He became an art teacher and accomplished portrait painter.



1. Letter from Frederick, Duke of York, to Sir Herbert Taylor. National Archives UK, TNA File No. HO 17-39/113

2. Collective Petition for Edmund Bult. National Archives UK, TNA File No. HO 17-39/113



ROBERT STEVENS

On 11 September 1825, Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar) “aged 21” used a crowbar to force the first floor window of the home of Miss Elizabeth Smith, and stole silverware, jewellery and clothing. The morning after, Police Constable George Cull detected him with a bundle containing the stolen property. His committal hearing on 12 September was told that Cull found in Edmund’s coat pocket

a chisel and a round sharp instrument, and a card, on which was pencilled with a crayon, a man sitting at a table in fetters, the head leaning on the hand, and the countenance expressive of the deepest mental anguish; a book and a lamp were drawn on the table. On the back was written – Edmund Bult 30th August.¹

Could this have been a self-portrait? Cull also recovered a crowbar, a variety of keys, including several skeletons for drawers and clout locks, and a sovereign, half sovereign, and crown piece. The prisoner, who had given his name as Edmund Edgar, begged one favour, namely

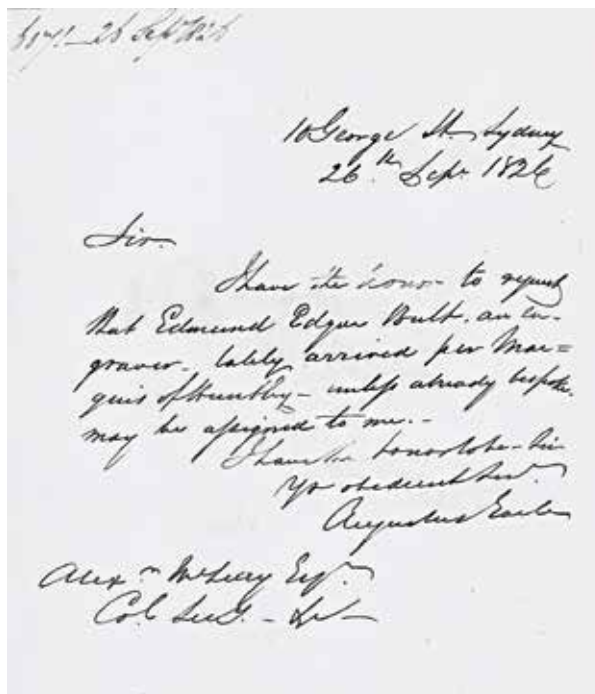
the return of my money ... (it) is mine, and was paid me last week by Mr Cook, an engraver, at Walworth, by whom I was employed.

As no money had been stolen from Miss Smith’s house, the money was returned.

Then two gentlemen came forward and said his real name was Edmund Bult, and that his family and connections were most respectable. His father, twenty years since, was one of the most respectable and richest butchers in Marylebone, but had failed in business. He had an uncle and a brother still in a large way of business.

Other reports were either erroneous or incomplete.²

Megan Martin from Sydney Living Museums has suggested that Edmund’s parents may have been William and Elizabeth (née Bowes) Bult, noting that William had been a successful butcher of Weymouth

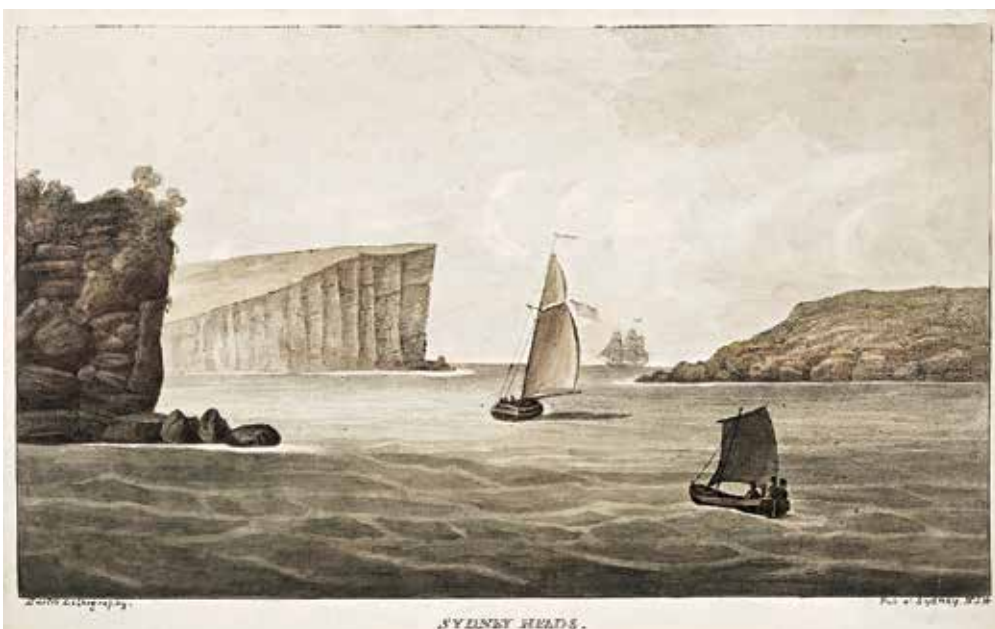


3.

S. De Koster (print after), W. Fry (engraver), *His Royal Highness the Duke of York*, 1815, engraving, 43 x 33 cm. Published J. Jenkins, London

4.

Augustus Earle’s letter dated 26 September 1826. Colonial Secretary’s Correspondence item no 26/6071, NSW State Archives



5.

Augustus Earle (1793–1838), *Sydney Heads, Views in Australia* c 1826. Inscribed “Earle’s Lithography, Pub. at Sydney NSW”. Collection: State Library of NSW, call no PX*D321

6.

Augustus Earle (1793–1838), *View from the Sydney Hotel, Views in Australia* c 1826. Inscribed “Earle’s Lithography, Pub. at Sydney NSW”. Collection: State Library of NSW, call no PX*D321

Street, Marylebone, London.³ This identification of Edmund Edgar as Edmund Bult is supported by the signed card found in his possession.

He was described at his trial as

*a young man of elegant and prepossessing appearance, very respectfully dressed in black.*⁴

Bult was found guilty and sentenced to death.⁵ While under sentence, a petition seeking clemency, signed by 19 people including the prosecutrix, was submitted (plate 1).⁶ Three of the signatories – his employers, William Thomas Fry, Henry

Richard Cook and James Appleton – were prominent London engravers. Two letters supporting the petition were sent to George Robert Dawson, under-Secretary of State for the Home Department: Sir Herbert Taylor, at one time the private secretary to George III, wrote at the request of HRH Prince Frederick, Duke of York brother of George IV and next in line to the throne (plate 2), who in turn was acting as a result of a written request from his sister Princess Sophia. The other came from John Ashley Warre, MP for Taunton in Somerset, at the request of James Bunter, a wealthy and influential Taunton woollen draper. The request for clemency was considered at a report in Council dated 11 November and the sentence commuted to transportation for life.⁷ The petition, supported by the highest echelons, had saved his life.

The appeal for mercy had cited the respectability of his heartbroken, ageing parents and that he had obtained an honest livelihood by his industry and talent as an engraver. Princess Sophia’s letter to Frederick mentioned the worthiness of his parents and their declining health and fortune, and that the hope was to have the sentence commuted to transportation. Frederick’s letter to Taylor, to be forwarded to Robert Peel, Home Secretary (later Prime Minister), conveyed Sophia’s earnest request for clemency.

His birth surname may have been Bult, but in official correspondence he was referred to as Edmund Edgar alias Edmund Edgar Bult. Later, in some Australian records, he was called Edmund Edgar, and he signed his Australian paintings in this way. This was the name he chose from the moment of his arrest. Perhaps he didn’t want to shame his respectable family or maybe he had started using it as an alias on commencing his criminal activities. I will refer to him by his first name Edmund, the one name that is always present.

HIS SUPPORTERS

Edmund had received amazing support from his employers, prominent London engravers Fry, Cook and Appleton and from the prosecutrix, who signed the

petition for clemency (**plate 2**), and from Prince Frederick, Princess Sophia and Ashley Warre MP, who supported it (**plate 1**).

William Thomas Fry, one of Edmund's employers, and signatory to the Petition for Clemency, had produced an engraving of Frederick, famed as "The Grand Old Duke of York", ten years earlier (**plate 3**). Fry was a fine printmaker who exhibited at the Society of British Artists. His artistic oeuvre mainly consisted of portraits, figure studies, and educational and historical subjects in the media of stipple engraving, aquatint and lithography, indicating that Edmund would have been introduced to these techniques.⁸

Henry Richard Cook, Edmund's employer at the time of the robbery in 1825, was a line and stipple engraver, mainly of portraits, with many portraits now in the National Portrait Gallery, London.⁹ James Appleton was a fine engraver of landscapes, represented in the Royal Academy of Arts, London.¹⁰ The prominence of his employers and their willingness to support him indicates Edmund's competence.

Edmund was held on the hulk *Ganymede* at Chatham in Kent from 2 December 1825.¹¹ *Ganymede* was the former French 450 ton frigate *Hebe*, captured by the British frigate *Loire*.¹² Renamed *Ganymede* she served in the Royal Navy before being decommissioned and later converted to a prison hulk.¹³

ENGRAVING FOR AUGUSTUS EARLE 1826

Edmund arrived in Sydney on 13 September 1826, aboard the 564 ton convict transport *Marquis of Huntley*.¹⁴ It departed Sheerness on 16 May 1826 carrying 200 male convicts, and had two deaths en route. The ship sailed along the west coast of France, travelled between Africa and South America, turned to cross the Southern Ocean, sailed along the base of New Holland, turned south to avoid the shallow waters of Bass Strait, and travelled around Van Diemen's Land to head north to Port Jackson. The journey took 120 days. Surgeon Rae reported that there was little "turmoil or disturbance during this voyage" but that ophthalmia was brought



on board by members of the guard and spread to the convicts and even himself, and the fatal case of typhus was "lost by concealment ... until it had gained an unconquerable height".¹⁵

The convict indent, the record created on a convict's arrival in NSW, noted¹⁶

Age: 24

Education: Reads and writes

Religion: Protestant

Single or Married: Single

Native Place: London

Trade or Calling: House painter and Engraver¹⁷

Offence: Stealing in a house

Place & Date Where Tried: Newgate,

7.

Augustus Earle (1793 –1838), *Sydney, from Pinchgut Island, Views in Australia* c 1826. Inscribed "Earle's Lithography, Pub. at Sydney NSW". Collection: State Library of NSW, call no PX*D321

8.

Augustus Earle (1793 –1838), *Sydney Lighthouse, Views in Australia* c 1826. Inscribed "Earle's Lithography, Pub. At Sydney NSW". Collection: State Library of NSW, call no PX*D321



15 Sept. 1825

Sentence: Life

Former Convictions: None

Height: 5' 4½"

Hair Colour: Dark brown

Eye Colour: Dark brown

Complexion: Dark Ruddy – No Marks

How Disposed of: Mr Earle – Sydney

The artist Augustus Earle had arrived in Hobart on 18 January 1825 and moved to Sydney, arriving 14 May 1825. In July 1826 he opened an art gallery at 10 George Street, gave lessons and sold art materials. On 26 September 1826 he wrote to Colonial Secretary Alexander McLeay requesting that Edmund be assigned to him (**plate 4**).¹⁸

Earle had recently acquired a lithographic press but had no experience in this medium and sought Edmund's assistance in producing his *Views in Australia* (**plates 5–9**).¹⁹ It is most likely that Edmund made a significant contribution to the production of these four historical views and frontispiece, captioned "Earle's Lithography". As an engraver, Edmund was probably familiar with operating printing machines and lithography. The lithographs were produced in two pairs: "Sydney Heads" and "View from a Sydney Hotel" published in November 1826, and "Sydney

from Pinchgut Island" and "Sydney Lighthouse" a little later, and reviewed in the *Sydney Gazette* in December 1826.²⁰

The first portrays Sydney Heads and headlands (**plate 5**). This view, the entrance of Port Jackson, is taken inside the harbour, from near George's Head. The second includes important George Street buildings which no longer exist: the Guard House, James Underwood's house, the Bank of Australia, and the County Gaol (**plate 6**). The main guardhouse was built c 1813 on the north corner of George and Grosvenor Streets.²¹ James Underwood's house, completed by 1804, was a distinctive two-storey flat-roofed, brick and stone residence.²² By the 1820s, the Bank of NSW, established in 1817 to provide credit facilities for local businesses, wasn't satisfying Sydney's "upper class" – ex military, officials and wealthy free settlers, and the Bank of Australia was established as a second bank.²³ Her Majesty's Gaol is shown on the corner of Essex St, described in 1800 as handsome and commodious, with two undivided dormitories, one for men and one for women, separate apartments for debtors, and six secure cells for the condemned. However by the 1830s, it had become badly overcrowded, and by 1835 it was in ruinous state and considered an eyesore, with its timber gallows towering

9.

Augustus Earle (1793 –1838), frontispiece, *Views in Australia* c 1826. Collection: National Library of Australia, call no PIC Volume 189 #S4032-S4036

over its stone walls, and George Street becoming more respectable. As a result the Darlinghurst gaol was constructed.²⁴

The third records three significant ships: HMS *Warspite*, HMS *Volage* and HMS *Fly* (**plate 7**). HMS *Warspite* served in the Napoleonic Wars with distinction, later circumnavigating the world and visiting Australia.^{25 26 27} Later *Volage* took part in the Battle of Kowloon, the first armed conflict of the First Opium War, and the landing and occupation of Aden.²⁸ Earle records that in 1827 *Warspite* passed through Cook Strait separating the North and South Islands of New Zealand accompanied by *Volage*, the first Royal Navy vessels to make the attempt.²⁹ HMS *Fly* surveyed the Torres Strait, New Guinea and Islands of the Eastern Archipelago.³⁰

The fourth is an historical image of the first Sydney lighthouse, later demolished (**plate 8**). The Macquarie Lighthouse was designed by convict architect Francis Greenway and first lit on 30 November 1818.³¹ The four views were mounted with a frontispiece consisting of an image of a kangaroo, also created c 1826 (**plate 9**).³²

WORKING FOR ANDREW ALLAN 1827

From late 1826 to mid-1827, Earle toured NSW sketching.³³ During this period he was often absent from his business. On 15 January 1827, Earle wrote to Colonial Secretary McLeay requesting that Edmund be reassigned to his associate Andrew Allan, and stating that he had left Sydney.³⁴ Bult worked for Allan for two months, probably as a clerk. On 17 January Allan wrote to McLeay asking "I shall esteem it a favour if he can be assigned to me".³⁵ Earle had other things on his mind. He departed for New Zealand on 20 October 1827, returning on 7 May 1828, and then left the colony permanently in October

1828. His *Narrative of a Residence in New Zealand* was published in London in 1832.

Andrew Allan (1798–1837) arrived in Sydney aboard *The Fortune* on 11 June 1813 with his parents and siblings. He was appointed Clerk on the Commissariat staff by Macquarie in 1816, when his father David was the Deputy Commissary General. In 1817, he received a 700 acre grant, “Waterloo”, fronting the Macquarie River near Albion Park. Like his father he had been able to hold a government position and at the same time work his farm in the Illawarra. David had been granted 2,000 acres in the Illawarra, called Illawarra Farm, now the site of the Port Kembla steelworks. By 1828, Andrew is reported as a landholder living on the Goulburn Plains with a flock of 5,062 sheep and 561 cattle. He died in 1837 and was buried at St John’s Parramatta.³⁶

On 30 September 1828 Earle wrote to McLeay offering to sell his press to the government. He had rejected an earlier approach because he had promised the press to his partner, who had since left the colony.³⁷ Andrew is likely the partner referred to; David had left the colony and the affairs of the Allan family had been disrupted. Edmund had been in Allan’s employ for just two months.³⁸

On 8 October 1828 McLeay replied that the press was not required.³⁹ This followed Surveyor General Thomas Mitchell writing that “as the press is too small for the purpose in which it would be most required, namely the printing of Parish Maps, I would not recommend this expense especially as success in Lithography is precarious without a lithographic Printer.”⁴⁰ What of Edmund?

Earle’s press was likely acquired by John Austin who had no knowledge of lithography and it wasn’t used until 1834 when Charles Rodius produced portraits of Aborigines, printed and published by J G Austin.⁴¹ By this time Edmund was probably busy concentrating on his portraiture. However, as two of the people later sketched by Rodius, G R Nichols and C Windeyer, recommended Edmund’s request for a conditional pardon, it is likely that Edmund and Rodius were acquainted.



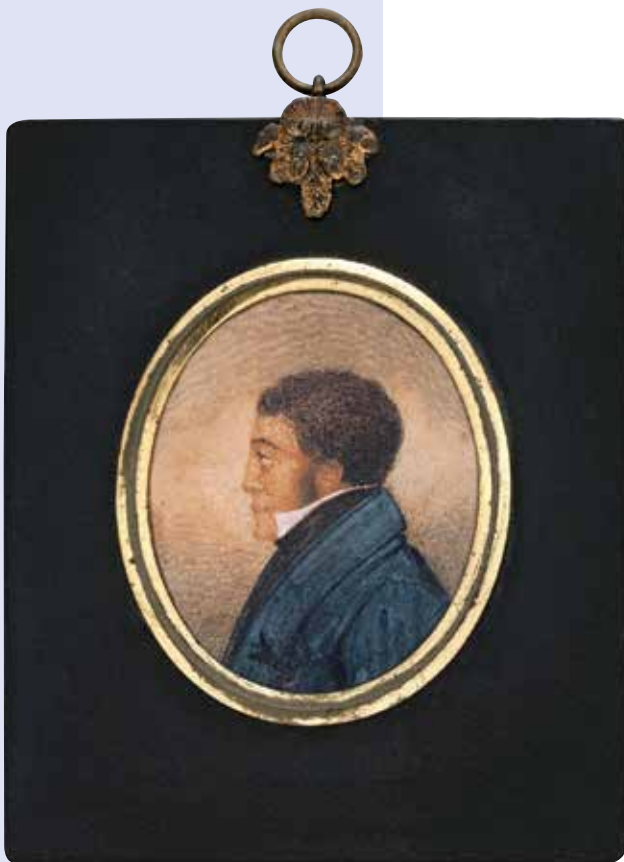
ENGRAVING FOR ROBERT HOWE 1826

In 1826, Edmund, assigned to Earle, engraved a small portrait of Governor Darling which formed the frontispiece to Robert Howe’s 1827 *Australasian Almanac* (plate 10).⁴²

In March 1799, George Howe had been sentenced to death but commuted to transportation for life, arriving in Sydney aboard the *Royal Admiral* in November 1800. Almost immediately he became

10.

John Linnell (print after), Edmund Edgar (engraver), *His Excellency Lieutenant General Darling, Governor in Chief of New South Wales. 1827. Australasian Almanack for the year of Our Lord 1827.* Sydney, Robert Howe 1827. 10.3 x 8.9 cm. Collection: National Gallery of Australia 2005.514.2



11.

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804–after 1852),
Miniature portrait of a gentleman
 c 1830. Watercolour, 6.5 x 5.5 cm (oval).
 Inscribed verso “drawn by Edmund Edgar, Sydney”.
 Private collection

12.

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804– after 1852),
Mathew Wellington. March, 1833.
 Watercolour, 10.6 x 8.3 cm (oval).
 Inscribed verso “drawn by E. Edgar/
 March 1833/Sydney. N.S.W”.
 Titled from pencil inscription verso
 “Uncle Mathew Wellington”.
 Collection: State Library of NSW



government printer, publishing the first book in Australia in 1802. Then on 5 March 1803, he published the first newspaper, *The Sydney Gazette and NSW Advertiser*. The *NSW Pocket Almanack* was issued in conjunction with the *Gazette* from 1806 and continued from 1808 until 1821, when he died. His son Robert continued to edit the paper, which for a short time in 1827 became the first daily newspaper. Robert produced religious tracts, issued the *Australasian Pocket Almanack* from 1822–26 and the *Australasian Almanack* for 1827, which included Edmund’s engraving of Darling.⁴³

Two years later, in an article on the state of fine art in NSW, a contributor to the *Sydney Gazette* wrote of Edmund’s image of Darling:

So scrupulous was he of ushering into the world a print that did not bear a correct resemblance of our worthy chief, that he threw aside the first plate which sustained a blemish, when nearly complete and the artist proceeded to execute his work afresh.⁴⁴

WORKING WITH JOHN CARMICHAEL 1827

In March 1827 Edmund’s services were transferred from Andrew Allan to the ‘deaf and dumb’ engraver John Carmichael, at Carmichael’s request. The request was endorsed by the Colonial Secretary and the Principal Superintendent of Convicts, although the latter was concerned that Carmichael’s “infirmity” – his “want of speech and hearing” – might present difficulties.⁴⁵ Edinburgh-born John Carmichael arrived in Sydney in 1825, and produced landscapes, portraits, maps, billheads, musical scores, bank notes, illustrations and some of the colony’s first postage stamps.⁴⁶ Edmund would certainly have assisted with the production of Carmichael’s engravings. He may have helped with Carmichael’s *Select Views of Sydney*, published in 1829 after the *Sydney Gazette* had previewed the publication in December 1828. Edmund had worked for Carmichael into the second half of 1827.⁴⁷ The fine engraving of Governor Darling, which bears Edmund’s name, is his only engraving identified to date.



TEACHER AT GILCHRIST'S SCHOOL 1827

By late July 1827 Edmund had a new master and a new job working as a teacher at a school for young gentleman at 67 Pitt Street, established in January 1827 by John Gilchrist. On 23 July 1827 Gilchrist wrote to Colonial Secretary McLeay asking that he be reassigned from Carmichael, and enclosing a note from Carmichael offering no objection to the request.⁴⁸

Having by my individual exertions established a Seminary in this town, in which there are at present more than forty students, the children of the most respectable inhabitants and requiring the assistance of two or more under masters, I would take the liberty of soliciting through you ... the sanction of His Excellency the Governor to the transfer of the man, Edmund Edgar by the ship Marquis of Huntley, from his present employment, (in service of Mr J Carmichael, engraver and copperplate printer), to my establishment, who from his knowledge of drawing in perspective, and other qualifications, might become very serviceable to

the pupils under my tuition, most of whom are the sons of officers civil and military, and to the rising generation of this colony generally ...

Carmichael sent his agreement to Gilchrist:

Having no further occasion for the services of Edmund Edgar, I have no objection to transfer him over to you.

THE IRON GANG 1828

But on 1 October 1828 at the Sydney General Sessions, Edmund was found guilty of being “drunk and out all night” and sentenced to the Iron Gang for three months.⁴⁹ This is the first official indication that Edmund may have had a drinking problem.

TEACHER AT THE SYDNEY ACADEMY 1828

On 6 October 1828 Gilchrist wrote, now as Master of the Sydney Academy in Macquarie Street, to Governor Darling requesting that the sentence be reviewed, as his students had an approaching examination and he had “little reason

13.

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804– after 1852), *Mary Ann Turner* May 1835. Watercolour on ivory, 5.75 x 4.75 cm. Identified on the backing paper: Mrs Turner / mother of J.A.Turner / my maternal great-grandmother (G.V.D.R.). Caroline Simpson Collection, Sydney Living Museums

14.

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804– after 1852), *John Andrew Turner* May 1835. Watercolour on ivory, 5.75 x 4.75 cm. Identified on the backing paper of the framed object as follows: J.A.Turner / John Andrew Turner of Sydney NSW / (my maternal grandfather) G.V.D.R. Caroline Simpson Collection, Sydney Living Museums

to blame him for any irregularity for 15 months” and “I am induced to think that he was unwittingly led into the circumstance”. Magistrate Bunn, who had presided over the case, supported Gilchrist but McLeay was unmoved. His response, annotated on the request, was: “Inform him that the Govr. sees no



15.

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804– after 1852), *Hannah Morris* 1837. Watercolour, 19 x 14 cm. Inscribed verso “Miss Hannah Morris, aged 4 years, drawn by Edmund Edgar, taken February 1837, Sydney N.S.W.” Private collection

16.

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804– after 1852), *Richard Fitzgerald* c 1838. Pencil and watercolour on paper, 34.5 x 27.6 cm. Collection: National Portrait Gallery acc no 2010.130. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program in memory of Richard Kelynack Evans 2010

ground for interfering in the case.”⁵⁰ The NSW Census of November 1828 records Edmund’s residence as “Iron Gang”.⁵¹

Gilchrist died in August 1829 and Dr Wilks, the new master of the Sydney Academy, advertised that he “will have the valuable assistance of Mr. Edgar, more especially as a Drawing Master, and a Teacher of Ornamental Penmanship.”⁵²

Wilks’ ability to employ Edmund seems to have been negotiated with Gilchrist’s

widow because in late April 1830 Crown Solicitor William Henry Moore applied to the Principal Superintendent of Convicts asking for Edmund Edgar Bult to be transferred to his service “from that of the widow of the late Mr John Gilchrist who consents”. His application was allowed.⁵³

CLERK 1830

William Henry Moore was chosen as one of two unconvicted “solicitors of the Crown” and sent to NSW to overcome difficulties with ex-convict attorneys. He arrived in Sydney on 27 May 1815 and was later admitted as the first free solicitor. In September 1825 Governor Brisbane appointed him as King’s coroner or master of the Crown Office. Under Governor Darling he acted as attorney general. In 1842 the Supreme Court appointed him to examine persons applying for admission as attorneys. From 1836–42 he was a director of the Commercial Banking Co of Sydney, in 1837 he became a shareholder in the Marine Insurance Co and committee member of the Royal Exchange, and in 1842 Chairman of the Union Insurance Co. He died on 13 October 1854.⁵⁴

Moore employed Edmund as a clerk, and he seems to have had plenty of free time to take on portrait commissions.



PORTRAIT PAINTINGS

From 1827 his only known art works are his portraits. He taught drawing at Mr Gilchrist’s school in Sydney to a young Samuel Elyard, who found him

*of kind disposition, and glad to impart a knowledge of the Art to anyone who had a taste for it ... Mr Edgar painted miniatures very nicely, and had he kept steadily to his profession, would perhaps have been an eminent artist.*⁵⁵

Elyard, who became a fine painter of landscapes and portraits, is inferring an inconsistency in Edmund’s behaviour.⁵⁶ Edmund’s portraits are similar, though possibly superior, to the naïve portraits of Charles Henry Theodore Costantini, who painted in Van Diemen’s Land. His slightly stilted style was a natural technique rather than indicative of a lack of training or incompetence. Like Costantini, his portraits provide a fine historical record of Australian fashions, furniture and interior design in the early to mid-19th century, and his clients also come from the emerging middle class, their stories reflecting success and failure in colonial Australia. Several of his sitters were former convicts and their families.

In the 1830s he painted a miniature portrait of a man (**plate 11**). The subject may be Billy Blue, a renowned Jamaican visitor to Australia who died in 1834. Joan Kerr, in conversation with Annette Larkin of Christie's, felt that it had an Afro-American look to it, and suggested a possible portrait of Billy Blue, but difficult to confirm, and "could be one of hundreds of people".⁵⁷

Pearce and McDonald considered Edmund "a competent, but somewhat lifeless, miniature painter", not competing with artists such as Nicholas or Read, but finding "a market amongst a less wealthy, and discerning, clientele."⁵⁸ Joan Kerr noted that his portrait of a man (**plate 11**) had been "painted in a slightly crude manner".⁵⁹ However, these assessments are based on a small number of portraits and do not take into account finer works more recently identified. Edmund did not secure the elite of society as clients, though he mixed with them. As more of his portraits and engravings are identified, his standing as an artist may rise. However, his speciality – smaller, more portable miniatures – are not hung permanently, and are much more easily lost or discarded.

In 1833 he painted Matthew Wellington (**plate 12**), supporting the assertion that Edgar was a painter of modest middle class people.⁶⁰ At the time, Wellington was buying and selling properties.⁶¹ However in 1838 he was declared insolvent; his house in Parramatta Street, a very superior mare and foal, and a large quantity of carpenter's tools, being auctioned to provide some recompense to his creditors.⁶² In 1845 he was convicted and fined for being a "nuisance".⁶³

The fine miniature portrait of Matthew Wellington shows the clothes worn the 1830s. His modestly styled coat, collar standing high and long skirted, has larger and thicker than normal lapels possibly indicating more a greatcoat than a frock coat. The coat is worn open and the black neckcloth indicates day attire, with French cuffs, a cream coloured waistcoat, and a seal hanging from his fob pocket. In half-length portraits the head is generally of the greatest interest and here the hair is curled, parted on the left, and partially pulled over

17.

Edmund Edgar Bult
(alias Edmund Edgar,
c 1804– after 1852),
*Unidentified man aboard
a ship*, April 1842.
Watercolour on card,
14.1 x 12.2 cm.
Inscribed verso "Drawn
by Edmund Edgar /
Sydney New South
Wales / April 1842".
Collection: State Library
of NSW



the forehead with the face typically clean shaven, apart from side whiskers.⁶⁴

In May 1835 Edmund Edgar Bult petitioned Governor Richard Bourke for a Conditional Pardon. His petition was supported by his employer W H Moore and by several other respectable persons including Mrs Amelia Forbes, wife of Chief Justice Francis Forbes. Mrs Forbes said that Bult had been employed as drawing master to the Forbes children sometime prior to his residence with Moore. The petition was refused on the grounds that a Ticket of Leave must be held for six years before a Conditional Pardon could be granted (ref: State Archives NSW: 4/2309 no.36/6107)

Also in May 1835, Edmund painted Mrs Mary Ann Turner and her young son John Andrew Turner (**plates 13–14**). The late Mrs Caroline Simpson bought these miniatures from John Hawkins, who had acquired them at London's June 2002 Olympia Fine Art and Antiques Fair. They now form part of the Caroline Simpson Collection given to the Historic Houses Trust of NSW (Sydney Living Museums) by her children through the Commonwealth Cultural Gifts Program, 2004–7.

Mrs Mary Ann Turner née Chapman was born in Sydney in 1804, daughter

of William Chapman and Ann Marsh, both emancipated convicts – Ann a now famous Second Fleet convict, transported on the *Lady Juliana*. Mary Ann married Sergeant George Turner of the 48th Regiment in 1821. Their son, John Andrew Turner was born in Maitland on 12 June 1829 and died in May 1874 leaving an estate valued at £31,000. His widowed second wife relocated with her family and the miniatures to England, the portraits passing by descent to George Victor Dalton Rybot (1901–77), a grandson of John Andrew Turner.⁶⁵ Again, the subjects are of the emerging middle class.

Mrs Turner wears the hairstyle and cap typical of the early 1830s, when caps dominated the costume and were worn indoors. With her beautiful lace cap and double lace collar held in position by a pink tie, she is dressed in day clothes; her coiffure arranged with a centre parting and lavish curls at either side was almost universal at the time. Curling tongs and curl papers were in constant use, before fashion dictated that hair be smoothly looped over or in front of the ears and plaited into a knot high on the back of the head, a style of the late 1830s which continued well into



18.

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804– after 1852), *Elizabeth Rech* Sept. 1849. Watercolour, gouache and pencil, 28.5 x 20.5 cm. Inscribed verso “Drawn by Edmund Edgar / Sept. 1849 / Sydney NSW”. Private collection, courtesy Christie’s Images Limited

19.

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804– after 1852), *Philip Rech* Sept. 1849. Watercolour, gouache and pencil, 28.5 x 20.5 cm. Private collection, courtesy Christie’s Images Limited

the forties. Graceful long drop earrings and a coral necklace are typical for the time.⁶⁶

The portrait of John Turner shows features typical for juveniles – turned back collar, curled hair style and simple neckcloth.⁶⁷

In 1837 Edmund painted a portrait of four year old Hannah Morris (**plate 15**). Hannah’s grandmother Sarah Thornton (alias Thorn), a needleworker, was found guilty of stealing and sentenced to death, commuted to transportation for life, and arrived Sydney 28 July 1814 accompanied by her two year old daughter, Hannah’s

mother, also named Sarah. Her husband Samuel followed her a few months later as a free passenger. Sarah Sr died in 1827 when Sarah Jr was just 15. In 1830 Sarah Jr married the former convict John Humphrey Morris, and Hannah, their third child, was born three years later.⁶⁸

Hannah married successful ship chandler and master mariner Captain John Broomfield in 1855. John was a very successful businessman and prominent member of the community.⁶⁹ In 1865 he commissioned the building of a 125 ton two-masted brigantine which he named *Hannah Broomfield*. Hannah and John’s son Reginald Broomfield was captain of Sydney Grammar School, graduated in law with honours from Trinity College, Oxford, and became one of the best known barristers in NSW: an amazing turn-around of circumstances in a few generations, from Sarah, sentenced to death, to Hannah, who had a sailing ship named after her, and then to the very successful Reginald.⁷⁰

Hannah is wearing a typical little girl’s dress of the period, simply cut with a low neckline, high waist, and short puff sleeves, and decorated with an embroidered border. Her pantalettes show under the shortish skirt, with hair typically curled, and bright

blue slippers matching her sash. A footstool is placed in the foreground.⁷¹

In November 1837 Bult again petitioned Governor Richard Bourke for a conditional pardon, stating he had been “assigned to a Mr Gilchrist and employed by him in giving instructions in drawing to the pupils of his academy and in consequence of his demise was transferred to the service of William Henry Moore Esquire then Crown Solicitor in the year 1830 and was employed by him in the capacity of a clerk”. He was still in Moore’s service at the time he submitted his petition, which Moore endorsed with the recommendation that the petitioner was “deserving of the highest indulgence”. The petition was disallowed, because a convict needed to “apply for the minor indulgence of a Ticket of Leave in the usual way, and hold it for six years before his petition for a pardon can be entertained”.⁷²

Edmund received a ticket of leave in September 1838, conditioned to remain in the service of Moore.⁷³ Moore later headed the list of recommenders for Edmund’s conditional pardon.⁷⁴

Around this time Edmund painted the successful ex-convict Richard Fitzgerald (**plate 16**). On 4 January 1787, Fitzgerald had been sentenced to seven years’

transportation, and arrived in Sydney on 28 August 1791. Using his knowledge of agriculture, he was progressively appointed to government posts, and benefiting from the opportunities available to knowledgeable and hardworking ex-convicts, gradually increased his private wealth, accumulating considerable land holdings. When he died on 25 May 1840, his estate was valued at £34,000. Edmund's portrait, now in the National Portrait Gallery, was painted in 1838. Fitzgerald has been described as one of the most remarkable men to settle in early NSW.⁷⁵

Fitzgerald is portrayed wearing a tail coat, probably cut across the front at the waist with tails at the back. His dark waistcoat has a typical rolled collar and is contrasted with a white neckcloth, often associated with evening wear. He wears finely crafted boots, a seal hangs to the side and he reads the *Sydney Monitor*, the clearly decipherable print indicative of Edmund's fine drawing skills. The furniture is of 1830s design and has an English look and feel, expected in a successful man's household.⁷⁶ The lower wall is marbled, the floor covering is painted oilcloth, a tough canvas material painted to look like marble paving.⁷⁷

Edmund's ticket of leave was replaced in October 1841, again on the condition that he remain in the service of Moore.⁷⁸

In April 1842 Edmund painted a fine portrait of an unidentified man which tells much about male fashion in the 1840s (**plate 17**). The young man is wearing a double breasted frock coat in dark grey cloth with a black velvet collar, wide notched lapels and narrow fitting sleeves, slightly gathered at the shoulder and ending in single buttoned French split cuffs. The coat is worn over dark cream trousers, a cream waistcoat with a rolled collar, and a high collared white linen shirt. Other features are a sky blue silk bow tie, gold stud buttons, two long gold chains crossed over his chest, perhaps suspending spectacles, and a gold "pinkie" ring. His curly hair is parted on the left and his whiskers trimmed into a narrow beard with no moustache while his left hand holds back the edge of his coat to reveal a light grey silk lining.⁷⁹

20.

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804– after 1852), *Miniature Portrait of a Lady* Sept 1851. Watercolour on ivory, in a daguerreotype case, 6.2 x 5 cm. Paper mount inscribed verso "Painted by Edmund Edgar Sept 1851 N.S.W". Private collection



Edmund received a Ticket of Leave Passport no 43/141 on 25 January 1843, allowing him to follow his profession as an artist in the districts of Windsor, Campbell Town and Parramatta for six months.⁸⁰ At the end of the six months, he was recommended for a conditional pardon which he received formal notification of in June 1844. The names of those who recommended Edmund include W H Moore, Geo R Nichols, W A Miles JP, T Long Innes JP, Geo Mitchell CC and Chas Windeyer JP.⁸¹ As with the petition for clemency, Edmund got support from some very prominent people.

George Robert (Bob) Nichols, lawyer and politician, was the first native-born Australian admitted as a solicitor in NSW. In 1848 he was elected to the Legislative Council. Later he moved to Parramatta.⁸² On his death in 1857 the *Sydney Morning Herald* described him as "the earnest, eloquent, and graceful advocate of all that was good ... and the stern, determined and resolute foe of anything approaching bigotry or oppression".

William Augustus Miles JP, commissioner of police and police magistrate held a number of civil appointments in England before coming to NSW. He intended to make the Sydney

police organisation more closely resemble the London one.⁸³ Joseph Long Innes JP on 5 May 1829 married Elizabeth Ann Reiby daughter of convicted horse thief cum business woman, Mary Reiby. He became Superintendent of Police.⁸⁴ Geo. Mitchell C C was Chief Constable.

Charles Windeyer JP, magistrate, arrived in Sydney in July 1828. His capital was sufficient to entitle him to a grant of 2,560 acres (1036 ha) which he located on the upper Williams River naming the property Tilligra. In 1842 when Sydney was incorporated as a city, he was appointed its first mayor.⁸⁵

By this time Edmund was concentrating on portraiture and is listed in *Low's Directory* for 1847 as an artist of Argyle Street, West of Trinity Church, The Rocks. On 24 January 1848 he appeared before the Bench of Magistrates, Sydney charged with drunkenness; the charge was dismissed.⁸⁶

In 1849 he painted the middle class Rech children (**plates 18–19**).⁸⁷ Elizabeth Rech aged 9 and Philip Rech aged 6 were the two eldest of four children of Jacob Rech (1795–1890) and his second wife Johanna Barrett Rech (1800–76). Jacob Rech was born in Merxheim, Germany, migrated to Australia as a free settler in 1833 and was employed as a baker. Johanna was born in

Cork, Ireland and was a convict sentenced to seven years, arriving in Sydney in 1820.

Both children are dressed in black and carry horse riding whips. Clothing is typical of the time. Philip is holding a boy's tassled black cap, and Elizabeth's sunhat has an atypical black ribbon. Perhaps they are dressed for riding however the formal nature of the outfits suggests not. They are likely in mourning. Children in middle class Victorian families were required to wear full black mourning clothes for one year after the death of a sibling or close family member.⁸⁸

In 1850 Edmund was called as a witness at a second inquest into the death of a Mrs Clarkson in Sydney. At the first, on 6 February 1850 and held at the Spread Eagle, Park Street, Sydney, it had been concluded that death was by natural causes.⁸⁹ However, as a result of rumours that she had been poisoned, a second inquest was held and Edmund was called as a witness as he had dined with the accused Mrs Canny on the day Mrs Clarkson had died. Edmund's evidence:

I recollect the day Mrs Clarkson died; I dined on that day with Mrs Canny; there was an apple pie for dinner that day; do not know of my own knowledge as to whether any of it was sent to anyone; ... I ate some of the apple pie, as did also the children; it was a very good one, and agreed well with me.⁹⁰

This places Edmund in Park Street, Sydney in early February 1850. In June 1850, "Edgar, or Edgar Edmund Butt, Edmd / Marquis Huntley 1 / 1826" is listed as not having collected his Conditional Pardon.⁹¹

In 1851 Edmund painted a miniature portrait of a lady, dressed in half mourning and seated on a terrace with a landscape beyond (**plate 18**). Though still dressed in black and with discreet coiffure, a brooch containing jet⁹² and possibly a centrally positioned lock of hair from the deceased, indicative of mourning, she is no longer wearing a black veil but a white cap and grey bow signifying half mourning; the colour of cloth and coiffure lightened as mourning continued.^{93 94}

Edmund was living, apparently alone, in Parramatta in 1853. In May 1853, at an inquest into the death of Mary Ann Ferguson whose body was found in Church Street North, Parramatta, Chief Constable Ryan stated that, "I found traces of blood and appearances of a scuffle, also of a body having been dragged up to Mr Edgar's door". Edmund gave evidence:

Mr. Edmund Edgar, deposed: At about 12 o'clock on Monday night I was aroused by a noise opposite my window as if some person was dragging another; I heard the voices of a male and female, the male voice said "If you don't come I will make you;" I live about 50 yards from where the body was found; in a few minutes all was silent.⁹⁵

Robert Shepherd (Sheppard), a boot and shoemaker and neighbour of and sitter for Edmund, also gave evidence.⁹⁶ Edmund painted two larger portraits of Sarah Shepherd (Sheppard) with daughter Hepzibah, and Robert Shepherd (Sheppard) (**plates 21– 22**). They can be dated c 1853–55 from the apparent age of Hepzibah Kennedy (née Sheppard) who died in 1929 aged 78, placing her as born in 1851.

Robert Shepherd (Sheppard) had married Sarah Emmerton (Emerton) in Sydney in 1841. The "Permission to Marry" entry indicated that Robert was a Ticket of Leave convict convicted at the Norfolk Assizes on 3 August 1833 and transported for 14 years. He lived in West Maitland, Parramatta, Kingsgrove, Kogarah and Norwich, England. He was a boot and shoemaker who became insolvent in Parramatta in 1856, his West Maitland house Polka Castle previously offered for sale in 1850, in a mortgagee's auction. In 1853 he and Edmund were neighbours in Parramatta when they were witnesses at the inquiry into the death of Mary Ann Ferguson, and approx. when the portraits were painted. Robert died in 1897 and Sarah in 1904.⁹⁷
98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 These larger portraits are an excellent record of fashion, furniture, and interior design in mid-19th century Australia and are possibly Edgar's most important paintings identified so far.

Sarah Shepherd's dress shows several of the usual features of the mid-fifties – open bodice descending to a point with chemisette, pagoda or bell-shaped sleeves with lace edging, and dome-shaped skirt supported by petticoats. Adornments include a large embroidered handkerchief, either a necklace or a small neck scarf held by a brooch, a bracelet and rings. Her hairstyle with hair looped smoothly over the ears and possibly plaited into a knot high on the back of the head, a style suitable for straight hair and similar to that worn by Queen Victoria.¹⁰⁷

She is seated on a cedar sofa, the typical form used throughout NSW in the 1830s and 1840s, featuring scrolled ends and carved centre portion of the back, designs taken from Peter Nicholson's *Practical Cabinet Maker* of 1827.^{108 109 110} Upholstered in crimson fabric, the back plain while the seat is buttoned and ruched along the front. Bolsters are gathered to a central button with tassels.¹¹¹

Hepzibah's skirt is V-fronted, short sleeved, flared and just below knee. Her typical broad brimmed sunhat with colourful ribbon lies on the ground.¹¹²

Mr Shepherd is dressed in a frock coat worn open with a five buttoned, cream, notch collared waist coat, and a simple black bow necktie. His hair is parted on the left and neatly combed across the top of his head and his whiskers trimmed into a beard without a moustache.¹¹³

He is seated on a cedar chair, dated about 1845, probably with an adjustable back, the adjustment knob hidden on the left side, and upholstered in something such as rep rather than horsehair or leather. Typical features are the gently scrolled arms with counter curved supports resting on the side rails, bulbous turned front legs and slightly outswept back legs.^{114 115 116}

The room interiors are probably imaginary, as hinted at by the different curtain colours, but portray rarely recorded mid-19th century features. The chair rails, more common in the 18th century, when chairs were placed around the edges of rooms rather than in the centre, but revived in the late 19th century, have allowed the walls to be typically painted in different shades above and below, and again floor coverings are "painted carpets".¹¹⁷



21.

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804– after 1852), *Sarah Shepherd (Sheppheard) and daughter Hepzibah*, c 1853–55. Watercolour on paper pasted on card, 66 x 55.3 cm (oval), believed to be signed/inscribed on back of paper. Private collection, illustrated in T Lane & J Searle, *Australians at Home*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990

EDMUND'S DEATH

Searches of death registrations in NSW, Queensland and Victoria between 1850 and 1910 have not found reference to Edmund's death. However it was not compulsory to register deaths prior to the *Act of 1856*, he may not have had a church burial, or he may have left the country.

In some catalogue records Edmund is said to have died a pauper in the Sydney Benevolent Asylum in June 1854.¹¹⁸ The burial register of the Parish of St Luke's Liverpool does list an *Edward Edgar*, aged 58 and a pauper, who died on 21 July 1854 in the Benevolent Asylum.¹¹⁹ This register entry probably relates to a convict named Edward Edgar or Hedger, sentenced at the Oxford Assizes on 13 July 1825 to 14 years, who arrived on the *Sesostris* in 1826, and would have been about 58 in 1854.

CONCLUSION

Edmund had a good start to life being of a good family and given the opportunity to pursue a respectable career. As a younger son, probably unable to follow his older brothers into the family butchery business, instead he trained as an engraver with several leading London engravers. With this experience, an inherent respect for his art, a likeable personality and considerable

natural talent, he became a competent engraver and miniature portraitist, and mixed in good circles.

What made him steal? With the family wealth decreasing, perhaps it was to fund the social life as he mixed with the wealthy, or maybe an emerging drinking problem. The brazenness and aggressive nature of the "breaking and entering" were quite extreme and in 1825 would normally have resulted in death by hanging, even though transportation was an option. He was saved from the gallows only by the support of his friends and acquaintances.

Edmund had a similar start in Australia, being assigned to a leading artist, employed as a teacher at a good school, and supported by community leaders. He was very conscientious with his engraving, portrait painting and teaching, establishing high standards. However, as in England, his life declined as he possibly succumbed to alcoholism and mixed with the lower stratum of society.

His life seems to have been one of opportunities offered, accepted, but then at least partially wasted, perhaps indicative of a flawed character. This was highlighted in England by the robbery, and in Australia by his mixing with the lower echelons and alcoholism. However talent can never be

22.

Edmund Edgar Bult (alias Edmund Edgar, c 1804– after 1852), *Robert Shepherd (Sheppheard)*, c 1853–55. Watercolour on paper pasted on card, 66 x 55.3 cm (oval). Private collection, illustrated in T Lane & J Searle, *Australians at Home*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990

fully suppressed and he left a fine artistic legacy which is still emerging. His well painted portraits of Australian pioneers, some of whom were successful former convicts, record the dress, furniture, interior decoration and history of the times. One signed engraving is of the highest quality, and he probably contributed to some fine historical lithographs. It is likely that more of his engravings and portraits will be identified and his artistic standing will continue to increase.

His artworks are held in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, National Portrait Gallery, National Library of Australia, State Library of NSW, Sydney Living Museums and several private collections.

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NOTES

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Using hide glue to repair antique furniture

David Bedford cautions against using modern glues for antique furniture restoration, recommending instead that you stick with old-fashioned animal glues.

DAVID BEDFORD

In our contemporary world we are very used to thinking that everything new is better than the old. Even collectors of antique furniture and wooden objects can easily fall into this trap. One of the worst problems for antique collectors in our harsh Australian climate is that the toll of time can loosen joints and pieces of veneer or decoration can become unstuck.

If you talk to contemporary woodworkers about these problems, they will happily tell you that the problem is that the old glues were not any good. They will then recommend that you repair your piece (or have them repair it) with “high quality, modern adhesives” like epoxy, polyvinyl acetate (PVA, white glue; a common trademark version is Aquadhere) or even Superglue.

Don't do it, don't believe them. They are wrong and using such adhesives on original joints will damage your lovely antique.

A step back in the story – over 100 years ago (and indeed generally until the 1950s) – the most commonly used adhesives were true glues made of animal extract/residues. Hoof and hide glue was the most common with rabbit skin glue used for some veneering. The animal collagen glues (I'll call them all hide glue) are actually very strong and very long lasting in most circumstances. But they are not so strong that the timber breaks, as the glue usually lets go first, which gives an opportunity for an easy repair rather than smashed, broken pieces of timber.

Some important features of hide glues are:

- they are long-lasting – many antiques over 100 years old have never needed to be re-fastened;

- they are reversible – just add hot water and they soften. Unlike other glues, hide glues split readily along the glue-line if you need to take something apart; that's why it is used for wooden musical instruments such as violins;
- new hide glues adhere very well to old hide glue, which means that you only need to clean out dust, wax, garbage etc before applying new hide glue and clamping the joint;
- They all clean up easily with water so spills or squeeze-out are not a problem.

Fortunately, traditional hide glues are still manufactured and sold, which tells you there is still a place for them in the



1. 'Pearls' of hide glue
2. Rabbit skin glue
3. My old two-part cast-iron glue pot, assembled as used



4.

A typical situation to use hide glue, where two solid timber components of a laminated table top have separated

5&6.

A drop of liquid hide glue is applied to the gap, then pushed into place

7.

Timbers clamped while the glue sets. The squeeze out can be removed while it is still soft



market. The most common form of hide glue comes as small light brown beads or 'pearls', each about 2 mm diameter, which is why it is sometimes called pearl glue (**plate 1**). Rabbit skin glue is sold in small, dried curls (**plate 2**).

You need a double-walled glue pot to heat them ready for use (**plate 3**). You put water in the outer pot and add the pearls to the inner pot with some water. Then bring the whole gently to the boil and leave to simmer until the glue softens to the desired texture or runniness. It can then be applied with a fine brush. That sounds like a lot of trouble, but it is pretty easy. One woodworker I know uses a beautician's electric wax heater for the purpose.

Even more conveniently, two North American companies make liquid versions of hide wood glue. US company Titebond sells liquid hide glue¹, which is very good for small repairs (**plates 4-7**) and Canadian

company Lee Valley sells a "High Tack Fish Glue". Titebond liquid is available here in Australia from some specialist woodwork supply stores, while the Lee Valley product can be ordered online.²

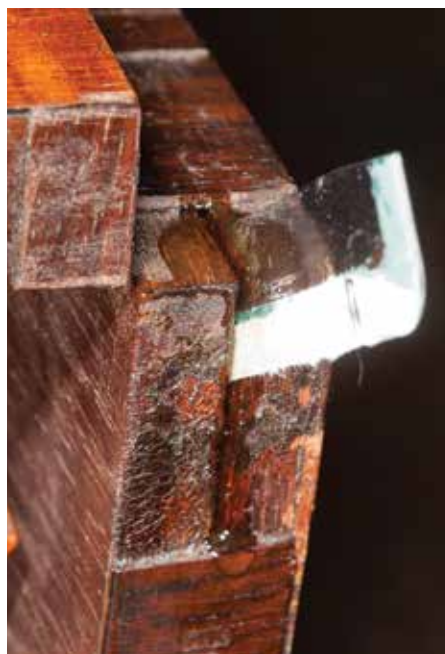
Julian Bickersteth, CEO of International Conservation Services, has also informed me that fish glue of many different types is very widely used in the conservation/restoration field.³

NOTES

- 1 Distributed in Australia by Carbatec, www.carbatec.com.au. For a product review, go to www.popularwoodworking.com/article/hide-glue-in-liquid-form
- 2 www.leevalley.com
- 3 My thanks to Julian Bickersteth, CEO of International Conservation Services, a leading Australian conservation firm with offices in Sydney and Canberra, for checking the article and adding further information.



Dr David Bedford is chair of the Queensland Chapter of the Australiana Society. He is also a hobbyist maker of contemporary furniture and other items with Australian timbers and repairs his own furniture when necessary. Email him at australiana.queensland@gmail.com



Colony: Australia 1770–1861

NGV Australia at Federation Square, Melbourne

The NGV touted its landmark 2018 exhibition *Colony* as “drawing from public and private collections across the country, *Colony: Australia 1770–1861* brings together the most important examples of art and design produced during this period.”¹

Although the show has over 600 exhibits, John Hawkins claims the show did not live up to the marketing hype. He laments missed opportunities for showcasing major artefacts – many of which have been published in *Australiana* – and disputes some of the artefact descriptions and interpretation.

JOHN HAWKINS

In May I was in Melbourne exhibiting at the Australian Art and Antique Dealers Fair. After packing up my stand I had four hours to spare before my return flight to Tasmania. With great anticipation I visited the recently opened first part of a two-part exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria’s NGV Australia at Federation Square: *Colony: Australia 1770–1861*. I was so disappointed that I never visited the separate second part, *Colony: Frontier Wars*, in another gallery.

Over the past 50 years I have researched and written about Australian colonial history as seen through our surviving decorative arts, writing the standard reference book on Australian silver.² My comments should therefore carry some weight and are restricted to the first part of the exhibition *Colony: Australia 1770–1861*, claimed in the accompanying catalogue (p x) to be “The most comprehensive presentation of Australian colonial art to date ... [exploring] the rich diversity of art, craft and design produced before 1861.”

The reality is completely different. I make the following suggestions in the hope that those currently responsible for the discovery and dissemination of the history and related provenance and context of Australian decorative arts may consider consulting more widely in future. It is perhaps significant that the NGV lists only an Assistant Curator of Australian Decorative Arts in its curatorial team responsible for the direction of the exhibition, that the National Gallery in Canberra no longer has a curator of Australian decorative arts, and many other institutions are shedding curators in favour of “generalists”, ie staff with no curatorial expertise at all. This suggests a lack of pride and interest in our achievements during 230 years since British settlement.

The exhibition disappointments are principally due to a lack of in-depth knowledge of Australian decorative arts. It is not sufficient to find exhibits just by searching the online databases of public collections. Old-style curators with their deep wells of hard-won knowledge pioneered and maintained the current wisdom encompassing this complex subject, using a methodology



1. Julius Hogarth, statue of an Aboriginal man, gold, c 1854 h 11 cm. Collection: Trevor Kennedy



2.

J B Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition 1862*, with the gold and malachite inkwell top left. The adjacent gold kangaroo and emu were made by Julius Hogarth

based on research and visual precedent. ‘National Treasures’ such as Terence Lane, Elizabeth Ellis, Daniel Thomas and Eva Czernis-Ryl are some of the holders of this knowledge regarding the location and history of key objects that provide a context for our evolving social history.

This wealth of experience and talent has not been engaged for this exhibition and their absence from the published discourse is unfortunate. I suggest that in creating this exhibition, most of the budget has been thrown at the design of the exhibition and the production of the catalogue, leaving those charged with establishing the curatorial ‘meat’ seriously exposed. Many pieces that should have been in the exhibition are absent, while others lack critical information; I list here some “important examples” which are missing.

I have three times owned and sold the contracts, tenders, estimates and letters written by Phillip regarding his epic voyage as Captain of the First Fleet and future Governor of the infant colony of New South Wales. Phillip wrote in his own hand a letter to the Comptroller of the Navy Board describing the voyage to Botany Bay, the number of deaths and why he had moved the infant settlement to Port Jackson. This iconic document was penned in his tent on the banks of the Tank Stream in late January 1788 to Sir Charles Middleton, in whose family

it had descended until I bought it at Sotheby’s in London some 40 years ago. This letter is pure, unadulterated, living history providing a direct link to European settlement, written by the founder of the colony at the very moment of creation, but didn’t make it to the show.

The first major view of Sydney was probably commissioned by, or may even have been painted by, Captain John Hunter, second governor of NSW, as a two-part panorama of Sydney. Hunter likely gave this oil painting to his long-time friend and fellow First Fleeter, the former Governor Arthur Phillip, on his return to England. After the death of Governor Phillip’s widow, it was listed as a panorama in two parts in the sale of the contents of her house in Bath. This panorama visually documents the infant colony and is worthy of a double-page spread and a further illustration in the catalogue text. The problem is that half the panorama is missing in action and remains hanging in the State Library of NSW in Sydney. The two parts should have been exhibited together, probably for the first time since 1819.

The first exhibit in the silver section is the so-called Josephson round lidded box which was constructed to deceive; in other words, a fake.³ Another box from the same source, also in the Art Gallery of South Australia, is no longer on

exhibition; I bought the cast aboriginal figure handle for £50 from the London silver dealer Roger Barnett of Lampards in 1982. After I sold it, this figure was subsequently added to the made-up box which was engraved by the same hand responsible for the Josephson box, this time purporting to be made by C. Bennett in Melbourne. Had those responsible for choosing the exhibits asked around they would have rapidly been made aware of these and another two later-engraved fakes that all surfaced in 1988.

The wealth of the newly created colony of Victoria was a direct result of the ongoing gold discoveries of the 1850s. The William Smith O’Brien gold cup of c 1854, weighing 125 ounces and costing over £800, links to the Irish political exile, patriotism and incarceration in a convict colony for one’s personal political beliefs. The wealth of the resident Irish community as a result of the gold rushes allowed them to honour one of their own, the Harrow and Cambridge-educated protestant O’Brien (1803–64), who had been sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered for insurrection in the 1848 rebellion, but instead transported to Tasmania. The Hackett brothers, immigrants from Ireland, were commissioned to make the gold cup presented to O’Brien in Melbourne in 1854 and he left it to the nation; it is now in the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.

3.

Brass gorget given to Jackey
Wullurang. Collection: Trevor Kennedy



The fact that no gold item raised from the flat by a working Australian goldsmith before 1860 is to be found in this exhibition is inexcusable.

The gold Hogarth aboriginal statuette (**plate 1**), now one of the treasures of the Trevor Kennedy Collection, links gold and the Australian Aborigine in a similarly grand manner and complements the silver statuette lent by the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences. The gold and malachite inkwell made in 1861 for the London International Exhibition also in the Trevor Kennedy Collection was in its time considered worthy of illustration in J. B. Waring's *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition 1862* (**plate 2**). As one of the few surviving accredited Australian masterpieces displayed at a major international event, its absence from *Colony* is regrettable.

The 1835 silver cup gifted by the Scottish inhabitants of Bothwell to George Augustus Robinson, Conciliator of the Tasmanian Aborigines, was made by the Perth-born Scottish convict Joseph Forrester in the workshop of the Montrose-born Hobart retailer David Barclay. After the failure of the Governor Arthur's "Black Line", Robinson brought the survivors of the Big River and Oyster Bay tribes from Lake Echo near Bothwell peacefully to

Hobart, for which he was rewarded by local settlers with this unique example of colonial-made presentation silver. Bearing in mind the theme of *Colony's* two-part exhibition, this object from the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston should have been a must-have inclusion. Omitted from the Museum's own book of its treasures under the guise of political correctness, it has been once again overlooked, although it is on display at the National Gallery of Australia Canberra in *The National Picture: The Art of Tasmania's Black War*.

Governor Phillip brought back to England logs of seasoned casuarina from the shores of Botany Bay in the form of dry planks, selling them to the Lancaster cabinet-makers Gillows. Their workshop drawings for furniture using this "Botany Bay Wood" and the resulting work tables exist. As a result, we could have had a direct link, rather than a contrived link chosen, a Pembroke table with a dodgy label (p 157–9).

New South Wales' third Governor, Philip Gidley King, also a First Fleeter, commissioned a casuarina and whale baleen inlaid demountable campaign secretaire desk from the Sydney Lumber Yard about 1805.⁴ This was made by the Irish political convict Lawrence Butler and is now in the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. The far-sighted Ron Radford purchased it through me

from descendants of the King family and is the jewel in the crown of Australian colonial furniture. Its absence from *Colony* is yet another example of an opportunity missed.

The lum chest made in 1822 by the Bonnymuir radical and political convict Alexander Hart for Charles Throsby of Glenfield, NSW and the Oatley clock cased by Hart for Governor Brisbane, now in the Trevor Kennedy Collection, are two more icons of Australian decorative arts missing from the exhibition.

The catalogue fails to mention that the two-pedestal sideboard from the NGV collection (p 166)—a classic Belfast tray-back sideboard, probably also by the Glaswegian Hart—came from Jarvisfield, the Antill family home near Picton, NSW. The NGV apparently sees no virtue in its provenance, associations and history.

Also from Jarvisfield and in the Trevor Kennedy Collection is the Jackey Wullurang cast brass Aboriginal gorget made in the Sydney Lumber Yard (**plate 3**).⁵ When known as Wallara, on 9 November 1802 at Stonequarry Creek he met with soldier, engineer and architect Francis Barrallier exploring the country on his "Embassy to the King of the Mountains". Wullurang kept his Aboriginal name, as recorded on the gorget presented to him by Governor Macquarie. Macquarie, a veteran of the American War of Independence, understood the



4.

Chinese export porcelain punch bowl, detail showing Campbell's Wharf, c 1820. Collection: Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney

symbolism of gorgets, having seen them given as identifiers to those Native Americans who worked for the British. The Jackey Wullurang gorget is another cross-cultural icon missing from *Colony*.

The US consul Edward Augustus Wilson, whose writing desk of Boston form reflects the skills of yet another political convict, is another glaring omission.⁶ Wilson described himself as an American-born patriot, cabinetmaker, political convict and slave. It is the slave comment which is of interest, for under the British, convicts, be they political or criminal, were no more than slaves. Black or white, when the opportunity arose, all on the island continent were treated harshly by those who considered themselves born to rule.

The piano stool in the foreground of the Augustus Earle portrait of the Piper family (p 145) provides a subtle indication of the culture and sophistication of the Piper household, a fact not found worthy of mention. The Campbell family of the Wharf at Sydney Cove owned a rare upright Broadwood piano which appears in Charles Rodius' portrait of the founder of the dynasty. This image should have been in the exhibition if only because Robert Campbell's wife Sophia probably drew the original images for the exhibited Chinese export ware punch bowl (pp 102f). Contrary to the

NGV catalogue entry by James Bennett, no amount of research will ever "... reveal the vessel to have been decorated in England." The Campbell family had long standing trading connections with Calcutta and the British East India Company. These connections allowed them access to Canton where the bowls with Sydney views (two are known, both in Sydney public institutions) were decorated.⁷ The ANMM bowl illustrated on page 103 of the catalogue clearly delineates a view of the family wharf and warehouses around 1815 (plate 4). It would have been clever to link the later watercolour of Campbell's Wharf by Conrad Martens, tutor in watercolours to the family, to the punch bowls.

It would be tedious to continue. However, my advice to those who created this mish-mash without a bibliography to appease two totally different cultures is that the decorative arts matter, for they record our achievements for better or for worse in this harsh and testing land.

Colony: Australia 1770–1861 ran from 15 March to 15 July 2018. The exhibition catalogue of the same title is available from the NGV shop for \$49.95 plus postage.

NOTES

- 1 <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/colony-australia-1770-1861/> accessed 24 June 2018.
- 2 *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver*, Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge UK 1991.
- 3 AGSA 928A32A.
- 4 J Hawkins, "Lawrence Butler and his veneered case furniture made in Sydney between 1804 and 1815" *Australiana* Nov 2016, 10-19.
- 5 J Hawkins, "Governor Macquarie and the Badges of Distinction", www.jbhawkinsantiques.com/uploads/articles/TheGorget.pdf
- 6 J Hawkins, "Edward Augustus Wilson, American born patriot, cabinetmaker, political convict and 'British slave'" *Australiana* Feb 2
- 7 We know this happened. South Carolina merchant Charles Izard Manigault (1795–1874) had Samuel Clayton engrave his bookplate, which was used in China c 1820 as the pattern to decorate his dinner service [Ed.].



John Hawkins is a Tasmanian dealer, author and farmer who established his antique business, J B Hawkins Antiques, in Sydney 51 years ago. He since relocated to properties at Moss Vale in the NSW Southern Highlands and later to Northern Tasmania. While helping build some remarkable public and private collections, he has also written several books and many articles on Australian and international decorative arts, listed on his website jbhawkinsantiques.com.

The South Australian Study Group

NSW has always had the most Australiana Society members. Though Sydney has held Australiana Society events since 1978, only recently have 'chapters' been established in Tasmania and Queensland, with their own committees and developing their own programs. South Australia has a 'study group' and convenor Peter Lane explains how it works.

PETER LANE

Our first function, a visit to Adelaide University Museum in 2013, attracted only a small group and many apologies by local, elderly Australiana members. While attendees enjoyed the experience, we lacked critical mass for regular excursions, so momentum stalled.

With only a small group available, in late 2015 we decided to invite Australiana Society members and guests to monthly 'show and tell' nights at a private residence. Each attendee brings up to two items and a basket supper. All items are photographed and written up anonymously for a monthly e-newsletter, emailed to interested people across Australia.

Adelaide is easy to get around and the furthest attendee lives just 20 minutes away. We attract collectors, curators, conservators, dealers and auctioneers. Many of the items shown are indeed modest but their stories are always intriguing. We do not try to out-do each other. Our interests have widened due to exposure to other fields, and often someone can elaborate on an item. We mostly pass items around the table, except for large works of art. Collectors seem to be a very tactile lot and they enjoy handling items. Everyone seems to get a

lot out of the night. Interstate members are welcome and we were pleased to host President Dr Jim Bertouch recently.

This format has worked well with up to 15 attending and we have met regularly for over three years. This year we have been able to add two outings to our program, visiting a little-known private museum in the Adelaide Hills and the oldest house in Hahndorf. We are planning a trip to the Barossa Valley and to see the numismatic collection in the Art Gallery of South Australia. Events are free, to encourage everyone to participate.

We combine informally with the Adelaide Society of Collectors (est. 1961) for their monthly guest speakers at the Adelaide Naval, Military and Air Force Club (est. 1879). About half are on Australiana themes. Usually 20 members enjoy a meal at the Club beforehand and 50 attend the meeting followed by supper. Visitors are welcome and pay \$15 towards the cost of the evening. For further information, email theadelaidesocietyofcollectors@bigpond.com.

SOME ITEMS FROM OUR SHOW AND TELL

Colonial Australian 18-carat gold bracelet, attributed to Hogarth & Erichsen, c 1858.

The articulated bracelet consists of seven panels with cast and chased openwork design, depicting bull rushes

and Australian flora, centred by a locket, incised with the monogram 'AC', opening to reveal a panel of South Australian Burra malachite, framed with an applied vine border, flanked by a kangaroo and emu. Hogarth Erichsen & Co, active in Sydney 1854–61, is regarded as the premier Australian 19th-century jewellers in the naturalistic style incorporating Australian flora, fauna and materials.

Plum red velvet child's dress, c 1890.

This dress found in the hay loft of one of Hahndorf's earliest houses most likely belonged to Bertha Ottilie Alwine Gallasch (1886–1956), known as Alwine, later Alwine Paech, who lived there as a child.





The Mendelsham Cup of the Outboard Motor Boat Club, S.A., 1929–1930, won by 'Koondee'. A silver trophy commissioned from C W Ottaway & Co., Adelaide and made by Schlank's. H 22 cm

Ernest Edward Jolly (1892–1952) of North Adelaide donated the cup. His father A E Jolly had been born in Mendelsham, Suffolk, came to SA in 1879, then Darwin where he built a career as a trader, with pearling luggers and mining interests. Ernest was a director of the family firm and named his Robe Terrace house Mendelsham. The race was held on the Port River on 22 March 1930.

Frederick Dawson, *SS Warooka*, watercolour, 1900, 24 x 34 cm

A small iron hulled, sailing steamship, built in England, 1883, primarily for the weekly Port Adelaide - Edithburgh run. Named after the Yorke Peninsula inland town, she is shown schooner-rigged



passing a distant Pt Adelaide lighthouse and flying the flag of the Yorke's Peninsula Steamship Company. Frederick Dawson was a self-taught maritime artist active between 1890 and 1925 in Port Adelaide.

Plywood tray with inlay celebrating the US–Australian alliance in 1941, 54 x 40 cm

US troops arrived in Brisbane on 22 December 1941, two weeks after Pearl Harbor.

By mid-1943 150,000 US troops were stationed here, mostly near Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville. Their social impact was considerable with Australians influenced by American fashion, goods, domestic technology and consumerism.

Charles Edward Tute, *Shirley*, c 1910, watercolour, 23 x 33 cm

Shirley was built for William Bakewell (MP and Crown Solicitor, 1817–1870) near Payneham Road and named

after his hometown of Shirleywich in Staffordshire. Bakewell's grand-daughter, the studio potter and artist Gladys Reynell (1881–1956), lived here from 1899 with her grandmother Jane after the early death of her mother. Charles Tute (c 1866–1927) was a London stained glass designer who worked in the Gothic Revival style. He emigrated to Australia in 1906, exhibiting designs for an Adelaide exhibition catalogue cover in 1910, and designed a set of 12 WWI memorial windows for the library of Brisbane Grammar School.



For information about the SA Study Group or to receive their e-newsletters, email Peter Lane pnj.lane@bigpond.com





Australiana Society annual report 2018

President's report Jim Bertouch

It gives me great pleasure to present the Society report for the last 12 months.

40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

As you all know we are almost at the 40th anniversary of the formation of the Society which occurred in Balmain on 21 October 1978 and we have already started the celebrations with a very successful tour of Tasmania in March this year. The tour was arranged through our Tasmanian Chapter and the chairman Colin Thomas did a fantastic job in hosting the 8-day trip, as well as delivering the 2018 Kevin Fahy lecture on Tasmaniana.

Through the generous hospitality of property owners, we were able to visit numerous historic homesteads and saw beautiful gardens of both small and grand scale. We inspected several wonderful collections of Australiana, including Colin's extraordinary scrimshaw collection. There were so many highlights, and I know from the feedback that we received from a post-tour survey that everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The major event for our 40th anniversary celebrations is a planned exhibition of Australiana titled "Made in Australia" which is to be held at the S H Ervin Gallery in Sydney towards the end of 2019. Margaret Betteridge is the curator, and there are several committees and many people working on various aspects of the events, which will include a weekend seminar on Australian decorative arts, both modern and traditional.

SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

During the Tasmanian tour we also saw the launch of the first publication celebrating our 40th year. This is a wonderful book on Maude Poynter, the pioneering Tasmanian studio potter and painter, who inspired many other

pottery through her mentorship and direction. The author, Glenda King, did an amazing job in finding a huge amount of new information, so much so that the publication grew from a brochure into a 90-page book! Glenda even discovered hitherto unpublished and unknown material from a museum collection, and the resulting work is profusely illustrated with previously unseen pots and paintings. The cover of the May edition of *Australiana* shows one of her wonderful vases, dated 1924, depicting Cleopatra and Mark Antony. There was a form for buying the book in the latest journal as well.

You will all remember the series of articles on the Cayley family of bird-painters that we published a few years ago. The author, Dr Mark Cabouret, is well advanced with a pioneering book on another fascinating bird painter, J M Cantle. This should be launched later this year and will be our second publication for 2018.

AUSTRALIANA MAGAZINE

We have expanded *Australiana* to 48 pages this year and I am sure you will agree that the standard of the articles is excellent. Next year we intend to add a proper spine to the back of the journal so that it will stand up in a bookshelf. Then we can add details on the spine eg volume and year, making it much easier to navigate. Our editor John Wade continues to do an outstanding job and Kylie Kennedy does the superb layout and design. Our flagship has never looked better!

GRANT FOR ITEMS OF AUSTRALIANA

I am very pleased to announce that we have recently awarded our first grant to an institution to purchase items of Australiana. You will recall that we set up this award with the express purpose

of promoting our heritage through the purchase and exhibition of Australiana items by a museum or gallery. The Sydney Jewish Museum has been able to purchase several items of importance to Australian Jewish history and Alan Landis has written about them in our May journal. I will be presenting the grant at the Jewish Museum on Sunday 15 July and all members are welcome to attend. You will receive an RSVP invitation by email and the details are also on the website.

STATE CHAPTERS

Since our last AGM the Queensland chapter, under the leadership of Dr David Bedford and Jennifer Stuerzl, had held its first meeting, and the Tasmanian chapter has continued to organise meetings with an excellent lecture by Anne Schofield on 19th and early 20th century Australian jewellery. And every month the South Australian interest group meets for a "show and tell" of Australiana led by Peter Lane. Photos and commentary on the objects now appear on our website. You won't be surprised to know that I am keen to form chapters in other States and I am encouraging the Victorians at present!

TOURS

In May this year Tim Cha and Robert Stevens organised a mini tour in Melbourne which included the opening of the AAADA fair, a curator-led tour of the *Colony: Frontier Wars* exhibition at the NGV and two private collections of Australiana. Sarah Guest welcomed us to her beautiful home and showed us her amazing collection of boxes made from different Australian timbers. The following day we travelled to Geelong where Pamela Edgecombe and her husband showed us their fantastic collection of early Australian furniture with particular emphasis on



Tasmanian musk. That tour quickly sold out, which indicates the interest from our members in such events.

Our Queensland Chapter has arranged a number of events later this year including a tour of the Miegunyah house museum in June and a guided tour of the Ipswich Art Gallery by the director Michael Beckmann and a tour of Goolawan to be held in August. In September, with the help of Tim Cha, the Queensland chapter will be hosting a mini tour over a long weekend, to view further collections of Australiana, and also to visit the exhibition *With heart and hand: art pottery in Queensland to 1950*, at Griffith University, which is being curated by Glenn Cooke. You will receive emails about this and there is information on the website.

COMBINED MEETINGS WITH OTHER SOCIETIES AND OTHER EVENTS

In the past year we have held our first combined meetings with the Ceramic Collectors Society and the Silver Society. Both these events received strong support from the members of both groups. I am intending to continue with these and to expand to involve other specialist societies as well. In December Annette Blinco organised a very enjoyable Christmas drinks event at the offices of Gilbert and Tobin, lawyers in Barangaroo, where we saw an excellent collection of Indigenous art and decorative arts, which actually extends over three floors of the building.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to all members of the committee for their dedicated contribution to running this

organisation which continues to go from strength to strength. I would particularly like to acknowledge the contribution made by Dr Paul Donnelly who is stepping down from the committee tonight. Paul was instrumental in setting up the process for the Australiana grant program and evaluating the applications. We are indebted to him for seeing this process through and we will miss his contribution to the committee.

Tim Cha does an excellent job maintaining the Society website and arranging tours, and Andy Simpson looks after membership matters and subscriptions. All members of the committee have been very involved in the process of keeping this Society running smoothly. It increases in complexity every year! I would especially like to thank vice president Annette Blinco, secretary Michael Lech and treasurer George Lawrence as well as committee members Judy Higson, Leslie Garrett, Phillip Black and Michel Reymond. I should add that Michel Reymond's legal advice has been particularly useful.

I would also like to thank the State Chapter committees in Tasmania and Queensland, as well as the South Australian interest group for their enthusiasm and support and for arranging lectures and Australiana collection viewings. They have done a great job in furthering interest in all things Australian and the State Chapters have been instrumental in building member numbers.

And in conclusion, thank you all for your attendance at the AGM and other Society events. Remember to try and sign up a new member if you can. We could double our numbers if everyone did! Share your passion ... well perhaps not literally!

Treasurer's report

It is my pleasure to present the financial report for the year ended 31 December 2017. The year was a year of consolidation. Your Society did not undertake any major projects, however one item stands out and that is the \$3,000 grant to the Sydney Jewish Museum.

You will note, from the income and expenditure account, that the Society achieved a more than acceptable outcome in view of these difficult financial times. I believe that the entity's investments have to be in non-risk and conservative type offerings and in that regard we need to note that Westpac, our banker, is offering the lowest interest rates seen for a long time. Unfortunately, costs aren't so conservative, but your committee has been mindful of this and has attempted to minimise costs wherever possible.

In this, the new 2018 financial year, we have just sponsored and completed the Tasmanian tour and enjoyed the long weekend sojourn in Melbourne. Looking ahead 2019 will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Society's founding. The planning has begun and the financial strength of the Society will play a vital part.

We ended the 2017 year \$9,000 better than we started and we have grown by almost \$30,000 since December 2014.

I look forward to another successful financial year and recommend that the financial statements, comprising the balance sheet and the income and expenditure account, be adopted.

George Lawrence
Honorary Treasurer

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2017

	2017 \$	2016 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
CASH ASSETS		
Cash in bank - working account	23,747	50,370
Cash in bank - reserve account	5,238	5,221
Cash in bank - term deposit 1	76,139	74,674
Cash in bank - term deposit 2	25,265	-
	<u>130,389</u>	<u>130,265</u>
CURRENT TAX ASSETS		
GST collected and payable to ATO	(254)	(274)
GST paid and refundable by ATO	657	315
	<u>403</u>	<u>40</u>
OTHER		
Prepayments	-	741
Total Current Assets	<u>130,792</u>	<u>131,046</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Equipment	1,290	1,290
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(860)	(430)
Total Non-Current Assets	<u>430</u>	<u>860</u>
Total Assets	<u>131,222</u>	<u>131,906</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
PAYABLES		
UNSECURED:		
Membership fees in advance	825	10,550
Payment in advance	16,000	16,000
Total Current Liabilities	<u>16,825</u>	<u>26,550</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>16,825</u>	<u>26,550</u>
Net Assets	<u>114,397</u>	<u>105,356</u>
MEMBERS' FUNDS		
Accumulated surplus	114,397	105,356
Total Members' Funds	<u>114,397</u>	<u>105,356</u>

These financial statements are unaudited.

Australiana Society annual report 2018

Income and Expenditure Statement For the year ended 31 December 2017

	2017 \$	2016 \$
INCOME		
Membership fees	27,800	17,843
Advertising in Australiana	13,516	15,322
Income from events	5,610	5,285
Expenses of events	(2,997)	(7,969)
Donations	25	1,025
Sales	818	314
Production costs - Australiana	(25,000)	(17,144)
Editorial costs - Australiana	(5,638)	(3,905)
Interest received	1,788	1,676
Total income	15,922	12,446
EXPENSES		
Advertising and promotion	775	-
Bank and merchant fees	610	799
Depreciation	430	430
Filing fees	80	54
General expenses	227	733
Grant	3,000	-
Insurance	386	410
Membership expenses	-	226
Printing, postage, stationery	567	636
Website and internet	806	1,115
Total expenses	6,881	4,177
Profit from ordinary activities	9,041	8,269
Total changes in equity of the association	9,041	8,269
Opening retained profits	105,356	97,087
Net profit attributable to the association	9,041	8,269
Closing retained profits	114,397	105,356

These financial statements are unaudited.

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HOBART TOWN PLATE, GEORGE W. EVANS

South-west view of Hobart Town, circa 1822, is the earliest printed image of Hobart and engraved after a watercolour by the surveyor-general of Van Diemen's Land, George William Evans.

Only a handful of these plates are known. This plate does have repaired cracks but is still a rare survivor.



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and by appointment



Colonial Australian cedar inverted Breakfront Sideboard of architectural design c 1845, with four doors featuring raised fielded panels and three frieze drawers with raised fielded inserts all with concealed finger grips, the outer doors framed by pilasters. Internally, the sideboard has three drawer slides and a cellarette. Constructed with handmade screws, pine secondary timber, with 19th century finish, great colour and patina.





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An extremely rare and fine documentary folding specimen wood box created in Melbourne in 1895 and signed by the important Australian woodcarver William Howitt (1846–1928), who is listed in *The Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

The box identifies specimens of Victorian and Tasmanian timbers for use in “higher decorative artistic work” then being promoted by G.S. Perrin in *Arts and Crafts; an Illustrated Australasian Magazine of Arts*, vol I, no 1, October 1895. The Peter Walker prize-winning article by Dr Dorothy Erickson on William Howitt may be consulted in *Australiana*, November 2011, vol 33, no 4.

