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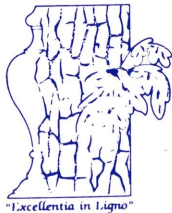
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The Hon. Secretary
Australiana Society
PO Box 643
Woollahra NSW 2025

All editorial correspondence including the submission of material for publication in *Australiana* to be sent to:

The Editor
Australiana Society
PO Box 643
Woollahra NSW 2025

Committee 1996/97:

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Cover: Smokers Table c.1920 by Frederick Edwin Strangward

THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

PO BOX 643, WOOLLAHRA NSW 2025



— SOCIETY PROGRAMME —

MEETINGS — 1996

- Thursday** Christmas Party – Special Guest Speaker.
5 December 1996 Bring along a plate.
Dr Anna Rubbo will lecture on 'Aspects of the life and work of Marion Mahony
- Architect, Artist and Designer - the Wife of Walter Burley Griffin'
Dr Rubbo is a Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Architecture, Sydney University.

MEETINGS — 1997

- Sunday** Australia Day Luncheon
26 January 1997 See Special Announcement and insert
Members friends and others are requested to provide suitable prizes for a raffle
to be held on this occasion. Please send particulars of your generosity to – The
Secretary, The Australiana Society, PO Box 643 Woollahra NSW 2025.
- Thursday** First meeting of the year for The Australiana Society.
6 March 1997 Lecture to be announced.

Society meetings are now held on the first Thursday of every alternative month:

March, May, July, September (A. G. M.), November.

Society meeting are held at the K Mart Learning Centre, Powerhouse Museum, Harris Street
Ultimo. Access is off its Macarthur Street entrance. Parking available.

Drinks served 7.30-8.00pm, followed by Australiana showcase (bring your Australiana treasures
along for general discussion, lectures will commence at 8.00pm.

Special Announcement

Australia Day Luncheon, Sunday 26 January 1997

The Australiana Society's Australia Day Luncheon will be held Sunday, 26 January 1997 at Old Government House, Parramatta. The Guest Speaker will be Kevin Fahy who will talk on the acquisition of its major collection of Australian colonial furniture and the recent refurbishment of the house by the National Trust of Australia (NSW). The talk and dinner at 1pm will be preceded by

predinner drinks and an inspection of the House at noon and followed by an opportunity at 3.30pm to inspect and study its furniture collection with specially guided assistance that has never previously been available.

The dinner will be held at Lachlan's, the adjoining restaurant at \$45 per head (BYO, but an extensive wine list available).

Book as early as possible. Members and friends may like to make a group booking. As we expect a large attendance please communicate your interest as soon as possible to The Secretary, Australiana Society, PO Box 643 Woollahra NSW 2035.

Please note that being a Sunday, the traditional time for dinner is 1pm.

See enclosed application form for full particulars.

Noris Ioannou's Recent Overseas Experience

What is the diversity and character of Australian folk art, where does it spring from, and what does it say about our nation, society and culture? These are among the questions historian Dr Noris Ioannou wishes to answer following his return from a two-month study tour of the USA under the sponsorship of a Churchill Fellowship.

Why did he choose the US for his study? 'Because that is where scholarship to folk art research is best developed world-wide', says Dr Ioannou. His two month itinerary included some 10 major cities and states in the US. He began at the Institute of American Folklore located in the University of Indiana, meeting schol-

ars of folklore and American cultural history. Flying south to Atlanta, Georgia, he travelled into rural regions to interview sixth generation folk artists. New York City provided an opportunity to study at the Museum of American Folk Art. He visited Savannah, and Charleston in South Carolina, and finally, New Mexico where "New Mexican" or Southwestern folk art emerged as a result of the interaction of three cultures and the unique desert landscape: the American Indians, the Hispanic, and the Anglo-Americans'.

In New York, the director and staff at the Museum were especially amazed at the fact the 'the German 19th century diaspora had included

Australia' and of the richness of German folk culture which was documented in his recent book *The Barossa Folk: Germanic Furniture and Craft Traditions in Australia* (now available in the US). 'I, in turn, was amazed at the level of American ignorance of Australia's historical and cultural make-up. We have a long way to go in educating Americans in Australiana studies!'

Following this study tour, Dr Ioannou feels that he can now approach the writing of his next book 'Folk Art in Australian Life' with confidence. 'This was the eventual aim of the Churchill Fellowship whose assistance permitted me to reach this point'.

Contributions Please ...

We require articles urgently for our *Australiana* journal.

We would appreciate if our members doing research into aspects of *Australiana* "would put pen to paper and let us have the fruits of your labours for publication".

Please forward your submission to: The Editor, *Australiana*, PO Box 643 Woollahra NSW 2025.



The Corporation Cup

J. M. Houstone

Sailing has been a popular sport in Australia since the early days of settlement. In the 1820s many challenge races were held on Sydney Harbour, but the distinction of holding Australia's first regatta goes to Tasmania. This took place on the Derwent River, Hobart on 5 January 1827.

In 1837 in Sydney "a committee of gentlemen" organised an "Anniversary Regatta" on the 26 January of that year. Every year since a regatta had been held on that day.

The scene of the regatta on Anniversary Day 1867 was described thus by the *Sydney Morning Herald*: "Never has Sydney Cove presented a scene of more animation and gaiety. Bright sunshine, blue sky, soft winds that just created the dancing wavelets for fleets of boats of every size and build from a costermonger barge up to a first class yacht". It sounds very much the Sydney Harbour we saw on Australia Day 1996!

The program comprised a total of fourteen races, both sailing and rowing. The fourth race was for "all open boats not exceeding 22 feet overall under canvas". It was won by Mr Richard Driver Junior's boat "The Currency Lass". First prize was "The Corporation Cup presented by His Worship the Mayor, the Aldermen and Officers of the Municipal Council of Sydney". Second prize was £5.5.0.

The Corporation Cup is a large two handled lidded trophy cup. It weighs 80 ozs. (2475 gms) and stands 18" (45cm) high. It features embossed fruit and leaf decoration, stylised grape vine handles and a finial comprising a sailor and a boy with an anchor. The cup, in typical mid-Victorian florid style was made by leading London silversmiths Hayne and Ca-

ter and is hallmarked for 1859.

Richard Driver Junior was a prominent and influential citizen and

politician. His grandfather, John Driver, came as a convict in 1801. He died in 1810 leaving three children,



one of whom, Richard was born in 1803. Richard senior prospered, owning property at Cabramatta and a hotel in Castlereagh Street Sydney. He married Elizabeth Powell in 1823 and had nine children including Richard Junior, born 1829. Richard Junior's parents ensured he had a good education after which he took up law, becoming an articled clerk with the leading firm of G. R. Nichols and J. W. Williams. He was admitted as a solicitor in 1856. By 1859 he had become Solicitor to the Corporation of Sydney and had developed an extensive police court practice. He entered politics, being elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1860. Driver was a fervent supporter of Australian nationalism, claiming that "the natives of this country have never had a fair share of representation, either in the government ... or



in patronage". And by "natives" he did not mean aborigines!

In the years 1860-80 he emerged

as an important law reformer, introducing some fifty Bills. He was Minister for Lands in Henry Parkes' 1877 ministry. In 1868 he became foundation president of the Australian Patriotic Association. He was keenly interested in sport, particularly cricket, sailing and horse racing and was a chief organiser of the visit of the English cricket team. He was several times chairman of Tattersall's Club and a councillor of the Agricultural Society. As a minister of the Crown, he vested the Sydney Cricket Ground in trustees, and became one himself, representing the New South Wales Cricket Association. His name is remembered in the road fronting the Cricket Ground: Driver Avenue.

He died in 1880, only 50 years of age.

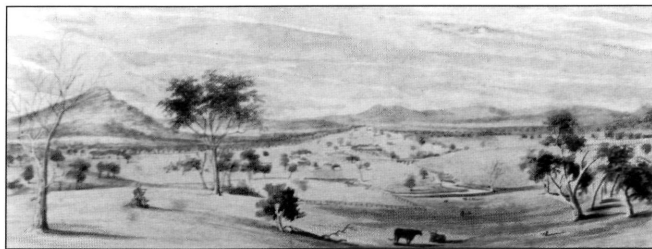
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William Tibbits

Australia 1837-1906

Detailed Watercolour sketch for "Table Top", Yambla, property of James Mitchell Exq., 1887.
 7cm x 18cm.

The large finished watercolour of this scene now held by the Albury and District Historical Society is "one of the finest works of the artists' entire output" (Tibbits, U. of M. 1984 p.35). Tibbits working sketch's are very rare and interesting in that they are so full of detail, this one for instance including a depiction of the artist sitting on a stump sketching. This important watercolour sketch is available for \$1,350.

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The Cafe Australia

Michael Bogle

Melbourne's Cafe Australia was a restaurant designed by Walter Burley Griffin's architectural practice and constructed within The Australia Hotel, 272 Collins Street during 1915-16. The architects used painters and sculptors as well as innovative lighting, novel furniture and architecture to create one of Australia's most exciting early 20th century interior spaces. The designers' achievement is demonstrated in the carefully integrated form and furnishings of the interiors; this freedom is almost without precedence during this era. This essay seeks to assemble

in outline form what is known about the Cafe Australia and to examine elements of its historiographic treatment by historians and journalists.

Most of the material consulted for this survey of the commission comes from secondary sources such as magazines, newspapers and monographs on the Griffins' practice in Australia. There is considerable ambiguity in the reported dates for the Cafe Australia and related events.

Before discussing the circumstances of the Cafe's 1915-16 design and the nature of the interiors, it is important to establish the historical

setting of the Cafe at 272 Collins Street, Melbourne.¹ As the Griffins' later associations with Theosophy are thought to be inherent in their design work, it would also be useful to investigate the Cafe interiors for *leit motifs* associated with that movement. In conclusion, the fate of the Cafe Australia after the Griffins' commission reveals yet another interesting design project from a new generation of designers.

Walter Burley Griffin (1876-1937) needs little introduction to Australians following his firm's initial design of the national capital of Can-

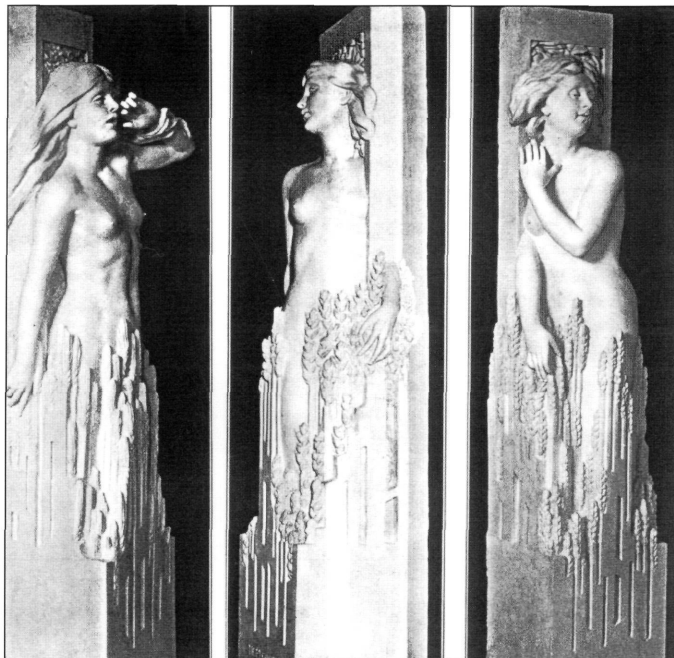


1. The Fountain Court. Cafe Australia, 272 Collins Street, Melbourne. The New York Historical Society.

berra. Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin (1871-1963), who had married in 1911, arrived in Australia on 18 August 1914. Walter had worked with Frank Lloyd Wright in Chicago, Illinois from 1901-1905 but the degree of autonomy Griffin enjoyed under Wright remains contentious. What is certain, however, is that Wright left for Japan in 1905 leaving Griffin short of his wages.² Marion also worked with Wright after 1895 as the “superintendent” of his small drafting department.³ After 1910, Marion Mahony worked with Walter Burley Griffin in private practice.

The nature of the Griffins’ architectural practice in Australia has been discussed in detail elsewhere and their attempts to broaden their client base by establishing a Melbourne practice was rewarded with some interesting commissions in that city; among them the Cafe Australia.⁴ Their client for the Cafe was A.[Anthony] J.J. Lucas, the Greek Consul-General in Melbourne.⁵ While one Griffin scholar describes the Collins Street site as a former auditorium and music shop, others remember the location as the Vienna Cafe.⁶ Keith Dunstan in his history of “Georges”, the well-known Melbourne retailer, describes the Vienna Cafe as the best place to eat in Melbourne, where the coffee was the “Best in Australia”.⁷ The tables were crowded with bohemian actors and artists.⁸ It seems certain that the location was operating as a restaurant when Lucas acquired the property and commissioned the Griffins’ firm to design a cafe.

A feature in the October, 1931 *Australian Home Beautiful* reports on some of the earlier changes in the Collins Street restaurant. After observing that the site began as Gunslers Cafe in the 19th century, the anonymous journalist reports that



Margaret Baskerville. Sculptures from the piers of the Fountain Court. Illustration from Margaret Baskerville, Sculptor. Edward A. Vidler, Melbourne, 1928.

in 1908, A. J. J. Lucas, “a successful restaurateur”, bought the Vienna Cafe and made unspecified “radical alterations at once”. Then in 1916, he hired Walter Burley Griffin to rework the site then known as The Australia Hotel.⁹ [Most authorities state 1915]. A new entrance was created but the older facade of the building remained. The interiors, however, were radically altered. The writer notes that city gossip suggests that Lucas spent 50,000 pounds on the Griffins’ work.

The radical alterations reported by *Australian Home Beautiful* at the Cafe included a two level interior with a lower floor fountain court; Bertha Merfield (1869-1921) murals at the ends of the barrel-vaulted ceiling on the upper level balconies; plasterwork sculptures and decorations by Margaret Baskerville (1861-1930) in the lower floor fountain court and new timber furniture throughout.

The Interiors of the Cafe Australia

While it is difficult to discern the exact floor plan of the interiors, the Cafe was divided into three distinct spaces: The Fountain Court, The Fern Room and the Banquet Hall.

Marion Mahony Griffin describes these spaces in her unpublished 1949 memoir: “Magic of America”.¹⁰

Fern Room

“[The lighting is] a continuation of ... [the] Fountain Court but enriched with angular pattern in the greens of the leaf forms. Again no division of partitions but piers ... of gold delft tile encircling four pools for gold fish with fountain spray...”

Banquet Hall

“A ... semicircular vault formed of open tracery spans the room. This great airy, sunny room, cozy in spite of its size because of the balcony with its alcoves

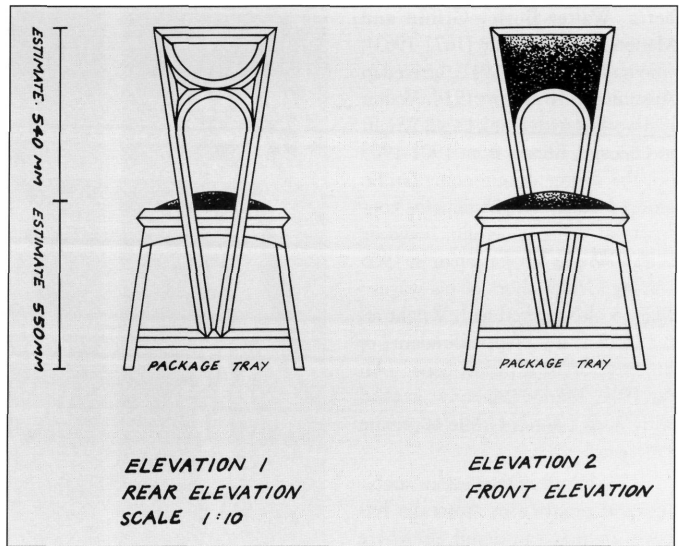
below, formed by the supporting piers with their gay caps ...”

Fountain Court

“Under the projecting light shelf of each of these piers is a single figure stepping lightly through a grain field with a background of tree foliage, the orange, the almond, the cherry, which foliage is continued through to the opposite side, facing the fountain court where the tree itself becomes the motif of the panel and forms a rich decoration balancing the figures opposite.”

The three square piers were dominant elements on the ground floor Fountain Court and the Griffins commissioned Margaret Baskerville to produce relief sculptures of seasonal vegetation (orange, almond and cherry) on one side of the piers and deep reliefs of three female figures on the opposite sides. They may be Persephone, Demeter [?] and Flora [?], a not uncommon grouping. These sculptures of classical figures have been illustrated in a monograph on Baskerville where they are described as marble.¹¹ This seems an unlikely medium as architectural plaster would be expected. The works carried engraved titles on both sides but they are largely illegible in the known illustrations. In one photograph, the inscribed name Persephone [in the Greek alphabet] can be seen on the base of one of the figures.

The architects chose their artists well. Margaret Baskerville had studied at the National Gallery School of Design in 1879 and she was one of Victoria’s most accomplished sculptors of the period. Baskerville’s completion of a monumental bronze commission of Sir Thomas Bent (1911-13) almost coincided with the arrival of the Griffin practice in Melbourne. Although these Cafe Australia sculptures are usually attributed to Baskerville based on contemporary accounts and their appearance in her



Front and Rear Elevations of the Cafe Australia chair. Drawn by Virginia Buckingham.

monograph, hectographs of drawings for these three famous pier reliefs have been attributed to Marion Mahony Griffin in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.¹² The exhibition catalogue produced for the 1988 Walter Burley Griffin exhibition at Monash University also reproduces the pier relief designs and attributes them to Marion Mahony Griffin.¹³ Perhaps Griffin scholars should draw a distinction between the attribution of the architectonic elements of these three piers and the sculptural reliefs.

In the balcony area overlooking the lower floor and its sculptured piers, Bertha Merfield’s commissioned murals show a sunset in a landscape of Australian flora and treeless hills.—The ceiling is illuminated with the Griffin’s characteristic lattice-screened up-lighters similar to those found in the Newman College Common Room at Melbourne University. The design of the diffused and directional lighting enhanced the volumes of the barrel-vaulted ceiling as well as Merfield’s murals and the Baskerville sculptural work below.

Design and Decoration in the Cafe Australia

Surface decoration is not a popular topic amongst architectural critics in this century. James Birrell’s *Walter Burley Griffin*¹⁵ (1964) skims over the highly ornamented Cafe Australia in one-half page. Donald Johnson, the author of *The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin* (1977) is equally frightened of surface design, preferring to propose a formal spatial analysis of the Cafe Australia even when the floor plans are not available.¹⁶

The Griffins’ ornamental vocabulary is usually dismissed as “Sullivan-esque”. There is a modest element of truth here; but the stylistic consistency in the firm’s work suggests a more personal theory of design and decoration. It is clear that the morphology of crystals is a central element in the Griffins’ faceted surface treatments. While several writers have also noted the prominence of crystalline imagery amongst the Theosophical literature, Anna Rubbo reminds us that the Griffins

were not active in Theosophical circles until the early 1930s.¹⁷

Crystals derive their characteristic shapes from the molecules that form them. The microstructure, therefore, dictates the macrostructure. One may suggest that the crystal is the "perfect manifestation of natural law ...".¹⁸ The Griffins' colleague, Chicago architect Louis H. Sullivan (1856-1924) published a comprehensive philosophy, *A System of Architectural Ornament* in 1923-24 that pursued the idea of a natural order in the formation of architectural decoration. Sullivan describes the development of a pattern or decoration of radial energy from the basic geometric forms of the triangle, circle and the square.

"The ... [geometric] ... forms, rigid in their quality, are to be considered in our philosophy as contain-

ers of radial energy, extensive and intensive; that is to say; [they are] expressions of form along lines or axes radiating from the center and the intention of form along the same or other radials from the periphery toward the center.. We assume energy to be resident in the periphery and that all lines are energy lines..."¹⁹

Imagery associated with "energy" and "lines of force" enjoyed international currency during this era of exciting discoveries in atomic physics. In the 1920s, Rudolf Steiner described the surface of earth with its plant covering as a "relief full of meaning". A wall, Steiner says, is a living thing much as the earth brings forth plants. These observations appear in a series of lectures delivered in German in 1914 and first published in English translation in 1927.²⁰

Similar language is used to describe the Griffins' suburban architecture in the Castlecrag development in Sydney (especially GSDA No. 1, 1921). Meredith Walker and her co-authors state that the highly finished, crystal-line-faceted voussiors of the Griffins' house [GSDA No.1, 192] represent the "... abstract expression of the crystallisation of natural forces, represented by the random rubble walls, a reference to the primitive nature of building techniques."²¹ That is, Steiner's "relief full of meaning". The systematic use of geometric decoration by the Griffins requires much more study.

The remarkably consistent geometric vocabulary of the Griffins' work in surface relief found its

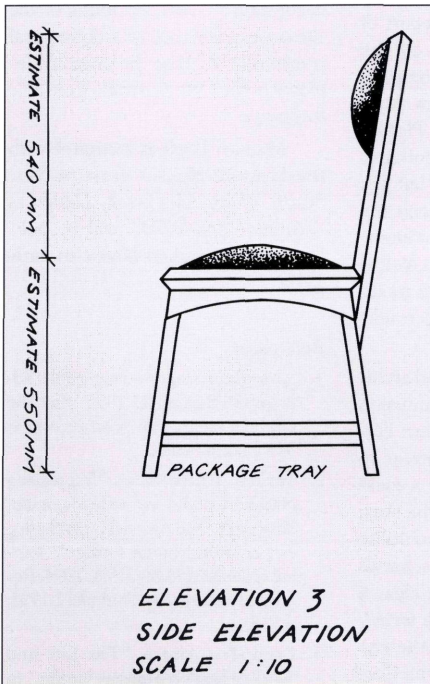
way into the Cafe's lighting treatments, load-bearing piers, balustrades, ventilators and its furniture. The line drawings of the Cafe chair and table also show persistent angular crystal-like joinery, even when it created major disadvantages in construction.

The Furniture in the Cafe Australia

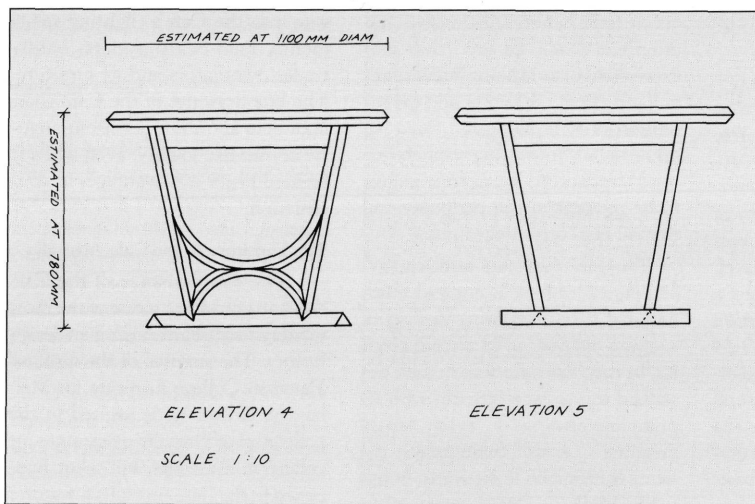
The disappearance of the Cafe Australia furniture is one of the most mysterious losses in Australian design history. The survival of the Griffins' Newman College furniture for Melbourne University is assured in the collection of virtually every state art gallery in Australia, but what happened to the Cafe Australia furniture?

The chairs and tables were darkly-stained and varnished timber in the Arts and Crafts manner as the surviving photographs show. The chairs had round padded leather seats with a package tray beneath. The writer was able to inspect a fragment of one chair held by a private collector and it showed consistently angular joins, faces and edges throughout every element. The line drawings accompanying this essay were developed with the information found in the photographs of the interiors and an inspection of the surviving fragment. The furniture would have been difficult to construct and the poorly resolved attachment of the uprights at the back of the seat would have resulted in structural failure where the seat and backrest join. It has been suggested that this flaw led to the replacement and radical remodelling of the Cafe Australia furniture. As far as this writer can determine, not a single setting of the table and chairs has been found.

While the manufacturer of the furniture remains unknown, Terence Lane of the National Gallery of Victoria has suggested that the Griffin's designs for their Newman College furniture were made by James Moore



Side Elevation of the Cafe Australia Chair. Drawn by Virginia Buckingham.



Elevations of the Cafe Australia Table. Drawn by Virginia Buckingham.

and Sons, Melbourne. Did Moore and Sons make the Cafe Australia furniture? While the timber and finishes seem similar, the details of the joinery are distinctly different. Another Melbourne furniture manufacturer, H. Goldman in South Yarra also had a reputation for executing challenging work for noted designers.²²

Who Designed the Cafe Australia?

Griffin scholars are certain the Cafe Australia is the work of Marion Mahony Griffin. Donald Johnson's survey of the Griffins' architecture says that Marion was primarily involved in the cafe design.²³ The project was designed in their Sydney office where Marion was supervisor and Johnson assumes that she had the greatest responsibility for the interior work. Pregliasco's recent summary (1995) of Marion Mahony Griffin's career attributes the entire commission to her, even including Baskerville's sculpture.²⁴ Peter Harrison also ascribes the unique furniture, chinaware and menu cards to Marion Mahony Griffin.²⁵ Birrell ignores the issue entirely.²⁶

The Fate of the Cafe Australia

In the *Australian Home Beautiful*

(AHB) article, "A Cafe with a History. The Australia. A Much Remodelled Restaurant." (1 October 1931), the anonymous writer summarised the cafe's past in order to report of the recent transformation of the space. In 1927, another company took over the building from A.J.J. Lucas and the architect J. Plottel, reworked and enlarged the building. According to the AHB, he left the Marion Mahony Griffin balcony and ceiling and gutted the rest for interiors in the "Italian Manner" as well as a "Georgian Revival" dining room. The Griffin furniture almost certainly disappeared at this time.

In 1932, the painter (and architect) Sam Atyeo had a commission through Cynthia Reed Modern Furnishings in Little Collins Street to design and paint a mural for a cocktail bar in the basement of the Australia Hotel. The mural was to utilise drinking slogans as well as hands holding cocktails.²⁷ It is not clear if this work took place in the former Cafe Australia location or the site next door formerly called "The Coal Hole". Both frontages were combined in the late 1920s. This "Coal Hole"

name has an ironic resonance as the architect and publisher Florence Taylor had severely criticised the Griffins' facade for The Australia in 1916 by describing elements of the street-level elevation as resembling a coal cellar.²⁸

In 1937, the entire site was demolished and reopened as the Hotel Australia in 1939 as a highrise (40 metres) residential hotel. The Vienna Cafe was revived and reinstated and a shopping arcade put through to the rear lane of the site, in Little Collins Street. The architects were Leslie Perrott

and Partners who retained for the third time, Marion Mahony Griffin's balcony, the barrel-vaulted ceiling and elements of its plaster openwork decoration.²⁹ This reworking of the site seems to be the last architectural transformation that the original elements of the Cafe Australia were able to survive.

Michael Bogle is a curator with the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales. His book, *Design in Australia 1880-1970*, will be published by Craftsman House in early 1997.

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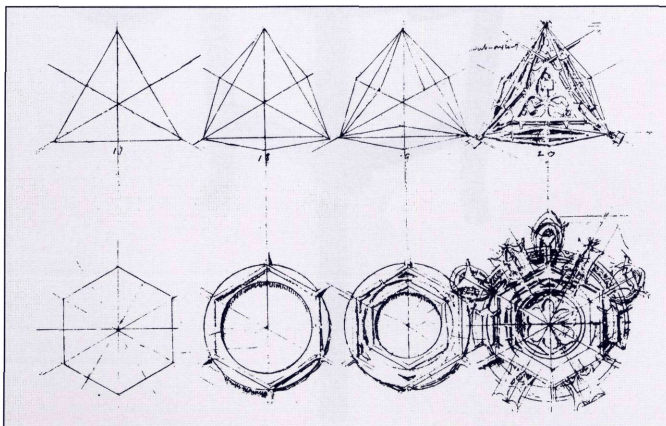
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1995. Michael Sittenfeld, ed. p.165.
4. Surveys of the Griffins' career in Australia are found in James Birrell. *Walter Burley Griffin*, University of Queensland Press, 1964; Peter Harrison, *Walter Burley Griffin. Landscape Architect*. National Library of Australia, 1995; Donald L. Johnson. *The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin*. Macmillan, 1977.
 5. Harrison, Peter. *Walter Burley Griffin. Landscape Architect*. National Library of Australia, 1995, p.59. A.J.J. Lucas was also involved in the Capitol Theatre commission.
 6. "A Cafe with a History. The Australia. A Much Remodelled Restaurant." *The Australian Home Beautiful*. 1 October 1931. pps. 52-53, 56. Peter Harrison, *ibid*, suggests the address was a music shop and auditorium.
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... "3.30. Took Gertrude to Lucas's Cafe. The vanilla ices were so delightful I had no trouble in persuading her to have some strawberries and cream. Afterwards she had a cool squash. Gertrude's the type of girl that does you credit."
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Ornamental studies from Louis Sullivan's *A System of Architectural Ornament* illustrating his philosophy of energy-laden geometry dictating the external structure of three-dimensional forms.

F. E. Strangward – Maker of Unique Australian Mosaique Woodware

V. J. Fairley

The works of F. E. Strangward are unique examples of Australian mosaique woodware quite similar in construction to English and Italian Tinbridgeware. F. E. Strangward lived in the first half of the 20th century and produced a series of stunning mosaique woodware pieces from a small house in St Kilda, Melbourne. He achieved prominence in Australia in the 1930s, however, a lack of turnover in pieces contributed to loss of awareness in his work after his death at the end of World War II. His dedication and commitment saw him achieve an effect described by Arthur Streeton in 1933 as "like the exquisite decorative design found in sea shells, sea anemones and other forms of natural growth".

Frederick Edwin Strangward was born in Victoria, Australia in 1863 and died at the age of 80 in 1944. For most of his life he lived in a cottage in St Kilda he undertook several life-long pursuits in his spare time – including the development of a unique Australian technique for decoration of wood ornaments and utility furniture. He went blind six years before his death from glaucoma.

During his life he was a banker and then a stockbroker in Melbourne. In his older age he owned a tyreworks at Blackburn – a suburb in Melbourne. In his spare time he maintained a love affair with woodworking – a craft he learnt early in his life. At the age of 14 he left school and was apprenticed to a cabinetmaker. He made extension tables and sideboards and in his spare time when he was about 15 he built a replica of an early Australian sailing ship. Many pieces of furniture that he made during this period survive, including ta-

bles and dining chairs with engraved mottoes and family shields.

As his work developed he devoted the front room in his home to

a show room and manufactured from a back room. He made all his tools – including an electric lathe. He moved from making furniture to making



utilitarian pieces in the tunbridge style – such as vases and bowls. These pieces stand out as Australian because of the motifs used – including gum leaves and kangaroos. As his skills developed he became more engrossed in fine, detailed, inlays. Pieces from this phase such as a woodware pocketwatch and a cigarette box show very fine inlay craftsmanship. All ancillary parts such as handles were hand made from copper or brass if not done in wood. During this phase he started using Australian local timbers such as wattle and pear.

In his search for a unique style, he experimented with different techniques and tools. He made a breakthrough when he engaged a Victorian university to design and manufacture a saw capable of cutting wood into tiny pieces – typically half a millimetre square.

Strangward then started to develop mathematically intricate designs that, combined with the tiny pieces of wood, replicated the delicate flow of colours that exists in nature. He restricted himself to the use of certain coloured woods from local sources: pear, cedar, blackwood, holly

and other fruit trees grown in the local orchards in Doncaster.

Around 1910 he commenced the design and manufacture of the unique series of Australian mosaicque woodware pieces that distinguish him as a mastercraftsman. In total, he made 22 pieces in the style before he went blind, these being the most well developed in term of style, complexity and effort. The 22 pieces took over 20 years to create. Strangward saw the pieces as representing the culmination of his life's work – achieving high quality, unique designs and distinctly Australian characteristics.

The collection includes tables, vases and other utilitarian pieces. Strangward gave several of the pieces to the Prime Minister Alfred Deakin and offered others to the Victorian Arts Museum. Strangward and the museum were unable to consummate a transaction at a price acceptable to him, and so the pieces were not sold until his death in 1944.

Awareness of his style peaked in the early 1930s when exhibitions of the works were held both in Australia and in the United Kingdom. The exhibitions were well noted by the arts

community and received favourable publicity in various newspapers and magazines.

All the pieces were sold at auction when Strangward died. Many were bought by the Strangward family although some of the better pieces went under the hammer to local and international collectors. Prior to the auction, Christies were requested to provide a valuation, however after international reference they advised “no comparable pieces exist”.

The later pieces are distinguished by their intricate work and in many pieces the use of Australian motifs such as kangaroos. Some of the larger pieces typically use over 2 million individual squares of wood glued together in intricate designs and patterns. The finish is a high polish, described as being as smooth as blown glass.

Frederick Edwin Strangward stands out in 20th century Australian design and furniture manufacture as a dedicated and expert craftsman who displayed originality, innovation and determination to achieve a unique style.

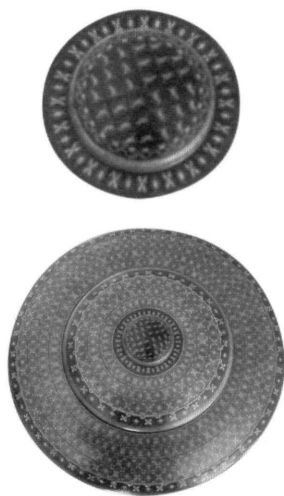


Description of Smokers Table c.1920 F. E. Strangward

The piece was made in Australia c.1920 in Melbourne by F. E. Strangward who described it as mosaicque woodware. It is made from blackwood and covered with tiny pieces of wood ranging from one half to one millimetre square. It has over 2 million of these tiny pieces glued to the body. It has been recently restored and is in original condition.

Dimensions are:

- 60 centimetres high; • 38 centimetres in diameter; • 113 centimetres circumference;
- 6 small drawers 9 x 9 centimetres; • 3 pull out ashtrays; • a pop up section at the top for storing cigarette paper using a spring system; • 6 different types of wood used.



Silver Napkin Rings of Australian Make and Interest

Kenneth Cavill

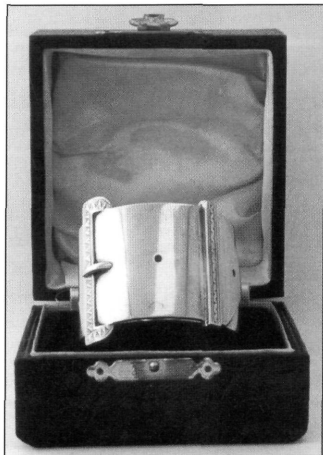


Fig. 1. Henry Steiner

Silver napkin rings have been fashioned in Great Britain, Europe and the United States of America at least from early Victorian times. By the 1890s they were highly popular accessories that regularly graced the family dining table. In the present century their use has waxed and waned. Nowadays paper or 'non-iron' cloth napkins tend to satisfy many family

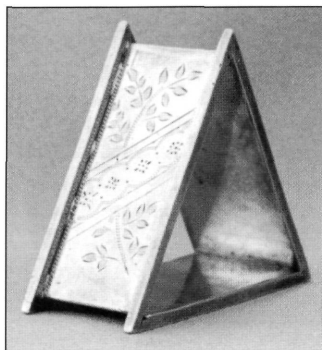


Fig. 4. William Kerr



Fig. 2. (a) Cunningham McFarlane (b) Kilpatrick and Company

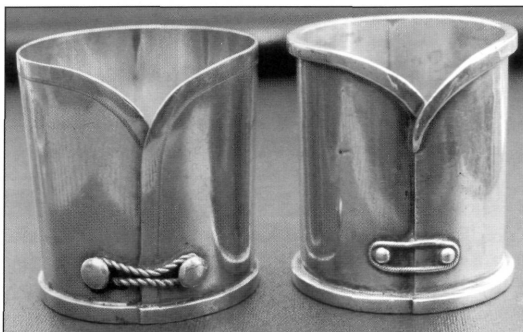


Fig. 3. (a) J. M. Wendt (b) Unknown

needs. More elaborate table napkins are often reserved for special occasions when guests are present and rings are not required.

Even so, the popularity of silver napkin rings as christening and wedding presents continues to the present day. Commemorative items serve to remind the collector of historical events while others are mementoes

of a pleasant visit or holiday, some of a sporting competition.

The earliest recorded examples of British rings were those made by James Barber and William Whitewell of York in 1821 and 1830.¹ From the 1850s napkin rings were regularly listed in the trade catalogues of British, Continental and American silverware manufacturers. The diversity of



Fig. 5. (a) T. T. Jones and Son (b) J. M. Wendt (c) A. L. Brunkhorst



Fig. 6. Thomas Gaunt

these rings reflects stylistic changes from the Victorian era to the present. The early British and European wares² were soon complemented by an interesting range of American silverplated figural napkin rings. These highly ornamental pieces of Victoriana were as much table deco-



Fig. 9. Unknown

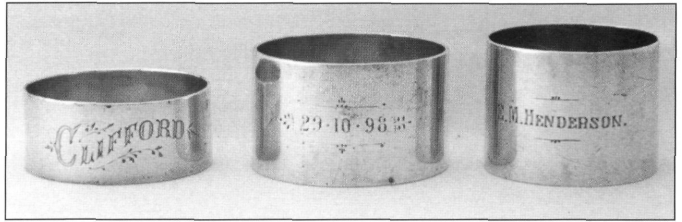


Fig. 7. (a) E. Fischer (b) G. Bradley and Son (c) Green Bros



Fig. 8. Kilpatrick and Company

ration as napkin holders.³ Rings of Chinese origin were exported from the 1850s.⁴ While most of the Chinese export silver was destined for the American and European markets, numerous items including napkin rings have found their way to Australia. Keen collectors will soon note however that the vast majority of imported rings found in Australia are British.

Silver napkin rings of Australian origin are known from the 1870s, some could have been fashioned prior

to this.⁵ Rings bearing the distinctive marks of 19th century Australian silversmiths are highly collectable.⁶ One of the early pieces, illustrated in Fig. 1, is marked for Henry Steiner of Adelaide. This finely crafted ring is shaped in the form of a belt, the applied buckle is hand-engraved. It closely resembles one by Rawlings and Summers of London, 1866 (see ref. 2).

Two fine silver rings, c. 1870-80, the first by Cunningham McFarlane of Melbourne and the second by

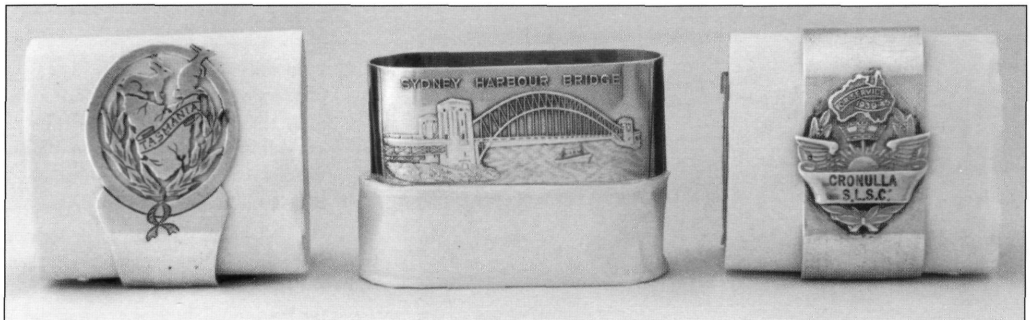


Fig. 10. (a) Taylor and Sharp (b) Prouds (c) Angus and Coote



Fig. 11. (a) W.J. Sanders (b) Tilbury and Lewis (c) Tilbury and Lewis (d) S. Schlank and Company

Kilpatrick and Company also of Melbourne, are shown in Fig. 2. Both have applied beaded rims and extensive gallery decoration. The "Good Luck" ring is further embellished with gold flowers and leaves in high Victorian style. Two large, elaborately shaped rings are shown in Fig. 3, the first being marked for J. M. Wendt of Adelaide, c. 1880. Each is fashioned in the form of a cloak collar. The large, substantial triangular-shaped ring (Fig. 4) by William Kerr of Sydney, c. 1880, has applied rims and is decorated in the Aesthetic Movement manner. A later ring (see Fig. 5, centre) by J. M. Wendt, c. 1895, is similarly patterned and in addition, has a large double-diamond shaped cartouche with an engraved border. In contrast, a well finished ring of the same period by A. L. Brunkhorst of Adelaide has minimal beaded deco-

ration to the rims (Fig. 5). It is typical of the unadorned silver produced in Brunkhorst's workshop c. 1890-1910.

A silver ring by T. T. Jones and Son of Sydney, c. 1885, is also shown in Fig. 5. It has an engraved floral pattern, the large cartouches being decorated with Art Nouveau-like borders. The pair of rings by Thomas Gaunt of Melbourne, c. 1885, displayed in their original case (Fig. 6), have an embossed flower and leaf pattern, the

shield-like cartouches are initialed.

A number of plain rings rely on the engravers' monograms for embellishment (see Figs. 7&8). The first of these, a small ring by E. Fischer of Geelong, c. 1885, is stylistically engraved: "Clifford". The second ring by George Bradley and Son of Geelong is dated: "29/10/98". The third is by Green Bros of Newcastle (Fig. 7). It is engraved

with a surname and initials, possibly it belonged to a college student. Each of these plain rings appear to have been well used. The interesting pair of heavy rings by Kilpatrick and Company that are shown in Fig. 8 have sizeable monograms. The first ring forms a sleeve to the second which is inscribed: "Xmas, 1900".

A late 19th century presentation ring with applied scalloped rims (see Fig. 9) has minimal decoration flanking the central shield that is inscribed: "30-10-70 SILVER WEDDING 30-



Fig. 12. Stokes and Sons



Fig. 13. (a) Stokes and Sons (b) Stokes and Sons (c) Tilbury and Lewis



Fig. 14. Stokes and Sons

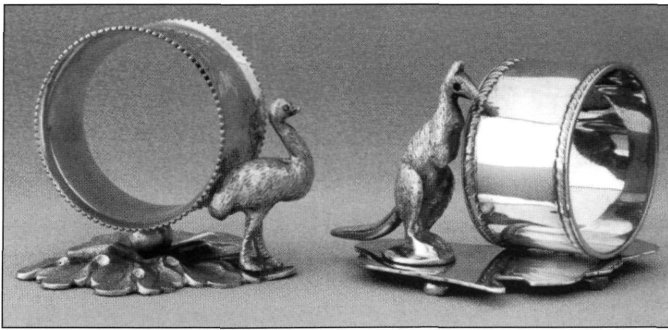


Fig. 15. (a) Stokes and Sons (b) Phoenix Manufacturing Company



Fig. 16. (a) S. Schlank and Company (attr.) (b) J. Dixon and Sons (c) Stokes and Sons

10-95". The maker of this large sterling silver ring is not known.

A novel napkin holder by Taylor and Sharp of Hobart, c. 1900, has a pierced and engraved pattern showing a map of Tasmania in cameo, surmounted by two rabbits (Fig. 10). This piece is attributed to J. C. Taylor and may well have been intended as a christening gift.⁷ Much small silver has been produced in Arts and Crafts style in Australia from the turn of the century. Well known makers have included J. W. R. and J. A. B. Linton of Perth and Harold Sargison of Hobart. Unfortunately, napkin rings fashioned in this manner have not been available for illustration.

Silver rings that commemorate special events include those designed for the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1932, in the midst of the Great Depression. The ring, pro-

duced for Prouds of Sydney, is shown in Fig. 10 (centre). Commemorative wares including spoons and napkin rings were also made for the occasion by G. & E. Rodd of Melbourne. At the conclusion of the Second World War, the Surf Life Saving Association recognised the service of its members in the armed forces with the presentation of sterling silver napkin rings suitably inscribed for individual clubs (see Fig. 10). They were made by Angus and Coote of Sydney.

Many napkin rings are affordable mementoes and souvenirs. Enamelled badges representing the crests of the Commonwealth and States have been applied to sterling and electroplated silver rings from the Federation era onwards. A multitude of 20th century silver rings show the enamelled crests and badges of schools, associations and sporting clubs (see Fig. 11).

In the period between the World Wars, Australian shipping lines had a virtual monopoly of the interstate and much of the Pacific Islands passenger trade. Quality souvenir wares were made for various shipping companies than plying the Pacific and Australian routes. These items, decorated with an enamelled badge showing the name of the ship and flag of the line, included napkin rings, spoons, paper knives, etc. Angus and Coote manufactured the larger proportion of these mementoes, usually in electroplated nickel silver (EPNS). They are reminders of a more leisurely era of travel.

Arguably, Stokes and Sons of Melbourne are the best known manufacturer of domestic silverware from the 1890s to the 1960s.⁸ Their tablewares, produced in quantity in EPNS were also available in sterling silver. An extensive range of sterling silver rings bearing Stokes' characteristic marks were made throughout the first half of the century (see Figs. 12, 13 & 14). Many of the rings have die-stamped leaf patterns flanking a central cartouche. The novel folding ring (Fig. 13, centre) doubles as a hook that may be affixed to the wearer's waistcoat, the spring-loaded clip then holds the napkin in place. The pierced, shaped die-stamped rings shown in Fig. 14 appear to have been very popular. The elaborately decorated ring with applied beaded rims (Fig. 12) has a stylised floral pattern, die-stamped and hand-finished. It is inscribed: "18/8/12". Stokes' many silver rings of late Victorian design include one that has the company's "Koala" silver mark c. 1950, and an inscription for 1954 (Fig. 13, left). In contrast, Stokes have also manufactured plain rings (e.g. Fig. 19, centre).

Australian figural rings came into prominence in the 1920s. The cast or die-struck figure that holds the napkin ring in a vertical position is

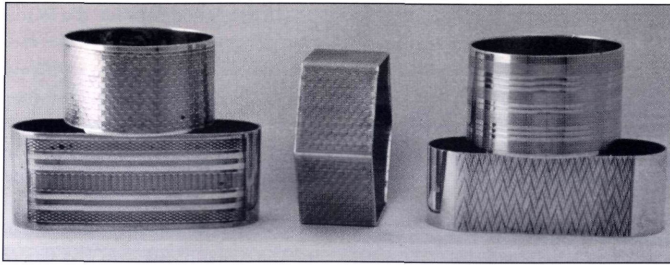


Fig. 17. (a) F. J. Mole (b) W. J. Sanders for Hardy Bros
(c) Magnus Goldring (d) Dunklings (e) G. & E. Rodd

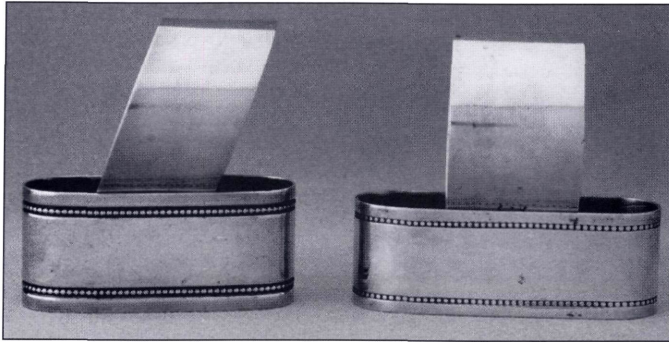


Fig. 18. (a) F. J. Mole for Walker & Hall – Australia (b) T. Gaunt and Company
(c) F. J. Mole (d) Tilbury and Lewis

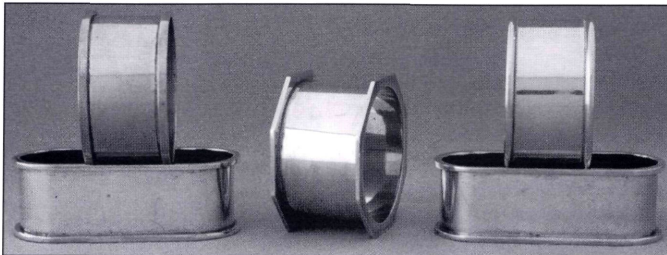


Fig. 19. (a) W. J. Sanders (b) F. J. Mole (c) G. & E. Rodd (d) Stokes and Sons (e) G. & E. Rodd

likely to be an emu, kangaroo or kookaburra. More elaborate pieces have a map of Australia or leaf base (see Figs. 15&16). These decorative rings, usually found in EPNS, were made by Stokes and Sons, Tilbury and Lewis, the Phoenix Manufacturing Company and others. They are keenly sought by Australiana collectors.

It should be noted that British, as well as American figural rings have been made from the early 1900s. The

British pieces were designed for export to Australia, North America and elsewhere – the animals varied from kangaroos to squirrels. The silverplated ring shown in Fig. 16 (centre) is supported by a squirrel, cast in Britannia metal (EPBM). It is marked for the maker, James Dixon and Sons of Sheffield and for the retailer, A. Saunders of Sydney. Was the “squirrel” ring accidentally sent to Australia? It was presented in 1908,

as “2nd Prize Rapid” by the B. M. R. C. – possibly the Botany-Maroubra Rifle Club. It predates the above Australian made wares.

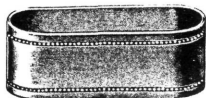
By the 1920s many manufacturers of electroplated silverwares were making the ubiquitous napkin ring in sterling silver as well as EPNS. G. & E. Rodd, Stokes and Sons, Tilbury and Lewis and the Phoenix Manufacturing Company of Melbourne, Angus and Coote of Sydney and S. Schlank and Company of Adelaide are representative of this large group of manufacturers. “Lewbury” napkin ring⁵ are illustrated (see p. 105).

In the same period, well known manufacturing silversmiths including W. J. Sanders of Sydney, Magnus Goldring of Sydney, T. Gaunt and Company of Melbourne and F. J. Mole of Brisbane were also producing sterling rings in quantity. Rings produced by the various manufacturing silversmiths and electroplaters, predominantly from the 1920s to the 1960s, tend to be of plain form. These round, flat (D-ended) or hexagonal rings may show engine-turned or minimal roller-impressed decoration (see Figs. 17&18). Some have applied rims – plain or scalloped (Figs. 19 & 20). The marks are usually those of the manufacturers or of the retail jewellery houses that they supplied.⁶

During the 1970s and 1980s there has been a resurgence in the design and making of Australiana silverware by craft silversmiths. The recently designed napkin rings by Tony Kean of Bendigo (Fig. 21) and by R. J. L. Martin of Sydney (Fig. 22) are representative of fine current craft work.

That the 19th and early 20th century napkin rings bearing Australian makers’ marks are comparable in design to British wares of the same period is not surprising. The workshops of the Australian manufacturers were often supervised by skilled

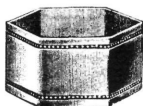
LEWBURY SERVIETTE RINGS



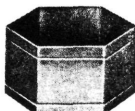
LEWBURY
No. 1.
Wrapped, 3/-;
Boxed, 3/2;
Sterling Silver, 10/-.



LEWBURY
No. 474.
E.P.N.S.
Boxed, 2/9.



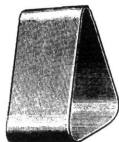
LEWBURY
No. 9.
Wrapped, 3/-;
Boxed, 3/2;
Sterling Silver, 10/-.



LEWBURY
No. 9X.
Wrapped, 3/-;
Boxed, 3/2;
Sterling Silver, 10/-.



LEWBURY
No. 482.
E.P.N.S.
Boxed, 2/9.



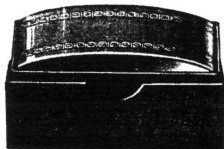
LEWBURY
No. 306.
Wrapped, 3/-;
Boxed, 3/2;
Sterling Silver, 10/-.



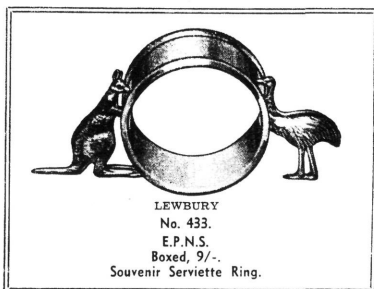
LEWBURY
No. 1X.
Wrapped, 3/-;
Boxed, 3/2;
Sterling Silver, 10/-.



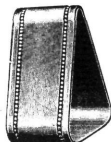
LEWBURY
No. 486.
E.P.N.S.
Boxed, 2/9.



LEWBURY
No. 478.
E.P.N.S.
Boxed, 2/9.



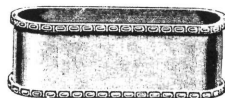
LEWBURY
No. 433.
E.P.N.S.
Boxed, 9/-.
Souvenir Serviette Ring.



LEWBURY
No. 307.
Wrapped, 3/-;
Boxed, 3/2;
Sterling Silver, 10/-.



LEWBURY
No. 2.
Wrapped, 3/-;
Boxed, 3/2;
Sterling Silver, 10/-.



LEWBURY
No. 23.
Wrapped, 7/6;
Boxed, 7/8;
Sterling Silver, 19/6.



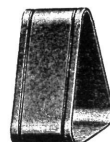
LEWBURY
No. 5.
Wrapped, 3/-;
Boxed, 3/2;
Sterling Silver, 8/-.



LEWBURY
No. 5X.
Wrapped, 3/-;
Boxed, 3/2;
Sterling Silver, 8/-.



LEWBURY
No. 24.
Wrapped, 7/6;
Boxed, 7/8;
Sterling Silver, 15/6.



LEWBURY
No. 308.
Wrapped, 3/-;
Boxed, 3/2;
Sterling Silver, 10/-.

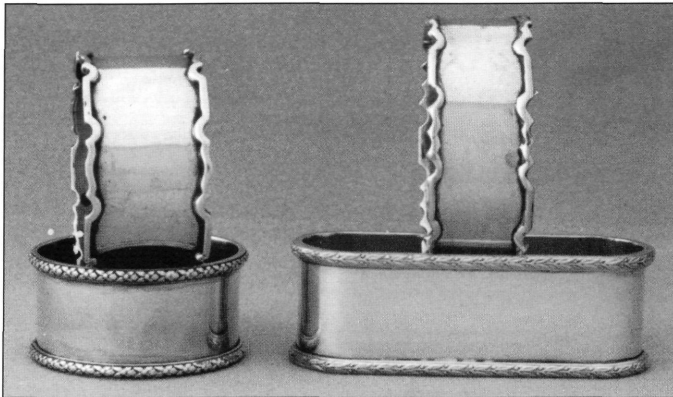


Fig. 20. (a) W.J. Sanders (b) Magnus Goldring for Hardy Bros
(c) & (d) G. & E. Rodd

craftsmen recruited from Birmingham or London. The early cloak collar ring by J. M. Wendt (cf. Fig. 3) is one of a few considered to be of Continental style. Wendt's later example (Fig. 5, centre) is decorated in the manner of the Aesthetic Movement. However, the majority of silver rings shown belong to the period 1900 to 1940. They were designed and produced in quantity by the then well known Australian manufacturers.

The making of a plain silver napkin ring is not a difficult task, being readily accomplished by an aspiring apprentice. The making of an elaborately decorated ring requires considerable expertise. The numerous napkin rings that have been illustrated including those with Australiana motifs, are useful and relatively inexpensive collectables.

Acknowledgement

The assistance of many collectors who have provided Australian napkin rings for illustration is greatly appreciated.

References and Footnotes

1. Clayton, Michael 1971, *The Collector's Dictionary of the Silver and Gold*



Fig. 22. R. J. L. Martin

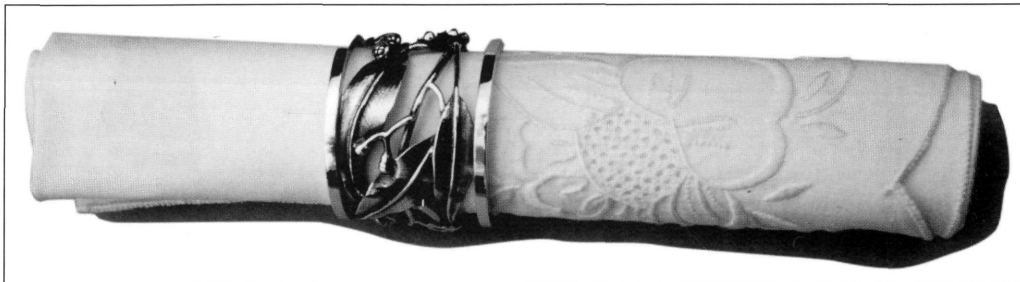


Fig. 21. Tony Kean (Photograph courtesy A. Kean)

of Great Britain and North America, p. 190 (The World Publishing Company, New York)

2. Lachmann, Ole 1981, "Silver Napkin Rings" in *The Best of Antique Collecting*, pp. 76-80 (Antique Collector's Club Ltd, Woodbridge, Suffolk).
3. Catalogue: *Victorian Silverplated Holloware*, 1972 (American Historical Catalog Collection, The Pyne Press, Princeton, N. J.)
4. Forbes, H. A. C, Kernan, J.D. and Wilkins, R. S. 1975, *Chinese Export Silver*, p. 225 (Museum of the American China Trade, Milton, Mass.)
5. Silver bullion was in short supply in the Colonies in the 1850s and 1860s, although gold was plentiful. It is unlikely that silver would have been used to any extent for napkin rings.
6. Marks of 19th and 20th century Australian makers and retailers are to be found in *Australian Jewellers, Gold & Silversmiths - Makers & Marks*, 1992 (C. G. C. Gold Pty Ltd, PO Box 322, Roseville, NSW)
7. A comparable napkin holder with enamelled decoration has been described. It was made by J.C. Taylor following his move to Perth, WA. (See Erickson, Dorothy 1993, *Australiana*, 15 (2), p.43.)
8. Cavill, Kenneth 1986, "The Silverware of Stokes and Sons", *Australiana*, 8 (2), pp. 37-41.
9. Catalogue: *Lewbury Trophies and Plate*, c. 1932, p.42, (Tilbury and Lewis Pty Ltd, Richmond, VIC.)

The Australiana Society Meeting

1 August 1996

Caressa Crouch

This well attended lecture illustrated the interest members have towards gaining information on the dating of Australian furniture. The lecture entitled "English Furniture Pattern Books and Australian Furniture Design" by Robert Griffin a curator of the Historic House Trust of NSW, was well illustrated with slides from both original furniture pattern books and examples of Australian furniture to emphasise their usage.

Robert Griffin pointed out that many of the furniture pattern books and catalogues produced by English cabinetmakers and furniture wholesalers over the 19th century had considerable circulation in Australia and provided the main sources of patterns, styles and decorative details for local cabinetmakers. While researching these pattern books it became apparent that Australia did not lag behind England in the latest styles as had previously been thought, with the newest styles only a 6 months boat voyage away.

The Historic Houses Trust of NSW has established at their headquarters at "Lyndhurst", Glebe a library based on furnishings along with a collection of fabrics, wallpapers, etc. used in NSW houses, where many of the early and rare pattern books can be found. Another well recommended source for designs from original pattern books is the publication from the Antique Collectors Club *Pictorial Dictionary of British 19th Century Furniture Design* which reproduces the original plates from the many publications.

As was shown, pattern books were used from the very early years

of the 19th century with a settler on the Hawkesberry River in 1802 having a copy of the 1793 edition of the *Cabinet Maker's Book of Prices and Designs for Cabinet-Work* by Thomas Shearer and the Hepplewhite firm. Various settlers used such guides as, John Taylors' 1825 *The Upholsterers' and Cabinet Makers Pocket Assistant* and George Smith's 1826 *The Cabinet Maker and Upholsters' Guide* for example.

Robert Griffin told us that one of the most influential pattern books in NSW was Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* published in seven editions from 1833 to 1869, and he illustrated various plates with existing pieces, such as an Elizabethan style hall chair made for Government House NSW in 1845.

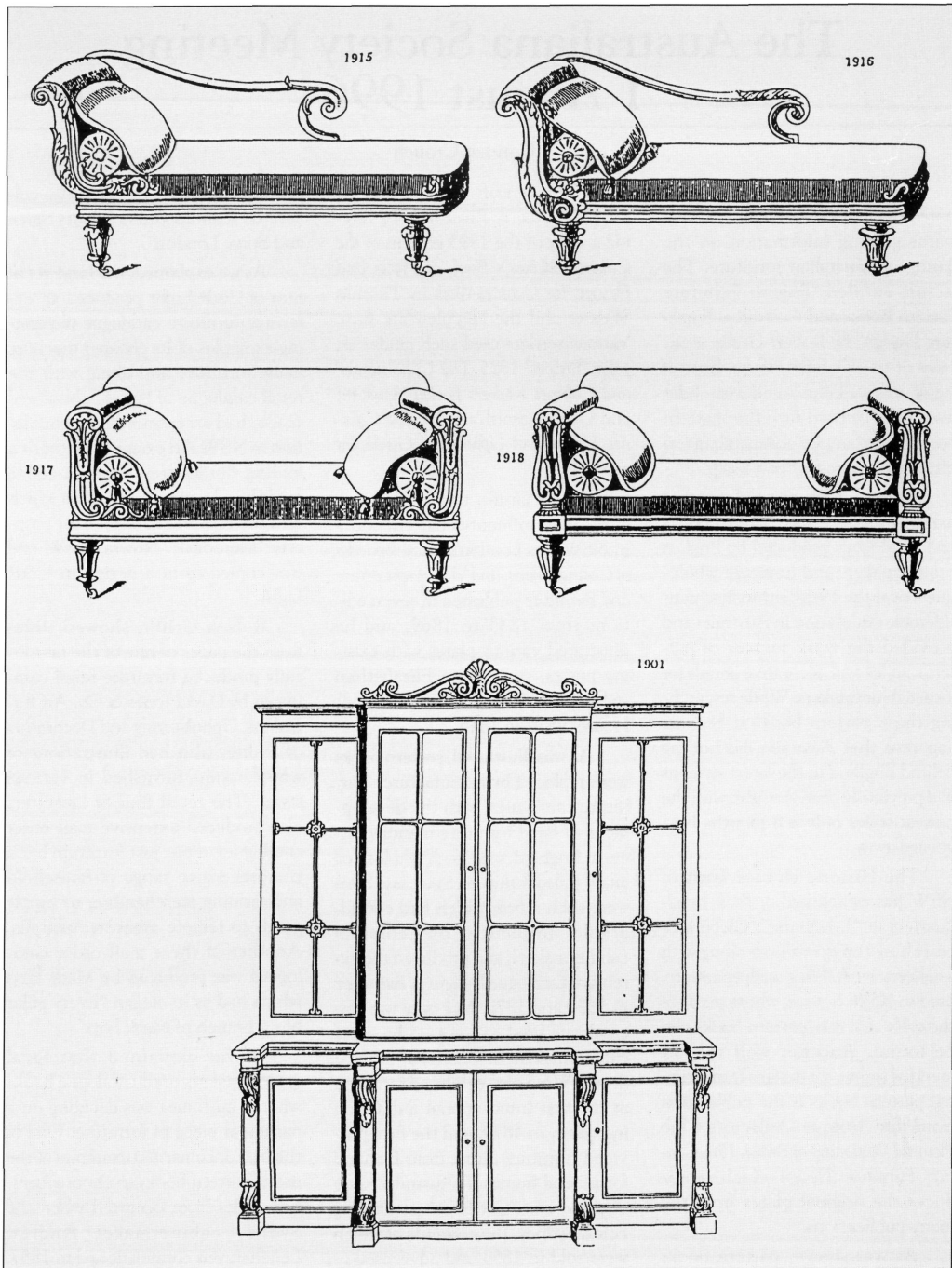
As was illustrated, pattern books were replaced by manufacturers furniture catalogues, with the development of large furniture manufacturers in England, who both wholesaled and retailed furniture. Smee and Sons were such a firm which had considerable influence on colonial cabinetmakers, and produced the extensive catalogue *Designs of Furniture* in 1850 and 1870. Not only was this catalogue used and copied by other cabinetmakers in Australia, but the firm of W&S also exhibited furniture at the first International Exhibition in Sydney in 1879, and the firm provided furniture direct from England for several homes in Australia. One of these was "Carthona" at Darling Point, Sydney, the contents of which were sold in 1853 and advertised as "The whole of the furniture was made

expressly to order by the justly celebrated manufacturers Messrs Smee and Sons, London".

As we explained, the large retail firm of C&R Light produced an extensive furniture catalogue illustrating examples of its cheaper machine made furniture and along with the retail catalogue of James Schoolbred & Co. had an extraordinary circulation in NSW. An example for this is a folding library step chair in cedar, made by a local cabinetmaker, which is in the Historic Houses Trust property "Meroogal", Nowra, NSW, and was copied from a design in C&R Light.

Robert Griffin showed slides from the pages of one of the first locally produced furniture retail catalogues by David Jones & Co. Art furnishers, Upholsterers and Decorators of Sydney also had illustrations of whole rooms furnished in various styles. The retail firm of Lassetters also produced extensive mail order catalogues of not just furniture but a comprehensive range of household and farming merchandise, to supply goods to remote areas in Australia. Another of these mail order catalogues was produced by Mark Foy's which had as its slogan "Every pillar box a branch of Mark Foy's".

It was explained that local cabinetmakers used catalogue books when a customer was deciding on a particular piece of furniture. One of the best documented examples of the use of pattern books to choose furniture styles from occurred when the Sydney cabinetmaker Andrew Lenehan was commissioned in 1857, by Governor and Lady Denison to



Illustrations from Loudon's 'Encyclopaedia' (1833).

supply furniture and fittings for the dining room and two of the State rooms for Government House, Sydney.

Documentary evidence of this remains in the records of the Commission on Inquiry which was set up to inquire into the reasons Lenehan was not paid for the work undertaken. This did not occur until 1862, after Lenehan had been involved in lengthy legal proceedings in an effort to be paid the full amount. The Denison's would only pay the amount on the original quote instead of the final bill which contained an extra amount for the more expensive furniture designs manufactured.

The Commission of Inquiry held an inquiry into the whole process of supplying furniture to Government

House as well as interviewing other Sydney cabinetmakers. Lenehan described how the choice of styles and materials occurred as in the extract he states "He ordered a new table, a new sideboard for the dining room as well as two dinner wagons and a side table to hold the spare leaves of the dining table ... I sent patterns of carpets, patterns of silks and some articles of furniture, chairs etc. small furniture that was portable enough to send and all my design books. I sent them in the evening and I called the next day. I saw Sir William Denison and Lady Denison and Mr Alfred Denison, and the Governor selected from the design books, the dining table and gave instructions. They approved of the sideboard as well as the table. Then Sir William Denison

wanted some alterations to the sideboard. H said he wanted a handsome one and would get Mr Dawson (the Government Architect) to furnish a design for it ... The design I received about a week after was different to that in the book. He had first selected one in the book."

As Richard Griffin is a furniture curator at Government House a detailed examination of the disputed designs and the furniture in question was shown to the meeting, as all this furniture still remains at Government House. Recently given to the care of the Historic Houses Trust Robert Griffin then explained the process underway to record the furniture and its history for display to the public. Members appreciated the detailed and descriptive lecture presented.

Book Reviews

Kevin Fahy

W. & D. Hall, *Carter's Collecting Australiana: A Guide to Australian Antique & Collectables*, Kangaroo Press / Carter's Antiques and Collectables Publications, Terry Hills 1995. RRP \$40.00.

In the initial chapter of this publication its authors caution their readers, 'Information in books and magazines is subject to inaccuracy. No author is perfect ... Read everything with slight scepticism.

While this book might appeal 'to the broadest spectrum of collectors' containing 'sufficient basic information to get the beginner started' it is unlikely to find that 'at the other end of the spectrum the experienced collector will be interested in its methods of classification, the manufacturing information, and detailed historical background' the latter being lim-

ited to an occasional 'case study'.

While its references, collecting hints and maintenance recommendations useful, its value lies largely in its excellent illustrations.

This publication deserved far more careful proof-reading to avoid typographical errors in the spelling of several surnames ... As to its Dictionary of Terms, I have yet to see a 'credenza' with 'side drawers and a sloping leather inset top!

However the book deserves the attention of Australiana collectors who will be interested in the inclusion of a current price guide to items illustrated in this publication (with the exception of those in private collections).

Peter Cuffley, *Cottage Style in Australia A Practical Guide to Achieving*

a Timeless Country Look The Five Mile Press, Victoria 1996. RRP \$39.95 (ill, 208pp.)

The author is well known for his several publications on Australian domestic architecture, traditional gardens, antiques and social history. He was the first Curator of History at Sovereign Hill, Ballarat. This attractive and readable book contains a wealth of illustrations, many drawn from contemporary catalogues. Topics range from cottage furniture, fabrics, wallpapers colour schemes and collectables to light fittings, knick-knacks and cottage crafts.

The combination of scholarly research and practical advice will appeal both to collectors, renovators and all those interested in Australia's social history. Highly recommended.

New Publication – Working with Silver

The Story of a Practical Chemist's Adventures

Robert J. J. Martin

The book describes the problems encountered by a chemist when he undertook to do some silversmithing during his retirement and how these problems were solved. An innovative process used was deep drawing and redrawing. In deep drawing a flat disc is forced through a die to produce a seamless cup with a depth approximately half its diameter in one step and only annealing operation. Such a process has been used industrially for some decades using various metals including sterling silver but it is not described in the silversmithing manuals although it is described in more general books on metal working. It takes approximately three hours to produce a cup 200mm in diameter and 95mm deep. To produce such a cup by raising with a hammer on an iron stake is a labour intensive operation and would require considerably longer time and many annealing operations. So far as the author is aware no deep drawing press is available for the small operator and so the author has had to design and manufacture his own equipment.

The soldering or annealing of sterling silver articles in air with a gas flame causes the oxidation of the copper in the silver to form firestain or black copper oxide. To remove this firestain by abrasive methods and polishing is a labour intensive operation resulting in substantial losses of silver. In some cases the manufacturers hide the firestain by covering with an electroplated layer of silver. Bright annealing is used on an industrial scale to prevent the oxidative despoliation of metals by using an inert or reducing atmosphere in a closed container. This process is mentioned in only one silversmithing manual but no details are given. The author has designed and made equipment so that it is possible to anneal silverware without the formation of firestain. As a spin off is possible to reduce the firestain to metal and minimize the loss of silver by abrasive action by using a reducing atmosphere containing small amounts of hydrogen.

The extensive literature on the crystal structure of sterling silver and the changes that are brought about

by heating operations such as soldering and annealing are reviewed. This is a subject which is not dealt with in silversmithing manuals. The properties of the sterling silver are dependent upon the heat treatment to which the metal is subjected and are in no way related to the mechanical or manual shaping process because soldering or annealing operations transform the metal to the same common state. By using an adequate temperature control it is possible either to anneal the silver without the formation of firestain and undue crystal growth or to harden the metal by tempering.

The book is designed for the established silversmith who is interested in innovative practises and who has the facilities to construct his own equipment. The book should be useful to the silver collector who is interested in knowing how the silverware is made. Apart from the innovative practices mentioned above traditional methods are also described. Accepted terminology is used throughout the book and every attempt has been made to explain each process in simple language. As an aid to this latter aim an 8 page glossary has been included in the book. Many photographs of the seamless holloware constructed by the author are given together with a brief description of the method of construction.

Apart from the printing of the colour photographs and the cover and the binding, the book has been printed and published by the author. Recommended retail price \$60. (Inquires 49 Minnamurra Avenue Pymble NSW 2073).

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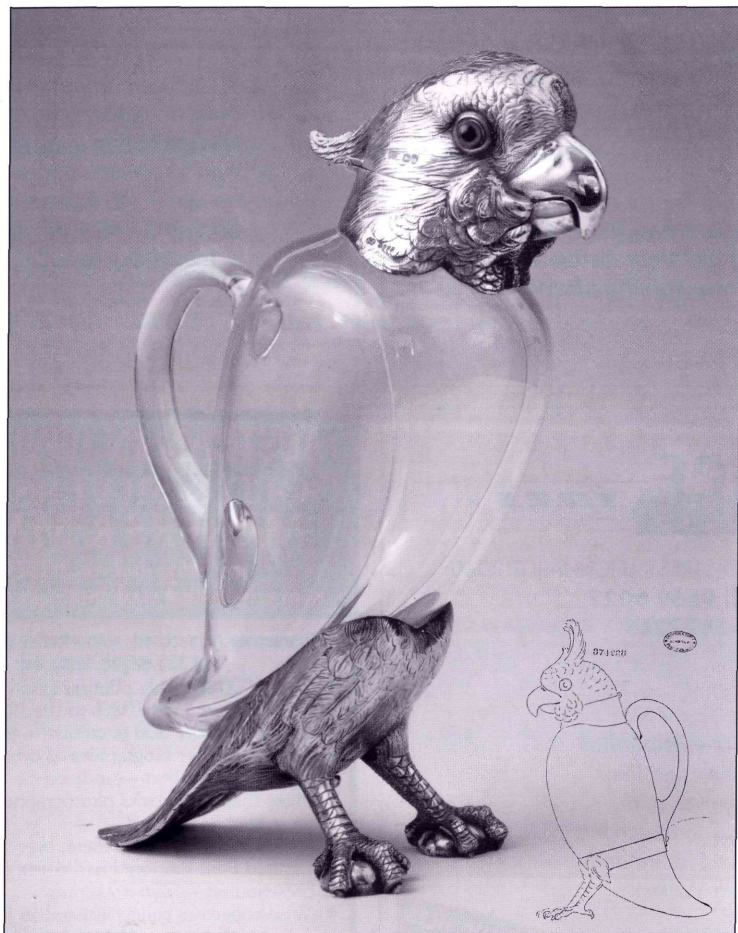
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