

---

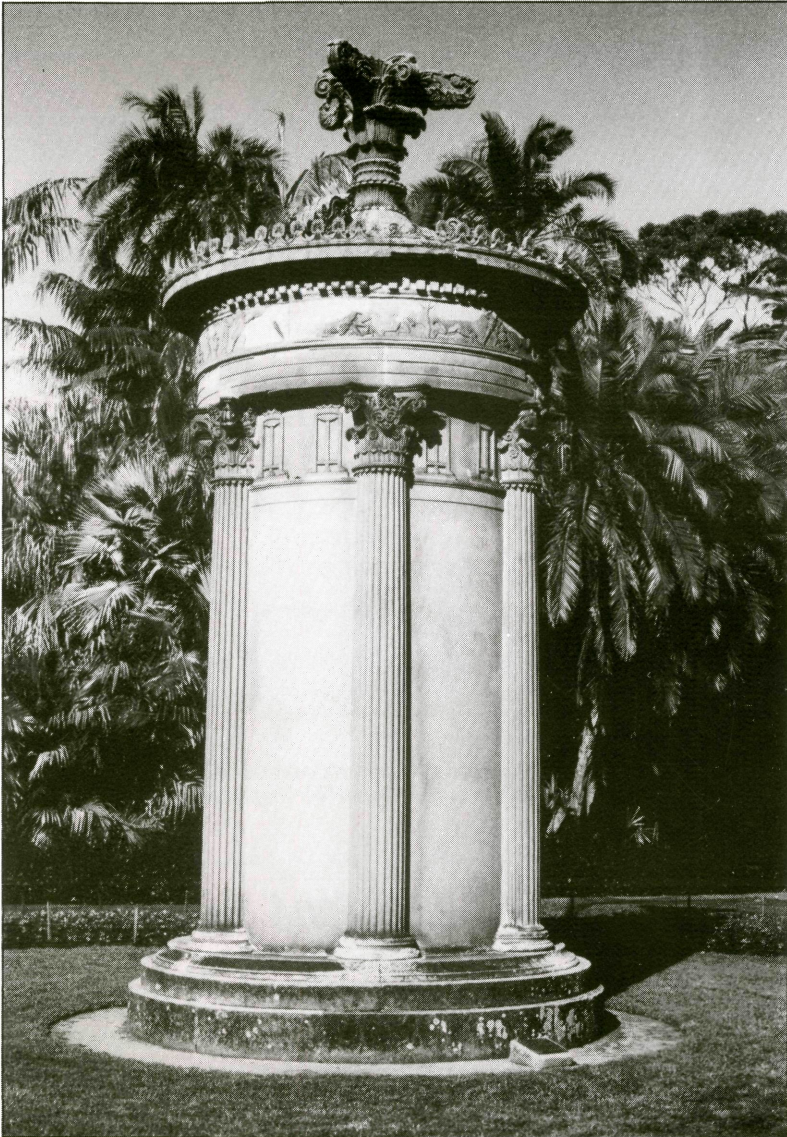
# AUSTRALIANA

FEBRUARY 1993

---

Registered by Australia Post Publication No. NBH 2771

Vol. 15 No. 1



**SIMPSON'S ANTIQUES** Pty Ltd  
A.C.N. 003 418 602 TEL/FAX (02) 363 3424 A.H. (02) 569 0211  
*FINE COLONIAL FURNITURE*



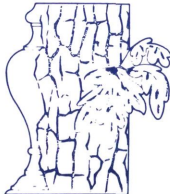
A rare early colonial cedar work table with two drawers and ebony and whale bone knobs (cloth work bag missing). NSW origin circa 1825. We will be exhibiting this table along with other interesting pieces of colonial furniture at the 25th Lindsay Antique & Decorative Arts Fair, "Lindsay" Darling Point from 22nd to 27th March 1993.

**40 QUEEN STREET, WOOLLAHRA NSW 2025**  
*Approved Valuers Under the Tax Incentives for the Arts Schemes*

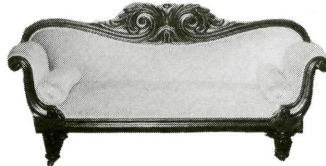
*Gregson's Antiques*

A.C.N. 002 655 905

DEALERS AND CONSERVATORS OF FINE FURNITURE



"Excellentia in Ligno"



*A superb quality Australian Colonial Cedar Double-end Sofa, superior carved back, selected show timber on fluted legs c. 1855.*

*Gregson's*

CONSERVATION OF ANTIQUE FURNITURE

*The Specialist Antique & Fine Furniture Workshop*

TEL. (02) 875 4790 14 RAILWAY PARADE, THORNLEIGH NSW 2120

Published by The Australiana Society  
Editor: Kevin Fahy

---

AUSTRALIANA, the journal of the Australiana Society, is published in February, May, August and November.

Subscription rates (1993):

Individual	\$25
Household	\$30
Institutions	\$35
Overseas	\$35
Life	\$500
Bona Fide Student	\$15

---

### SINGLE ADDRESS FOR ALL CORRESPONDENCE

Including Editorial, Advertising, Membership, Subscriptions and Requests for back issues etc., should be sent to:

The Hon. Secretary,  
Australiana Society,  
PO Box 322,  
Roseville NSW 2069  
Phone: 560 6022  
Fax: 569 7246

To simplify the process of written communication with the Society the committee has agreed to maintain only a single address for all correspondence, including the submission of material for publication in *Australiana*.

---

Committee 1992/93:

President: Kenneth Cavill  
Vice-Presidents: Michel Reymond,  
John Morris  
Secretary: Graham Cocks  
Treasurer: Andrew Simpson  
Editor: Kevin Fahy  
Members: David Bedford  
Les Carlisle  
John Houstone  
David Dolan

---

## CONTENTS

### 4 SOCIETY PROGRAMME 1993

#### ARTICLES

- 5 Dorothy M. Wager  
– Deborah Cocks
- 11 Lord Byron and Australia  
– Michael Bogle
- 14 Clandestine Furniture in the Macquarie Era  
– R. A. Crosbie
- 21 English and the Australian Eastern Colonies' Involvement in Jewellery and Silversmithing in Western Australia  
– Dorothy Erickson
- 26 Letter to the Editor

#### SPONSORS

Aust Building Adhesives  
H.P.M. Electrical Industries  
J.B. Hawkins Antiques  
Price Tiles Pty Ltd

---

Produced by GeoGraphics (02) 744 6700.

© Copyright 1993 The Australiana Society or individual authors. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society.

Registered by Australia Post Publication No. NBH 2771

Cover Facsimile of the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates (330 BC) by Walter McGill. Commissioned by Sir James Martin in 1870 for *Clarens*, Potts Point, NSW. Moved to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney in 1943.

# THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

PO BOX 322 ROSEVILLE 2069



## — SOCIETY PROGRAMME —

### MEETINGS – 1993

THURSDAY,  
25 FEBRUARY

Anne Watson, Curator of Decorative Arts and Design at the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney will speak on her three months at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

THURSDAY,  
1 APRIL

#### AUSTRALIANA SHOWCASE

Bring along your Australiana treasures for general discussion

THURSDAY,  
3 JUNE

Lecturer to be announced

THURSDAY,  
5 AUGUST

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY,  
7 OCTOBER

THURSDAY,  
2 DECEMBER

---

### SOCIAL OUTING – 1993

SUNDAY,  
27 MARCH

An afternoon tea-party at "Aberdour", Petersham the residence of Robert Hutchinson and John Waterstreet.

3.15 p.m.  
Cost: \$5.00

An ideal opportunity for Society members and friends to enjoy congenial company in ideal surroundings and view the extensive collection of Australiana.

Society meetings are held at 7.30pm at the Glover Cottage Hall,  
124 Kent Street, Sydney. Convenient street parking.  
Drinks served 7.30 - 8.00 pm, followed by Australiana Showcase  
(bring your Australian treasures for general discussion).  
Lectures will commence at 8.30 pm.



---

# Dorothy M. Wager

---

*Deborah Cocks*

*"My bench is the same as hers, excepting that I've painted the legs, my tools identical and the methylated spirit lamp she used in her first studio in Glasgow, in Fiji and Sydney until her first studio in Rowe Street ... I have used this lamp for almost 40 years."*<sup>1</sup>

Dorothy Wager is a somewhat individual and unusual jeweller in that she has been working within the tradition and style of her aunt and teacher Rhoda Wager,<sup>2</sup> and consequently the English Arts and Crafts movement, for her entire life (Plate 1). She is fully immersed in the theme of foliage and stone as taught by her aunt and this has "sustained her for sixty years".<sup>3</sup> She has produced about 1,700 pieces, each piece imbued with quality and longevity, each piece extremely well designed and wrought. Dorothy's later work of the 1970s and '80s shows the expertise acquired in thematically repetitive work and the further exploration of both Rhoda's and her style. Dorothy has finely tuned her work over the years, becoming more intricate, exquisitely weaving the foliage among itself but never overpowering the beauty of the stone or stones.

Dorothy May Wager was born on 10 March 1912 at Namasau, Ba, Fiji. The following year the Wagers sailed to England to visit relatives in Bristol, a journey which was, as Dorothy says, "to shape my life".<sup>4</sup> Rhoda Wager accompanied the family back to Fiji and stayed until 1916 when she left to settle in Sydney. During her time in Fiji Rhoda continued to work as a jeweller and Dorothy remembers watching the processes, enthralled. Rhoda told Dorothy she would teach her when she grew up.

In 1922 Dorothy and her family moved to Sydney.



*Plate 1. Dorothy M. Wager.*

Within a few years Dorothy went to live with Rhoda and her husband Percy Ashton. They sent her to SCEGGS in North Sydney and when she left school at the end of 1928 Dorothy went to work for Rhoda in her studio at Bulls Chambers, Hosking Place. The shop was at 42 Martin Place. Dorothy had grown up knowing she would be a jeweller.

"For 6 months I learned to solder, making links of all kinds and sizes and hundreds of leaves, before moving on to making rings and brooches she designed in more simple designs for me. Though Rhoda designed the work she allowed me to go about the making in my own way and she was always encouraging and constructive in her criticism."<sup>5</sup>

Dorothy was with Rhoda for eleven years. In the early years she

also took drawing lessons at the Julian Ashton Art School. Whilst Rhoda and her assistant Walter Clapham worked as a team, Dorothy was given Rhoda's designs to make entirely, from the basic framework to the finishing off and polishing. There was, however, within each batch of designs the lure that Dorothy could choose a stone, design the piece and make it, with Rhoda's approval of course. As Dorothy says, "happily for me she always approved",<sup>6</sup> and many pieces were designed and made by Dorothy with the Wager stamp.

Dorothy joined the Arts and Crafts Society of NSW in 1931 as a student member and records show that the annual exhibition in 1932 contained some ten items entered under Dorothy Wager Junior<sup>7</sup> and designed by Rhoda Wager. In 1938 Dorothy was "helping Rhoda select

her display when she said 'all this is yours, I think we will exhibit in your name this year'.<sup>8</sup> And indeed the catalogue shows 37 pieces under Dorothy Wager Junior, in cultured pearls, moonstone, cherry amber, opal, white topaz, lapis and cornelian.

Dorothy has an extraordinary memory for the pieces made by both herself and Rhoda. Whilst at her most recent exhibition opening in Toowoomba she "saw a beautifully dressed lady wearing a long chain. I recognised it as the one made for a lady doctor many years ago by Rhoda Wager. On enquiry she said that she had bought it ... in Brisbane eight years ago but she did not know who made it, so I told her and asked to do a sketch. Remembered the name Dr Constance Darcy ... and yes it is the one, Number V391 (in Rhoda's sketchbook) made January 1931."<sup>9</sup>

In December 1939 Dorothy opened her own studio after a "trifling difference of opinion"<sup>10</sup> with her aunt. She left on a Friday and on the Monday moved into Rigneys Building, 147 King St, bought tools, got the gas laid on and carpenter in to build the bench she still uses today (see Plate 2). For the first three months Dorothy taught glove making, six people at a time.

Initially the gloves paid the bills and by March 1940 the first jewellery orders were in and glove making was phased out. Dorothy had worked predominantly in silver while with Rhoda. Her first order in her new premises was to "remake 3 rings in white gold! One of 5 diamonds, one of 7 diamonds and the other, 2 emeralds and 3 rubies. I was close to panic but decided there was nothing else to do but go ahead and make them, thought it all out first and carefully advanced through each stage. Fortunately all went well."<sup>11</sup>

Dorothy spent two years in this studio and in 1941 took on jillaroing with a friend on a property near Warren in NSW. The Second



Plate 2. Dorothy M. Wager at work ...



Plate 3. After two years in an underground ack-ack station, ex AWAS Dorothy Wager is now making jewellery in an attic studio. (A magazine in late 1945,-early 1946, "THE SUN" Feature Bureau.)



Society Depot at 112A King Street, Sydney. Smaller shows every couple of years were held at Marton Hall, Margaret Street and Adams Hotel, between Pitt and George Streets. The foyer of the Royal Overseas League, Castlereagh Street, was the venue for another large show in 1967. Lady Fairlie-Cunningham, a loyal customer, was the patron.

In 1972 Dorothy and Bob moved to Wentworth Falls in the Blue Mountains and Dorothy took two years off. About working again until 1979 she had decided to retire but on reading about the Women and Arts Festival scheduled for October 1982, she "felt compelled to participate".<sup>12</sup> She returned to her bench and made twenty pieces for the festival but her work was not shown.<sup>13</sup> Anne Schofield,<sup>14</sup> however, showed the work in October 1982, later purchasing thirteen pieces and presenting them to the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in 1986.

From 20 February to 5 March, 1988 Anne Schofield again successfully hosted an exhibition of fifty pieces of Dorothy's work, acknowledging her commitment and contribution to the jewellery movement in Australia. 1988/89 also saw the Bicentennial Exhibition, 'A Free Hand', mounted at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney. This was a celebration of Australian crafts in which both Rhoda's and Dorothy's work was displayed. In 1991 Dorothy was invited to participate in the McKinney-Hardy Bros Invitation Award in Toowoomba. A London show has unfortunately fallen through but all of the pieces were on display at a solo exhibition in Melbourne at Kent Antiques from 9 to 29 November, 1992.<sup>15</sup>

Dorothy has, for the last decade, limited her time at the bench. This has perhaps helped to stimulate her and she writes that she finds herself "making some of the most intricate and challenging pieces of my life".<sup>16</sup>

Apart from the work made while Dorothy worked for Rhoda, which of course carries the WAGER stamp. Dorothy has never stamped or marked her work. Each piece Dorothy Wager has made is 'exhibition standard', as distinct from production or stock line. This immediately sets her work apart from other unsigned work.

Rhoda Wager imparted to Dorothy the importance of strength and durability in well designed work. Supports in the framework give that strength. Rings again feature a double shank joined to the frame, never a continued run forming the framework. Chains show the traditional linkages and the fastener is still a twisted wire ring and bar. Dorothy, too, makes all her findings.<sup>17</sup> She has continued to use semi-precious stones, foliage, berries and flowers and has

continued to use many of the shapes associated with Rhoda Wager but she has introduced subtle changes that define her work.

Dorothy employs a combination of metals more frequently than Rhoda did. She says that some stones need a little bit of gold. Millgraining is never employed on the settings but there is often twisted wire forming the outermost decorative border. She does employ a variety of ways of setting the stones (Diagram 1). Some pieces with multiple stones also have different kinds of settings within the piece.

Leaf shapes are based on the elongated diamond (Diagram 2). Gum leaves are not used. Each leaf is meticulously and individually fashioned from a flat sheet of silver, 18ct yellow or white gold. Grape leaves are used but not often. The

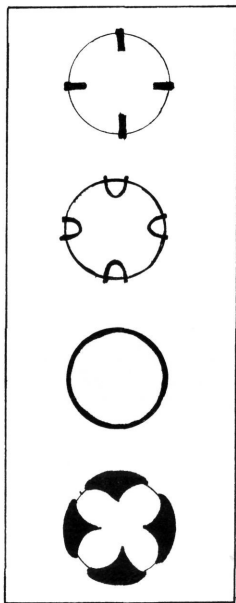


Diagram 1. Setting methods.

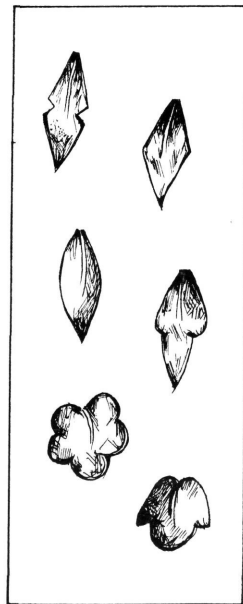


Diagram 2. Leaf shapes.



vines, leaves, flowers and buds are realistically connected, as they are in the work of her aunt, but the wires connecting them are sometimes finer, depending on the design, and weave a more intricate pattern. The flowers are also individually made. Dorothy has Rhoda's one stamp but uses it, like Rhoda, only when the flowers need to be the same size. Each piece is dictated by the stone or group of stones, the foliage designed to enhance the stones, not overpower them.

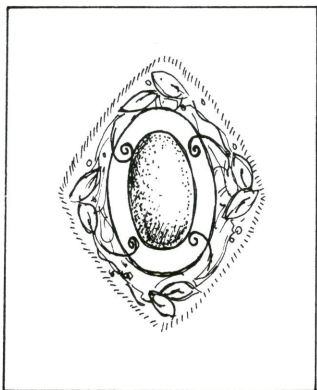


Diagram 3.

Dorothy sometimes employs a larger space between the stone and the foliage (Diagram 3). It appears to be peculiar to Dorothy's work although it could have been used occasionally by Rhoda. The supports are disguised by a small scroll of vine.

A shape which Dorothy began using when with Rhoda is an asymmetrical shape, often featuring different types of stones set at different levels. The cornelian brooch (photo, Plate 7) was designed and made by Dorothy and recorded in Rhoda's book by Dorothy in August, 1939, and is perhaps the first of the asymmetrical shape.

Dorothy Wager also made tea-spoons for special customers (Plates

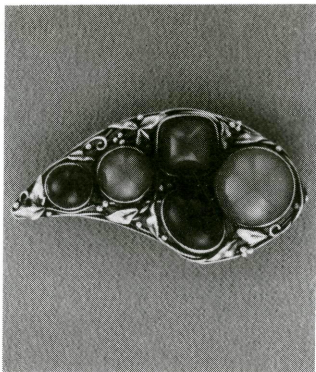


Plate 7. Cornelians by Dorothy Wager.

8 & 9), engagement and wedding rings, some buckles and buttons and also mounted some small china paintings as brooches. She inherited some paintings by Amy Vale (working during Rhoda Wager's time) and some stones. These have been treasured and when the time is right they are used. Brooches, pendants, ear-rings and exquisite suites of jewellery form the body of Dorothy's work.

Dorothy Wager's work has held its appeal through time. Old cus-

tomers add to their collections over the years. New customers may see the history but still find the work pertinent today. Perhaps Robyn Tudor best sums up Dorothy's work when placing her in a contemporary jewellery context.

"Her art remains faithful to its origins, an island in time ... She has been neither troubled nor distracted by the ebb and flow of Modernism and Post Modernism ... Her work has come through the ... artistic turbulence of the 20th century unscathed, innocent and unjudged."<sup>18</sup>



#### Bibliography

Society of Arts and Crafts (NSW) Annual Exhibition catalogues.

Tudor, Robyn, *A Living Tradition*, in *Craft Arts No. 20*, 1990.

Wager, D.M., *Autobiography*, unpublished memoirs 1980/1989.

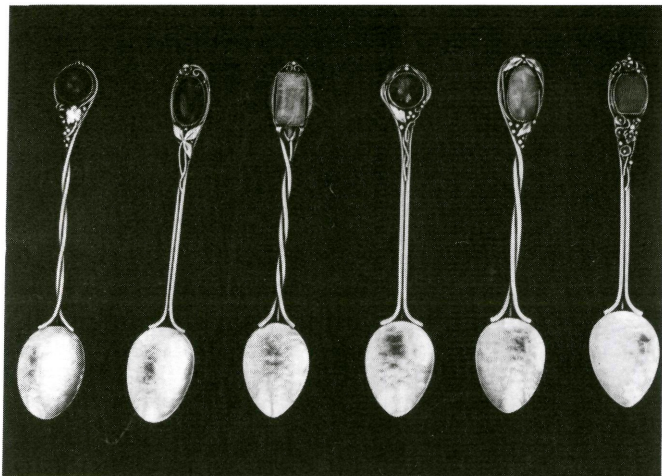


Plate 8. Spoons by Dorothy Wager.



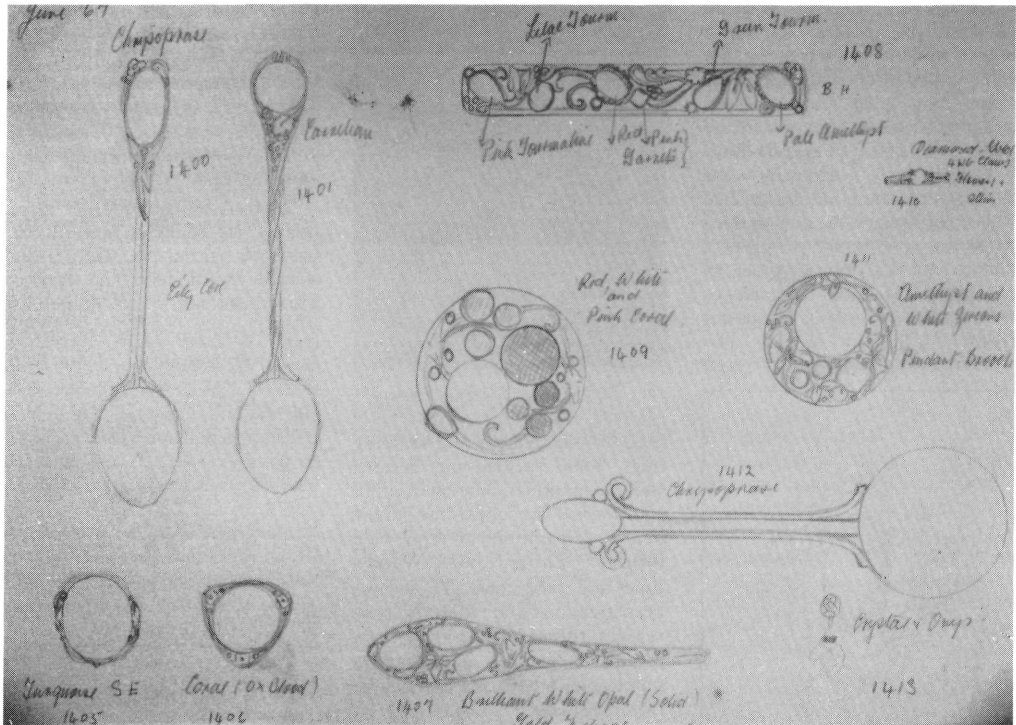


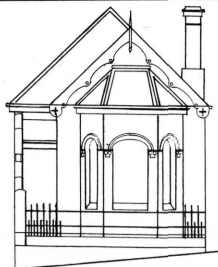
Plate 9. Original working drawings by Dorothy Wager.

**Footnotes**

1. Wager Dorothy, letter to M.A.A.S., 12 November, 1984. M.A.A.S.
2. See article Rhoda Wager by D. Cocks, *Australiana* February 1991.
3. Robyn Tudor, *A Living Tradition*, *Craft Arts* No. 20, p.55.
4. Dorothy M. Wager, *Autobiography* (unpublished private memoirs), p.1.
5. *ibid.*, p.1.
6. *ibid.*, p.1.
7. Dorothy Wager senior was Dorothy's aunt, a weaver who also belonged to and exhibited with the Arts and Crafts Society of NSW.
8. Dorothy M. Wager, *op cit*, p.1.
9. Letter from Dorothy to the author, 11 November 1991.
10. Dorothy M. Wager, *op cit*, p.1.
11. *ibid.*, p.1.
12. *ibid.*, p.1.
13. See Robyn Tudor, *op cit*, p.57.
14. Antique dealer situated in Queen Street, Woollahra, NSW.
15. Kent Antiques, 266 Waverley Road, Malvern East, Vic.
16. Dorothy M. Wager, *op cit*, p.1.
17. See article D. Cocks, *op cit*.
18. Robyn Tudor, *op cit*, p.58.

**Acknowledgement**

Many thanks to Dorothy M. Wager for sharing her life and work with us.



**ABERDOUR**

**HOSTED DINNERS IN UNIQUE ATMOSPHERE**

Late Victorian home "Aberdour" circa 1893, decorated to the period and furnished with a large collection of *Australiana*. The perfect setting for that special occasion or celebration.

Small groups to 6 guests.

Three course set menu – \$55/person inclusive.

For bookings phone your hosts

Robert Hutchinson and John Waterstreet on (02) 568 3079.

---

# Lord Byron and Australia

---

*Michael Bogle*

The tumultuous career of the poet Lord Byron is well known; as a sensualist who sampled and wrote on every pleasure he experienced, he is the archetype of the countless Romantic Heroes of the 19th century. During his lifetime, his fame (and his reputation) travelled around the world, even as far as the young colony of New South Wales. While the poet has no first hand associations with Australia, there are a surprising number of coincidental connections with George Gordon Byron, the 6th Lord Byron.

While Lord Byron (1788-1824) and the Australian colony were officially born in the same year, his family name appears in the earliest English charts of New Holland as Cape Byron. This headland was named by Captain Cook in honour of Captain John Byron, the 6th Lord Byron's grandfather. Captain Byron was known to his fellow sailors as "Foul weather Jack". In 1764, the British Admiralty ordered the Captain to undertake a voyage of discovery in command of HMS "Dolphin". "Foul weather Jack" circumnavigated the globe and managed to avoid every potential major discovery in the Pacific Ocean, including New Holland. In 1770, Cook celebrated this sailor's achievement by naming Cape Byron in his new maps of the eastern coast of Australia.

More can be made of the Byronic coincidences of Australian place names when one recalls that William Lamb, the 2nd Viscount, Lord Melbourne (1779-1848, British PM 1835-41), was the long suffering husband of Lady Caroline Lamb, Lord Byron's outrageous mistress during 1812. Lord Melbourne is, of course, the namesake of Victoria's capital.

A more direct Australian link with Byron was forged with the

1816 arrival in England of the future colonial political leader William Charles Wentworth. Lord Byron and Wentworth were distant relations by marriage due to Byron's marriage in 1815 to Annabella Milbanke (1792-1860). She was a descendant and heir of Lord Wentworth (d. 1815), the head of the long-honoured English branch of the family.

While there is no evidence that William Charles Wentworth and Lord Byron ever met, the young Wentworth returned to London for legal training in 1816 when Byron was a raging lion in the city's social scene. Later, in 1823, Wentworth

verses, Wentworth was to use Lord Byron as a theme for a poem "On the Death of Lord Byron". It appears in *The Australian* on 11 November 1824; a newspaper published by Wentworth and William Wardell.

This closing reflects Wentworth's knowledge of Byron's farewell to his estranged wife Annabella before the poet fled into exile in 1816. Byron writes to his much-abused spouse:

Fare thee well! And if for ever,  
Still for ever, fare thee well:  
Even though unforgiving, never  
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

## On the Death of Lord Byron

Where art thou, man of might, thou grand in soul;  
Gone! like the vesper pageantry of heaven,  
Leaving a twilight gloom, sadly to roll  
over the heart bereft; for thou wast given  
to quicken our dull spirits, and to blaze  
A living light o'er the dim world beneath ...

... Greece! thou hast lost thy champion; Italy!  
Thy poet, glowing with the stirring dream  
Of all thou has been, art, and yet mayst be.  
Shed from thy broken urn a tearful stream,  
And from the Tiber let a voice of wail  
Mourn o'er the Palatine, and where the hoar  
Lone Colisoeum stands, and Dian pale  
Sleeps beautiful, for him who lives no more.  
Clarens, Lausanne, and Veray, could a ray  
Of paler sheen oppress ye, hear his knell,  
And echo a struck world, and sorrowing say,  
Farewell, — alas! for ever fare thee well!

went up to Cambridge, Byron's "alma mater". And he too returned from university as a poet.

Wentworth's poem, well known "Australasia", was composed for the Chancellor's Medal at the Cambridge Commencement in 1823. It still stands as a landmark in the development of Australian literature. But while this poem's heroic couplets are no match for Byron's

Wentworth's Australian poetry aside, there are more physical associations with Byron in the form of a sandstone monument in the Royal Botanic Gardens at Farm Cove. The much-abused Sydney version of the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, which once stood in the grounds of Sir James Martin's villa "Clarens" at Potts Point, is a facsimile of one of Lord Byron's

residences in Greece.

Byron became a tenant of this circular temple during his travels in Greece in 1810-11. At that time, the structure (which is larger than Sir James' version) was within the grounds of the Capuchin Monastery in Athens. According to a contemporary account that Lord Byron gave in a letter to John Hobhouse on 10 January 1811 (*Byron: A Self-portrait*, Peter Quennell, Ed. OUP 1990, p87), the monks had made this ancient structure (330 BC) into a cosy library where he could compose. It was incorrectly known at the time as "The Lantern of Demosthenes". After Byron's early death, this "lantern" became associated with his life. For mid-19th century English tourists rediscovering the classical world, it became an important stop on the Greek pilgrimage.

The unanswered question is why Sir James Martin would commission Walter McGill in 1870 to carve this monument with its Byronic associations? (It was moved to the Royal Botanic Gardens in 1943.) Martin was an intellectual and writer and published the *Australian Sketchbook* in 1838. Perhaps he had it erected to honour Lord Byron's memory? By coincidence, Martin was also a great admirer of William Charles Wentworth and presided at Wentworth's graveside funeral service at Vaucluse in 1873.

The connections discussed above form some distinct links between Lord Byron and Australia; but there are other tenuous but interesting coincidences connecting the poet to the colony:

1. The writer Mary Wollstonecraft, also the wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley and an intimate of Lord Byron, was the first cousin of Elizabeth and Edward Wollstonecraft of North Sydney. The Wollstonecrafts came to Australia in 1819 and gave their name to a Sydney suburb.
2. Isaac Nathan (1790-1864) who emigrated to New South Wales

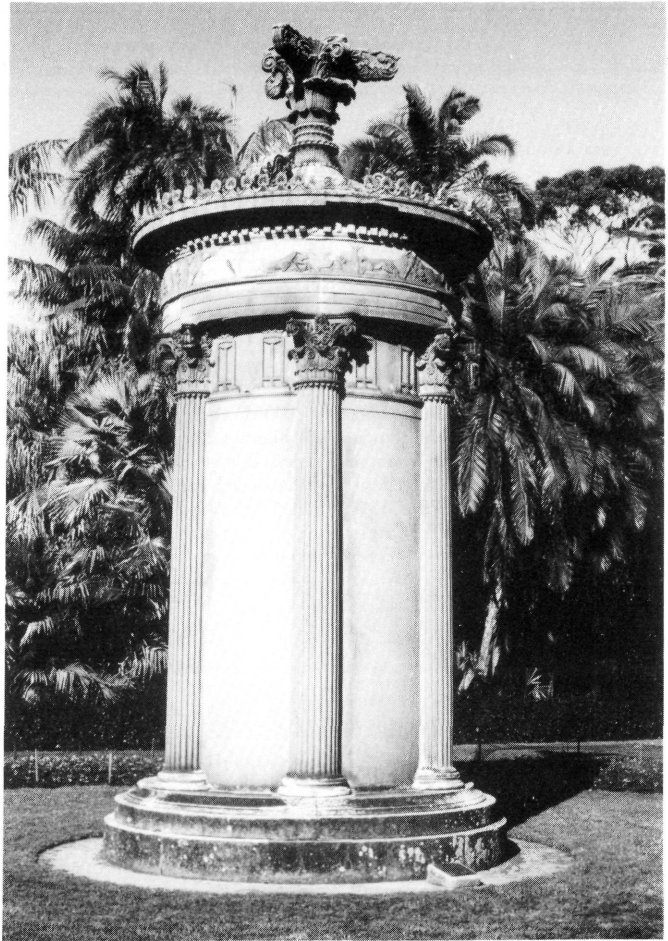


Plate 1. Facsimile of the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates (330 BC) by Walter McGill. Commissioned by Sir James Martin for "Clarens", Potts Point. Moved to the Royal Botanic Gardens in 1943.

in 1840 and became the colony's most prominent musician, was another intimate of Lord Byron. Through a collaboration in London, Nathan set some of Byron's lyrics to music (see "Isaac Nathan", Graham Pont, *Australian Antique Collector*, July, December, 1992, pp 66-69). Nathan's home in Randwick was called "Byron Lodge". He also published *Reminiscences of Lord Byron* in London in 1829.

3. The Right Honourable Pauline, Lady Byron, the wife of the late 11th Lord Byron (d.1983) lives in Mt Claremont, Western Australia.

The Australian branch of the Lord Byron Society is based in Bondi, c/o J. Voignier-Marshall, PO Box 819, Bondi, NSW 2026.

Michael Bogle is a curator for the Historic Houses Trust of NSW. He currently oversees Vaucluse House, the former home of William Charles Wentworth.

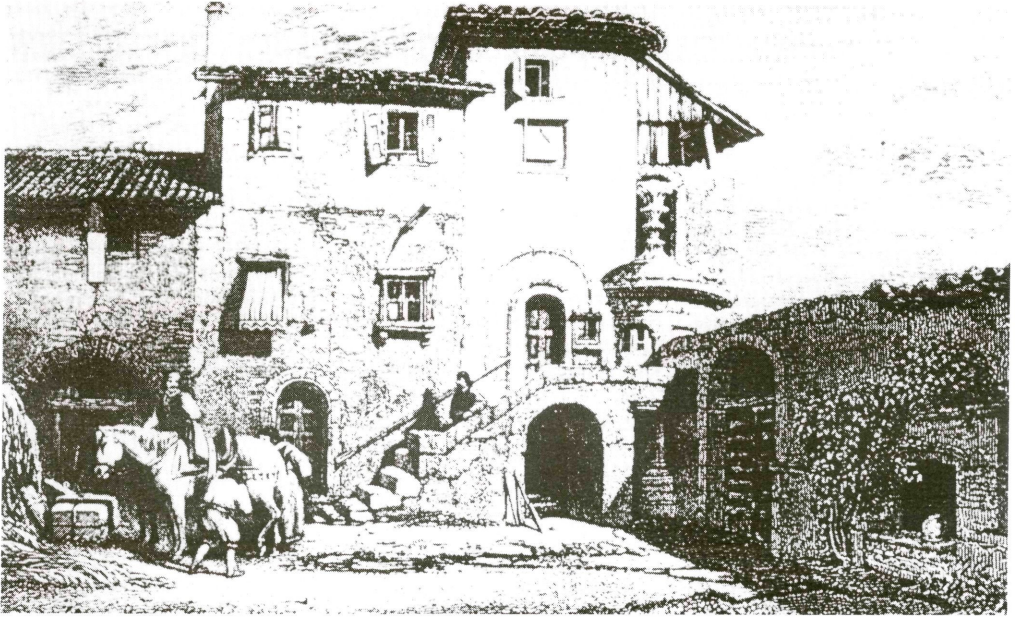


Plate 2. Detail of an anonymous etching of the Capuchin Monastery, Athens. The Unusual finial of the Choragic Monument is visible behind the stair landing.

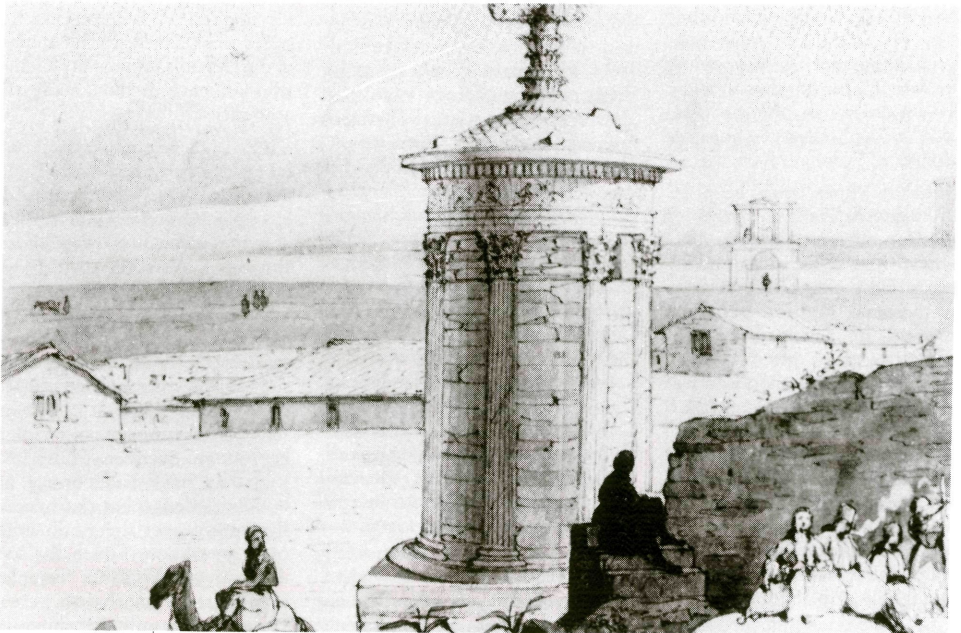


Plate 3. Detail of a 1834 ink and watercolour sketch by Alfred Beaumont showing the Monument after the monastery had been levelled.



---

# Clandestine Furniture in the Macquarie Era

---

*R.A. Crosbie*

The second phase of Governor Macquarie's administration was a period of rapid population growth and accelerated government activity.<sup>1</sup> Macquarie's building programme and the aspirations of free settlers with capital generated a building boom. Skilled artisans were in high demand while being in low supply. Most tradesmen were in government employ as servants of the Crown; convicts. Furniture production was stimulated by these conditions. The established cabinet makers were either well entrenched emancipists such as Lawrence Butler, or relatively secure conditionally pardoned convicts such as Henry Adcock, or free settlers with capital such as Edward Hunt. Emancipist or free settler alike faced similar problems, principally the difficulty of securing reliable labour and the scarcity of cedar, the staple raw material of the trade. As a consequence "formal" furniture was relatively expensive in the cabinet makers' and upholsterers' shops or warehouses in Sydney or Parramatta.

Formal furniture could be procured by alternative less expensive means. To understand the possible "irregular" transactions it is necessary to place the furniture of this era into some historical perspective. Macquarie's public works were largely carried into effect by convict labour. One exception was the Rum Hospital, built by contract. The preparation of the building components, excepting masonry, was carried out by convict mechanics in the Government Lumber Yards. Masonry was conveyed from quarry or brick pit to site and convict workers erected and fitted out buildings. In Sydney there were two connected Lumber Yards, the Old and the New. Convict

apprentices were trained in the Lumber Yards or on site. Apprentices were boarded in the Carters Barracks, mechanics lodged in the Town or the Carter Barracks or latterly in the General Barracks. Some free apprentices, the sons of constables or watchmen, were also trained by government in the lumber yards.

The building sites, the Lumber Yards and the Carters Barracks were controlled by the Engineer, Major George Druitt and were under Military command. The buildings in progress were superintended by the Architect, Francis Greenway, a civil official. The Architect was also responsible for the instruction of apprentices and the improvement of the competence of mechanics in the building trades. The Architect was subordinate to the Engineer. The Engineer was in turn subordinate to the Governor. Thus Macquarie gave orders to Druitt and then Druitt instructed Greenway in the routine of effecting the Governor's instructions. The convicts were controlled by the Principal Superintendent of Convicts, William Hutchinson. Justice was dispensed by Magistrates and enforced by the constables. This proto police force was under the command of the Chief Constable acting directly under the orders of the Superintendent of Police and the Superintendent of convicts. The property of the Crown was issued from the Commissariat Stores and the possessions of His Majesty and the administration of the stores controlled by the Deputy Commissary-General.

Each Military and government official "Acting" for the Crown had his own chain of subordinates. Under Druitt were his subordinate officers of the Engineer's Depart-

ment and under them the convict overseers, ticket of leave men, who saw to the practical day-to-day matters. The Engineer's Department drew stores for use in the lumber yards or on the buildings in progress from the Commissariat Dry Store. Timber, iron, etc. was kept in the lumber yard. The Commissariat Dry Store and the lumber yards were administered by convict storekeepers and watchmen and guarded by gatekeepers and constables, again convict. Materials were drawn from the store or lumber yard by a system of chits signed by Major Druitt or his agent, either an officer or a storekeeper in the Engineer's Department; stock books and labour returns were maintained by convict clerks. Watchmen and gatekeepers prevented thefts and checked passes and chits. Requisitions from stores were subject to the approval of the Deputy Commissary-General who also gave the final audit to all accounts.

Civil officials, who were usually convict or pardoned, had a limited authority over subordinates. For example Greenway's control of convict mechanics was effected through overseers who were accountable to the Engineer, Druitt and not to the Architect. The convict artisans were allocated tasks by the Engineer according to the priorities set by Governor Macquarie. The selection of the artisans was the responsibility of the appropriate overseer. Thus Greenway may have had control of a building's design but not necessarily control over the workmanship or its execution. Given the social dislocation in England, "complete" or fully trained mechanics were not plentiful. The military composition of the bureaucracy exacerbated the



situation. Military officers were entitled to perquisites. Macquarie allowed officers of the Engineers Department the perquisites of taking mechanics "off the stores" as assigned servants if this did not conflict with the requirements of government.<sup>2</sup>

Under Commissioner Bigge's enquiry into Macquarie's administration the distinction between a perquisite and misappropriation was to be argued at length. As a further incentive convict overseers were also allowed to have an assigned mechanic under similar preconditions. Overseers also commonly conducted businesses in town along with their government position. For example Henry Adcock was Overseer of Carpenters in the Lumber Yard, had a cabinet-making and undertaking shop and was the Licensee of a Public House, managed by his wife Margaret Adcock. This Public House, The Fox and Hounds, was the meeting place of Adcock's and Druitt's supporters in the Lumber Yard. Given the number of buildings in progress, the dual Lumber Yard, the bureaucratic chain of command between military and civil, the perquisites of the officers and the convicts being allowed to work "at large" for wages after 2pm, opportunities for irregularities were inevitable.

William Minchin was made a Justice of the Peace and appointed as a Magistrate for Sydney and New South Wales in March 1820. In April he was given the position of Principal Superintendent of Police.<sup>3</sup> By May he was enmeshed into an investigation into the Commissariat Store. Two convict clerks in the Commissariat Store had been detected passing forged notes against the store. One man, Garland, had obtained a number of blank notes while another, Harvey, had forged entries onto the blanks. A number of accomplices then presented these notes to the Commissariat. While investigating this fraud another crime must have

been detected. This concerned the storekeeper, Robert McIntosh, and the thefts from the Dry Store carried out by the convict carpenter, William Price. Minchin interviewed witnesses and recorded their depositions.<sup>4</sup>

Evidence was compiled by William Minchin from 19 to at least 26 May 1820. A picture of systematic purloining of government property from the Sydney Lumber Yard and Commissariat Store emerged. Copies of the transcripts of evidence were sent by Minchin to Macquarie,<sup>5</sup> who then sent these transcripts to Commissioner Bigge.<sup>6</sup> Minchin's transcripts are a summary of the statements made by the convicts. No details of how they were questioned are known. The statements were made under oath and signed by the person making the deposition and witnessed by Minchin. The impression given by these transcripts is that any superfluous material has been submitted. The statements probably followed detailed interrogation by the Chief Constable and the Superintendent of Police.

During the last week of May 1820 the convict Millwright attached to the Lumber Yard, Charles Mines, found himself under oath before Magistrate Minchin. Possibly as a consequence of Mines' testimony the Superintendent of Police has issued a number of search warrants to recover goods stolen from the Commissariat Dry Store by a convict carpenter from the Lumber Yard, William Price, and a storekeeper in the Commissariat Store, Robert McIntosh. Mines had purchased goods from Price and was implicated in these crimes. Mines may have cooperated with Chief Constable Redman and his detailed testimony may have facilitated the rapid recovery of the stolen items.

William Minchin heard Charles Mines' evidence on 19 May 1820.<sup>7</sup> Mines stated that in the first week of April he was approached by the

convict William Price at his (Mines') lodgings at The Rocks. Price asked Mines to go for a walk to which Mines replied "he should not go anywhere, till he had his tea" to which Price answered "he could help Mines to something better than tea". The two men then went for a stroll during which Price declared he had some tools to dispose of and Mines observed it was no use trying the government men as they had no money. He advised he "had better try one of the Jews". So they went to Levy's house where they were immediately turned away. Hall was approached next and he also refused to buy the tools but suggested Whitefield might be interested. The two convicts then went to Whitefield "and called him out to the front gate".

Price then gave Whitefield a description of the items he had for sale, "a Carpenter's Stock and Bits ... which had not been ever used". Whitefield said no, prices were discussed and finally a bargain struck. Whitefield bought the Stock and Bits and a tooting plane with two irons for a guinea. Price's asking sum has been two guineas. Mines stated the tools were worth from forty-five to fifty shillings in England and told Price he regretted not being in a position to buy. Price then told Mines he could get more as "the store was open and he, Price, has nothing to do but help himself, thus his master Mr McIntosh under whom he was employed in His Majesty's Dry Store at the Commissariat, would never take any notice of anything he did for himself in that way, for that he, Mr McIntosh, said to him to take care how he did it, that there were many eyes about, but for his own part, he should not see him, that he did not blame him for getting a shilling, but he should take care to keep his (Mr McIntosh's) name out of question".

Price then gave Mines an account of how he was working for McIntosh at his private house and

claimed he could do as he liked as long as he worked for him. The value of glue was then discussed and Price suggested he could supply Mines with glue and thread from the store. He cautioned the thread was in short supply as McIntosh had "sent a lot up to his farm". A week later Price again approached Mines and sold for eleven shillings and threepence (in a ten shilling bill and a Dump) eight pounds of glue and one pound of thread. They then had "a glass of grog" together and Price told Mines the glue was from the Dry Store and also some brandy was being taken for McIntosh. Talk of glazier's diamonds followed and then a reversion to the topic of the brandy. Price described it as "famous brandy and was quite a treat to Mr McIntosh and that he, Price, had a rare blow out".

Mines further declared that in the first week of April Price came into the Lumber Yard for some cedar "and got from twenty to thirty feet of inch cedar, the best in the yard, a fine piece, fit for a table top or other good work, which he took up Church Hill and then on to Mr McIntosh's house ... and afterwards remarked to him that he had a pretty good swag, to which Price replied, yes, he had a good sweat, that Mr McIntosh wanted it for drawers and other furniture". As we shall see this cedar was in the process of being made into furniture when Price was arrested.

To conclude his evidence Mines said that "last week Price brought him six hundred tacks, four dozen screws, a stock lock, an inch auger, a wood axe, four door hooks and three hinges" but claimed he did not buy the items as there "was a balance unsettled between them". What conclusions can we draw from Mines' evidence? The obvious observation concerns the description of Price's activities for though Price is called by generic term "carpenter", he is more likely to have been a joiner or cabinet-

maker. The thefts must also have been known by the Constables. A check of the store's stock books would have isolated the missing items and it is more than probable that someone with "inside" information had informed to save themselves. Perhaps Mines was swept up in Price's actions and being the minor player was apprehended first and was fully aware of the value to self preservation of being cooperative to those in authority.

The transcript of William Price's deposition is undated and unsigned.<sup>8</sup> He may have been questioned by Police Superintendent Minchin after his arrest. As he was arrested on Friday evening, 19 May, he could have been examined on the Saturday morning or on the following Monday. No other testimonies are present for 22 May, Monday, and it is reasonable to assume Price appeared before Minchin on this morning. Alternatively Minchin may have examined him late on Friday evening, 19 May. I suspect a weekend in custody would have made him cooperative and improved his memory. The delay would also have allowed John Redman to consider his course of action and arrange for Minchin to issue search warrants against McIntosh. Of course the Police would also have been active in pursuing the inquiry against the forgers and utterers also suspected of fraud against the Commissariat.

In the opening sentence of his declaration Price informed Minchin "about four months ago after I had been working at the Commissariat Store as a carpenter for eight or ten days" he was approached by storekeeper Robert McIntosh who said, "Well carpenter how do you get on?" I answered, "Middling, Sir." After some other observations he said, "Do not you carpenters sometimes make mistakes and take out the cedar for yourselves?" I told him, "No, for there were too many eyes about." McIntosh then put a hypothetical proposition to Price

asking if he gave Price an order for cedar, could he not make a table ready for putting together and McIntosh would then have him passed out of the store with the table's components. Price agreed to this arrangement.

Next morning McIntosh gave Price an order for cedar boards. He took the order to Mr Flynn at the lumber yard and selected the cedar and carried it back to the store. "I there made a table top which I glued together and afterwards took to his house." McIntosh then asked Price where he lived and offered him free lodgings at his house. After Price had been in McIntosh's house several days he was taken by McIntosh to the Commissariat Store before the Clerk of the office came to his employment. McIntosh then gave Price two blankets and told him to put them in the Bread Room until an opportunity came to take them away.

Price further claimed McKissock drew some cedar and had him make a table. McKissock then passed this table out of the store along with a bag containing Price's blankets from the Bread Room. The blankets were taken from McKissock and carried by Price to McIntosh's house. When McIntosh returned in the evening he told Price to give one blanket to Mrs McIntosh and to keep one for himself. A few mornings after this incident Price and McIntosh were again "at the store before any of the people were about". Price received from McIntosh ten to twelve pounds of English glue and McIntosh passed him by the watchman. The glue was taken to McIntosh's house. Price was then transferred from the store to work at the Government Mill.

After Price finished his job at the Government Mill McIntosh sent tosh had told him to take a cedar flour bin to pieces and to take the for McIntosh "and after I had been employed there a short time, an order came from the lumber yard

for tools, on which McIntosh took me with him into the room, we then opened the boxes and examined their contents which were jointers and tothing planes. Afterwards we went upstairs and McIntosh, calling McKissock, told him to give me the tools I wanted and a pair of trousers and giving him the key of the room we had been in as though he had not been into it."

At this junction Price's evidence is at variance with McKissock's testimony. McKissock did not mention his table supplied by Price or the extent of the thefts from the storeroom. Price claimed he then took, by McKissock's direction, a pair of trousers, a pair of shoes, a pair of stockings and two rolls of thread, a dove-tailed saw, a tenon saw, a jointer, two braces and bits and two veneering planes. McKissock took a frying pan and told Price to take all these items to McIntosh's house. Price was clearly implying that McKissock was either acting with McIntosh in the thefts or at the least fully aware of his actions. McKissock is revealed as sharing in McIntosh's arrangement with Price.

Price also recounted how McIntosh had told him to take a cedar flour bin to pieces and to take the best of it, at various times, to McIntosh's house. McIntosh then instructed Price to put a drawer into the table he had made and to take the table to the store. Price, on McIntosh's orders, exchanged the table he had made for the pembroke table in the store. This is the cedar pembroke table recovered from McIntosh's house and commented favourably on by John Redman. After this incident Price made McIntosh "Two cedar dressing tables" using timber drawn from the lumber yard for the use of the store and had nearly completed a round table made from the same cedar. This is the cedar described by Mines as the best quality in the lumber yard.

Price then provides further evi-

dence to implicate McKissock and McIntosh by claiming that McKissock brought a box from the store to McIntosh's house. He mentions Mr Hutchinson (Principal Superintendent of Convicts) speaking to Mr Cordeaux (Deputy Commissary) on the subject of thefts from the store and claims that as a consequence McIntosh told him "in case I should be pulled to take it on myself and he would be a friend to me" and added that before this conversation McIntosh had sent his wife to remove the evidence from the house. This she did, removing the blanket Price "had lain on from the day it came from the store and placed it on McIntosh's and her bed". The tools "and a box belonging to them" were also removed from Price's room.

Mrs McIntosh told Price she had burnt the wooden parts of the tools and put the rest down the well. Price was told to get another lodging in case Hutchinson had "a down" on McIntosh's house. Price also mentions kegs of wine and brandy from the store. After leaving McIntosh's house Price went to lodge with Charles Mines and put him into his confidence about "the number of tools purloined from the stores by the sanction of McIntosh." He then describes the glue and tools he sold to Mines, and the brace and bits he sold to the carrier in George Street. This account agrees with Mines' description of these events. Indeed the testimonies are at this point virtually interchangeable.

Price then digresses to the period when he was living at McIntosh's house and describes how one of the men in the store took a cot and frame from the store to McIntosh's house. This frame was marked with the broad arrow which McIntosh had Price plane off. The same morning he planed the broad arrow out he also took a large hen coop from the store to McIntosh's house. At this time McKissock brought

the canvas bags to McIntosh's house. Price then describes the job he had to do for "Colebrook the Constable". "I took five boards from McIntosh's house, out of the stuff I had, at different times, brought from the stores, to make a pair of shutters. This gave McIntosh great offence inasmuch that he went to Colebrook's wife and asked what I had been doing and what cedar boards I had sold her."

As a consequence, when Price next went to the stores, McIntosh told him there would be trouble over the boards and not to take any more "even though some were put aside to be taken away". That evening McIntosh told Price some person had informed him that Price had been selling cedar to Colebrook. Price observed in conclusion how when he took the tools from the store Watchman Evans questioned him at the gate and told him to bring out all he wanted for he should not run the risk again. The next day the watchman said to Price he should not have spoken so as he did not know Price lodged with McIntosh. Price then told Minchin he believed the tools Mrs McIntosh claimed to have destroyed were "at this time in the house of one Sandy Campbell, a man in whom Mr McIntosh places an implicit confidence".

On 23 May Thomas Colebrook, Constable, gave evidence before Magistrate Minchin.<sup>9</sup> He stated that he had lately employed the carpenter, Price, "a man who lives with Mr McIntosh, storekeeper", to make some shutters from cedar and line some doors and window frames with red gum and that Price had made three pairs of shutters and had been paid by his wife two pounds fifteen shillings for making the same. Colebrook claimed he had "not the least suspicion of the man seeing him frequently with McIntosh's children and knowing that he lived there". He observed Price had used government tools in his house and added that he really

wanted wooden brackets and Price had used the iron broad arrowed brackets against his instructions.

Search warrants to recover the stolen goods must have been issued on or before 23 May. On 24 May Richard Dalton, District Constable, made his first statement before Magistrate Minchin.<sup>10</sup> Dalton, accompanied by Constable Butcher, went to the house of Sandy Campbell, on The Rocks, in the early afternoon and served the warrant to search his premises. Campbell produced the goods on the warrant to search his premises. Campbell produced the goods on the warrant saying he had them from McIntosh's man. He produced two planes, "a small one and a large one". Dalton then asked him if he had any other goods and he answered "No". The house was then searched. Campbell claimed McIntosh's man had told him to keep the planes until he wanted them. These were the tools Mrs McIntosh had claimed she had destroyed. This search of Campbell's house most probably occurred immediately before John Redman, Chief Constable, searched Robert McIntosh's house. The arrest of Price had occurred on the evening of 19 May, Mines' interrogation on the afternoon of the 19th and the search of Campbell's and McIntosh's places on 23 May.

On 24 May Chief Constable John Redman gave his evidence before the Magistrate. Acting on a search warrant Redman, at 4pm on the 23rd, "proceeded to the house of Robert McIntosh, in The Rocks, and found there six new canvas bags, one of which was marked with the broad arrow ... one cedar pembroke table very neatly made which he said was brought from the store to his house to be repaired – there were two other cedar tables which he said he had paid his man for making. I understand the man to be William Price the prisoner now in custody for robbing the

store". A frying pan and a cot were also recovered. McIntosh claimed the cot from England with him. Redman pursued his inquiries and reappeared before the Magistrate on 27 May to present further evidence concerning McIntosh. The arrest of Price probably followed the search by Redman of McIntosh's house on 23 May.<sup>11</sup>

On 26 May 1820, Constable Richard Dalton appeared before the Magistrate.<sup>12</sup> He gave an account of the arrest of Price on the previous Friday evening, the 19th. On that evening, as a result of "information" District Constable Dalton accompanied by Constables Elliot and Chapman went to search the house of William Price, Prisoner of the Crown, in The Rocks near the Military Hospital. The search uncovered "two cedar boards, a chair cushion, a blanket with the broad arrow thereon, a box nailed up quantity of glue, thread of different colours, some tacks, some hinges, a little bag full of screws, and a small bag full of little tools – we took this property to the lumber yard, placed it in charge of the watchman and took Price into custody." Price was probably questioned by the constables and further information obtained. This is left to conjecture from the statement of Dalton.

The constables then "in pursuance of our information" went to the house of William Whitefield, Tanner, in George Street. Price accompanied the three constables. Whitefield admitted purchasing a brace and thirty-six bits, and said he didn't know the seller's name but could identify him. Whitefield then formally identified Price as "the man with them wearing the long coat". Whitefield further admitted purchasing from Price a toothing plane and said it was with a carpenter working for him. He named the man as Bunyion. Dalton told the magistrate "I have since got it from Bunyion".

The constables "in pursuance of

still further information" then proceeded to the house of Thomas Colebrook, Constable, Princes Street, The Rocks. There they found six cedar shutters, "three iron brackets, marked with the broad arrow, one plane, one plane iron, a hammer, and one chisel all marked with the broad arrow". Mrs Colebrook identified the tools as belonging to Price and said Price had fixed the brackets and shelves and made the shutters and found "the stuff" to make them. She had paid Price two pounds five shillings for the work. The items were then lodged in the lumber yard. Isiah Chapman then took the oath to verify Dalton's statement.<sup>13</sup>

On 25 May 1820 Joseph Evans, watchman at the Gate to the Commissariat Store, was examined by Magistrate Minchin.<sup>14</sup> He stated that by the orders of Mr McIntosh, storekeeper, and Mr McKissock, overseer, he had passed out of the store quantities of corn screenings in bags two or three times, cedar boards, a table top in two parts, a cot frame and a tub with some things in it. "I did not examine it as was my duty as it was passed out by McKissock himself," he confessed. After these incidents he passed out of the store a quantity of bags while McIntosh was present and recalls a convict by the name of Long Tom being passed out with bags and observed "Price, the carpenter, has since told me that a cot was in the bags amongst the screenings, I noticed Price carry the cedar out and I suspected something wrong. I frequently cautioned him and said he was playing a queer game." He added three weeks ago Price had three large planks of cedar and he had taken these from Price and reported the matter to McIntosh.

James McKissock, overseer in the Dry or Lower Commissariat Store, took the oath before Magistrate Minchin on "26 May 1820".<sup>15</sup> He declared that "two months ago William Price a carpenter from the

lumber yard came to the store to do some repairs. After he had been there a week McKissock saw Price take a bag out of the store. McIntosh, the storekeeper, instructed McKissock to pass Price out of the store with the bag. A few days later McIntosh gave McKissock the keys of the Dry Store and told him to let Price in to take a plane "such as he may want". McKissock accompanied Price who selected a plane and took it away. McIntosh then told McKissock there was a cask to go to McIntosh's house and to let Evans, the watchman, pass Price out with the cask. There is a major discrepancy here with Price's evidence. Perhaps McKissock was attempting to disassociate himself from McIntosh's and Price's actions.

McIntosh is then said, by McKissock, to have instructed him to go to the Dry Store and to give a soap box with a frying pan to a man called Long Tom to take to McIntosh's house. Some time after this McKissock saw Long Tom and one or two other men taking a cot to pieces in the Dry Store. The frame was then taken away, under McIntosh's instructions, but the other parts were left to be removed at a further opportunity. "I know it is gone away entirely," McKissock further claimed, "I have one or twice seen Price bring cedar boards from the Bread room, where he was at work, and take them from the stores" and that he and Watchman Evans had discussed this irregularity. McKissock told Evans he was not empowered to pass out the cedar and that he supposed they were for McIntosh.

McKissock's concluding evidence concerned the cedar pembroke table Chief Constable Redman had recovered from McIntosh's house. The overseer of the Dry Store recalled "I observed, one day, that Mr Casey had got a new table, and asked what became of the old one, he Casey, answered "I have got a new one, I do not know what became of the old one". McKissock further claimed McIn-

tosh had his own corn in the store. Mr Casey's new table was the table made by Price and placed in substitution for the cedar pembroke table found in McIntosh's possession. The table stolen from the store was of a quality to cause comment by Chief Constable Redman, himself a cabinetmaker. It is of interest that a quality colonial made piece of furniture was in use in the Commissariat Store by a convict clerk. McIntosh's scheme to possess this table also reflects the quality and general appreciation of formal locally made furniture.

John Redman gave supplementary evidence on 27 May.<sup>16</sup> He stated that on the morning of the 26th he, with a Constable, went to Robert McIntosh's house and found a cot different from the cot he had seen on the 23rd. McIntosh said he had borrowed this cot from the store. Redman examined the cot and "found it was King's Canvas and marked with the broad arrow – I seized it". The evidence established to this juncture must have been referred to higher authority. The Magistrate next took evidence from the officer in command of the Commissariat Store. This evidence was needed to formally establish unlawful actions on the part of the storekeeper McIntosh.

On 30 May 1820 before Magistrate Minchin, William Cordeaux Esq, Deputy Assistant Commissary-General "made oath that the Carpenter's tools sent out to this Colony and deposited in His Majesty's Stores, previous to issue, have been hitherto in charge of Robert McIntosh, storekeeper, under his employ and that Robert McIntosh had no permission to remove, on any pretence, from His Majesty's Store one pembroke table, one cot, one frying pan which the respondent (Cordeaux) understands have been found in McIntosh's house."<sup>17</sup> It was thereby established that McIntosh had acted illegally.

Police Superintendent Minchin considered the evidence recorded and on 30 May 1820, wrote to

Governor Macquarie.<sup>19</sup> He informed Macquarie of the Depositions he had taken concerning depredation and frauds in the Commissariat Store. He summed up his conclusion and commented on storekeeper McIntosh's actions. "In the affair of McIntosh, Your Excellency will perceive that this man like Harvey holds a very responsible situation, and like him has equally violated the confidence reposed in him." He then discussed the contradictions in the evidence presented and informed Macquarie, "I have sent him and the parties concerned in the forgeries before alluded to in this letter to the Criminal Court and with that Tribunal their fate now rests."

Upon receiving Minchin's letter and depositions Macquarie wrote to Commissioner Bigge enclosing a copy of Minchin's letter and transcripts of the depositions.<sup>19</sup> In the *Sydney Gazette* of Saturday 24 June 1820 brief mention is made of Robert McIntosh's "fate". "Robert McIntosh, in the Criminal Court Sydney, was found guilty of theft from the Kings Store and sentenced to four years transportation to Newcastle." The fate of William Price, James McKissock and Charles Mines is unknown. The neat pembroke table was returned to the Commissariat Store. If you know of a round cedar table "almost finished" it may be provenanced to 1820. McIntosh was too blatant, Price too enterprising but neither were unique. Many a piece of fine colonial furniture may have had similar clandestine origins.

#### Notes

1. For a synopsis of the Macquarie era see Broadbent, J. Hughes, J. ed. *The Age of Macquarie*. Melbourne University Press. 1992
2. See for Macquarie to Major Druitt. 21/1/22 O.A. N.S.W. 4/1755, p.161.
3. *Sydney Gazette*. Mar 11 1820.
4. W. Minchin. Superintendent of Police. Police Office Sydney 30/5/20 to L. Macquarie. Mitchell Library. BT Box 22, p.4256. Note: These transcripts are copies of transcripts in the colonial Office London. They can be



586

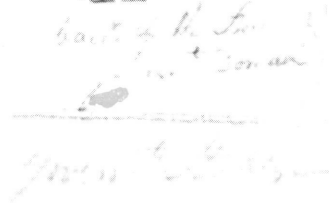
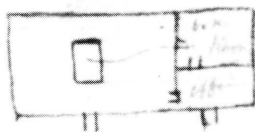
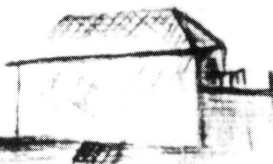
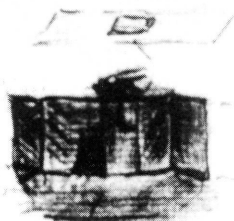


Plate 1. A sketch believed to be the Commissariat Store, Sydney 1820 (Colonial Office).

found in PRO. Reel.116. For convenience, references are given to BT Box numbers only. The documents have been searched back to the Colonial Office transcripts. It should be realised that Bonwick's transcripts contain errors and omissions and do not follow the original file arrangement.

5. Minchin to Macquarie 30/5/20. BT Box 22, pp.4256-91 Memorandum. Minchin to Macquarie. BT Box 22, pp.4206-7.
6. Macquarie to J.T. Bigge 9/6/20. BT Box 22, p.4232.
7. Statement. Charles Mines before William Minchin JP. 19/5/20. BT Box 22, pp.4233-7.
8. Statement. William Price before William Minchin JP undated. BT Box 22, pp.4282-8. The Bonwick transcript is dated 24/5/20 but the Colonial Office original is undated.
9. Statement. Thomas Colebrook, Constable, before William Minchin JP. 25/5/20. BT Box 22, p.4279.
10. Statement. Richard Dalton, Constable, before William Minchin JP. 24/5/20. BT Box 22, p.4281.
11. Statement. John Redman. Chief Constable, before William Minchin JP. 24/5/20. BT Box 22, p.4289.
12. Statement. Richard Dalton, Constable, before William Minchin JP. 26/5/20. BT Box 22, p.4242-3.
13. Statement. Israel Chapman, before William Minchin JP. 26/5/20. BT Box 22, p.4244. Bonwick's copy is "Israel", the Colonial Office original is "Isiah".
14. Statement. Joseph Evans, before William Minchin JP. 25/5/20. BT Box 22, p.4290.
15. Statement. James McKissock, before William Minchin JP. 26/5/20. BT Box 22, p.4238-40.
16. Statement. John Redman, Chief Constable, before William Minchin JP. 27/5/20. BT Box 22, p.4241.
17. Statement. William Cordeaux Esquire, Deputy Assistant Commissary-General, before William Minchin JP. 30/5/20. BT Box 22, p.4245.
18. Minchin to Macquarie 30/5/20. BT Box 22, p.4256.
19. Macquarie to Bigge 9/6/20. BT Box 22, p.4232.

---

# English and The Australian Eastern Colonies' Involvement in Jewellery and Silversmithing in Western Australia

---

Dorothy Erickson

Because Western Australia was a protectionist colony obtaining most of its revenue from import duties on luxury goods, a number of English and Victorian firms found it prudent to set up manufacturing businesses in Perth and Fremantle in the late 1890s.

One of these was the London and Melbourne firm of Rosenthal Aronson. It had been represented in Western Australia until 1875 by Eugenio Vanzetti, a budding mining magnate, and it may have been he who registered the design "W.A.10" on its behalf on 12 March 1896. This is an ugly little mining brooch, with a large crossed crowbar and sledgehammer surmounted by a small crossed pick and spade. It has the one sided geologists' pick typical of the company men, who by this time had joined the prospectors and fossickers on the fields. A finished piece is more attractive, the goldsmith had modified the element in the making (Plate 1). Two others using

the same elements plus a pan and bucket are known. These have "KALGOORLIE" and "BOULDER" pierced in sans serif letters above the inelegant compositions.<sup>1</sup> They are stamped with the marks used by this firm, a flag, "9", and gerbes (wheat sheaf), followed by a number and letter combination. The gerbes and "9" together have been taken to indicate a piece made in Melbourne but it is possible that these marks were still used in Western Australia when the company set up manufacturing premises in 1896-7 under the management of J. Lazarus.

More typical of the Rosenthal Aronson work is a bracelet in the collection of the WA Museum.<sup>2</sup>

This is the "Ladies Bracelet" presented, according to the donor, at the first Katanning race meeting which took place in 1892. It is of light construction with components pressed out in sections between steel dies. This sort of work, made partially by machinery, was

typical of the manufacturers as distinct from the manufacturing jewellers.

The large firms employed designers but also purchased designs from freelance designers or made under licence. Maude Wordsworth James registered a series of designs in Kalgoorlie in May 1907. These included: "COO-EE" combined in various ways with boomerangs, the Southern Cross, a map of Australia, a kangaroo, a swan or kookaburra. The cleverest of a rather pedestrian set of distinctly nationalistic designs was the pearl-set snake "The Northcote", looped to read Coo-ee. The work was made up by the Melbourne firm Johnson and Simonsen (c.1895-1914) and exhibited in Perth in 1907 (Plates 2 to 3). The exhibition was reported in *The Australian Manufacturing Jewellers' Watchmakers' and Opticians' Gazette*, February 1908.

*One of the most interesting exhibits in the art section of the exhibition, being held in the Exhibition Building East Perth is a case of "Coo-ee" jewellery. The idea is a very novel one ... The collection shown at the Exhibition includes brooches, lace pins, rings, bangles, sleeve links, and trinkets. In most of the brooch designs the boomerang is conspicuous, embellished in many instances by the addition of tiny jewelled kangaroos or laughing jackasses. Other brooches noticed take the form of a snake, composed of Broome pearls, with eyes of tourmaline, a boomerang of tourmaline and pearls, and the Southern Cross, the word "Coo-ee" appearing in the stars. There are also plain gold*

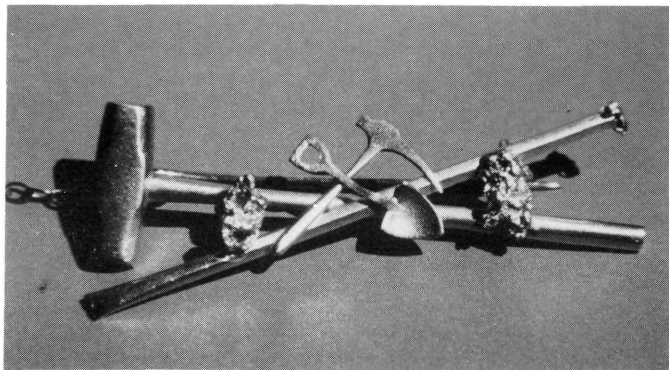


Plate 1. Rosenthal Aronson: Mining brooch, c.1896, 15ct, WA Reg No. 10, Erickson collection, Perth.

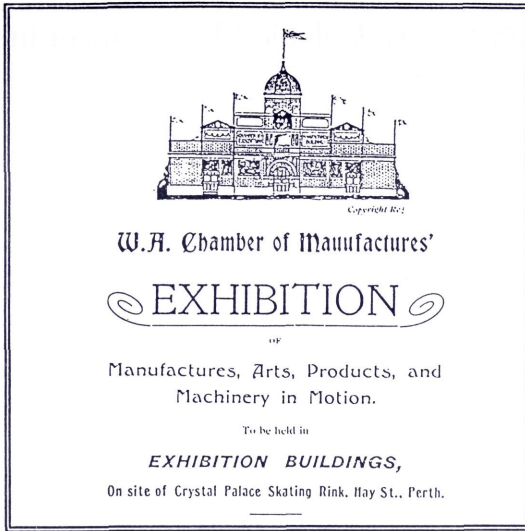


Plate 2. The WA Chamber of Manufacturer's Exhibition Buildings, Hay Street, Perth. (Illustrated in The WA Society of Arts' catalogue, 1906.)

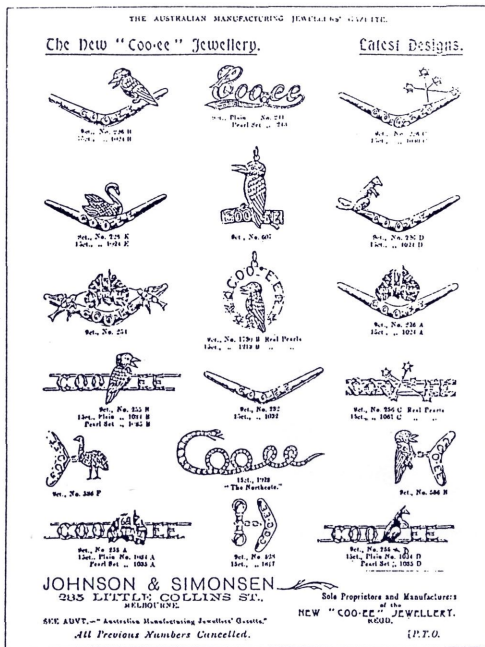


Plate 3. Maude Wordsworth James: Designs made up by Johnson and Simonsen of Melbourne, exhibited in Perth in 1907. (Australian Manufacturing Jewellers Watchmakers and Optician's Gazette, February 1908.)

bar brooches, bearing the word "Coo-ee" in relief, and the same word set in pearls, all attractive specimens of the designer's art.

Little is known of the designer James or her training. She was the wife of the Kalgoorlie surveyor and city engineer, Charles Wordsworth James. When the foundation stone of the new Kalgoorlie Town Hall was laid, one of her "Coo-ee" pieces was placed with other objects in a casket embedded in the stone (*Kalgoorlie Miner*, 7 November 1907, p2).

The designs were made at a time when there was a growing sense of nationality in the eastern seaboard and probably also on the goldfields, heavily populated by "T'othersiders". In October, an editorial in the jewellers' trade journal advised that Australian manufacturing jewellers should always strive to maintain Australian characteristics in their designs. These it determined, were the local flora and fauna which the writer considered better suited to representation than those of other countries. He went on with a caution against mining brooches which by now must have been passé.

*The pick and shovel are not so nice for designs as wattle blossom, the staghorn or maidenhair fern, or the sheep hung up by a band round its girth so as to represent the Golden Fleece, but they serve to signify that much of our wealth has been got out of the earth.*

In 1907 when the tariff barrier was removed, the Melbourne firms had no need to continue the smaller factories in Western Australia. The local subsidiaries became wholesale houses. The date of the changeover for Rosenthal Aronson was before 1910 when the manager, E.S. Lazarus, set up the WA Warehouse company and proceeded to manufacture.

Lazarus (Plate 4) probably purchased the surplus machinery and employed the men to make work similar to that made previously.

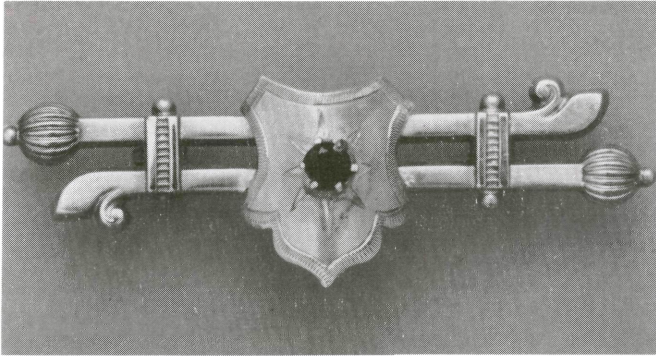


Plate 4. E.S. Lazarus att.: brooch, 9ct and garnet, c.1911, private collection, Perth.

Two brooches illustrate this point. One has the full hallmarks of Aronson (which by now the firm had become in Melbourne) Flag, "9", gerbes. The other has a set which read "L,9", a swan, "B". Both are cheap pressed-gold objects aimed for the lower end of the market and the men who were used to tooling up for the first could simply make slight alterations to the designs and re-tool for the new clusters of plain and fluted balls and rings (Plate 5). in Fremantle were increased during the America's Cup Regatta.

customer. Other pieces presumed to be early Lazarus work are of a better quality. They are marked "L,9", a swan, "D" and "L,9ct", a swan, "F". The first piece is a delicate amethyst and seed pearl necklace made about 1907 and the second a fob medallion. Both of good craftsmanship and typical of the period.

In 1911 Lazarus applied to have a black swan as a registration mark. This was already in use by a number of other makers beside himself and he abandoned the idea when it seemed impossible to attain. The

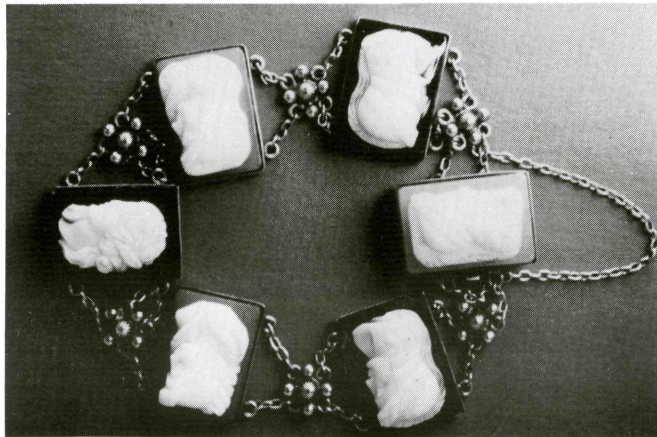


Plate 5. Lazarus: Bracelet of hard stone cameos (onyx and sardonyx), 1911-1926, 9ct gold, private collection, Perth.

following year he applied for a fish mark. This is a rather shaggy shark-like fish and is seen on a number of cameos. The mark was withdrawn in 1926, by which time he had probably ceased business and may have left the State.

He had been prominent in Jewish affairs early in the twentieth century having been president of the Perth Hebrew Congregation in 1901-2 and 1909-10. The tightly-knit contacts of this group would have assisted his business. He was also active in public service, being awarded an OBE for his fund-raising activities for the war effort. He was the maker of a most attractive hard-stone cameo bracelet: six rectangular onyx and sardonyx cameos are set in plain rims, alternating with attractive links made with clusters of plain and fluted balls and rings (Plate 5).

A similar story unfolds for the large Melbourne firm of A. Macrow and Son Pty Ltd. It was expanding with branches in Hobart, Adelaide and Melbourne when it decided to open in Perth about 1900. Joseph Dunkerton (c.1882-1963), trained in the Adelaide branch, was sent to head up the manufacturing department of the firm. When this closed in 1907 he purchased the machinery and set up Dunkertons at 60-62 High Street, Fremantle.

In 1907 Macrow registered the design of the heraldic animals brooch made by Alfred Jackson (*Australiana*, vol 11, no 1, February 1990), Australia's coat-of-arms was to be granted in 1908 and interest was high in heraldic animal jewellery. Jackson's connection with Macrow is not documented.

Dunkertons became a firm which traded for sixty-five years in Fremantle. Although starting in a small way in High Street, Dunkerton moved to Market Street in 1912. Here he had a staff of ten workmen making jewels, by hand, Dunkerton purchased some die-stamping machinery in the late 1920s and from then on parts of









Plate 6b. Stewart Dawson, necklace.

rate cartouche. Appropriately the piece comes apart for packing. The railing, horse and silver-capped crystal inkwells could be re-assembled in Western Australia with a minimum of trouble.

Silversmithing did not develop in Western Australia to match goldsmithing. This was probably due to the traditional lack of support available in the community. Silversmithing has need of facilities such as trained polishers, spinners, engravers, casters and before the introduction of flattening mills, flattening (beaters). Without the incentive of local material as had occurred in the 1870s in South Australia with silver from Broken Hill, it was easier to import rather than develop facilities. In Perth, Stewart Dawson's, with its international trade and large factories, was well placed to service most requirements. The local premises were on the corner of Hay and Barrack Streets opposite the Town Hall. David Stewart Dawson died in 1932 and by 1935 the Sydney branch had apparently closed. The firm continued in Perth but the ownership is not known. It was managed c.1945 by Harold Harris for six months after being purchased by the Stafford family

who owned it until 1961 when the landmark Hay Street store closed. The name was purchased by Meldrums who opened a Stewart Dawson's eighteen months later in what had been Zeider's shop in Gledden Arcade. In 1965 the firm was amalgamated with Meldrums.

### CONCLUSION

By the First World War, many of the goldsmiths who came for the rushes had departed. Of those who remained, a number scaled down their enterprises for the duration while quite a number went off to the war itself. A few firms enlarged and expanded, some changed hands. Despite the problems and depression caused by the loss of able-bodied men to the war, the picture of trade jewellery in Western Australia in 1921, as seen by an east coast jeweller, was apparently quite reasonable. He noted Caris, Levinson and Stewart Dawson's as the big three, mentioning also J.C.

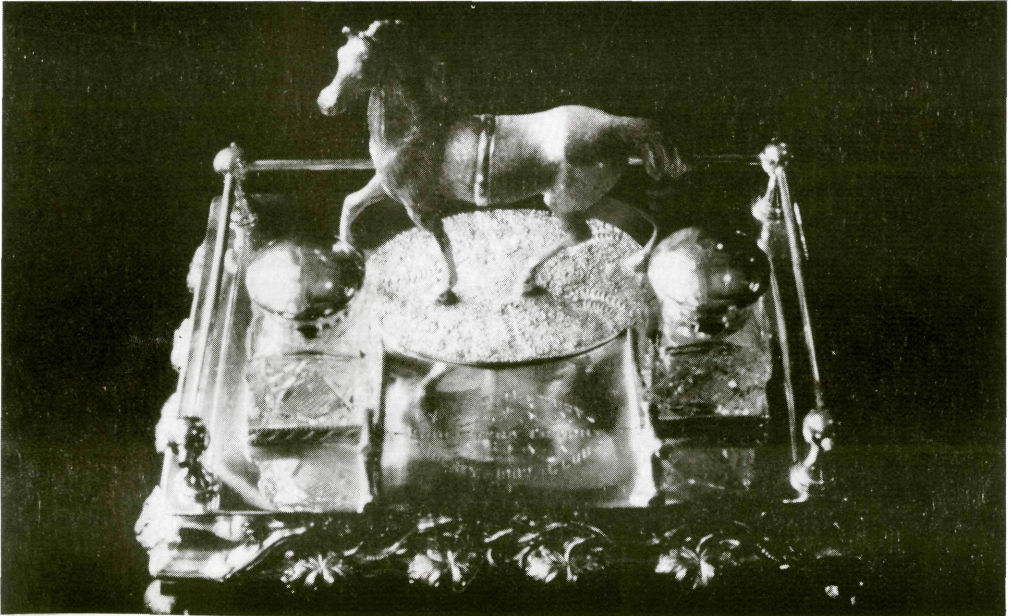


Plate 7. The Yalgoo Squatters' Jockey Club Trophy, 1902, electroplated Britannia metal, marked "SD & CO", "EPBM", private collection, Perth.

Taylor, Addis and Mazzucchellis as retailers. The larger wholesalers were mentioned as Donovan and Overland and Middlewick and Son, a newcomer to the field who later specialised in badges. The Melbourne manufacturers were well represented with three having large establishments. Falk and Co had just built a three-storey building but were commissioning work from local wholesale jewellers like Harris and Son. Of the general scene he wrote:

*The jewellery shops of Perth and Fremantle come also as another surprise to the interested visitor, and well appointed spacious amply stocked business places are numerous in both cities. Certainly there are only a few places in Sydney or in Melbourne that are better ... the public is well provided for in Perth and Fremantle.*

He commented on the hospital-

ity, and the lack of self-conscious seeking of praise for the city environs he found so evident in the east. His next observation was significant:

*The West does not appear to take kindly to either unions or associations, and I was surprised to find even the retail Jewellers' Association ... did not appeal to them as being at all advantageous, and opinions were freely expressed to the effect that they were perfectly competent to manage their own affairs in their own particular way, and were not at all thankful for interference. (AMJWOG March 1921:54).*

Western Australia had absorbed an enormous growth in population during 1895-1905 and yet the migrants had obviously absorbed local attitudes and more, continuing the traditional isolationist attitude and distancing from the eastern sea-

board which would continue until the 1960s' mineral boom. J.C. Taylor, a firm which started at this period and continues in a modified form today, is the subject of a further article together with Harris and Son which owned it for a period.

#### References

- 1 Two other similar pieces are known from photographs. One is associated with Victor Streich and the Mt Lyell company in Tasmania. This piece was the name "Mt Lyell" stamped into the head of the sledgehammer.
- 2 The piece has been damaged and repaired and no maker's mark is evident but it is identical to one illustrated in Kenneth Cavill's article on the Aronson firm ("The Jewellery of Aronson and Company: Melbourne." *Australiana* vol 12, no 3, Aug 1990:79).
- 3 Although supposedly from Donovan and Overland the family give the purchase date of this machinery as 1926, the closing year for Lazarus, and there may have been additional equipment from that firm too.

---

## Letter to the Editor

---

Dear Editor,

Fellow members of The Australiana Society may be interested to hear of the formation of an interest group concerned with the preservation of material artefacts and the technology associated with these objects.

This is the recently formed The Trade Tools Group. The organisation was a consequence of an informal meeting of a number of like minded individuals in late 1991. Early last year a working committee was formed and the group began enlisting members. In this short period more than fifty people have joined.

Regular meetings are held and a newsletter is distributed to members. Membership is open to all applicants and the group is proving to be diverse and dynamic. A display was mounted at the recent Working With Wood Show and the response was very encouraging.

Members of The Australiana Society should be aware of this group because of the overlapping interests of the two organisations. The Australiana Society rightly concentrates on the cultural and artistic aspects of our history while The Trade Tools Group is concerned with our technological past.

A moment's reflection will reveal that this technology and the tools and tradesmen who used them, created the objects which members of both interest groups are endeavouring to preserve. Both bodies are in essence complementary.

Among the pioneer members of The Trade Tools Group are individuals with a vast body of knowledge in colonial arts and crafts. Indeed the group has attracted a dynamic handful of experts. More importantly people are emerging from the shadows who have immense practical experience in all

aspects of architecture, engineering and the decorative arts. The Trade Tools Group wishes to see this knowledge recorded and disseminated.

The Australiana Society is proof of the widespread interest in our heritage. The new organisation will encourage its members to share their knowledge and facilitate discussion. No doubt some will wish to publish this material through The Australiana Society.

I am confident that The Trade Tools group will emerge as a complementary association to The Australiana Society. In anticipation of this we would like to include The Australiana Society on the mailing list for our newsletter.

Further information can be obtained by writing to: The President, TTTG, T. Butcher, 56 Pitt Street, Redfern, NSW 2016.

Bob Crosbie



**INDUSTRIES PTY LTD**  
4 HILL STREET  
DARLINGHURST 2010

Tel: (02) 361 9999

Fax: (02) 332 1294

Australia's leading  
manufacturer of  
Electrical Accessories

*Available throughout Australia  
at all major hardware  
and lighting stores*



**australian  
building  
adhesives**

1-5 Mary Parade, Rydalmere 2116

Tel: (02) 638 5244

Fax: (02) 638 6427

*Manufacturers of adhesives for the  
building industry of Australia with  
distribution in all states, through  
specialist stores trained in the use  
of ABA products and backed by  
ABA technical advisory service.*



33 FLOOD STREET, LEICHHARDT 2040

Phone: (02) 560 6022

Fax: (02) 569 7246

*Distributors of Australian  
ceramic wall and floor  
tiles, adhesives and  
accessories to merchants  
throughout Sydney and  
New South Wales.*

**WORLD-WIDE IMPORTERS OF CERAMIC TILES**  
from MAJOR overseas manufacturers

## AUSTRALIAN JEWELLERS GOLD & SILVERSMITHS MAKERS & MARKS

K. CAVILL G. COCKS J. GRACE

A thoroughly researched, authoritative

reference book of 336 pages, featuring:

- over 1000 impressive pieces of jewellery, with superb colour photographs from private and public collections
- comprehensive biographies of over 200 Australian jewellers that are fully referenced and cross indexed
- more than 500 marks which are photographed or illustrated
- a listing of over 750 jewellers from the 1820s to the 1950s

Limited First Edition

PRICE \$225.00 (postage plus \$20)

Available for inspection and purchase  
from

**Elizabeth Antiques**  
THE GROSVENOR ANTIQUE CENTRE

216 Pacific Highway Lindfield NSW 2070

Phone (02) 416 1779

OPEN 7 DAYS • 10am to 5.30pm





## J. B. HAWKINS ANTIQUES

**TELEPHONES:**

**HOUSE**      048 68 2726  
**OFFICE**     048 69 1190  
**FAX**        048 68 3212

**WHITLEY**  
**OLDBURY ROAD**  
**MOSS VALE 2577**  
**NEW SOUTH WALES**  
**AUSTRALIA**



*I collect Australian TREEN and will pay high prices for any important 20th Century Mulga Wood objects.*