

THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



1980/4

November 1980



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The Australiana Society
P.O. Box A 378
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Editorial

MUSEUMS AND THE COLLECTOR

"The editor cannot help concluding with a wish that the nobility and gentry would condescend to make their cabinets and collections accessible to the curious as is consistent with their safety."

Thomas Martyn, 1766.

Two hundred years after these words were written, economic pressures compelled the British aristocracy to open the doors of the great houses to the curious public. Today in Australia, while private collections are frequently available to the public through National Trust open days, exhibitions in public museums, or other means, the public collections of museums are all too rarely accessible.

Museums draw too hard a line between those things which the public may see - the things on display - and those things the public may not see - the things in "storage".

Of course there are some objects, such as sacred Aboriginal religious items, gold coins, and fragile glass antiquities which, for one reason or another, cannot be available to everyone. But museums generally put too low a priority on making their cabinets and collections accessible.

In many cases, the public is not admitted at all to the so-called storage areas. Yet these areas are where the bulk of the reference collections and raw materials for research are kept. It is rare to find a museum which will, as an alternative, bring the objects to the public for inspection under supervision.

In the battle for visitor numbers, the serious student and the serious collector is being forgotten. Yet his research may well benefit the institution and the progress of knowledge, and his interest may well result in tangible expressions of support through gifts to the collection.

In the expanding museum scene, this is a small point that administrators could well overlook in their concern for security of the collections and desire for simple, efficient administration. But the public has a fundamental right of access, within reason, to the public collections. Museum administrators and curators should allow for this in their planning and staffing.

Museums are institutions which preserve, display, educate and research. They are right to provide displays which will satisfy most of the public, and to provide formal educational programmes for the school children who make up a large component of the visitor numbers. But they should not make the collections accessible only to their staff, at the expense of the scholar and collector. It is, after all, the amateur scholar and the private collector who pioneered the preservation, collecting and research in the field of Australiana.

Society Information

NEXT MEETING

"NEW SOUTH WALES SILVER" will be the subject of the next meeting of the Society, on Thursday, 4th December 1980 at 7.30 pm in the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli.

Noted silver collector John Houstone will give an illustrated talk on the subject. Members are welcome to bring along pieces or photographs for discussion.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership subscriptions are due on 1st January each year. Current rates are:

Individual membership	\$10
Household membership	\$15
Institutional membership	\$20

All correspondence regarding membership should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Box A378, Sydney South, NSW, 2000.

COMMITTEE 1980-81

President	<i>Don Tomsett</i>
Vice-Presidents	<i>Kevin Fahy</i> <i>Robert Hutchison</i>
Hon. Secretary	<i>Maisie Stapleton</i>
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NEWSLETTER

The Australiana Society Newsletter is published four times a year in January, April, July, and October. Newsletter contributions are welcome at any time and should be sent to:

John Wade
Editor, Australiana Society Newsletter
46 Queens Park Road
Bondi Junction NSW 2022

Telephone: (02) 389 9915 (a.h.)

Contributions should preferably be typed, double spaced, on A4 paper, but all contributions will be considered no matter how presented. Line drawings in black ink on white paper or card, and glossy black and white prints may be included. A short biographical note on the author should accompany each article submitted for publication.

Australiana News

A WALK AROUND THE CROSS

Maisie Stapleton and Jenny Stackhouse have produced a six-page leaflet, "A Walk Around The Cross", to accompany the current exhibition at Elizabeth Bay House - "The Villas of Woolloomooloo Hill". Over forty historic and other sites of interest in Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay are shown on the map and described in a paragraph of the text. The walk can be done in a couple of hours and is recommended. Pick up your leaflet first at Elizabeth Bay House.

And on the subject of places to see, should you happen to be in North Queensland, the Far North Queensland Museums Association has published an excellent little booklet, *Heritage Trail of Far North Queensland*.

HYDE PARK BARRACKS

The Heritage Council of N.S.W., has acted to preserve the historic character of the Hyde Park Barracks and the Mint Building, (see the article by James Broadbent in the previous issue). Recommendations were made against the intrusion of a lift and air conditioning into the third floor of the Barracks.

It is worth noting that in the Sydney press of 30th January, 1937, the demolition of the Barracks was being opposed by those who wanted to see it turned into a museum

ENGINEERING HERITAGE

Outside the scope of collectors, the engineering heritage of Australia - bridges, wharves, locomotives, and so on - has found a new champion in the Heritage Committee of the Institution of Engineers. The Institution's first Historical Engineering Relics Committee was formed in South Australia in 1974. The Sydney Division held a meeting on September 11th, addressed by Colin Crisp on the wharf at Tathra, David Earle on the Queen Victoria Building, and Don Fraser on the Long Cove Creek Bridges. The Committee aims to record and assess remains and is appealing for information on structures to be included in a Register of Engineering Heritage.

Address of the Sydney Division is 118 Alfred Street, (Box 138), Milsons Point, 2061; the national headquarters is at 11 National Circuit, Barton, A.C.T., 2600.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS OF TASMANIA

Adult Education in Tasmania this summer is running a school from 3rd to 10th January on "The Historic Buildings of the Northern Midlands of Tasmania", based at The Grange, Campbell Town, a Tudor Gothic National Trust building with two or three beds per bedroom. Participants travel by bus each day to a large number and variety of historic buildings and bridges, accompanied by G. Hawley Stancombe, a well-known historian, writer, and interesting personality who provides comments, stories and local history on each trip. Lectures are provided most evenings.

Cost for the week is \$170, including full accommodation, bus hire, lectures, and transport to and from Launceston Airport. For an extra \$60 you can have bed and breakfast at a nearby hotel instead.

Applications should be sent as soon as possible to Midlands Adult Education, Council Chambers, Campbell Town, Tasmania, 7210. Telephone: (003) 81 1283

VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN WALLPAPERS

An exhibition of Victorian and Edwardian Wallpapers is being shown at the Hawthorn City Art Gallery, 584 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, Melbourne, from 24th September to 15th October, 1980.

Suzie Forge, who is a member of the Hawthorn Arts Council, has organised the exhibition and obtained financial assistance from the Hawthorn City Council.

Many of the exhibits have been lent by Phyllis Murphy who has an extensive collection of wallpapers from mid-Victorian to Art Deco periods. Most of this collection came from Kyneton, a town eighty-four kilometres north-west of Melbourne. They are the unused offcuts and remnants of a painting and decorating firm which operated continuously from 1859 to the 1960s, providing a comprehensive illustration of dados, friezes, borders, ceiling centres and fillings.

It is hoped that it will be possible to arrange an exhibition of wallpapers in Sydney early in 1981.

AUSTRALIANA INTERIORS

Suzie Forge who, with Phyllis Murphy, is putting together the wallpaper exhibition, is also preparing a book to be published next year on *Australian interiors*. Another book on Australian interiors is the subject of research by Terry Lane and Jessie Serle. So if you are planning to restore the inside of your house, or if you are creating sets for television series, wait with bated breath until both of these books appear.

TRIVIA

Short notes on Australian craftsmen, like the following, are welcome additions to the Newsletter. Everyone must have jottings that are useful to record, and which one day might be developed into something more substantial.

At the Hastings Historical Museum in Port Macquarie, there is a rectangular tray which the label says was made at Cockatoo Dockyard from timber retrieved from *H.M.A.S. Sydney* by Frank Cuneo in 1927. It is decorated in pokerwork with a waratah and lozenge pattern.

In the same museum, there is a brown glazed oval bread plate with the lettering "Give us this day our daily bread". The label, obviously recording data provided by the donor, Mr. H. W. Chapman of Lane Cove, states that it is "one of two plates made from clay at the first bake at Gore Hill about 1860, once in the possession of Richard Green (champion sculler and father of Australian rowing)" who was the donor's grandfather. While the story sounds unlikely, perhaps someone might one day check it out.

A daguerrotype identified as the diarist Annabella Boswell is another interesting exhibit in this museum, one of the best in the State.

ANTIQUE AND ART DIGEST

Victoria has a new antiques magazine, *Antique and Art Digest*, whose first issue appeared in winter 1980. The cover is in colour - it shows the same photograph of "The Cloud" by C. Douglas Richardson as appears in the *Art Nouveau in Australia* exhibition catalogue - and the rest of the magazine is in black and white. Indeed, the picture on the top of page 29 is in negative! The first issue has articles on the eastern influence on Victorian English ceramics, Como, the Bretby Pottery, and Caucasian Soumak rugs. So far as we can see, there is nothing original in any of these. It is intended to publish the magazine twice yearly.

W. H. GOCHER, ARTIST

Your Editor, whose friends admit he has good taste in picture frames, recently acquired a painting of "The Entrance to Milford Sound", (N.Z.), signed by W. H. Gocher. His Milford Sound is not in the same class as von Guerard's, but Gocher is not entirely unknown. He is listed in Sands Directories as an artist, and he wrote a quaint book, published about 1898, entitled *Australia, the Light of the World* which is not, regrettably, as interesting as the title suggests. Any further information on Mr. Gocher (other than that available from the catalogue cards in Mitchell Library) would be appreciated.

NSW HERITAGE WEEK

The State of N.S.W. is holding its first Heritage Week, from 23-29 March 1981, to encourage people to examine their cultural heritage. A planning committee consisting of representatives from the three sponsors has been formed and it will be co-ordinating and promoting a wide range of activities.

Heritage Week presents an opportunity for every citizen to reflect on the community's origins, to discover some things about the environment in which he lives and the places of natural and man-made beauty he wishes to preserve for future generations.

It is hoped that regions with special historic links will mount displays, exhibitions and special functions to stimulate community interest. Heritage Week gives you a unique opportunity to reach the people of your local area, to gain support for your organisation, and to encourage future community involvement in your projects.

Details of Heritage Week are now being formulated. The committee anticipates that activities will include such things as historical re-enactments, house inspections, street fairs, shop window displays, costume balls, bus tours to historic landmarks, walking tours, working bees to clean up local cemeteries or historic sites, competitions, seminars, films, lectures, and other appropriate functions. Some events are already well into the planning stages, for example an Heritage Week Race Meeting, a special exhibition at Elizabeth Bay House, and the publication by the Historic Houses Trust of a brochure describing Heritage Walks.

A Heritage Week poster is being planned, and the formulation of programmes of activities, to enable the public to gain as much as possible from Heritage Week activities, is expected.

Heritage Week will be a success with the help of your organisation. Your commitment to the Week is essential if it is to be entertaining and informative

for the people of N.S.W. The planning committee will be looking forward to hearing of your plans for activities during the week - your ideas and suggestions will all be welcomed.

The sponsors of Heritage Week 1981 are The National Trust of Australia (NSW), The Heritage Council of New South Wales, and The Royal Australian Historical Society. The Executive Officer for Heritage Week, Mrs. Celia Wade, will be available to give suggestions and information when you need it, and any other help you may require. She can be contacted at The National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney, 2000, telephone (02) 27 5374.

Victoria will be running its second Heritage Week concurrently.

HERITAGE PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTEST

The *Sydney Morning Herald* and the National Trust of Australia (NSW) have combined to run a contest marking the sesquicentenary of the newspaper.

Photographers can submit photographic prints as entries in five categories - Landscape Heritage, Natural Heritage other than Landscape, Architectural Heritage (Sydney Metropolitan), Architectural Heritage (regional NSW and the ACT), and Heritage Restoration.

Entries must be submitted by 13th February 1981. All entries become the property of the National Trust, and from the best, an exhibition will be mounted at the Trust's S. H. Ervin Museum.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, SYDNEY

The NSW Government Architect is currently researching the nineteenth century interiors of Government House, Sydney. It is hoped that this research will lead to the re-creation of 19th century decorative schemes in the Vice-Regal residence, which was designed by Edward Blore in London and built, under the supervision of Mortimer Lewis, between 1837 and 1845.

Research to date has concentrated on the collection of contemporary photographs, sketches, and references in public archives, which do not yet give a complete picture of the evolution of the interiors.

Don Ellsmore of the Historic Buildings Group is carrying out this research and would be glad to know of any illustrations which might assist the project. Correspondence should be sent to the Secretary, Department of Public Works, T.24, State Office Block, Sydney, 2000, and marked to his attention.



ERRATUM

Readers more meticulous than the Editor will already have picked up the mistake which crept into Michel Reymond's article "Light - an Early View of Adelaide" which appeared in the May, 1980 issue. On page 12, 10th line from foot of page, delete "(plate 3, inside front cover)". On p.14, second last line, after "wood engraving" insert "(plate 3, inside front cover)".

Australiana Exhibitions

THE VILLAS OF WOOLLOOMOOLOO HILL

Elizabeth Bay House, 7 Onslow Avenue, Elizabeth Bay, NSW.

In the 1830s, Darlinghurst Road led to the most splendid mansions in the Colony, the homes of Sydney's leading citizens. Woolloomooloo Hill was renowned for its elegant villas, lavishly furnished, with their well-tended gardens now long since replaced by rumbling traffic and closely packed flats.

With paintings and old photographs, the exhibition at Elizabeth Bay House recaptures this lost past. It traces the history of the area from its gracious beginnings and rich past, to the high rise development of today.

Exhibition closes 26th October, 1980.

TREASURED POSSESSIONS

At Sydney's Lower Town Hall, the St John Ambulance Brigade is mounting an exhibition of antique treasures open to the public from 14th to 19th October. The "Bulletin" collection of silver will be one of the highlights.

WOODCRAFT 80

Sydney's OTC Gallery in Martin Place will be the venue for "Woodcraft 80", from 10th to 23rd November. This is the third annual exhibition of the Woodworker Group of New South Wales and features handmade furniture and woodware made mainly from local timbers. Society member Mike Darlow is among those exhibiting.

BRIDGING THE PAST

The National Trust of Australia (NSW) and the Department of Main Roads have combined to mount an exhibition of bridges at the S. H. Ervin Museum, Observatory Hill, Sydney, which opened on 1st October. The exhibition is a blend of oil paintings, water colours, etchings, photographs, plans, and scale models. It presents a visual record of bridges in NSW over nearly two hundred years.

AN EXHIBITION OF THE LINDSAY FAMILY

Josef Lebovic has put together another special sale exhibition, this time of works by Norman, Daryl, Ruby, Raymond, and Percy Lindsay. It will be on show at his gallery at 390 Glenmore Road, Paddington from 11th to 31st October. The catalogue costs two dollars.

WILLIAM HARDY WILSON (1881-1955) - A 20TH CENTURY COLONIAL

At the S. H. Ervin Museum and Art Gallery, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney. From January 7th to March 1st, 1981.

A major exhibition being arranged by the National Trust will throw the spotlight on a man who helped change the course of Australian architecture in the 20th Century: William Hardy Wilson, one of the earliest and most influential proponents of Colonial Revival architecture.

In the 1980s he is best remembered as the artist whose superb collection of drawings of early 19th Century buildings was published in 1924 under the title *Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania*. He was also a notable graphic designer, a designer of furniture and gardens, and a writer.

In most of his work Hardy Wilson looked back lovingly for inspiration to Australia's Colonial past, he introduced his architectural ideas in houses like Erydene, Purulia, and Macquarie Cottage - all on Sydney's north shore - in the 1910s.

The simplicity of his designs, which he derived from Georgian architecture, at first provoked strong objection from residents seeking to establish a grand image on the hills of the developing North Shore. He represented the final break with the ornate traditions of the Victorian and Edwardian periods, and the style he sought to introduce proved so popular that it is still followed today, more than sixty years later.

The distinguishing features of a Colonial Revival cottage include the big hipped roof; a verandah, usually facing north, which links the house and the garden; a symmetrical front facade with a central elaborate front door and fanlight facing straight down the garden path to the front gate.

These houses are typically long and low with strong horizontal lines; they are proportioned so that people relate comfortably to their scale.

Hardy Wilson travelled widely, acquiring a taste for Oriental culture and design. He was increasingly obsessed with the concept of a fusion of eastern and western architecture in Australia.

In 1927, at the age of 46, he retired from architectural practice, disillusioned with the work offered to him and disillusioned with the direction in which he saw western civilisation heading. He wrote idealistically of a unified world civilisation, and designed 'Oriental Georgian' buildings that failed to attract serious attention.

But his earlier golden vision of Colonial Australia revived has left a lasting impression in architecture and art. What is more, he drew the attention of Australians to the beauty of their Colonial buildings, and helped usher in an era of new respect for Australia's architectural heritage.

This exhibition, which coincides with the 100th anniversary of Hardy Wilson's birth, will include paintings, architectural drawings, prints, photographs, books, furniture and memorabilia from private and public collections throughout Australia and in the United Kingdom. The exhibition will illustrate the many aspects of his extraordinary talent.

At the same time the Trust will publish an extended catalogue containing essays on Hardy Wilson's life and work by such writers as Daniel Thomas, Rachel Roxburgh, James Broadbent, Howard Tanner, Caroline Simpson, and Kevin Fahy.

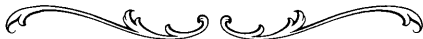
Our Authors

Richard Phillips was born and bred in South Australia. For the past 11 years he has been a meteorological observer with the Bureau of Meteorology, posted to Mt. Gambier for the last five years. His interests run to Australian history and Australiana, with a particular bent for Australian 19th Century silverwork. He has a deep interest in English and colonial silver, including Anglo-Indian and China Trade silver, as well as English and Scottish provincial, which bear a fascinating relationship to our own early works.

Phyllis Murphy is an architect in partnership with her husband John in the Melbourne suburb of North Carlton. They plan soon to move to the country near Kyneton, where she located and acquired most of the wall-papers featuring in this exhibition.

Michel Raymond is a Sydney solicitor who is active in the National Trust of Australia (NSW), as well as the Australiana Society.

Ian Evans is Public Relations Officer with Canterbury Municipal Council in Sydney's western suburbs. He contributed a biography of John Verge to *The Golden Decade of Australian Architecture*. He has written two books, *Restoring Old Houses*, published by Macmillan, and *The Lithgow Pottery*, published in 1980 by Flannel Flower Press.



Wait For It!

Coming soon in the Newsletter -

- * Nelson Illingworth, Potter and Sculptor
- * Wunderlich's Australiana
- * J. C. Rider & F. P. Webb, Early Australian Glass Engravers
- * A Guide to Researching Australiana
- * Conserving Pictures

The Bosleyware Pottery

Richard Phillips

Bosleyware was born of the Depression, and after an existence of about fifteen years expired in 1948, the victim of storm damage, the death of its founder, and the competition of the concrete and plastics industries.

Bosleyware is familiar to many collectors by its characteristic green and creamy yellow glazes, and white, almost chalky body. Also characteristic is the rough finish often found, such as fingermarks in the clay and "dags" of clay beneath the glaze. Most examples seen carry the impressed marks "BOSLEYWARE MITCHAM S. AUS.", or a minor variation of them, less often found is the (probably later) impressed mark "T.G. & A.G. BOSLEY". One piece seen recently has a script "BOSLEY WARE" mark applied by rubber stamp beneath. Unmarked pieces can be difficult to distinguish from similar wares made by Bennett's pottery.

Thomas George Dufty Bosley was born in 1867, his father a Staffordshire potter; even the name Bosley was Midlands vernacular for Burslem, one of the best known of English pottery making towns. When the family came to Australia is unknown, but at the age of nine Thomas joined his father in working at the Carrondown (now Hindmarsh) brick, pipe and pottery yard of William Shearing. This pottery was, a decade or so later as G. & W. Shearing, to proudly advertise its "Prize Medal for drain pipes and pottery", and produced, (apart from bricks and pipes), architectural embellishments, wine bottles, and the ubiquitous storage jars and flower pots.

Thomas was one of eight or nine apprentices, and began his working life weighing up clay and preparing it for throwing. Once his time was served, and following the death of his father, he left for Perth, where he managed a brickyard and remained for twenty years. Returning then to Adelaide he managed the Metropolitan Brick Works at Eden Hills, just south of Adelaide, remaining there until forced out of work by the Depression

Now unemployed, Thomas joined forces with his son Alfred George William Bosley, and bought a small amount of clay from the yard where he had started work over fifty years before. They made some "ornamental bowls and vases for the Unemployed Sales Depot, then recently established to help tradesmen and others thrown out of work by the Depression". Their wares sold well, so well that the two decided to begin commercial production at Abbotshall Road, Lower Mitcham. The date of the founding of the pottery is still uncertain, but it must predate the centenary of the State in 1936, for which they produced a moulded commemorative plaque. There is evidence of the production of a souvenir plaque bearing two heads, so the Royal Jubilee may also have been marked in the like manner.

The clay used for Bosleyware came from the Tea Tree Gully - Modbury area northeast of Adelaide, and was sometimes bought from the Bennett's pottery. The glazes were imported from the Midlands. Firing was carried out in two oil-fired tunnel kilns, which shared the wedge-shaped block of land with the pugmill, throwing and drying sheds. The plaster moulds used were made there, and remain there buried with the shards.

The Heyday of the pottery coincided with a boom in the popularity of potting among the "housewives of the State", some of whom bought their clay from the Bosleys and then returned their efforts to be fired.

Bosleyware was sold by the city firms of Myers, John Martins, and Harris Scarfes, as well as through an outlet at Broken Hill. Among the most popular of the domestic wares were the bread crocks, which were thrown on the wheel, and often decorated with sponge colour over the creamy base. Garden gnomes up to a little over a metre tall, assorted frogs, and toadstools in graduated sizes adorned many local gardens. During the War a Churchill bust was produced, about 20 cm tall, with a green waistcoat over the creamy base, and sporting a tapering wooden cigar complete with red painted tip. There was a veritable aviary of doves on mounds, parrots on stumps, swans, kookaburras, owls, as well as reclining dogs and even a Buddha. Garden urns and jardinières ranged in size to over half a metre high.

One type - illustrated on page 90 of "Australian Pottery", (as an Adelaide; maker unknown) - combined textured and plain surfaces. There the outside of the bowl of a stemmed urn was "combed" vertically, and then the surface applied with a thick slip patted on by fingers or sponge, before glazing and firing. The Bosley family still retains two of these urns, both unmarked, by the pottery.

Grape leaf ashtrays and savoury plates were made by rolling a vine leaf onto the clay, cutting around the edges, and then turning them up. Plates and low comports were made, of similar size and border to the Centenary plaques, but with moulded decoration of leaves and berries on a stippled background. Straight sided tapering jugs were made with extruded handles and incised ring decoration to the upper body. Many of the vases and flower troughs bore freehand incised decoration. The figures were mainly coloured by Alfred's wife and usually show colour runs. Small baskets were made of slab clay, with strap handles, and money boxes of the typical bulbous form on a low foot were thrown, to be completed by a rooster finial.

For the local barber the pottery produced a large bust of a sea captain, peaked cap on head, and with a sash emblazoned "Captain Tobacco" across his chest. This interesting "one off" piece was later stolen. Another unusual piece seen recently along Unley Road was a globular pot about 30 cm high, the body decorated about the shoulder with an entwined band in black outlined in gold, and with black heart shapes above it.

Although by the start of the War about a dozen people were employed at the pottery, the demand for manpower soon reduced the work force. Utilitarian wares, now hard to obtain from overseas, took precedence in production, and so fewer and fewer "fine art work" pieces were made. By the end of the War concrete was replacing more and more pottery in the building trade, while the growing plastics industry soon posed further competition.

In 1948 the Adelaide trade directory first gave a listing to Plastics Manufacturers. On April 11th 1948 fierce storms swept Adelaide, unroofing houses and wrecking the seaside jetties. At Lower Mitcham a pine tree fell onto the pottery, crushing the drying shed and smashing a lot of stock. Thomas Bosley's health was failing, and he did not long survive the wrecking of his pottery. The works were sold to a Mr. Bissett, who carried on the place as "Mitcham Potteries Ltd.", for a number of years making pipes. The venture was not a success, and the property changed hands again, and eventually became - as it is now - a depot and shop for the Saint Vincent de Paul Society.

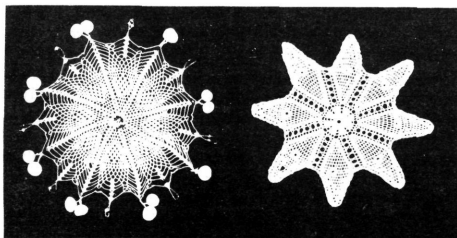
Sources:- conversation with Mr. G. Bosley of Adelaide, grandson of T. G. D. Bosley, 1979.

quotations from:

- : newspaper clipping "Potter works with the Good Earth of South Australia" - paper unknown, Adelaide c.1943.
- : M. Graham, *Australian Pottery at the 19th and early 20th Century*, David Ell Press 1979.
- : Sands & McDougall's *South Australian Directory*, 1930 to 1962.
- : Bureau of Meteorology, Adelaide.

List of Illustrations

- Front Cover: Owl in brown and yellow
Bosley Ware
ht. 20.8 cm
- Back Cover: Mrs. John Verge. A portrait attributed to James Armstrong Wilson, recently acquired by the Mitchell Library. (See article on page 17).
- Inside Front Cover, (Plate 1): Jug - dark green
Bosleyware
ht. 21.5 cm
- Inside Back Cover, (Plate 2): Comport - green
Bosleyware
height: 5 cm
diameter: 21.9 cm
- Inside Back Cover, (Plate 3): South Australia Centenary Plaque - green
Bosleyware
diameter: 22.3 cm



Land Records & Historic Buildings

Michel Reymond

Very often the importance of land records in the dating of historic buildings has been overlooked by researchers, surprisingly, as the history of such records is so often the history of historic buildings.

Primarily, these records are concerned with the ownership of land and dealings with it. The most important are plans concerned with the subdivision of land, especially in the case of city, suburban or town lands where frequent subdivisions have often occurred over a long period. In most cases these plans have survived and often with the building illustrated on the plan. Thus, by compiling a list of the plans and owners of the land and any other relevant dealings, it is possible to build a sound and proper foundation upon which further research can be undertaken.

The attribution of any particular date or period within which a building might have been constructed in the absence of contemporary plans and specifications signed and dated by an architect or builder has in most cases depended primarily upon the evidence to be gleaned from an architectural examination of a building and its fabric. Thus the discovery of an original colour scheme or wallpaper, the materials used in the building's construction and the general design and shape of the building, supplemented by perhaps letter books, old photographs, contemporary descriptions from letters, diaries, newspapers or family legend, to name only a few sources, have all too often been the only material consulted to provide the approximate date when a building was erected.

It is not uncommon, therefore, to find that as a result of such an examination that a building is described simply as say either circa 1840 or in the style of buildings of the 1840s. A good example is "Beggan Beggan", a building stylistically of the 1840s - 1850s. It was in fact built between the years 1863-1865. While in some cases land records may provide little additional information, in most cases they provide valuable and often vital information, mostly first hand and of a contemporary nature. In the case of "Elizabeth Bay House" these records turned up a hitherto unknown room by room inventory of furniture dated 1st February, 1845.

In recent times the date of construction of many historic buildings has had to be revised in the light of information gained from the use of these records. Thus the land upon which "Don Bank" at North Sydney is located and which for some time was thought to have been erected in the 1820s by Wollstonecraft or Berry was found to have been vacant land until 1854 when Charlotte Carr, the wife of a Sydney solicitor William Carr had this house built. In the case of "Don Bank" these records not only lead to the discovery of additional material but helped to explain other records which provided vital clues in assisting to date this building. For over thirty years "Cleaveland House" at Surry Hills was considered to have been built in 1810 by Thomas Sadlier Cleaveland, whereas upon an examination of these records, supplemented by other material, the conclusion was reached that the house was built in 1823-24 for Daniel Cooper and that the architect was Francis Greenway. Perhaps one of the most interesting discoveries

was a Blacket plan for additions to the "Octagon Tower" at Darling Point. Built in 1832 as a constable's house, the "Octagon Tower" was the first building erected in Darling Point, and apart from being unique in that respect it is thought to be the only surviving Government building designed by Ambrose Hallen when he was Colonial Architect. Yet another interesting discovery was John Verge's "Rose Bay Cottage", erected in 1834 and said long ago to have been demolished. An examination of these records, in the light of Verge's ledger, together with an architectural examination of the building provided the missing clues which proved conclusively that the building had not been demolished but was still extant.

In almost every case land records have either provided very strong evidence or proved conclusively the exact date of construction of an historic building. This is quite apart from establishing the earliest possible date or the latest possible date a building might have been constructed. These dates have in almost every case been supported by an architect's visual examination of such a building. The importance of such records and their preservation cannot be overemphasized. It is to be hoped that in future research in the dating of historic buildings, such records will be more readily consulted.

A Portrait of Mrs. John Verge

Ian Evans

The Mitchell Library has recently acquired a colonial portrait which has an interesting and tragic link between the artist and his subject.

The crayon portrait is of Mary, wife of John Verge, the well-known Sydney architect of the 1830s, and is attributed to James Armstrong Wilson. A companion portrait of John Verge is understood to be still in the possession of the Verge descendant who until recently owned both pictures.

Attribution to James Wilson is based on the medium chosen, style and circumstantial evidence. Verge, after retiring from practice in Sydney, moved to his 2560 acre property, Austral Eden, on the Macleay River near Kempsey in 1840¹. James Wilson settled in the village of East Kempsey in 1845 and in August of that year was clearing land to establish a vineyard².

Born at Roxburgh, Scotland, in 1804, Wilson became a portrait painter in oils and crayons and was head drawing master at Oxford and Cambridge. He taught drawing at Miss Graham's Boarding School in London and in 1829 married one of his pupils, a French girl named Aimee Louise Grandovinet. The Wilsons, with twin daughters and a son, emigrated to Australia aboard the *Fairlie* in 1836 and on the voyage made the acquaintance of Sir John and Lady Franklin. The Franklins were on their way to Hobart where Sir John was to take up his appointment as Governor of Van Diemen's Land³. In a letter to Eleanor Gell, written from Wiseman's Ferry on the Hawkesbury on 21 July, 1839, Lady Franklin said that Wilson "makes beautiful coloured chalk portraits at 5 guineas each"⁴. Between 1837 and 1844 Wilson and his family lived variously in Braidwood, Sydney, Tasmania

and Balmain. In 1844 he returned to Scotland to visit his elderly mother and spent several months in London painting portraits before he came back to Australia⁵. Wilson appears to have settled on the Macleay River with his family shortly after his return.

Verge's wife, formerly Mary Alford, was born in Sydney circa 1804⁶. She appears to have met John Verge during the early 1830s when she was employed at The Weaver's Arms, John Clegg's roadside inn on the Liverpool Road near Bankstown. Verge at this time was engaged on several important commissions to the south-west of Sydney, including Camden Park and Denham Court. They were not married until some years after the death in England in 1845 of Verge's estranged first wife⁷.

The portrait of Mary Verge can be dated to the period between 1845, when Wilson settled on the Macleay, and June 1852 when the artist was lost at sea en route to Sydney from Kempsey. James Wilson, his wife, their daughter Aimee Louise and youngest son, Victor, were on board John Verge's 58 foot schooner, the *Rose of Eden*, which was driven onto a beach near Broken Bay in a gale during the night of June 22/23. There were no survivors from the vessel's complement of fourteen passengers and crew. A workbox bearing Mrs. Wilson's name was found among the wreckage⁸. Neither John Verge nor his wife were on board the *Rose of Eden* on its last voyage.

James Wilson did not sign the family portraits, nor did he identify his subjects. However, both pictures were examined by the author of this article when they were still owned by a direct descendant of one of Verge's daughters. They are clearly a pair and were probably painted at the same time. The portrait of John Verge was easily identifiable by referring to the small picture of the architect published in Will Verge's 1962 monograph, *John Verge, Early Australian Architect, his ledger and his clients*. A member of another branch of the family recalled seeing portraits of John and Mary Verge at the home of Sydney Verge, one of John Verge's sons, at Artarmon in the 1930s.

REFERENCES:

1. Biography of John Verge in *The Golden Decade of Australian Architecture - The Work of John Verge*, David Ell Press, Sydney, 1978.
2. Benjamin Sullivan, J.P., to the Colonial Secretary, 30/8/45, NSW Archives 4/2680.
3. Reminiscences of Ann Hale Chapman, (nee Wilson), 1835-1903, in private possession.
4. Quoted in Eve Buscombe, *Artists in Early Australia and their Portraits*, Eureka Research, Sydney, 1978.
5. Reminiscences of Ann Hale Chapman.
6. The birth does not appear to have been registered but the date is estimated from an entry in the 1828 census.
7. *Golden Decade of Australian Architecture*.
8. Marie H. Neill, *Valley of the Macleay*, Wentworth Books, Sydney, 1972; SMH June 25, 1852.

Annual Report

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is interesting to reflect on what has happened over the last twelve months in the Australiana collecting scene. We have seen some very notable pieces pass through the salerooms and shops, and not all at top prices. Not only have private collectors been lucky, but our various museums and institutions have added to their already magnificent collections with pieces most of us would make house room for. Still, these pieces will be on public view for all to see and enjoy, which hopefully may mean we, the Australiana Society, will receive more members to our steadily growing membership.

Also in the past twelve months, we have been lucky to view some varied and specialised exhibitions on subjects of Australian interest. The D'Oyley exhibition, the Art Nouveau and Art Deco exhibitions with the National Trust and, for those lucky enough to see it, the Kangaroo in Decorative Arts exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. The various art exhibitions at the Ervin Gallery, Dixon Gallery, and Art Gallery of N.S.W., on Australian subjects, have also helped in the painting area. There were others, and I hope there will be more, as we need these exhibitions to help educate people into appreciating the special qualities of the various aspects of the Australian decorative arts.

I would like to thank the Committee for their help during the past year, especially Andrew Simpson for his difficult task of Secretary and Treasurer. A special thanks to John Wade, editor of our newsletter, for the very difficult task of keeping the standard of our newsletter so high. Lastly I would like to thank everybody for their support and interest in the society during the past year, without which there would be no Society.

I thank you all.

Robert Hutchinson
President.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

I have much pleasure in submitting my Annual Report for 1979-1980. During this year we have had an increase in membership to eighty-nine members, with a total of twenty-five new members. Our attendance book shows an average of twenty-one members attending the six bi-monthly meetings held, with a total of twenty-six visitors throughout the year. It is gratifying to know so many members regularly attend our meetings.

I wish the incoming Committee a successful year.

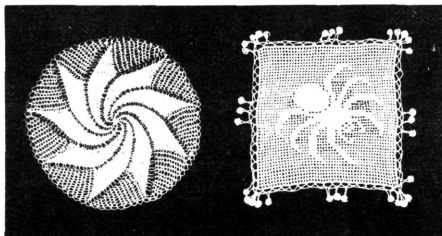
Andrew Simpson
Secretary.

TREASURER'S REPORT 1979-1980 AS AT 30th JUNE 1980

RECEIPTS		EXPENDITURE	
Subscriptions	\$1245.00	Stationery	\$ 13.05
Swap & Sell Takings	\$ 8.00	Postage	\$ 74.09
Auction Takings	\$ 518.56	Bank Charges	\$ 5.00
Raffle Takings	\$ 55.00	Hall Hire	\$ 102.00
Book Refunds	\$ 100.00	Book Purchases	\$ 293.80
Newsletter Ads	\$ 5.00	Refreshments	\$ 71.69
Book Sales	\$ 361.00	Book Refunds	\$ 100.00
Excursions	\$ 9.00	Newsletter Production	\$1114.63
Bank Interest	\$ 14.88	Affiliated Society Subscriptions	\$ 17.50
		Auction Payout	\$ 348.56
		Advertisements	\$ 19.44
SUB-TOTAL	<u>\$2316.44</u>	SUB-TOTAL	<u>\$2159.76</u>
Bank Balance as at 30/6/79	\$ 314.50	Bank Balance as at 30/6/80	\$ 471.18
TOTAL	<u><u>\$2630.94</u></u>	TOTAL	<u><u>\$2630.94</u></u>

I certify that I have examined and fully audited the vouchers, records and account books of the Society. They have been balanced and reconciled, and constitute a true and correct statement of Receipts and Expenditure for the year ending 30th June, 1980.

Andrew Simpson
Treasurer.



Australiana Books

Publishers are invited to send notices of new books and copies of books for review to the Editor.

AUSTRALIA'S ANIMALS DISCOVERED, by Peter Stanbury and Graeme Phipps, Sydney, Pergamon Press, 1980. Hardcover, 128 pages, 46 colour and 56 monochrome illustrations, casebound, \$19.50

European explorers were amazed by the strange animals they found in Australia; their accounts make fascinating reading; their sketches are charming, if often inaccurate. Here is the first collection of this material, species by species, gleaned from books and other sources that date back to the 1600s. It includes material on more than 50 species, many with the first recorded European sighting, many with the first scientific description, and all with the authors' notes in summary. The bibliography lists references to almost every voyage of discovery or exploration into Australia - by the English, the French, and the Dutch. The illustrations are charming and often amusing.

INVESTIGATING THE NATIONAL ESTATE. Canberra, The Australian Heritage Commission and Curriculum Development Centre, 1980. \$40.00.

A kit of teaching materials for secondary school students. The kit consists of four units and a teacher's handbook, for use in classes to develop an understanding and appreciation of the National Estate.

THE LIFE AND ART OF WILLIAM STRUTT 1825-1915, by Heather Curnow, Waiura (N.Z.), Alister Taylor Publishers, 1980. \$395.00.

1500 copies of this deluxe edition are being printed. The publisher's blurb tells us "it should be an excellent investment in these times of high inflation". The text is based on an M.A. thesis presented at the University of Sydney, and illustrated by 47 colour plates and over 50 other illustrations.

Strutt, born in Devon and trained in France, came to Australia in 1848, visited New Zealand briefly in 1855-56, and returned to Britain in 1862. His pictures, particularly his lion subjects based on visits to the London Zoo, have become popular in recent years. An exhibition of some of his works opens at the Art Gallery of NSW in February 1981.

THE FRONT GARDEN. THE STORY OF THE COTTAGE GARDEN IN AUSTRALIA, by Victor Crittenden. Canberra, Mulini Press, 1979. 50 pages, paper covers, about \$6.00.

A chatty book on a theme which deserves more detailed study than it has previously received.

PRINTS AND PRINTMAKING. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND TECHNIQUES, by Antony Griffiths. London, British Museum Publications Ltd. 1980. 168 pages, 12 colour and 120 monochrome illustrations. Soft cover £5.95, hard cover £10.50. Distributed in Australia by Thames & Hudson.

AUSTRALIAN SCULPTORS, by Kenneth W. Scarlett. Melbourne, Nelson, 1980. \$50.00
A dictionary of Australian sculptors, excluding Aborigines, from first contact to the present. Illustrated with monochrome plates.

THE LITHGOW POTTERY, by Ian Evans. Sydney, The Flannel Flower Press, 1980.

Australiana Society member Ian Evans has written the first book on the history of the Lithgow Pottery.

Entitled *The Lithgow Pottery*, it will be published by The Flannel Flower Press in October. The text contains 50,000 words and the book is illustrated with 120 colour plates and 144 black and white photographs and 19th century sketches. Each colour plate is of a piece of pottery while the black and white illustrations consist of historic photographs of the pottery buildings, the potters, directors of the company, tools and implements used at the Pottery, architectural pottery, and closeups of the various forms of the Pottery's impressed marks and distinctive decoration. A number of rare pieces of Lithgow pottery have been photographed for the first time and will be included among the colour plates.

The Lithgow Pottery is described as a comprehensive history of the Pottery from the late 1870s through to 1907 and afterwards. The role played by particular potters at Lithgow, including James Silcock, William Holford, Robert Abbott, James Brough and Arthur Brownfield, is examined in a narrative developed from company documents, private diaries, and contemporary newspapers and journals. Appendices contain glaze and body formulas used at Lithgow, an extensive list of previously unknown wares taken from the Pottery's stock book for 1888-1895, the names of a large number of Pottery workers, and some correspondence of Arthur Brownfield. The foreword to the book is by Kevin Fahy.

The Lithgow Pottery is being published as a limited edition of 2000 copies, 200 of which will be available in a superior binding, slipcased, and bearing a saltglazed pottery medallion made and fired on the site of the old Pottery. The medallion carries the impressed title of the book and a reproduction of the Lithgow kangaroo trademark. The standard version is fully bound with gold blocking on the spine and front and with a full colour dustjacket. The book measures 285mm by 210mm and contains 176 pages of good quality art paper. The recommended retail price of the standard version is \$49.95 and of the deluxe version \$175.00.

Australiana Society members may take advantage of a pre-publication offer and purchase the book for \$40.00, including packing and postage, a discount of approximately 20%. The arrangement is entirely between individual members of the Society and the publishers, who have undertaken to refund the purchase price to anyone who returns their book within seven days. Cheques and all enquiries should be directed to The Flannel Flower Press, 18 Mansfield Street, Glebe, 2037. Telephone: (02) 660 3386

Ian Evans



10,000 YEARS OF SYDNEY LIFE: a guide to archaeological discovery, ed. Peter Stanbury, 2nd edition, Sydney, 1980. No text alterations, hard cover, \$10.00.

You may think that 10,000 years is rather more Sydney history than you really wanted to know about, and maybe you will not read all of the fourteen pieces in this book. But whatever your specialty, you will probably find a snippet to delight or terrify you - I am haunted by visions of possums as big as leopards thundering through the primeval forests....

The collection preserves the tradition that historians and pre-historians are a twain that never shall meet. The former begin the book, with Max Kelly's loving review of Sydney history via George Street; Keith Johnson includes a good list of cemeteries, usefully annotated; Clive Lucas describes the architect-as-magician; Peter Valder reminds us that the Botanic Garden is still a splendid collection of plants and styles, and that rock lilies once flourished around the harbour. Plant more rock lilies!

The pre-historians give us pages of meticulous drawings - from Richard Wright, the toothy skulls of blessedly extinct "megafauna"; stone tools from Eugene Stockton (a stone tool is a stone tool is a stone tool); transcriptions by John Clegg of Aboriginal carvings and paintings; a review of Sydney Aboriginal cultures by Ron Lampert and Vincent Megaw.

The last portion of the anthology is a collection of methodological articles and a survey of the current heritage scene. Judy Birmingham suggests useful things for people to do, peppered with comments that smack of bitter experience - note the source of every skerrick of information! - look out for spiders! - deposit your finished research somewhere publicly accessible! Michael Pearson offers the NPWS checklist for historic sites recording, a concise and elegant skeleton for further research. Helen Temple reviews heritage legislation; John Wade lists object collections in Sydney; Jenny van Proctor considers the question "why dig?"; and Kate Sullivan gives hints on how to view Aboriginal sites.

10,000 Years of Sydney Life was produced as a companion to the Macleay Museum's exhibition *Sydney Unearthed* of 1979. I am sorry that neither the first nor the second edition includes one of the most memorable images from the exhibition - a colourful representation of the antediluvian Sydney Harbour, anachronistically bridged by the coathanger. This surreal landscape was nonetheless instantly familiar, for it still exists in the Blue Mountains; the warm, dank, luscious jungle of the deep gullies and the dry, gritty heat of the huge sandstone boulders where one picnics with ferocious ants are among the essential experiences of Sydney. The reminder that the Harbour is the same structure (plus millions of gallons of water and a few sharks) is valuable.

Linda Young

GOTHICK TASTE IN THE COLONY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, by Joan Kerr and James Broadbent. Sydney, David Ell Press, 1980. Hard cover, limited edition of 1500 copies, each numbered and signed, \$39.00.

This richly illustrated book, based on the 1979 exhibition of "Colonial Gothick" at Elizabeth Bay House sets out to cover the fine arts - architecture, painting, and sculpture - and the decorative arts in the Gothick style from 1800 to 1850.

AUSTRALIAN COLONIAL SPORTING PAINTERS: FREDERICK WOODHOUSE AND SONS, by Colin Lavery. Sydney, David Ell Press, 1980. Hard cover, 148 pages, cased edition \$32, deluxe leatherbound edition of 250 signed copies \$200.

A fascinating family, Frederick Woodhouse and his sons painted racehorses and bloodstock for the wealthy colonists of Australia, mainly from Victoria, from 1858. The book covers an area, hitherto neglected, of colonial art, as well as racing and coursing. Lavishly produced with many colour plates and black and white illustrations.

W. C. PENFOLD, PRINTER AND STATIONER 1830-1980, by Sheena Coupe. Sydney, W. C. Penfold & Co., in association with the David Ell Press. 128 pages, \$24.95.

Company history celebrating the sesquicentenary of W. C. Penfold, well-known not only for their products but also for their horse-drawn delivery carts. Many illustrations of Moffitt engravings, early family and company photographs

A LIFETIME OF EMBROIDERY, by Roma Field. Sydney, the David Ell Press, 1980. 112 pages, 80 colour plates, hard cover, \$35.00.

Roma Field, a nonagenarian, has spent her lifetime promoting interest in embroidery. This publication, which illustrates her work and benefits from her commentary on the plates, demonstrates a standard of embroidery achieved by very few. The book is issued in a limited edition of 1000 copies, each signed by the author, and is obtainable only from the St. Ives Group of the Embroiderer's Guild, Box 159, St. Ives, 2075.

THE VINE IN AUSTRALIA and *WINE-GROWING IN AUSTRALIA*, by A. C. Kelly, with an introduction and biography by Dennis Hall and Valmai Hankel. Sydney, The David Ell Press, 1980. Limited edition of 1000 numbered copies, 262 and 278 pages, casebound, \$45.00.

Facsimile editions of two books on wine written in South Australia in 1861 and 1867.



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TO THE SOCIETY

I hereby apply for election as a member of The Australiana Society, and if elected agree to abide by the Constitution and Rules of the Society.

Date Signature of Candidate

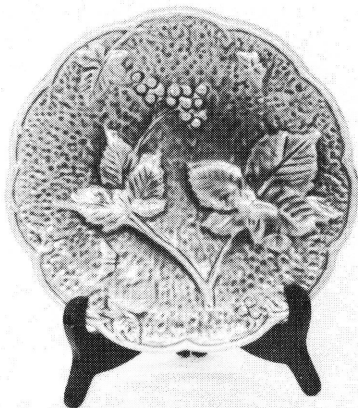
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	Individual	\$10	Life	\$250

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