

# Australiana

February 2012 vol. 34 no. 1







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George Alexander Gilbert (1815 England – Australia 1889?), *Panning for gold on the Australian goldfields, Mt Alexander Victoria*. Watercolour, ink & pencil, signed and dated 'G Gilbert 1852', detail. Private collection

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*Gold!*

An extraordinary

*colonial image*

Andrew Morris identifies a vibrant watercolour of the goldfields as a scene drawn by George Alexander Gilbert in 1852 on the Mount Alexander goldfields near Castlemaine in Central Victoria, and traces some images which, he argues, are derived from the watercolour.



## ANDREW MORRIS

Original pictorial depictions of Australia's colonial life and times during our prosperous gold rush past are mostly held publicly, so it is refreshing to illustrate a previously unrecorded example now in a private collection (**plate 1**).

This watercolour, ink and pencil drawing was auctioned by Bonham's, London on 13 December 2006, lot 321. Dated 1852 and described as 'Circle of George Alexander Gilbert', it depicts a lively Central Victorian goldfield scene, arguably on the Mount Alexander (Forest Creek) diggings near Castlemaine. It would have been initially sketched, or possibly completely rendered, *en plein air*.

By June 1852 at the height of the rush, 5,000–6,000 diggers per week were arriving at Bendigo. The road to Mt Alexander was 'one continuous line of vehicles and passengers' and the estimated population of the field reached 40,000.<sup>1</sup> At 'Forest Creek' (Mt Alexander), William Westgarth wrote 'the diggings formed comparatively a strip of the valley; here the whole scene before us was one vast diggings'. They embraced almost a hundred gullies and flats. It was said in 1852 'doubtless without a rival for extent and richness of yield'.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the customs and endeavours that could be observed on the diggings are depicted. Mining methods include panning for gold directly from the creek, cradling dirt to produce the heavier gold and digging with a pick and shovel to extract the precious metal directly from the ground. The importance of water as both a source of gold and in the process of mining is demonstrated by the throng of men congregating in and around the creek.

The hustle, bustle and vitality of the diggings are wonderfully depicted as the men strive to discover the gold that could transform their lives forever. Some wear top hats favoured by well-dressed gentlemen from the city, while others sport the wide brimmed hats typically associated with country folk. A man smoking a pipe can be seen lower left, as can blue-striped shirts either being worn or drying out. A digger indulging in a well-earned siesta leans against a tree. There is no hint of Chinese miners, as they arrived essentially *en masse* later, during 1854.<sup>3</sup>

Two uniformed colonial troopers and their horses are shown in the upper centre (**plate 2**). These are Aboriginal or native constabulary, wearing their police caps, corduroy pants and red shirts, which were for a period their

uniform in the field in Victoria; their distinctive tufts of thick dark hair peak out from under their police caps. The Native Police Corps was the sole body that enforced the law under the authority of the Governor and Gold Fields Commissioners during the early years of the gold rushes.<sup>4</sup> They were disbanded in 1853, a key to dating this work to 1852.

The watercolour is signed lower right 'Gilbert 1852'; the initial is indistinct, it may be a 'g', 'j', or perhaps an 's' (**plate 3**). Other works signed by George Alexander Gilbert show that his signatures vary. Gilbert's first initial is drawn as a lower case 'g', some of which look like a 'j' or even an 's'. I believe that this initial is a 'g' (for George) scrawled in lower case in the artist's unique quirky style, with a top to the 'g' looping back to the right and down as found in his other artworks.

### George Alexander Gilbert

George Alexander Gilbert (1815–1889?) was a watercolour painter, sketcher, professional photographer, lithographer, art teacher, inventor, assistant gold commissioner and police magistrate, who was born 3 December 1815 in Portsmouth, England, eldest son of ten children.<sup>5</sup> His father Joseph Francis Gilbert was a landscape painter who exhibited at the Royal Academy (among other institutions) and taught George painting.

Gilbert arrived in Melbourne during November 1841 on board the *Diamond* with his wife Ann and brother, Francis Edward Gilbert, also an artist. George immediately established himself as a drawing master teaching at schools, taking private pupils and holding drawing and lithography classes at the Melbourne Mechanics Institute. He also taught dancing and gave drawing lessons at his wife's seminary.

He was co-founder and co-editor of the *Port Phillip Magazine* (Victoria's first magazine) during 1843 and drew and put on stone some of its lithographs. However the magazine was short lived and in 1844 Gilbert was declared bankrupt. That year he lithographed the illustrations for Thomas Ham's *Australian Drawing Book* and in 1846, Ham printed Gilbert's work.

Reputedly Gilbert held the first art exhibition in Victoria. Gilbert is the earliest known resident photographer in Melbourne, advertising from his home on Eastern Hill during late November 1845 to early February 1846, claiming to have developed a new technique for producing better daguerreotype likenesses. Gilbert found drawing brought

### Opposite page:

1

George  
Alexander Gilbert  
(1815 England –  
Australia 1889?),  
*Panning for gold on the  
Australian goldfields,  
Mt Alexander Victoria.*  
Watercolour, ink &  
pencil, signed and dated  
'G Gilbert 1852', image  
25.0 x 35.0 cm.  
Private collection



2

George Alexander Gilbert (1815 England – Australia 1889?), *Panning for gold on the Australian goldfields, Mt Alexander Victoria.*

Detail – Native Troopers on horseback, wearing red shirts, with their distinctive tufts of dark thicker hair appearing from underneath their police caps

3

George Alexander Gilbert (1815 England – Australia 1889?), *Panning for gold on the Australian goldfields, Mt Alexander Victoria.* Detail of signature



‘grist to the mill’, John Cotton wrote, adding ‘he is a very intelligent person and will talk from morning to night, always in a fluent and agreeable manner’.

Gilbert held two exhibitions at the Melbourne Mechanics Institute. The first during 1847 consisted of his own ‘crayon’ (pastel) landscape views of Port Phillip and surrounds, the second in 1849 included the work of his pupils. The former was described in the *Port Phillip Patriot* of 15 April as ‘decidedly the best delineation of Australian scenery yet produced, possessing the semi-tropical peculiarities of colouring in depth and tone, which the description of crayon used and manufactured by the artist (Mr Gilbert) alone can communicate’.

During March 1849, when the governor viewed and praised some of his original drawings, Gilbert was reported as being about to publish a pictorial work on Victoria called *Australia Felix Illustrated* but this is not known to have eventuated. In 1851 he participated in the Victorian Industrial Society’s first exhibition, showing ‘beautiful crayon drawings’ of well-known scenery in Melbourne and

Geelong, which were highly commended by the judges ‘on account of their intrinsic merit....’.

Competing with his various cultural pursuits was Gilbert’s obsessive interest in mesmerism and clairvoyance. He established a reputation as a lecturer and demonstrated his clairvoyant skills to large, enthusiastic audiences.

More pertinent here is that as soon as the Victorian gold rush fever took hold during 1851, George Alexander Gilbert departed Melbourne and headed to Bendigo. In February 1852 Gilbert was appointed assistant gold commissioner and police magistrate for the Bendigo area (whereupon he achieved great popularity with the diggers), but due to some hullabaloo resigned during May 1853. Back in Melbourne he revived his artistic pursuits.

A silver tea service presented to him by the Bendigo diggers and a salver commemorating his work as secretary of the Port Phillip Academical Institution were displayed in a Melbourne shop window in 1854. He died some time before 1889, when referred to as ‘the late’ George Alexander Gilbert, but his final years are mostly buried in obscurity.

### Gilbert on the gold fields

By May 1852 assistant gold commissioner George Alexander Gilbert was in charge at Bullock Creek (about 15 miles southwest of Bendigo), where he had pitched his tents on the ridge overlooking the creek and the workings below, almost in the centre of the valley – a scene reminiscent of the 1852 watercolour.<sup>6</sup> Probably, the fine view it afforded appealed to the former drawing master. Gilbert was not at this time in charge of the field, being senior to his fellow commissioners only in length of service. The Bullock Creek field was still administratively part of Mount Alexander with its assistant commissioners directly responsible to Commissioner Wright.

A tall, handsome man in his late thirties, Gilbert was extremely popular with the diggers in his charge – a popularity that was partly his undoing. Panton describes him as ‘a very good fellow, cheerful and a capital officer’ and he was probably the only commissioner ever to earn the approval of William Howitt. ‘Though he was an officer in authority’ says Howitt, ‘his intercourse with the people was as simple and devoid of official starch and so-called dignity, as possible. Yet no man was more readily and effectively obeyed’. Coming from Howitt who found commissioners, as a type, ‘the most extraordinary collection of incompetent, empty-headed boys ever met with ... in fact, a burlesque of authority’, it was rare praise indeed.

Gilbert was held in such high esteem that when he was about to be transferred from Bendigo Creek the diggers set about presenting him with a solid gold pint-cup filled with nuggets. Startled by such unprecedented adulation, the Government 'pre-emptively forbade him to receive it'.

However, Gilbert's popularity bred ill-feeling and jealousy among his subordinates and fellow commissioners. 'A great favourite with the public', wrote Panton, 'he was not such a favourite with the men in the camp'. On his return to Mt Alexander (suggesting Gilbert had been at Mt Alexander pre-May 1852) he fell foul of Wright through criticism of his administration there and his erstwhile friend, La Trobe, incensed by such presumption, delivered a sharp admonishment. He resigned soon after and was free to accept his cup of gold. During the first week of October 1852, Captain Bull arrived on Bendigo Creek to replace Gilbert.<sup>7</sup>

The arrival of the commissioners brought some kind of focus to the encampments. The commissioners generally positioned their 'camps' on vantage points overlooking the encampments (precisely what appears drawn in the 1852 watercolour).<sup>8</sup>

Gilbert was in Bendigo (and the general locale) from February 1852 until May 1853, when he returned to Melbourne. Therefore the watercolour may be dated more precisely because Gilbert was assistant gold commissioner from May 1852 to the first week of October 1852, when he was replaced. Naturally he could have painted the scene outside these dates as a recreational pursuit.

Gilbert may have applied artistic licence by depicting a rather grandiose backdrop to this scene that may or may not have been authentic. However the existence of so much detail supports the claim the artist was actually there while the diggers were so feverishly occupied.

George Alexander Gilbert possessed the artistic skill, he had the time, he was in Bendigo and Mt Alexander during 1852 (both in official and unofficial capacities), and at one point was responsible for the Mount Alexander gold field as assistant gold commissioner.

### Related images

Several other images show a remarkably similar gold mining scene. I contend that George Alexander Gilbert intended that his watercolour be copied by his fellow artist and friend, John Skinner Prout. It was then transformed into other engravings, which directly relate to the 1852 Gilbert watercolour.

### 1. J S Prout watercolour

A watercolour by John Skinner Prout (1805–1876) emerged at Christie's King Street London Sale 7652 (Exploration and Travel) 25 September 2008 lot 38, and was purchased by the National Library of Australia (**plate 4**). Essentially extracted from Edwin C. Booth's 1873 book referred to below, Christie's noted:

Soon after leaving the town [Belvoir], the road runs away nearly due south to Beechworth, the chief town of the Ovens gold-fields. Some little distance to the east of the road, and about the same number of miles from Beechworth and Belvoir, is the digging township of Yackandandah. It is built upon one of the tributaries of the Kiewa river. During the wet season, and in the summer, when the snows upon the Bogong Mountains are melting, the Yackandandah Creek becomes a turbid, troubled stream; it rushes impetuously over its bed, and sometimes overflows its banks. The town itself is a pleasant place, surrounded by scenery that would make any district a favourite with its inhabitants. Yackandandah is the chief town of an important district road-board, the boundaries of which extend over an area of nearly four hundred thousand acres. Some ten thousand persons reside within the district, the rateable property of which is estimated to be worth £400,000.

Yackandandah, so far as its gold-bearing properties are concerned, was discovered by one of the many parties of diggers who spread themselves in all directions after the first discovery of gold near Beechworth, at the latter end of the year 1852. Some few miles above Yackandandah is the pleasant little digging town of Stanley – Snake Valley, the prospectors of the country called it. The creek runs from Stanley to Yackandandah, for the most part, between high precipitous banks. The ranges on either side were originally clothed with gigantic and handsomely grown specimens of the white gum; now the sides of the hills are comparatively bare, and the waters of the creek have been diverted from their original channel, and led, by means of flumes and races, round every hill-side, across every flat, and over every gully, in the neighbourhood of which gold could be obtained.

In a previous work [*Another England*, first edition, pp 97-8], I have referred to the gold-diggings of this part of the





4  
 John Skinner Prout  
 (1805–1876), *Alluvial  
 Gold Washing, Mt  
 Alexander goldfields,  
 Victoria* c.1852,  
 watercolour on card,  
 image 26.4 x 39.8 cm,  
 signed l.l. SKINNER  
 PROUT. Collection:  
 National Library of  
 Australia, image nla.  
 pic-vn4496154

Ovens district as follows: “In those far-off mountains, gold-digging is work fit for a man, and if any one tired of the commonplaces of every-day existence desires a life at once pleasant and comfortable, let him set out on a voyage of discovery for other diggings, such as lie between Snake Valley and the Yackandandah. The breeze is as pure as being close up alongside of heaven can make it. The trees shine and shimmer the long year through, and have a beauty of form, a brilliance of foliage, and a majesty of size unknown in less favoured regions; their branches are filled with birds ‘radiant in plumage and prodigal of song,’ and the deep undergrowth of the forests affords shelter to game, that any sportsman who loves to live on the produce of his toil would delight in. It was a merry manner of mining up at the Ovens: no dreary drives to crawl into, or noisome holes to descend. To dam up the waters of a creek, and to turn them among the sweet-smelling flowers

and herbs upon some handy point or conveniently shaped flat, to find gold from the roots of the grass down to the bed-rock, to work in the free air, and with a long-handled shovel to throw the sweet-smelling soil into the still sweeter water, is one of the pleasantest ways of growing rich in the world”.’ (E.C. Booth, *op. cit.*, p 53-4)  
 Prout left Australia in 1848 before the discovery of gold in the colony: ‘The family left for England in June 1848 and settled in London. Over the next twenty-eight years they lived at different addresses in the Camden Town-Kentish Town area. In the summer of 1850 Skinner Prout produced a diorama called *Voyage to Australia* based on his Australian experiences. The views were painted onto glass lantern slides and shown by projection. After the discovery of gold in Australia in the latter part of 1851 he updated this to produce a “moving panorama” (on rollers). This was exhibited over 600 times in London during 1852-53, taken on a three-month tour of the



Plymouth-Torquay area in April-June 1854, and shown again at Leicester Square in 1855.' (J. Kerr, ed., *The Dictionary of Australian Artists*, Melbourne, 1992). In 1850 at the Western Literary and Scientific Institution, Leicester Square, he lectured and exhibited his dioramic views illustrating convict and emigrant life, and the habits of bushrangers and Aborigines in Australia. In 1852 he published *An Illustrated Handbook of the Voyage to Australia* and in 1853 *A Magical Trip to the Gold Regions*; both works led to further exhibitions and ran to several editions. They also suggest that he may have revisited Australia, for he claimed that his sketches were made on the spot.' (*ADB*)

The Prout watercolour formed the basis of an engraving, *Alluvial Gold Washing*, by S. Bradshaw in E.C. Booth, *Australia. Illustrated with Drawings by Skinner Prout, N. Chevalier etc. in two volumes*, London, [n.d.], I, opp. p.54, published 1873.

This Skinner Prout watercolour is similar but not identical to the 1852 watercolour. Based on the following observations, it is a later copy (with alterations):

- Skinner Prout was in Australia 1840-1848 when he returned to London, so was not in Victoria in 1852<sup>9</sup>
- features are lacking from most of Prout's diggers' faces, Gilbert's are skilfully rendered, suggesting Prout was not an actual spectator as Gilbert is likely to have been
- generally Gilbert has a more refined and delineated approach when using watercolour, pen and ink
- Prout's troopers no longer look native
- Prout's horses are relatively poorly drawn
- Prout has added framing foliage to his version lower right foreground
- Prout has flattened the mountains in the background
- Prout has added smoke more noticeably streaming from the pipe in the foreground, and certainly more smoke from the camp fire upper centre.
- Christie's naming the Prout scene as Yackandandah, which in turn is superficially based upon reference to E.C. Booth's 1873-text, is incorrect.

George Alexander Gilbert often sketched in company with John Skinner Prout during Prout's visits to Victoria during the 1840s.<sup>10</sup> We can surmise that Gilbert painted his watercolour 'on the spot' during 1852, then forwarded it to England, where Prout copied it. The Gilbert

watercolour surfaced for sale in London during 2006.

The National Library of Australia titled this acquisition *Alluvial gold washing, Mt Alexander goldfields, Victoria, ca. 1852* from documentation supplied with the watercolour.

## 2. Lithograph, Australian Life, Mount Alexander

Scheding Berry Fine Art has a second related image, an unsigned hand-coloured lithograph entitled *Australian Life, Mount Alexander*, which they described as 'possibly taken from a sketch by George Alexander Gilbert' (**plate 5**). Scheding Berry provided the following research notes, before the Prout watercolour came to light:

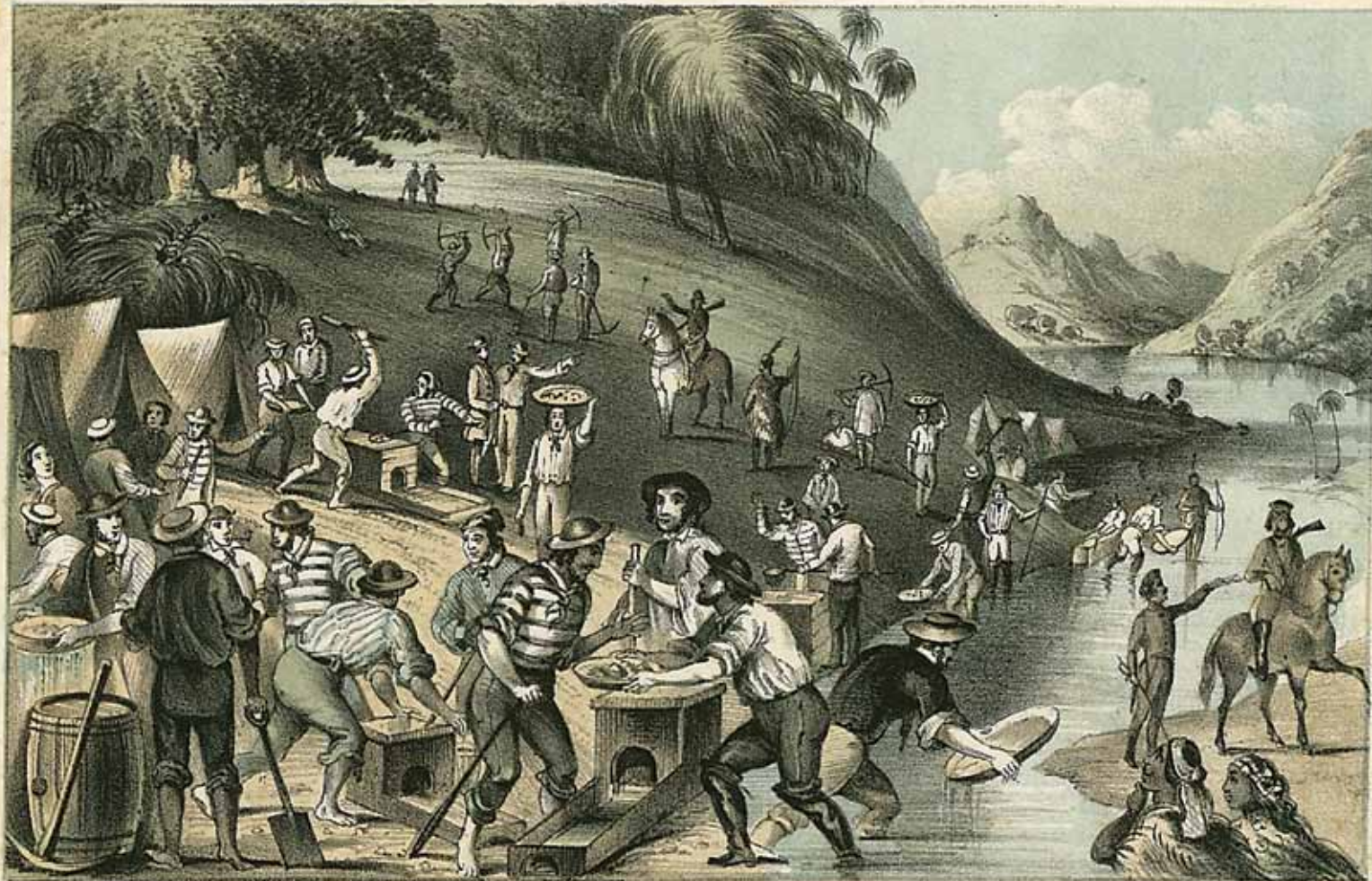
The Victorian goldfield of Mount Alexander was 'proclaimed' on 8 October, 1851. The field soon covered an area of about fifteen square miles. Governor La Trobe visited the field on 28 October 'and received an exaggerated impression of the accessibility of the riches to be won' [see *Artists of the Australian Gold Rush* by Alan McCulloch, Lansdowne Press, 1977]. Nevertheless, along with the Bendigo field in Victoria, it became a prime gold centre. In 1852 Alexander Tolmer organised his gold escorts from Mount Alexander to Adelaide, possibly saving South Australia from bankruptcy.

The sculptor Thomas Woolner unflatteringly referred to Mount Alexander as 'the ants' nest' and described it as 'desolate ... what one might suppose the earth would appear after the day of judgement has emptied all the graves' [McCulloch *ibid*].

While the subject of this lithograph seems familiar, we do not have a record of it having been offered for sale before and we have not, at this stage, been able to locate another copy of it. It is probably not unique but it is certainly rare.

There is an engraving, which bears a distinct similarity, reproduced in E.C. Booth's *Australia Illustrated*, published in 1873, said to be after John Skinner Prout (although the attributions of works in this book are often contentious).

A watercolour (24 x 34 cm) of this goldfield's subject was offered at Bonham's, London on 13 December 2006, lot 321, as 'Circle of George Alexander Gilbert' [**plate 1**]. Confusingly, it bore the signature and date 'J [not G] Gilbert, 1852'. George Alexander Gilbert was a painter and



## AUSTRALIAN LIFE, MOUNT ALEXANDER.

5  
 Artist and  
 publisher unknown,  
*Australian Life*  
*Mount Alexander*;  
 coloured lithograph  
 c 1852, 11.2 x  
 17.6 cm. Courtesy  
 Scheding Berry  
 Fine Art, Sydney

drawing teacher who was also interested in invention. Between 25 November 1845 and 3 February 1846 the *Port Phillip Patriot* carried advertisements of his intention to start practice as a portrait photographer. He claimed to have developed an improvement in the process. Gilbert apparently also experimented with the oxyhydrogen microscope, mesmerism and clairvoyance. He hand-coloured photographs for pioneering photographer Richard Daintree. There is little evidence of his connection with printmaking. However, the frontispiece for Robert Dundas Murray's *A Summer at Port Phillip* (1843) is after a sketch of a villa on the Yarra by George Alexander Gilbert and is one of the earliest published works by a Port Phillip artist.

David Tulloch produced an image (engraved by Thomas Ham) of Forest Creek, Mount Alexander [plate 6], published in Ham's five views of the gold

fields, Melbourne, 1852, but the subject, while containing a similar number of figures and being similar in 'feel', does not relate to the composition of the above lithograph.

S.T. Gill also painted Mount Alexander.

There is also a watercolour by a John Saddington Plush in the Art Gallery of South Australia (possibly after George French Angas) titled *Mt. Alexander Gold Diggings from Adelaide Hill* but again, while there are similar elements, the composition is not identical. Angas himself produced a number of images of Mount Alexander but whether he ever visited the gold field is not known.

While the print remains a delightful little mystery there is no doubt that it is a quintessential image of life on an Australian gold field.





The lithograph possesses several similarities with the 1852 watercolour:

- the general topography is consistent
- the digger panning in the water closest to the viewer, is essentially identical
- the digger lower left smoking a pipe, faithfully makes his appearance in the lithograph, although he has been engraved in a different way and less of him is shown
- the digger slightly to the left of centre in the lithograph, holding a laden gold pan upon his head with his left arm, also appears in the centre of the watercolour, where he holds the pan using his right arm
- the digger clutching sluicing tools, one lofted over his head, appearing left of centre in the watercolour, is oddly and rather inconveniently located well away from the water's edge in the lithograph
- more diggers use picks in the lithograph compared with the watercolour, but they are present nevertheless in similar locations
- the digger lower left leaning over his sluice is eerily comparable with the same individual in the watercolour
- a barrel and pick is shown lower left in each work
- the lithograph faithfully includes three (not two) colonial troopers, one in the same position as the watercolour, but pointing to something towards our left, the other two policemen are shown lower right in the litho. The mounted trooper at lower right also appears to be Aboriginal
- the engraver of the lithograph has applied artistic licence and supplemented the scene with 'traditionally' dressed 'natives' lower right (of some obscure nationality), made changes in diggers' headdress, etc.

6

David Tulloch, *Forest Creek Mt Alexander* [1851/1852], watercolour, image 21.3 x 29.5 cm. Collection: National Library of Australia, image nla.pic-an6617932



THE FOREST CREEK DIGGINGS, MOUNT ALEXANDER, PORT PHILLIP.

7

Artist unknown, *The Forest Creek Diggings, Mount Alexander, Port Phillip*, published in *The Illustrated London News*, 3 July 1852, page 8

### 3. Engraving, *The Forest Creek Diggings*

An engraving entitled *The Forest Creek Diggings, Mount Alexander, Port Phillip* was published in *The Illustrated London News* on 3 July 1852 (plate 7), in a story on 'Gold in Australia' illustrated 'by obliging Correspondents at Melbourne and Sydney.'<sup>11</sup> While not by any means a direct copy, it too possesses several connections with the watercolour:

- the digger bent right over, panning in the water front on, together with the digger standing slightly bent over immediately to his left (our right), both appear in the watercolour, with almost identical poses
- the digger centred in the engraving, holding a laden gold pan above upon his head with his right arm, also appears in the centre of the watercolour
- the digger located directly below that individual, holding tools for sluicing, one lofted above his head, also appears left of centre in the watercolour, however they face opposite directions

- facing left in the engraving, towards the back of the scene a digger wielding a pick high above his head about to pound the earth, the digger faces right in the watercolour
- the engraving includes two native troopers bottom right surveying the scene, standing next to a 'New Chum'.

### Conclusion

I contend that the 1852 watercolour formed the basis of all three related images – the Prout watercolour, the 'Australian life Mount Alexander' coloured lithograph and possibly the *Illustrated London News* engraving. Both the hand-coloured lithograph and the engraving provide further evidence supporting the identification of the scene as the Mount Alexander goldfield in central Victoria.

These three related works present persuasive evidence that the original gold rush watercolour, in all probability drawn by George Alexander Gilbert on site, is set in the Mount Alexander gold fields, located less than 50 km from Bendigo.



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... **Andrew Morris** is a private collector based in  
... the Central Goldfields of Victoria.

## Notes

- 1 Frank Cusack *Bendigo a History*, Lerk & McClure, Bendigo revised edition reprinted January 2006.
- 2 *Ibid* p 43-46.
- 3 Geoff Hocking *Gold, A Pictorial History of the Australian Goldrush*, Five Mile Press, Rowville, second edition 2006 p 171.
- 4 *Tracking the Native Police* (Public Records Office Victoria), <http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/nativepolice/goldfields.html>; Marie Hansen Fels *Good Men and True The Aboriginal Police of the Port Phillip District 1837-1853* Melbourne University Press 1988; John O'Sullivan *Mounted Police of Victoria & Tasmania A history of heroism and duty since 1837* Rigby Publishers, Adelaide 1980 - Part Two Victorian Civil Mounted Police The Goldfields pp 51-72.
- 5 Extracts sourced from Joan Kerr (ed.), *The Dictionary of Australian Artists, Painters Sketchers, Photographers and Engravers to 1870*, Oxford University Press Melbourne, 1992 pp 291-292

- (artist contribution by A E Creelman) and Susan & Emily McCulloch, *The New McCulloch's Encyclopedia of Australian Art*, Miegunyah Press Carlton, 2006 pp 458-459; A E Creelman, *The Life of a Dilettante George Alexander Gilbert, 1841-1859*, manuscript November 1979, State Library of Victoria accession number MS 11258.
- 6 Cusack, *op cit* p 39.
  - 7 *Ibid* pp 66-67.
  - 8 Hocking *op cit* p 91.
  - 9 Kerr *op cit* p 646 and a piece of evidence conceded by Christie's in their Lot 38 commentary.
  - 10 [www.hordern.com/stock/C403-137.aspx](http://www.hordern.com/stock/C403-137.aspx).
  - 11 *Illustrated London News* 3 July 1852, pp 8-9. We are indebted to Frances Prentice, Library Manager at the Australian National Maritime Museum, for locating this reference.

# Marina Shaw

china painter, sculptor, portrait painter



Marina Shaw (1903–1996) trained at Perth Technical School and is best known in Western Australia for her china painting, exploring repeating patterns based on Australian flora and Aboriginal motifs. Later she studied sculpture and painting in Melbourne, London and Sydney, producing small three-dimensional works that she sold through fashionable retailers such as George's in Melbourne. Her work was presented to Queen Elizabeth II, and she is represented in major galleries.

<sup>1</sup>  
*Marina Shaw*  
(Mrs W H Flynn)  
with vases she painted,  
c 1940s

## DOROTHY ERICKSON

Marina Shaw was a painter, china painter, ceramic sculptor and designer in Perth, Melbourne and Sydney (**plate 1**). Marina was born in 1903, the daughter of well-known naturalist J. B. Shaw of Kojonup in Western Australia. She was sent to boarding school in Perth for her education, later becoming an art student at the Perth Technical School under painter-silversmith James W. R. Linton<sup>1</sup> and graphic designer Archibald Webb.

In 1933 she exhibited a watercolour painting with the West Australian Society of Arts, then in 1935 watercolours and china painting – possibly the persimmon vase illustrated (**plate 2**). This was the year she became a student of Flora Landells at the Maylands School of Art where she learnt china painting.<sup>2</sup> All of these teachers reinforced her natural inclination to develop her designs from indigenous flora and fauna. Marina painted 'on-glaze' on imported blanks before the war, when there was a plentiful supply, developing a career as a china painter and a textile designer.





2

Marina Shaw (1903–1996), vase painted with persimmons, 1935, Thomson collection



3



4

Marina Shaw married Warwick H. Flynn, an aviation employee who worked on radar equipment. They lived in Greenmount, in the hills behind Perth. Here at ‘Galmarra’ she developed a native garden growing the unique Western Australian wildflowers. This was followed by time in the country at Dalwallinu before moving to suburban Nicholson Road, Subiaco in 1944, while her husband was away in the RAAF establishing radar posts in New Guinea.

Although described in 1985 as Australia’s answer to Clarice Cliff,<sup>3</sup> at the time she worked, the tone was rather more chauvinistic.

*If there is one type of person we make a bow to it is the married woman who has planned her life so that when her children have grown up she is not left in the air with nothing to do but spend her time on social fripperies. We make a bow to Marina Shaw, in private life, Mrs Warwick Flynn ...<sup>4</sup>*

Her designs for textiles and ceramics drew interest in both the USA and UK, but it is not known if she sold designs to industry in these countries. In the 1940s she won a scholarship to the Slade School of Art but was unable to take it up because of family commitments.

She painted a complete tea set on-glaze, with every piece having an individual motif based on Aboriginal legends and artwork (**plate 3**). On average each of the pieces would take two days and nights to complete. Other designs have included historic mills in Western Australia. When Marina Shaw exhibited with the Western Australian Society of Arts or the Western Australian Women’s Society of Fine Arts & Crafts her striking work, and that of her contemporary Amy Harvey, stood out.<sup>5</sup>

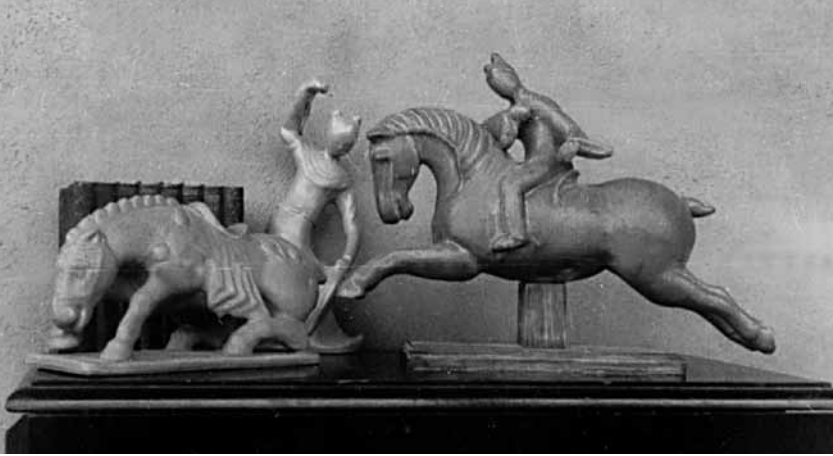
Marina Shaw said of her work: ‘Our wildflowers have such bold shapes and such rich colours that they are ideal for working into pattern designs.’ And pattern designs were a feature of much of her work. One of her most successful pieces is a plate painted with a vibrant circle of frill-necked lizards thrown in sharp relief on a red background highlighted

3

Marina Shaw (1903–1996), porcelain tea set painted with on-glaze designs based on Aboriginal designs or legends, 1944-6. Collection National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 1986

4

Marina Shaw (1903–1996), Noritake porcelain plate painted on glaze with frilled lizard and eucalypts, signed and dated 1945, diam 25.4 cm. Collection National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 1986



- 5  
Marina Shaw  
(1903–1996), *Chinese-  
inspired horses*, 1950s
- 6  
Marina Shaw (1903–  
1996), *Indonesian  
dancing girls*, 1950s
- 7  
Marina Shaw (1903–  
1996), *Australian  
collection*, 1950s

with touches of gold, the central section featuring red bugles on a blue background with a central medallion composed of the blossom of *Eucalyptus erythrocorys* (plate 4). As a pattern the design is strong with tension being added by the almost naturalistic lizards which are barely restrained on the surface of the plate.

In 1946, at the suggestion of the principal of the Calyx Porcelain Works in Perth, she began painting in the more difficult ‘under glaze’ technique on their semi-porcelain forms, assisted by the company’s chemist. Under-glaze colours available were much more limited as they had to withstand the high heat necessary to vitrify the glaze. This work lent itself to the incorporation of Aboriginal designs popular at the time and considered to be an expression of nationalism.

There is an obvious connection between the design of some of her work and that of Amy Harvey,<sup>6</sup> also a former student of Flora Landells. Similar strong colouring and design formulas were seen in designs exhibited by Perth Technical College students at much the same time, giving pause for thought that a ‘school’

style was in evidence. The strong design base of the Perth Technical School course stood Marina in good stead in her later career. In 1947 she won a competition for the design for a postage stamp – a black cockatoo entitled ‘Cocky’. Some thought the cockatoo was a caricature of the leader of the opposition Arthur ‘Cocky’ Calwell, and not used.

Like a number of other Western Australian women she sold her work through city shops such as the jewellers Caris Bros.<sup>7</sup> An article in the *West Australian* in 1948 described her work when it was on display in Caris Bros.

Western Australian wildflowers used as a basis for design, sometimes classical and in other cases quite unconventional, give striking individuality to china painted by Mrs W. H. Flynn of Subiaco. Exhibited amongst the craftwork at the recent exhibition of the Society of Women Painters, Mrs Flynn’s work is again on view at Caris Bros, Hay Street. She has not confined her attention to the use of flora however, but has found in our native fauna much inspiration for a lively sense of design and appreciation of the limits of shape and modelling of the pieces on which she works. Her craftsmanship, apart from her designing ability, and her sense of colour values in the medium she employs, add to the distinctiveness of the work, and there is also present an awareness of the unique qualities in Australian aboriginal art.<sup>8</sup>

Shaw and her husband left Western Australia in 1948 to live in Victoria. Here she studied ceramic sculpture for four years with George Allen at Melbourne Technical College, making three-dimensional figurative works in terracotta and bronze. The course included modelling, moulding, glazing and firing. Marina had two







kilns built in the enlarged garage of their Box Hill home and her husband took a course in ceramic chemistry to assist her with the glazes.

At first her inspiration for sculpture came from Chinese work of the Tang and Ming dynasties (**plate 5**) but then she moved into Australian imagery of goannas and exotics such as the Bird of Paradise and Indonesian dancing girls (**plate 6**). An early kangaroo sculpture resembles but pre-dates the Qantas logo. The works were made in multi-part moulds and as editions, and sold in outlets such as George's in Melbourne (**plates 7-10**). Some of her Aboriginal ceramic figures were presented to Queen Elizabeth II during the royal tour of Australia in 1954.

From 1957–64 Marina Shaw lived in Sydney and studied 'Meldrum Method' painting under Albert Rydge. Following this she lived in London where she studied sculpture and portrait painting at the Slade School. She returned to Sydney in 1966, living and working as a painter and sculptor into the 1980s until she developed Alzheimer's disease. She died in 1996.

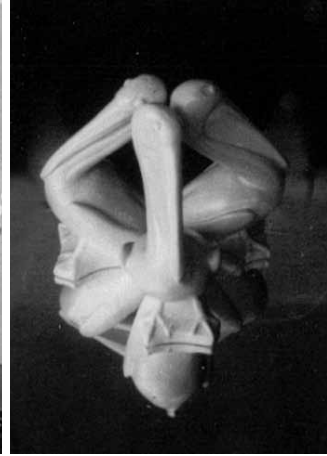
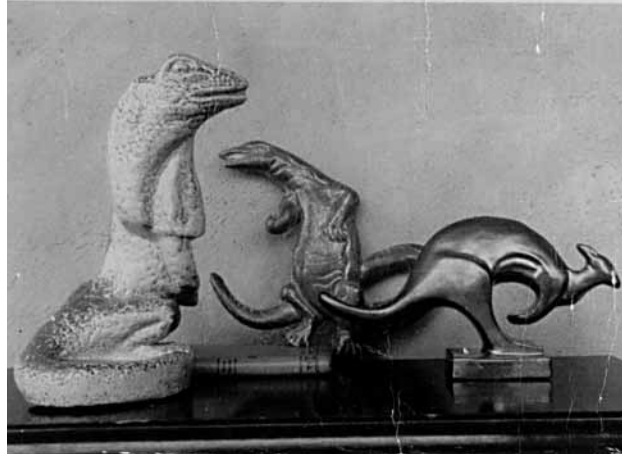
In 1986 a collection of her china painting work was bought by the National Gallery in Canberra and another acquired by the Art Gallery of Western Australia. Marina Shaw gave more examples to the NGA in 1988.

### Exhibitions

- WA Society of Arts Annual Exhibition, Newspaper House, 1933, 1935
- WA Women's Society of Fine Arts and Crafts 1936-48
- Claude Hotchin Art Galleries, Hay Street, Perth, 1947
- Caris Bros, Perth (china painting) 1945, 1948
- George's, Melbourne, solo china and ceramic sculpture, 1950s

### Collections

Art Gallery of WA, National Gallery of Australia, Queen Elizabeth II



### References

- Muriel Gardells, 'Handpainted china', *Western Mail Women's Magazine Supplement* 6 June 1946, p 10
- Jan Meredith, 'Native motif for your crockery', *Australian Home Beautiful* July 1949, pp 40-41
- Peter Lyell, 'How clay comes to life', *Woman's Day and Home* April 1955, p 41
- 'Perth woman's china painting filmed', undated cutting family collection
- 'Australia's answer to Clarice Cliff', *House and Garden* 18 Feb 1985
- Dorothy Erickson, '*Inspired by light and land: designers and makers in Western Australia*' unpublished MS 2000

### Notes

- 1 *Australiana* 22 nos 1–4, 2000
- 2 *Australiana* 31 no 4 November 2009 and *Australiana* 33 no 3, August 2011
- 3 'Australia's answer to Clarice Cliff', *House and Garden* 18 Feb 1985
- 4 Undated cutting c.1940s
- 5 *Australiana* vol 26 no 2, May 2004, pp 36-37
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 E.g. *West Australian* 10 Nov 1945, p 11
- 8 *West Australian* 1948

8

Marina Shaw (1903–1996), *Australiana* collection, 1950s

9

Marina Shaw (1903–1996), *Australiana* collection, 1950s

10

Marina Shaw (1903–1996), *pelicans*

11

Marina Shaw (1903–1996), *horses*



11

Hidden corners: rediscovering

# *Firnhaber and Schomburgk* in the Digital Age



It is now twenty-two years since the publication of my two-volume work *19th Century Australian Silver*.<sup>1</sup>

In the 21st century, instead of turning and reading each page of Australia's nineteenth-century newspapers, we have a new research tool – the National Library of Australia's Trove website. The Library has digitised Australia's newspapers for researchers, enabling a keyword search for names and news previously discovered by the laborious reading of every page.

The use of search engines has made unusual surnames particularly productive and I have researched the period 1850–1862 for these two Adelaide silversmiths using Trove. This new research should be read in conjunction with the information in my book.

1

*Ludwig Julius Schomburgk*, known as Julius (1819–1893), younger brother of Richard. He is renowned as one of the best silversmiths in colonial Australia. Photograph J B Hawkins Australian Silver Reference Library



## JOHN HAWKINS

Putting the name 'Firnhaber' into the website and restricting the search to South Australian newspapers, it becomes apparent that Charles Edward Firnhaber was the *only* silversmith producing any volume of major work in the period between 1850 and 1854: the Mayo Cup,<sup>2</sup> the Hahndorf Grand Pigeon Cup,<sup>3</sup> the Lazar Cup weighing 25 ounces,<sup>4</sup> the Grand Prize for Pigeon Shooters on view at Claude's, Hindley Street<sup>5</sup> and the Dry Creek Race Silver Cup,<sup>6</sup> value £20. Only two of these are in my book.

From these newspaper entries, it can be deduced that Firnhaber was a manufacturing silversmith constructing bespoke objects, and in the case of the Grand Prize for Pigeon Shooters, displaying them in the retail jeweller's shop from whom the prize was ordered. While stylistically Firnhaber's work displays his European heritage, it took Julius Schomburgk (**plate 1**) to change the style of silversmithing in South Australia forever, with the introduction from 1854 of colonial subjects as a compelling form of decorative art.

Julius Schomburgk (c. 1818–1893) arrived from Hamburg on the ship *Australia* on 15 December 1850, travelling as a cabin passenger with his sister Linna, joining two of his brothers, Dr Otto Schomburgk (d 1865) and Richard Schomburgk (1821–1891), a botanist and later curator of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens.<sup>7</sup>

Julius, trained as a goldsmith in Prussia, settled at Buchfelde near Gawler with his family, and travelled to Victoria. In February 1854, his name is recorded on a petition from the colonists of South Australia to Queen Victoria; the name of C. L. Meyer (c. 1809–1893) is just below his.<sup>8</sup> He first comes to notice as a silversmith in 1854, in the partnership of Meyer & Schomburgk, as manufacturers of this silver cup, now in the Art Gallery of South Australia (**plate 2**):<sup>9</sup>

**Colonial Manufacture.** Our attention has been directed to a chaste and silver cup, suitable for a race or hunting plate, the manufacture of Messrs Meyer & Schomburgk, of Freeman-street. It stands 16½ inches high to the extreme point of the cover, is 6½ inches broad, weight 43 ounces, and contains nearly three pints. The stem is formed of vines, around which are collected emus and kangaroos. The upper branches support and partly enclose the bowl with luxuriant foliage,



from which depend the ripe fruit. Amongst them is coiled a snake, which has made a parrot his prey. Each of these creatures is delineated with truly artistic skill; but the grand ornament is the native warrior upon the apex of the cover. He is seated with the opossum-rug thrown carelessly round him, and holds his long barbed spear in his hand, while near him are scattered the shield, the waddy, and the boomerang. The figure is exquisitely wrought, and small as it is, may challenge the closest examination. The features, the expression, the attitude, are all perfect. We do not understand that the cup was made to order, nor that it is for sale; but whenever the patrons of the South Australian Turf shall feel themselves rich enough to run for a veritable piece of plate, instead of for so many sovereigns, this is the sort of cup we should like to see contested. It is not only made in South Australia, but is

**2**  
Meyer & Schomburgk, Adelaide, *Covered cup* 1854, h 36.0 cm, diam. 15.3 cm. Collection: Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, gift of Southern Farmers Group Ltd in its centenary year through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 1988. Photograph Art Gallery of South Australia



3

J M Wendt's exhibits at Dunedin in 1865 from *The Illustrated Melbourne Post*, 18 July 1865, p.100.

I recently sold the pair of epergnes, one of which is illustrated to the right hand side. I have sold the candelabra centrepiece twice; purchased from Wendt's in 1991, it is now in an Australian collection. The only item still missing is the magnificent claret jug which was certainly, as with all the items on this plate, designed and made by Julius Schomburgk. Photograph J B Hawkins Australian Silver Reference Library

purely colonial in its design. It does credit to the colony, and to the accomplished artists by whom it was made.<sup>10</sup>

Schomburgk's appearance in Adelaide as an original designer and silversmith in early 1854 must have taken the wind out of Firnhaber's sails. The use of indigenous subject matter, the ability to make an object for possible sale as distinct from being bespoke, all on a scale not previously seen, was a revolution in taste in the small community that was Adelaide within 20 years of first settlement. This reference securely dates this cup to 1854.

Schomburgk, still operating in Freeman Street, placed several advertisements in January 1855 offering a wide variety of music for sale.<sup>11</sup>

### Lellmann & Schomburgk

Late in 1855, Schomburgk was to produce yet another silver masterpiece on a larger scale, this time with a new German-born partner, Eduard Emil Lellmann:<sup>12</sup>

**Colonial Art.** – We had the pleasure yesterday morning of examining a very beautiful specimen of colonial art – an elaborately executed silver cup, manufactured by Messrs Lellmann & Schomburgk, silversmiths of Rundle-street, it is 16½ inches in height, weighing 53 ounces, and capable of containing a pint and a half. Its general form is octagonal. The several faces of the bowl are highly polished, slightly concave, and expanding outwards

with a gentle curve towards the cover. The latter is surmounted by the model of a kangaroo in frosted silver, sitting erect upon a plot of grass. At the base of each alternate compartment of the bowl there is an emu, sitting with its face looking outwards. Their figures are clearly reflected from the polished surfaces of the bowl. The stem consists of intertwining vine branches covered with leaves and fruit in frosted silver, the workmanship of which is elaborate and ornate. The foot of the cup is in perfect keeping with the other parts, being octagonal in form, of polished silver, relieved by the representation of the leaves and tendrils of the vine in frosted work around its border. The interior of the cup and its lid are gilded. We should have preferred to see some relief to the polished surfaces of the bowl; but this is, perhaps, a mere matter of taste, in which others perfectly competent to form an opinion on the artistic merits of the work may not agree. The skill displayed in the design and manufacture are unquestionably highly creditable to the artists, and show that there is no longer any necessity for sending to England or elsewhere for presentation or prize plates which can be so skilfully produced in the colony. We were shown by the manufacturers several beautiful specimens of plate, and jewellery in an unfinished state, with the models and drawing of the principal figures intended to be represented. The whole of the designs are prepared and the work is executed by themselves.<sup>13</sup>

This as yet unlocated cup shows Schomburgk worked on an a grand scale, from designs and drawings presumably prepared by himself.

In December 1856, Lellmann & Schomburgk, 'manufacturing jewellers' of 40 Rundle Street, advertised

that they have just received, per Marco Polo, a select collection of JEWELLERY, and that their Stock consists now of the newest and most fashionable assortment of Colonial,



English and Foreign jewellery, of the very best quality. Orders executed on the shortest notice. <sup>14</sup>

They advertised the first of Schomburgk's important candelabra, this time offered by lottery, in July 1857. Did Schomburgk need the money or was this his new method of disposal, based on the European concept of the Art Union?

A SPLENDID Colonial-manufactured SILVER CANDELABRUM, of unique and elaborate design, valued at £100; a magnificent Colonial-made RUBY RING worth £10; and a beautiful Colonial-made EMERALD and PEARL RING, also worth £10; to be RAFFLED FOR, by 60 Members, at £2 each ... These valuable Prizes may be seen at Messrs. Lellmann & Schomburgk, jewellers, 40, Rundle-street...<sup>15</sup>

The firm of Lellmann & Schomburgk was also capable of making medals. They made a silver ploughing medal, valued at £5, presented to Charles Ferguson after its manufacture in 1858:

containing on the obverse, in full relief a golden group, consisting of a wheel plough, a harrow, and various other farming implements. Upon the reverse is the following inscription:—  
“Presented by the Gawler Agricultural and Horticultural Society to Mr Charles Ferguson, for the best ploughing at their Match, August 1857”.<sup>16</sup>

Schomburgk made a similar silver medal for the South Australian Agricultural and Horticultural Society for presentation to Mr Thomas Mellor in 1860.<sup>17</sup> This was made of South Australian silver, engraved with a wagon, plough and harrow, and awarded for making colonial farming implements.<sup>18</sup>

Lellmann on this evidence was a jeweller working with Schomburgk, a goldsmith and silversmith, but on 22 February 1858 they announced the end of the partnership.<sup>19</sup> Lellmann & Schomburgk entrusted the sale of their colonial and imported stock to the auctioneers Green, Parr & Luxmoore, who began advertising the sale four days later.<sup>20</sup>

In a series of advertisements in March 1858, Mr J.D. Koenke advises that he

...has prevailed upon Messrs Lellmann and Schomburgk, before they retire from business, to make a SPLENDID MEDAL, without regard to cost, and worthy [of] their well-known artistic skill. This Medal, with TEN GUINEAS ADDED, to be presented to the first Exhibitor of Bunawunda Wine who gets the first premium at any yearly show in Adelaide, of or before the year 1865.<sup>21</sup>

However, the *South Australian Advertiser* suggests that Schomburgk and Lellmann may still have been working together in 1859, with a description of an exhibition which joins the two names and may relate to the 1855 Cup:

#### East Torrens Institute

This Society's first annual exhibition of the 'works of nature and art' was opened yesterday at the large room of the Institute, Kensington, and from personal inspection we can safely pronounce it well worthy of a visit, if only for the intrinsic merit of the exhibition, apart from the feeling which should prompt everyone to foster the exercise of talent and induce the desire to reach the goal of excellence ... Amongst colonial specimens of art we must mention especially a very handsome silver vase manufactured by Messrs. Lellmann and Schomburg [sic], and exhibited by Mr. T.R. Jones.<sup>22</sup>

T R Jones was the landlord of the Blenheim Hotel in Hindley Street, a wine judge, and wine exhibitor with the SA Agricultural Society. Jones shot for the Adelaide German Rifle Club, where Lellmann was a member, and competed in the National Rifle Association shoot, but did not win the silver cup valued at £105 offered as a prize in November 1861.<sup>23</sup>

I suggest that a lack of sales and a possibly unsuccessful raffle is probably the reason why Schomburgk produced no further masterpieces until the end of 1859.

In November 1859, nearly four years since the production of the previous cup, a new and even more magnificent cup, which is also so far unlocated, was displayed in Adelaide.

**COLONIAL ART.** – Our attention has been called to a very magnificent silver cup

in the shop of Mr. Davis of Rundle-street. This beautiful article has been designed and executed by Mr. Schomburgk, and is certainly a credit to the colony as a work of art. The cup is 15 inches in height, in the renaissance style, of elaborate and beautiful workmanship. Various colonial figures and foliage are introduced with great skill, and the most happy effect. There are niches in the shaft in which small figures of natives are placed, grasping spears, and other characteristic articles. A large kangaroo, in frosted silver, surmounts the lid of the chalice, which has altogether a very rich appearance. The foliage of the salanium and oxylabum has been very carefully copied, and introduced in the form of wreaths, in various parts of the cup. An inspection of this choice specimen of Mr. Schomburgk's workmanship, will well repay a visit. There is also a design for a candelabrum of greater size, containing even more devices than the chalice, and which, when executed, will be a magnificent piece of work. The Sturt pea will in that case be introduced, and worked in gold in parts of the stem. It has been suggested that these beautiful works of colonial art would be a fitting present as a public testimonial, in the event of any movement of the kind being contemplated.<sup>24</sup>

This shows that Schomburgk was still making magnificent objects, not bespoke, but in the hope of a potential sale. The design for the candelabrum was presumably realised as the Ridley Testimonial.<sup>25</sup> The candelabrum advertised in 1857 must therefore have been sold.

Trove has produced further references to the production of the Ridley Testimonial.<sup>26, 27</sup>

The proposed present is to be a candelabrum. The original intention was to have it composed of gold and silver; but as this required £210, and the funds collected only amounted to £116, the idea was abandoned, and it was agreed to have it made according to the following design ... There are two or three other representations of our sable brethren, placed in appropriate situations. The whole is a magnificent design, and will no doubt be an extremely creditable production both to the colony and to its designer, Mr. Schomburgk, who is also to execute the work. He was authorized to commence it at once. It is expected that it will occupy three months in making. The entire cost will be about £120.

At this time, the Freeling Testimonial was to cause problems for both Schomburgk and Firnhaber and resulted in the following newspaper correspondence which is of great interest to the silver historian.

The *South Australian Advertiser* notes that at Parliament House, 30 gentlemen had subscribed the sum of approximately £100 for the purchase of presentation plate to be given to Lieutenant-Colonel Freeling on his departure for England and that Mr F.S. Dutton, the secretary to the appointed Committee, had contacted:

... Mr. Schomburgk (the manufacturer of the Ridley Testimonial), in reference to designs for a piece of plate, and that gentleman had submitted to him four designs, which he happened to have by him, and which the meeting could inspect. Two of them were for candelabra, and the other two were for claret jugs. Mr. Schomburgk was, however, perfectly willing to make other designs, should the meeting think it necessary. He might state that Mr. Schomburgk was the only person in the colony capable of manufacturing a piece of plate.<sup>28</sup>

In the end, the Committee decided that they would send the money to England to purchase a presentation centrepiece to be presented there.

Dutton's comment produced a letter in the *South Australian Advertiser*<sup>29</sup> from one of Firnhaber's greatest supporters, and for whose family Firnhaber had made the model of the Kapunda Mine surmounting the Bagot Cup.<sup>30</sup>

#### **To the Editor of the Advertiser,**

Sir – I perceive in your report this day of the “Freeling Testimonial” that Mr. Dutton stated that “Mr. Schomburgk was the only person in the colony; capable of manufacturing a piece of plate.” I am not aware whether Mr. Firnhaber is in the colony, but believing him to be, I think it only just to a very respectable and old colonist, to state that I have seen some of his designs and workmanship, which have never been surpassed by any in Adelaide. I may mention two which came under my own personal notice, viz., a large masonic cup, made for presentation to Mr. McClure, and a piece of plate presented to Captain Bagot



before he left for England. Those, with many others which I have had a look at, made by Mr. Firnhaber's own hands, may, for chastity of design and elegance of finish, defy competition.

I am Sir etc.

U.N. Bagot,

Kapunda November 23rd.

Firnhaber himself sent a letter to the editor in generous terms, published the same day:<sup>31</sup>

### **The Freeling Testimonial.**

To the Editor of the ADVERTISER.

Sir – I am not very desirous of troubling newspapers with correspondence at any time but I think this once I must intrude a little on your patience.

Now, Sir if you will be good enough to refer to Friday's Advertiser you will see that there is a report of what took place at a meeting of the Committee for the above testimonial, and at which meeting our worthy friend, Mr. Dutton, said that "There was no person in the colony that could make a piece of plate except Mr. Schomburgk". Now, what nonsense that is. Mr. Dutton's experience of the skill of the jewellers and silversmiths of Adelaide, I am afraid, is very limited. Had Mr. Dutton taken the trouble to enquire in what manner Mr. Schomburgk contrived to execute his last piece of work, viz., the Ridley Testimonial, he would have discovered that it was through the assistance of the modeller, draughtsman, caster, chaser, &c., Mr. S. of course assisting. Mr. Schomburgk is a most excellent workman, as is well known; so are likewise many others in Adelaide whom Mr. Dutton, in his blissful ignorance, knows nothing of. Mr. Dutton may rest assured that there are plenty of workmen in the different branches of a jeweller's or goldworker's trade that can turn out a piece of "plate," or anything else of the kind, with assistance, equally as well as his imaginary unequalled workman.

Now, what has Mr. Schomburgk gained by the Ridley Testimonial? Nothing; but on the contrary, lost £92 by it – a fact from his own lips, and which I was very sorry to hear him say. I could turn a piece of plate of any design or massiveness out of my hands, if, perhaps, I were lucky enough to be able to pay the expenses of working and materials by entering into some lucky



mining transaction as some have done. I am too poor to lose my money in such speculations and I have a family to support.

I am sir &c.

C.E. Firnhaber

Gold and silversmith of 42 years' standing  
Hindley-street, November 24.<sup>32</sup>

The letter suggests that Firnhaber had assisted Schomburgk in the production of the Ridley Testimonial; he also implies that Schomburgk made the Testimonial with an agreed fixed cost and lost £92 on the transaction.

All was not lost, for Trove has revealed in the *South Australian Advertiser*

We are informed by the last mail from England, instructions were received by Mr Ridley to pay a further £50 to Mr. Schomburgk, on account of the piece of work executed by that artist, and the value of which exceeded the contract price.<sup>33</sup>

4

*Great Exhibition of 1851 bronze medal, mounted by Julius Schomburgk 1861, 26.8 x 18.0 x 15.5 cm. Collection: Art Gallery of South Australia, gift of Robert Davenport 1891. Photograph Art Gallery of South Australia*



Schomburgk. It is decorated with figures of aboriginal natives, kangaroos, emus, and smaller birds. The cover is surmounted by a grass tree and around the bowl are medallions of horses and cattle, it would form a suitable prize for an Agricultural Show.<sup>36</sup>

In my book I suggested that this cup was made circa 1860, but I am now corrected; it was completed by October 1861 with a height of 22½ inches and a weight of 84 ounces. This is Schomburgk's finest cup and one of the last produced before giving up his independence and joining with Wendt.



5  
Julius Schomburgk, *Ridley Testimonial*, 1860. The Aboriginal heads, the flora and the castings of the fauna are all key indicators of Schomburgk's work. Collection: Waite Institute, University of Adelaide. Photograph J B Hawkins Australian Silver Reference Library

6  
Julius Schomburgk (attributed), [Lady McDonnell archery prize 1862], from J B Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition 1862*, London 1863, pl. 292

The gold reaping machine as a finial on top of the candle sconce combined with the use of malachite would have been difficult to cost.<sup>34</sup> I suggest that Schomburgk costed the presentation Ridley Candelabra at £120 yet it cost over £200. When it came to paying Firnhaber, Schomburgk would have made an issue of his losses, hence Firnhaber's first-hand knowledge of the matter.

All this suggests that Schomburgk was not a good businessman and yet he continued most years to produce another magnificent item for possible sale. In 1861 he produced the cup with malachite mounts – the largest, finest and heaviest to date.<sup>35</sup> My opinion is that he originally intended this as his 'Exhibition Piece' for the 1862 London Exhibition, but that it was not finished in time, due to work on the Ridley Testimonial.

This 1861 cup is described as

**Colonial Art.** – We saw on Saturday at Mr. Davis' shop in Rundle-street, a very beautiful silver cup made by Mr.

Schomburgk had two exhibits at the 1862 London International Exhibition, the Ridley Testimonial and, I suggest, the Wendt-exhibited, Lady McDonnell Archery Prize (**plate 6**).<sup>37</sup> The 1862 Bronze Medal he received was with him when he died.

I suggest that at least one of Schomburgk's Dutton candelabrum designs and possibly one jug were later completed for Wendt, and exhibited by them in New Zealand at the Dunedin Exhibition of 1865 (**plate 3**).

The London Crystal Palace Exhibition Medal of 1851 (**plate 4**) was indeed mounted by Schomburgk, some ten years after its presentation.<sup>38</sup> When writing my book, I had only a later reference regarding the mounting of this medal, now in the collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia. Schomburgk created the mount, as this August 1861 reference shows:

The workmanship was very creditable to the artist (Mr. Schomburgk) whom Mr Davis of



Rundle-street had employed in its execution.<sup>39</sup>

This confirms, as I had suggested, that the marks were those of Julius Schomburgk.

Finally an entry regarding the cup presented to the newly appointed Chief Justice, Richard Davies Hanson, on 12 July 1862 proves that after the Freeling affair, Schomburgk and Firnhaber still managed to work happily together.

It [the cup] was designed by Mr. Julius Schomburgk who also took part in the construction, but the principal workmanship was done by Mr. C.E. Firnhaber... The engraving of the inscription was the work of Mr. Payne...<sup>40</sup>

So despite the problems caused by the Freeling Testimonial, later made by the London firm of Hunt & Roskell and exhibited in the London 1862 exhibition under the South Australian banner, these two German craftsmen were still giving credit to each other when credit was due.

In January 1863, Schomburgk transferred his business to the firm of J M Wendt:

The undersigned begs to acquaint his Friends and Customer that he has TRANSFERRED his BUSINESS as MANUFACTURING JEWELLER and SILVERSMITH to Mr J.M. WENDT, Watchmaker and Jeweller, 84, Rundle-street, by whom all Orders will be punctually attended to.  
J. SCHOMBURGK<sup>41</sup>

In summary, the key items of documented or marked Schomburgk silver – the 1851 mounted medal in the Art Gallery of South Australia (**plate 4**) and the Ridley Testimonial Candelabra Centrepiece in the University of Adelaide (**plate 5**) – have now been joined thanks to Trove by the magnificent nearly two-foot-high, 84-ounce malachite mounted cup (**plate 7, 7A**) as the three finest surviving documented products of Schomburgk's workshop before the transfer of his business to Wendt.

7 Julius Schomburgk,  
*The Schomburgk Cup*, October 1861. Sold by J B  
Hawkins Antiques in 1991, repurchased in 2011  
and now in the collection of the Art Gallery of  
South Australia. Photograph  
J B Hawkins Australian Silver Reference Library





7B Detail of the lid

**John Hawkins** is a leading antique dealer who is the author of several books and many articles, mostly on the subject of distinguished examples of Australian silver, gold and furniture. He is based in rural Northern Tasmania.

### Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dick Phillips for his corrections over Lellmann and providing new references to his family history.

### Notes

- 1 J B Hawkins, *Nineteenth-Century Australian Silver*, Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge (UK), 1990
- 2 *South Australian Register*, 14 Jan 1851
- 3 *SAR* 14 Aug 1851
- 4 *SAR* 31 Dec 1851
- 5 *SAR* 21 Nov 1853
- 6 *SAR* 2 Dec 1853
- 7 Ludwig Julius Schomburgk arrived in South Australia in December 1850 with his sister Linna to join his two brothers Otto and Richard as a member of the South Australian Colonization Society formed in Berlin as the Berlin Emigration Society. For an excellent history of the Schomburgks in South Australia and a photograph of Julius from which this plate was taken, see Pauline Payne, *The Diplomatic Gardener*, North Adelaide, 2007.
- 8 *SAR* 2 Feb 1854 p 2; Christian Ludwig Meyer was born in Bremen, came to Adelaide in 1846, returning to Germany and coming back to Adelaide in 1849, when he was appointed consul for Hanover. A merchant in Grenfell Street, he returned to Germany in 1879 and died at Halle on

- 12 December 1893. *SA Advertiser* 17 Jan 1894 p 6
- 9 Hawkins vol II, pl 313 and colour pl 50
- 10 *SAR* 24 April 1854, not 1866-67 as I thought in 1990, then the earliest reference I could find for the two men working together.
- 11 *SAR* 29, 30 & 31 Jan 1855.
- 12 Eduard Emil Lellmann was born in the principality of Schaumberg, Lippe, Germany in 1829, and educated in the State College. After graduating, he was apprenticed to a jeweller for three years. Two years after serving the above, he sailed for South Australia in the ship *Alfred*, arriving in February 1850. After having been employed in various ways for some years he proceeded to the Mount Alexander diggings, in Victoria, where he stayed for six months and met with fair success. He then returned to Adelaide and resumed his trade. Schultze and Lellmann of Rundle Street advertised as 'working jewellers' in March-April 1853. He married Pauline (Emilie) Roediger in 1856.
- 13 *SAR* 8 Dec 1855, p 3
- 14 *SAR* 27 Dec 1856 p 1
- 15 *SAR* 7 July 1857 p 1; 14 July 1857
- 16 *SAR* 16 Aug 1858 p 3
- 17 *SAR* 28 April 1860 p 3; *SAA* 28 Apr 1860 p 3
- 18 *SAA* 26 May 1860 p 3
- 19 *SAR* 22 Feb 1858 p 1
- 20 *SAR* 26 Feb 1858 p 4
- 21 *SAR* 9, 11, 18, 23 & 24 March 1858
- 22 *SAA* 4 Jan 1859 p 3
- 23 *SAA* 5 Nov 1861 p 2
- 24 *SAA* 3 Nov 1859 p 3
- 25 Hawkins vol II, pl 308
- 26 *SAR* 25 October 1859. First advertisement for subscriptions continued to 1 Mar 1860, total amount realised £112-7s-6d. *SAR* 30 Mar 1860, p 2. J.S to start design of candelabra, 'It is expected that it will occupy three months in making. The entire cost will be about £120.' *SAR* 25 April 1860, as quoted. *SAR* 18 Sept 1860, p 3. Dispute over cost. 'The work weighs about 150ozs, is about 20 or 22 inches in height and is valued at over £210.'
- 27 Hawkins vol II, p 42
- 28 *SAA* 23 Nov 1860 p 2
- 29 As described in *SAA* 27 November 1860
- 30 Hawkins vol II, pl 302
- 31 *SAA* 27 November 1860
- 32 *SAA* 27 Nov 1860 p 3
- 33 *SAA* 26 April 1861
- 34 Hawkins vol II, colour pl 49
- 35 Hawkins vol II, pl 309
- 36 *SAR* 7 Oct 1861 p 2
- 37 *SAA*, 10 February 1862 p 3: 'Mr Wildman then presented Lady MacDonnell with an elegant inkstand, composed of an emu's egg ... The entire design is unique, and well carried out and reflects great credit on Mr. Schomburgk, the manufacturer.'
- 38 Hawkins vol II, pl 307
- 39 *SAR* 5 August 1861 p 2; see also *SAR* 2 Sept 1861 p 3
- 40 *SAA* 14 July 1862 p 2
- 41 *SAR* 21 Jan 1863 p 1



# *Ceremonial maces of Australian universities* Part 1

Most Australian universities have adopted a ceremonial mace that symbolises, in its materials and decoration, the university's ethos. The first, in 1854, was locally made but its traditional form and motifs hark back to British roots. Maces often aim to combine traditional academic values with innovative artistic ideas and distinctive local motifs and materials, with greater or lesser success. In this two-part article, Christine Erratt surveys over 150 years of artistic development in this art form.

## **CHRISTINE ERRATT**

Before assuming a ceremonial function, the mace was a weapon carried into battle by medieval knights and warlike bishops. Later the mace was carried as protection for royalty. Gradually the role of the mace changed to be purely one representative of authority. By 1450, practically every European university founded before the Renaissance had begun to redesignate as 'maces' their sceptre-like insignia which had previously been described as wands, staffs, rods etc.<sup>1</sup>

Today universities, parliaments and such institutions have ceremonial maces which are used on formal occasions in the presence of persons in authority. At universities, the mace is carried by the Esquire Bedell who precedes the Chancellor in all official processions. Esquire Bedell may also be known as Yeoman Bedell (or Bedel or Beadle).

Let us look at the parts of a traditional mace. The head is uppermost, supported on the shaft or stem which may be divided into an upper shaft and a lower shaft by a knop. Knops may be placed centrally or in other locations along the shaft. The shaft or stem ends in a foot knop or butt depending on the design.

University maces are extremely varied in their designs and many have symbolism reflecting particular aspects of their individual university. Some have been commissioned by the universities themselves, others have been presented as gifts by benefactors.

All but three of Australia's 39 universities have ceremonial maces. This study will present information relating to the ceremonial maces of 36 Australian universities. The first part will cover the era 1854–1989, the second 1990–2012. All the maces belong to the collection of the university for which they were commissioned.



Two universities, The University of Queensland (nos 3 & 13) and Griffith University (nos 14 & 36), have replaced their original maces with new maces. Thirty-one of the maces (the total includes the two replacements) were made in Australia, seven in England. These numbers include the mace that has been commissioned for Charles Darwin University due to be completed soon.

With the expanding roles of universities, which include having multiple or distant campuses, often overseas, a subset of maces exists that are called 'travelling maces'. These tend to be lighter and sometimes smaller than the principal mace which is retained on the main campus of the university. The travelling maces have not been included in this study.



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Since the 1970s tertiary educational institutions in Australia have been through many changes with numerous amalgamations of institutions, such as technical colleges, institutes of TAFE and schools of art, ultimately to form universities. Prior to becoming part of a university, a number of institutions had their own maces. These maces have not been included in this study.

The 1980s and 1990s saw a rapid increase in the number of universities being established. Half the maces covered in this study were made during these two decades. Ceremonial maces are listed in chronological order.

### 1 The University of Sydney, Sydney NSW, 1854

1854 saw the first ceremonial mace for the first university in Australia - the University of Sydney. It was made in 1854 by Sydney silversmiths Brush & McDonnell.

The university recorded a payment on 4 September 1854 to Sydney silversmiths 'Flavelle & Co.' (sic), known at that time as Flavelle Bros 'for a design drawn for a mace to be made for the University'. In December, *The Empire* newspaper reported that the mace was exhibited at the Australian Museum in that month, describing it as 'the largest piece of silverwork yet made in the colony'. This article stated that

'the design of the mace is by E. T. Blacket, Esq'. Various scholars<sup>2</sup> have suggested that Flavelle Bros' design may have been rejected by the architect who designed the university, Edmund Blacket, who then drew up a design himself.

The mace was acquired, funded by student fees, in the name and on behalf of Queen Victoria through the Governor of NSW, Sir Charles FitzRoy. The instigator of this symbolic item was Dr (later Sir) Charles Nicholson (1808–1903), the first vice-provost.

The mace is made of sterling silver with a shaft of polished myall wood. The head bears a model of the royal crown, part of which is gilded, surmounted by an orb and a Maltese cross, supported by four arches. On the head are the royal arms,<sup>3</sup> the arms of the colony of NSW and those of the university, with decorative motifs employing the rose, the thistle and the shamrock entwining between the arms. The university arms were added later, after their formal grant by the College of Arms on 14 May 1857.

On the arms is the current motto, *Sidere mens eadem mutato* (the general sense is 'The traditions of the older universities of the Northern Hemisphere are continued here in the Southern'. However, engraved below the crown is the original motto of the university,) *Doctrina parat virtutem* (Let teaching promote excellence). The shaft, which bears two silver knobs, ends with a silver foot knob decorated with oak leaves and acorns in bas relief. The mace contains approximately 3 kg of silver and is 104 cm long.

### 2 The University of Adelaide, Adelaide SA, 1926

Over 70 years later, in 1926, The University of Adelaide commissioned the second mace, to celebrate its golden jubilee. Frederick Millward Grey (1899–1957) of the School of Fine Arts, North Adelaide designed the impressive mace and supervised its manufacture. It was made by local Adelaide silversmiths, S Schlank & Co.

The 62 cm long mace is made of silver which has been gilded. The head consists of a platform supported by four chased supports of



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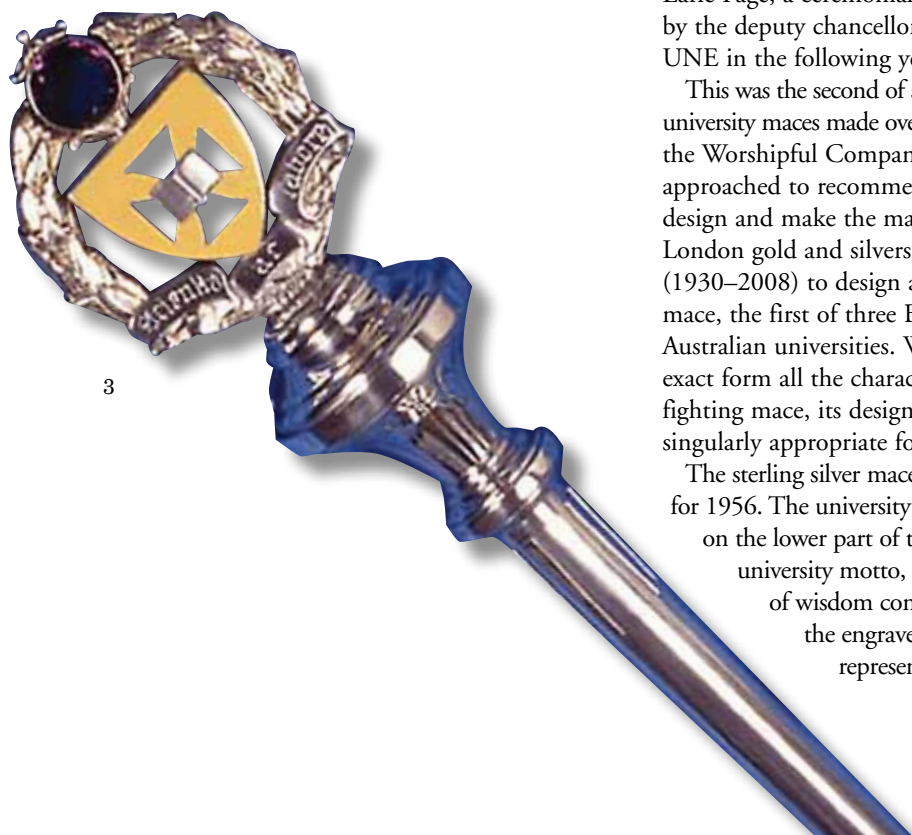


conventional leaf design. On the platform is an open book, symbolic of learning, with an orb denoting the world, resting on the book. The orb is surrounded by a broad carved band carrying a design of gum leaves on a matted ground. On each side of the orb are the university arms executed in enamel and gilded silver, with its motto chased on a scroll, *Sub Cruce Lumen* (The light [of learning] under the [Southern] Cross). Spiralling around the shaft, with a central knop, are engraved stars and fleurs-de-lis. Around the broad foot knop is inscribed 'University of Adelaide 1926'.

### 3 The University of Queensland, Brisbane Qld, 1935

On 3 May 1935 The University of Queensland held its 25th anniversary graduation ceremony. Following the presentation of candidates for admission, a ceremonial mace was presented to the university by the vice-chancellor, Dr W N Robertson. The mace was designed by William Bustard (1894–1973), a Queensland painter and designer, and was made by the Brisbane silversmithing business, F J Mole.

The silver mace is 60 cm long and has a tapered shaft. The head is surmounted by the university coat of arms, which includes the motto chased upon a scroll, *Scientia ac labore* (By means of knowledge and hard work). The arms are surrounded by a silver wreath embracing a large faceted amethyst. This original mace was replaced in 1971 (see no. 13).



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### 4 The Australian National University, Canberra ACT, 1950

The Australian National University received a ceremonial mace in 1950 from the University of Oxford. Made by the Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Company in London and hallmarked accordingly, it is a replica of the University of Oxford's mace and, being a replica, bears the same inscription as Oxford's mace, *Ego sum Via Vita et Veritas* (I am the way, the life and the truth). This sterling silver mace is 123 cm long, with a diameter at its widest point of approximately 9 cm. It weighs close to 2.6 kg.

### 5 University of New England, Armidale NSW, 1956

To commemorate the installation on 4 August 1955 of the foundation chancellor of the University of New England, the Rt Hon Sir Earle Page, a ceremonial mace was presented by the deputy chancellor, Dr Phillip Wright, to UNE in the following year.

This was the second of seven Australian university maces made overseas. In several cases, the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths was approached to recommend suitable artists to design and make the maces. It recommended London gold and silversmith Gerald Benney (1930–2008) to design and make the UNE mace, the first of three Benney made for Australian universities. While it combines in exact form all the characteristics of a mediaeval fighting mace, its design is modern and singularly appropriate for UNE.

The sterling silver mace bears London hallmarks for 1956. The university arms are engraved twice on the lower part of the head. Each bears the university motto, *Ex sapiens modus* (Out of wisdom comes moderation). Above the engraved arms rises the symbolic representation of the top part



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### 6 The University of New South Wales, Sydney NSW, 1962

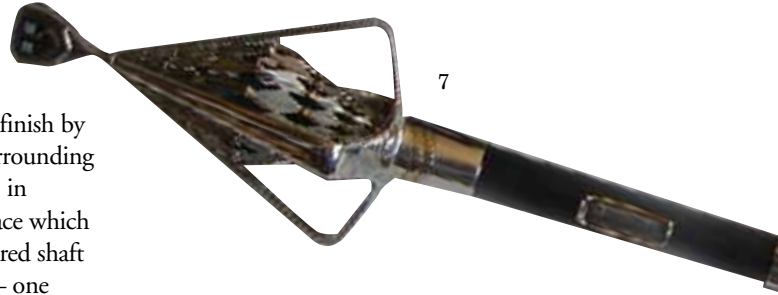
The 122 cm long mace of The University of New South Wales was presented by Dr Colin Syme, chairman of BHP, on 6 December 1962 as a gift from the company. It was designed by the university's architect, Dr Cobden Parkes (1892–1978, youngest son of Sir Henry), and Dr Francis Matthews, chief engineer, Australian Iron & Steel (BHP), Port Kembla.

The head is formed by separate bands of stainless steel crowned by a waratah, the floral emblem of the state of NSW, in chased silver. The arms of the university and the state of NSW encircle the head. The characteristic lustre of the stainless steel is enhanced by a cloth of scarlet velvet loosely set within the head, visible between the separate bands. The tapered shaft is made of eumung, a dark lustrous NSW timber, and of acacia. The shaft terminates in a tail-like butt of stainless steel.

The silversmithing work was in close collaboration with Sydney jewellers Hardy Bros, while the steel and woodwork were manufactured at BHP's Port Kembla workshops. The symbolism of the silver and steel is that BHP started business in silver and later moved into steel.

### 7 University of Western Australia, Perth WA, 1963

The mace of the University of Western Australia was the gift of British Petroleum (BP) in Western Australia to mark the 50th anniversary



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of the arms formed in a textured finish by eight open arches or 'spikes' surrounding a flame. The textured finish is in contrast to the rest of the mace which is highly polished. The tapered shaft has two decorative knobs – one immediately below the head and the other close to the foot knob, which is elongated and ends in an orb-decorated spike. The mace is 122 cm long and weighs 2.92 kg.

of the university. Mr E F Downing QC, the chairman of BP in Western Australia, presented the mace at a ceremony on 28 October 1963. The mace was used for the first time in Winthrop Hall on 19 November 1963 when the chancellor, Sir Alex Reid, welcomed guests to the golden jubilee celebrations.

On the recommendation of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, the mace was designed by Kenneth Lessons and made by London silversmiths Wakely & Wheeler. It bears London hallmarks for 1963.

The head is an intricate design of silverwork, decorated with gold stars and surrounded by four silver arches. This is topped by a double-sided triangular disc decorated on one side with an enamelled black swan on a blue enamelled background, and on the other side with the university arms in black, white and gold enamel. Below the arms is the university motto, *Seek wisdom*. Below the head on two gold bands are engraved the inscriptions, 'Golden 1963 Jubilee' and 'University of Western Australia'. The tapered shaft is covered in black leather and has a central knob with an enamelled ring of black swans on a blue ground. This ring is bordered by decorative silver and gilded bands.

The upper and lower shafts each bear two engraved silver plaques bordered in gold. The upper ones portray the Great Gateway of the university and the tower of Winthrop Hall, where graduation ceremonies are held. The lower plaques portray the kangaroo paw (a plant unique to WA) and symbols of WA industry and agriculture. The foot reflects the style of the head and ends in a small golden orb. The mace is 91 cm long and weighs 2.4 kg.

### 8 The University of Melbourne, Melbourne Vic, 1966

In March 1966 The University of Melbourne received a mace as the gift of Melbourne businessman and collector Colonel Aubrey Gibson (1901–1973). It was designed and made by Stuart Devlin (b. 1931), an expatriate Victorian silversmith working in England since 1965, and is hallmarked London 1965.

This was the first of two maces made by Stuart Devlin.

The silver gilt and enamel mace is 118 cm long and has a tapering shaft with a gilded spike foot knob. The head is formed by a frame of six





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angular arches which taper at the top and are crowned by a pointed finial, a smaller version of the foot knob. Each arch is bordered by a gilt edge of small concave curves. A central inset of three joined concave sides is gilt around the edge. Each side bears an enamelled depiction of a winged Nike holding a laurel wreath against a blue background. Each depiction is identical, surrounded by four eight-pointed stars. This design is from the university arms.

The figure of the Greek Goddess of Victory (Nike), known to the Romans as Victoria, identifies with both the colony of Victoria and the Queen for whom the colony was named. Beneath this depiction, in gilt on red enamel, is the university motto, *Postera crescam laude* ('Later I shall grow by praise', or more freely, 'We shall grow in the esteem of future generations'). Engraved just below the head is the inscription, 'Presented to the University of Melbourne by Colonel Aubrey Gibson, March, 1966.'

### 9 The University of Newcastle, Newcastle NSW, 1966

On 5 April 1966, to commemorate the establishment of The University of Newcastle as an autonomous institution, The University of NSW presented The University of Newcastle with a mace. This was the second mace made by the London gold and silversmith Gerald Benney for an Australian university (the first was for UNE).

The head represents an open book, the traditional symbol of learning. The six gold-plated silver pages of the book lie between six arches of silver. At the top of the shaft, upon a silver band is engraved the university arms. Queensland walnut veneer, silver ash veneer and silver ash were supplied from Australia and shipped to the UK for use in the shaft of the mace. The shaft ends in a broad silver band and a disc-like butt.

### 10 Monash University, Melbourne Vic, 1966

The mace of Monash University was presented by Sir Archie Michaelis, former MLA for St Kilda and a leader of the Melbourne Jewish community. Bohemian Victorian sculptor and silversmith Matcham Skipper (1921–2011) was commissioned to design and make the mace.

The sterling silver orb which forms the head is surmounted by the university arms with its motto, *Ancora imparo* (I am still learning). Silver flames symbolise the light given to the world by increasing knowledge. The tapered shaft is made of polished blackbean. The silver foot knob has four oval panels, each engraved with a device suggested by the donor as identifying General Sir John Monash (1865–1931), after whom the university is named: the Star of David; a thunderbolt, in reference to the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, of which he was the first chairman; the badge of the Australian Imperial Force; and the arms of The University of Melbourne, of which he was a former vice-chancellor.



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### 11 Flinders University, Adelaide SA, 1969

The mace of Flinders University was presented by The University of Adelaide on 23 April 1969 in recognition of the special relationship



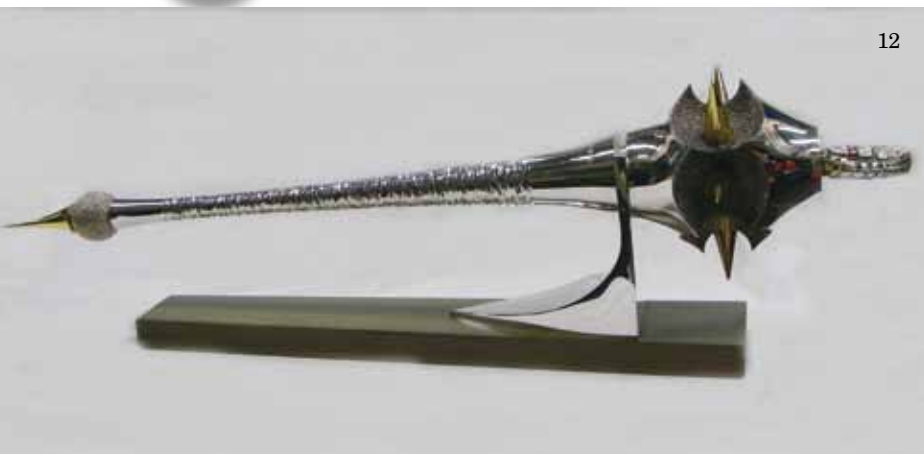
between the two universities. The 100 cm long silver mace was the third designed and made by London silversmith Gerald Benney (see nos. 5 & 9). The design is based on two capital Fs (for Flinders) back to back.

The head consists of two wide circular discs. Broad spindles separate the discs from each other and from the top of the shaft. The discs are textured on their outer surfaces and the spindles are highly polished. The logo of Flinders University is engraved on the recessed top surface of the head. The untapered shaft of the mace is oxidised silver in black-grey giving a molten surface appearance. The butt is a smaller reflection of the design of the head. On the discs of the butt is an engraved replica of the arms of The University of Adelaide and an inscription, 'Given to the Flinders University of South Australia by The University of Adelaide 1969'.

### 12 La Trobe University, Melbourne Vic, 1969

The mace of La Trobe University was the gift of Mr A G Oldham CBE, ED and first used in the ceremony conferring the first La Trobe degrees at Glenn College in December 1969. This was the second mace commission for London-based Victorian expatriate gold and silversmith Stuart Devlin (see no. 8).

The mace is made of sterling silver and gold and is 117 cm long. The plain silver head has six concave stippled facets each bearing a plain gold spike. The head is surmounted by a decorative gold egg-shaped structure bearing the enamelled university arms, with the motto, *Qui cherche trouve* (He who seeks will find) – a modern version of the La Trobe family motto. The stippled silver shaft has its top and lower portions in polished silver and the traditional foot knob of the mace is a gold spike below a stippled orb.



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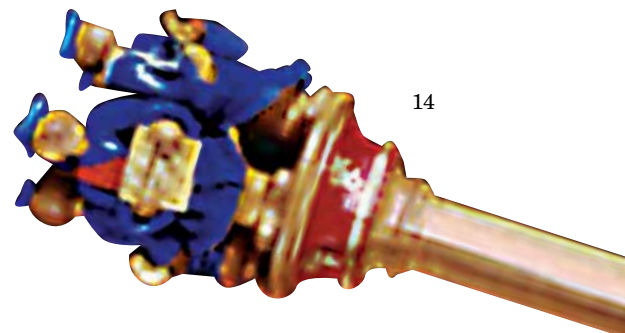


### 13 The University of Queensland, Brisbane Qld, 1971

In 1971, to replace its original mace (see no. 3), Mount Isa Mines commissioned craftsman David Walker, a graphic designer at the Australian National University, to design and make a new ceremonial mace. MIM chairman Mr J W Foots, a member of the senate, presented the mace at the final senate meeting of the year.

The mace is made of a range of metals - copper (a great natural resource of Queensland), silicon-bronze, brass and silver. A group of 'blades' form the head. Polished stones (copper minerals, mostly malachite) are set on the inner blades. The university arms appear on the top of the shaft. Polished stones are also set in the end of the mace.

Designed to symbolise the dynamism of the contemporary university in Australia, asymmetry is used, and rough textured and oxidised areas contrast against smooth, polished surfaces.



14

### 14 Griffith University, Brisbane Qld, 1979

In 1979, Griffith University commissioned Queensland woodcarver Colin Blumson to make its first mace, made of Queensland beech and displaying the university's colours at that time of cornflour blue and red.

Five figures in academic dress on the head represent the community of scholars.



The figures hold three objects: the globe, representing the spheres and indicating the universal search for knowledge; the abacus, representing orderly and measured methods of discovery; and the open book, representing a critical interest in cultures and recorded knowledge, and the responsibility to publish opinion and discovery. Beneath the figures are representations of rampant lions, part of the university logo. The untapered shaft is divided by a central knop, which is decorated in red and gold, as is the foot knop. This mace was replaced in 2005 (see no 36).

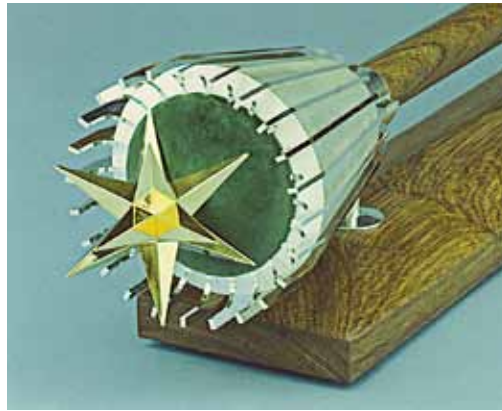
**15 University of Tasmania, Hobart Tas, 1982**

The University of Tasmania was inaugurated in 1890 and the original object used as the symbol of authority was a simple black rod. In 1982 the university commissioned a mace.

Peter Taylor, a local sculptor, designed and co-ordinated its creation from everyday materials. A number of Tasmanian artisans contributed to its making, covering such disciplines as ceramics (Les Blakebrough), woodwork (Keith Ward), modelling (Ruth Waterhouse), bronze casting (Curtis Hore), gilding (Jim Rollins), metalwork (Bruce Johnson and Kelvin Daley) and enamelling (Gary Paul).

The head is made of ceramic and bronze. Twelve shaped ceramic flanges or 'vanes' form the lower part of the head. The enameller painted the vanes alternately in the university colours of red and blue. Gilding was applied to the outer edges of each of the 12 vanes, topped by a bronze crown. Four of the 12 ceramic vanes extend through the crown and are chamfered to form a visual focus for the paws of four bronze thylacines (Tasmanian tigers) which surround the crown.

At the base of the head is a large undecorated wooden knop. The tapered wooden shaft has two knops; one in the upper third and one near the end of the shaft. This lower knop is coloured blue on its upper surface and red underneath. Its outer perimeter is gilded. The foot knop of turned wood is painted blue. The mace is 120 cm long.



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**16 Macquarie University, Sydney NSW, 1986**

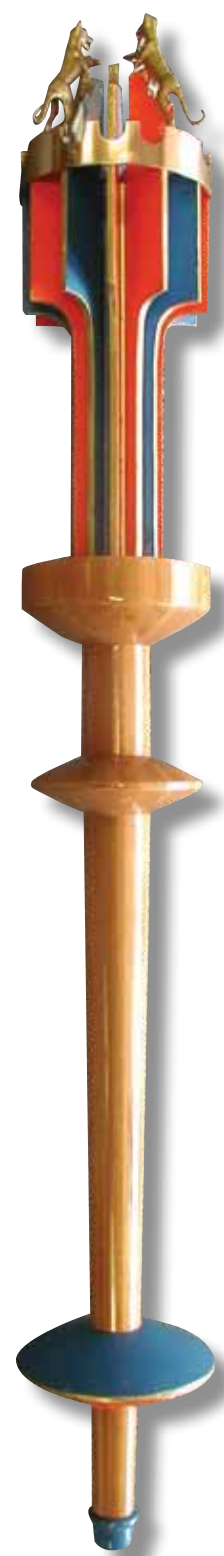
Macquarie University's mace was made in the university's workshop. It was the gift of the Macquarie University Women's Group and was designed by Emeritus Professor Gareth Roberts, a former deputy vice-chancellor of Macquarie University.

It displays the two principal elements of the university arms – Sirius (brightest star in the night sky) and the Macquarie lighthouse. The lighthouse is located near the entrance to Sydney Harbour. The original lighthouse on this site was built by Governor Lachlan Macquarie, after whom the university is named.

Sirius is represented by a dodecahedron, made of gold-plated copper, at the head of the mace. A silver-plated replica of the Macquarie lighthouse is at the base of the shaft. The university's colours are represented by the gold of the star; the white of the silver lighthouse and the green of the velvet pad upon which the star rests. The shaft of the mace is turned from polished blackbean, a dark Australian hardwood. The mace is 100 cm long.

**17 Deakin University, Geelong & Melbourne Vic, 1987**

The suggestion for the purchase of a mace and an initial donation came from a student, Donald Thomson. The chairman of the University Foundation, Sir Wilfred Brookes, approached Alcoa Australia seeking a contribution to the mace. With the generosity of Alcoa and of Sir Wilfred, an aluminium



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mace was able to be funded. It was designed and manufactured by Don Shiel Metal Art Investments Pty Ltd, a Victorian aluminium manufacturing company. The presentation of the mace was made on 22 May 1987 jointly by Mr Thomson, Sir Wilfred Brookes and Norman Stephen, managing director of Alcoa Australia.

Below the highly polished anodised aluminium top of the spherical head, the surface is textured. The head bears the Alcoa logo on the textured surface and is decorated with entwining gum leaves which continue down the upper shaft. The aluminium central shaft is covered in leather. An aluminium plaque in the centre of the shaft is engraved with the initials AD, for Alfred Deakin, after whom the university is named. The lower shaft and the foot knob are again in textured aluminium with decorative gum leaves.

### 18 University of Wollongong, Wollongong NSW, 1988

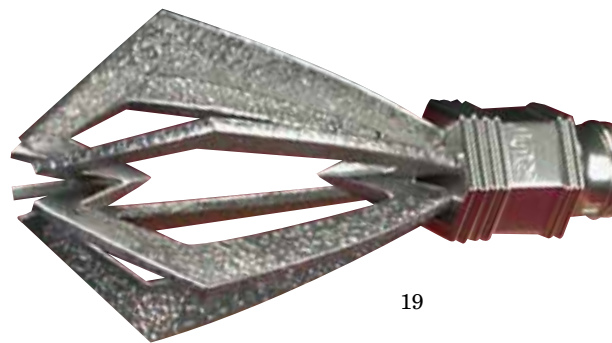
Mrs Ethel Hayton MBE, a fellow of the university, offered to provide a mace to the University of Wollongong but died before the project could be instigated. The Friends of the University took up the project and presented the mace in 1988 in her memory.

Italian-born Wollongong artist Gino Sanguineti (1926–2011) designed and crafted the mace in stainless steel. The head of the mace is the symbolic shape of the flower of the local native tree, the Illawarra flame tree, which appears on the university arms. The exterior surface has a rough finish, symbolising the heavy industrial area of Wollongong, while the stamen of the flower is smooth and highly polished to indicate the university's position as a centre for the city and region. Below the head are three timber carved inserts made from one of the three original Moreton Bay fig trees which were a feature of the campus and estimated to be 500 years old.

### 19 Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane Qld, 1988

The Queensland University of Technology commissioned a mace to be carried at the inauguration ceremony of the university in 1988. The mace was designed and made by Alan Place, a part-time lecturer in fine arts at the former Brisbane CAE, now part of QUT.

The sterling silver mace is 80 cm long and of simple, strong design. It has three sections, each symbolising the different levels of tertiary education. The foot knob represents the bachelor degree, the start of a professional career; the knob in the middle represents the



19

master's degree; and the flame-shaped head, made of six angular arches, symbolising the torch of learning, represents the doctorate. QUT is engraved on the section between the shaft and the head. The open top acknowledges that education is an on-going process.

### 20 University of Technology Sydney, Sydney NSW, 1989

The last of the 1980s maces was presented by the Department of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in NSW on 1 May 1989 to the Council of the first University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). That Council, in turn, presented the mace to the 'new' University which formed in 1990 following several amalgamations with educational institutions.

The sterling silver and titanium mace was designed and made by Larsen and Lewers – Sydney silversmiths Helge Larsen and Darani Lewers. Its design is a blend of traditional and modern devices.

The head is a double helix, a three-dimensional representation of a DNA molecule, the code of life. This is made from forged silver and finished with a lightly hammered surface. Surmounting the helix is a rotating silver hemisphere, suspended within a silver gimbal. The hemisphere displays two emblems: the UTS emblem enamelled in teal blue with a silver anchor inlay on the flat side, and the emblem of the first UTS with black infill let into the curved side of the hemisphere.

The shaft is made of silver and titanium, heat coloured to gunmetal blue. Two circular silver and titanium discs, reminiscent of the wheel, form a central and a lower knob. Engraved on the lower knob is 'Department of Technical and Further Education 1.5.1989 University of Technology, Sydney'.

At the base of the shaft, in line with its main axis, is another small circular disc of silver that is the same size as the central knob. This disc bears three emblems in bas relief - the City of Sydney anchor; the NSW state waratah; and, on







the bottom circumference of the disc, the TAFE NSW emblem. The mace is 98 cm long.

Part 2 of this article will appear in a future issue of *Australiana*.

**Christine Erratt** is a researcher and the author of the reference book *Marks on Australian Silver 1950-2005* available through Parker Press (Australia) [www.parkerpressbooks.com.au](http://www.parkerpressbooks.com.au)

### Notes

- 1 Peter Thorne, The Royal Mace, House of Commons Library Document no. 18, p 28
- 2 Tim Robinson, *Record*, 2002, University of Sydney, University Archives p16
- 3 Coat of Arms definition: 'A synonymous term for coat armour; now come to mean that which was painted on the coat, the armorial bearings. Because these are nowadays shown on a shield, a shield with armorial bearings painted on it is known as a Coat of Arms.' Stefan Oliver, *An Introduction to Heraldry* ISBN 1 85627 617 1. The College of Arms in London has granted coats of arms to 19 Australian universities.

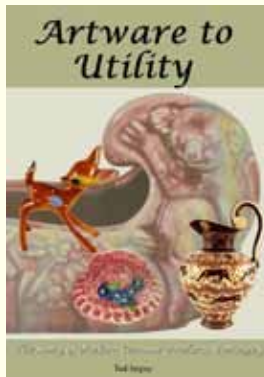
20



Book Available  
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## Artware To Utility

The Story of Modern Ceramic Products  
By Ted Impey



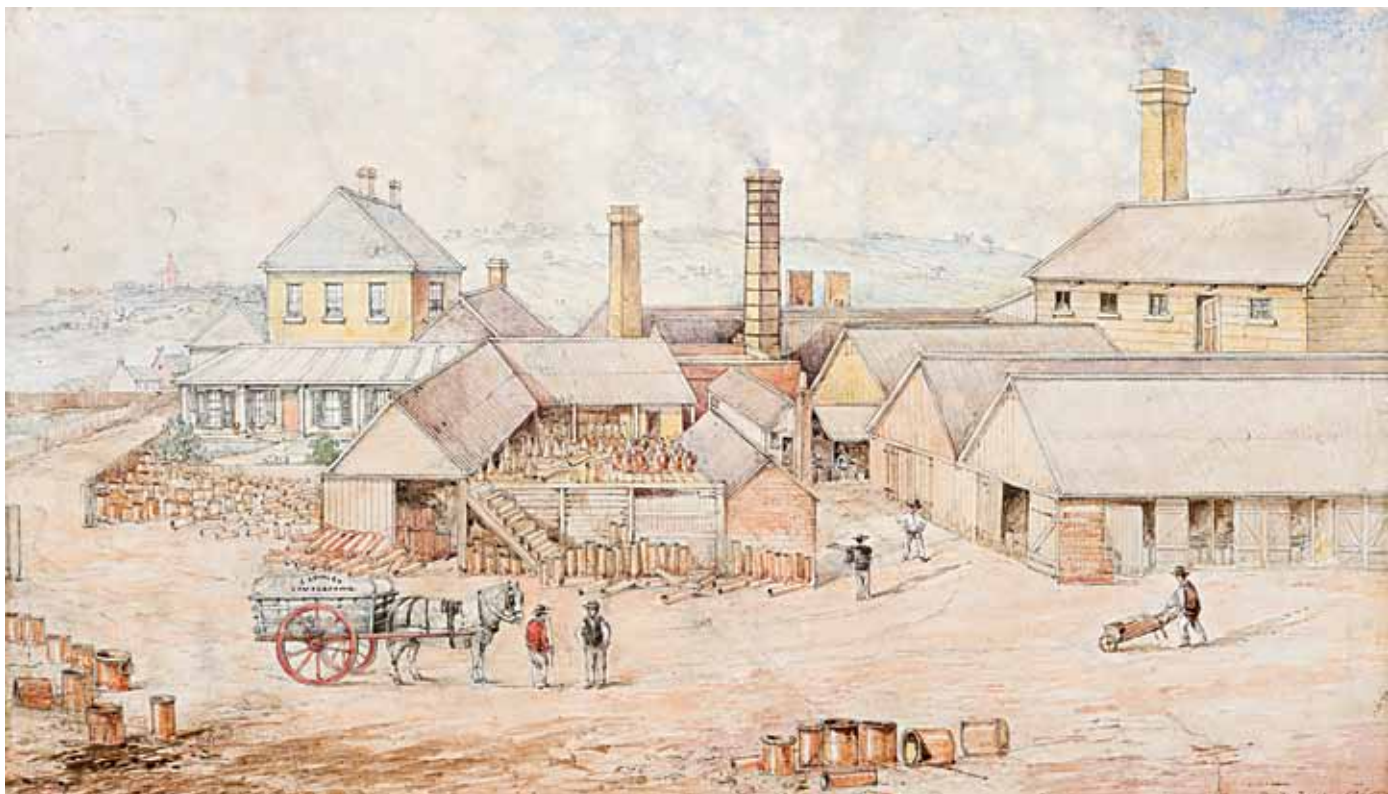
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LAUNCH: **National Museum of Australian Pottery at Holbrook, NSW**, [www.australianpottery.net.au](http://www.australianpottery.net.au) on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012. A five month exhibition will follow the launch.

Cost of book: \$75 plus postage. [www.mcpmingay.com](http://www.mcpmingay.com) or phone 0417 132652 to order a copy



An 1865 watercolour of

# Fowler's Camperdown Pottery

1

John Rider Roberts  
(c 1820–1868), *Fowler's  
Pottery, Camperdown*,  
signed and dated 1865.

Watercolour on paper,  
25.0 x 42.5 cm.

Photo courtesy  
Deutscher and  
Hackett, Melbourne

**GEOFF FORD**

Last November, Deutscher and Hackett in Melbourne auctioned a watercolour on paper of Fowler's Pottery, Camperdown, signed and dated 'John R Roberts 1865' (plate 1). Its provenance was given as Enoch Fowler, Sydney, thence by descent, finally a private collection in Sydney.<sup>1</sup>

This watercolour shows the five-acre site of Enoch Fowler's pottery on the corner of Parramatta Road and Australia Street, Camperdown NSW. It was reproduced, with added emphasis to the belching smokestacks, as an engraving in the *Illustrated Sydney News* on 16 October 1865, page 5, entitled 'COLONIAL INDUSTRIES. FOWLER'S POTTERY, CAMPERDOWN, NEAR SYDNEY, together with the following extensive description of the works:

MR. E. FOWLER'S POTTERY.

WE have recently had the pleasure of inspecting the Pottery Manufactory of Mr. E. Fowler, situate at Camperdown, and must candidly admit that we were much surprised at its great extent and importance; in truth we had no idea so extensive a business in pottery ware was carried on in New South Wales, and were highly gratified by witnessing the moulding and making up of various kinds of useful articles such as drain pipes, ginger beer bottles, &c, and the extraordinary rapidity with which some of these articles were made by manipulation alone. It may be thought surprising that though situated at so short a distance from Sydney, so few of our fellow-citizens are acquainted with the existence of a manufactory of many requisites of daily life on so extensive a scale, and which has almost



entirely stopped the exportation from England of such articles as can be produced here.

In the manufacture of drain pipes, the clay is put into pits, soaked with water, and after passing through a pug mill, is in a state called tempered, or fit for use. This clay is taken to another department and placed in an iron tube of two feet eight inches, and called the press; a die, attached to a disc, is inserted at the bottom of the tube, the clay is then filled in, and a downward pressure, from a flat piece of iron driven by steam, forces the clay into the interstices of the die, and a drain pipe is delivered at the bottom on a flat board. The pipe in this state is merely in a rough state. It is then taken to another part of the premises and handed over to the 'thrower,' who puts on the rim or socket, which is done entirely by hand on a horizontal revolving wheel; the pipe being in a moist state, the rim readily adheres to it, and it is then carried to the stove to dry, preparatory for the kiln. When placed in the kiln salt is thrown into the fire, which produces the glaze which is perceived on the pipes.

There are a number of buildings not shown in our sketch, which form a part of the works, such as kilns for making fire bricks; and places for machinery, such as rollers, elevators, pug mills, used in the manufacture of paving bricks, oven tiles, &c. The whole machinery is driven by steam power. The drain pipes alone at present made here in one week would extend half a mile, but the capabilities of this establishment would produce five times that amount. The number of hands constantly employed is about twenty-five. A visit to this interesting manufactory would not be uninteresting to many who forget that no matter how much we know there is still something to learn.

The pottery's founder, Enoch Fowler (1807–1879), was born in Newtown Stewart, County Tyrone, Ireland, where for several generations the Fowler men had worked in the pottery trade.<sup>2</sup>

Enoch emigrated to NSW in 1837, and set up his own pottery at Broadway in Sydney, where he began producing salt-glazed storage jars and ginger beer bottles. In 1847, he relocated his works to Queen Street, Glebe, and began making hand-turned drain pipes on a potter's wheel. In 1854 he relocated his works to Bay Street, Glebe.

In 1863 he moved again, to George Guthrie's 'Camperdown Pottery' site, which he had purchased in 1858. Added to the production were garden edging tiles, plain and fire bricks, chimney



pots, laundry tubs and stoneware containers.

In 1873, Enoch's son Robert (1840–1906) took over the pottery which continued to expand and produce sewerage, drain and agricultural pipes, sanitary ware, WC pans, jars, ginger beer bottles, chemical ware and terracotta and salt glaze chimney pots, air bricks, flower pots and a large variety of bricks. Robert Fowler was elected Lord Mayor of Sydney in 1880, and built a substantial two-storey house, Cranbrook, opposite the pottery; it still stands at 14 Australia Street (**plate 2**).<sup>3</sup>

After Robert's death in 1906, the Fowler family continued running the pottery. The firm was then employing a total of 104 men and boys, who were producing 400 different articles.

In 1914, 17 acres at Marrickville were purchased and over the next six years everything was relocated to the new site. In 1919, Fowlers became a Limited Liability Company, with the family still in control, and the pottery continued to expand.

In 1937, the company celebrated its centenary. Two of the outstanding features were the magnitude of the Marrickville works, and well over 1,000 different articles which 450 employees turned out of 22 kilns. In fact the company's range of products was one of the largest of its kind in the world.

In 1969, Newbold General Refractories Ltd purchased the 'Fowler Company'. The closure of the Marrickville works in 1977 marked the end of 140 years of production. The Fowler name was then acquired by James Hardie. Caroma, a division of GWA International, now maintains the Fowler brand for bathroom ware.

**2**

Robert Fowler's house Cranbrook at 14 Australia Street, Camperdown NSW, c. 1880.

Photo John Wade 2011

### John Rider Roberts (c 1820 – 1868)

The artist John Rider Roberts has an entry in the *Dictionary of Australian Artists*, quoted below.<sup>4</sup> It appears from the NSW Births, Death and Marriages website that his wife's name was Emma and they had two children, William (b 1856) and Isabel, (b 1862); both children died in the year they were born.

Landscape painter, illustrator, surveyor and architect, advertised as a surveyor of Jamison Street, Sydney, in January 1854. By May he was in partnership with Henry Haeg as surveyors and civil engineers; the following year they were listed as architects. One of Roberts's major artistic activities was 'improving' the survey plans he and Haeg provided for land auctioneers by adding topographical views of the areas up for subdivision. Two such views ('looking to the south-east, embodies a grand view of Botany Bay' and 'looking to the North Head, a view of the Railway and Petersham Station') appear on a survey plan dated October 1854.

Roberts was closely associated with the *Illustrated Sydney News* during both its first (1853–1855) and second series (from 1863 until his death). He provided many topographical drawings, including a very large *View of the City of Sydney and Port Jackson*, used in January 1854 when the paper stated: 'Mr Roberts is a great observer of nature, and ... endeavours to imitate what he sees. Many artists are satisfied with giving a general idea of the outline of a landscape and completing it in a peculiar style of their own, so much so indeed, that the picture might be in any part of the world, they make nature subservient to their style; in this case Mr Roberts makes his style subservient to nature, consequently we have a correct notion on inspecting his drawings, of Australian scenery.'

As head of the art department for the first series, Roberts also 'tidied up' drawings from less competent artists before the woodblocks were made. His contributions to the second series included *The Old Figtree, near Wollongong* (16 October 1867). Engravings after Roberts's drawings also appeared in the *Illustrated Melbourne Post*, e.g. *Panoramic View of Armidale, New South Wales*, October 1866).

Several of Roberts's drawings first published as views in the *Illustrated Sydney News* reappeared as advertisements. A picturesque landscape of a property near Goulburn (20 May 1854) was used to sell off lots on the estate, a view of the Rising Sun Hotel with a plan of its grounds to sell the hotel (29 April 1854), and a view of Burwood Villa to sell its subdivided land (surveyed by Haeg and Roberts) on 13 May 1854. During the first series of the *Illustrated Sydney News*,

Roberts seems to have been the last of the many proprietors in partnership with its longstanding engraver, printer and publisher, W.G. Mason. Although the final edition contains no indication of imminent demise, on 4 July 1855 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the paper was for sale, the late proprietors having 'retired from the business'. The following day Roberts was declared insolvent. His debts amounted to £310 6s 3d.

During his lifetime Roberts was best known as a painter of watercolour landscapes. *View on the Clarence River, New South Wales* was included in the New South Wales court at the 1867 Paris Universal Exhibition and four of his paintings were shown posthumously at the 1870 Sydney Intercolonial Exhibition, one being *On the Barwon* (probably now in Geelong Art Gallery, Geelong, Vic).<sup>5</sup> Extant watercolours include Sydney Harbour scenes looking from and towards Neutral Bay (1853, Dixon Library, State Library of NSW, Sydney, NSW), *Dangar Falls* (1861, private collection), *Sydney Harbour from the Wharf at Point Piper* (1864, private collection) and *St George's Bridge, Barwon River, Queensland* (1865, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, Sydney, NSW). Pencil sketches of the Sydney Botanical Gardens drawn in March 1866 are in the Mitchell Library...

Listed as a painter, architect and surveyor of Hordern Street, Newtown, in 1867, John R. Roberts died of 'dropsy' on 30 June 1868 aged 48. His obituary in the *Illustrated Sydney News* called him 'a painstaking landscape artist of no mean ability'.<sup>6</sup>

.....  
**Geoff Ford** OAM is the author of nine books on Australian 19th-century pottery. Geoff is an approved valuer of Australian Pottery for the Australian Government's Cultural Gift Program and an approved expert examiner for the Australian Government's Office for the Arts, for the protection of Movable Cultural Heritage. He and his wife Kerrie are both Fellows of the Australian Institute of History and Art, and own and operate the National Museum of Australian Pottery at Holbrook NSW; go to [www.australianpottery.net.au](http://www.australianpottery.net.au) for information.

### Notes

- 1 Deutscher and Hackett, 30 November 2011, lot 69, sold for \$38,400; [www.deutscherandhackett.com/node/23000069](http://www.deutscherandhackett.com/node/23000069), accessed 22 Dec 2011.
- 2 Geoff Ford, *Australian Pottery, The First 100 Years*, Salt Glaze Press, Wodonga, 1995, pp 27–38.
- 3 G P Walsh, 'Fowler, Robert', ADB 4, 209–210.
- 4 Joan Kerr (ed.), *Dictionary of Australian Artists*, OUP Melbourne 1992, p 673.
- 5 This does not appear on the internet version of the Geelong Gallery catalogue.
- 6 The brief obituary in *ISN* 11 July 1868 p 3 incorrectly names him 'John Ryde Roberts'.





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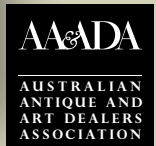


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## Wash Drawing by John Glover



A highly important and historical Wash Drawing by John Glover, taken on the summit of Ben Lomond, Tasmania between the 26th and 27th January 1833.

It is possible that this drawing was adapted and reused some 5 years later as the vantage point in the oil painting "Moulting Lagoon and Great Oyster Bay from Pine Hill" circa 1838 (Hansen p. 104).

Glover, who had two club feet, ascended by pack horse, guided by John Batman and the surveyor John Helder Wedge. They took with them three "Sydney Natives" from the Wollongong and Jervis Bay area brought over by the Parramatta-born Batman to his Tasmanian property at the base of Ben Lomond. They were Beewurher (Pigeon), Kanninbayer (John Crook) and Quanmurrer (Joe the Marine).

The expedition was in part recorded in some 27 drawings of the topography to include "The Sydney Natives" and Tasmanian Natives all by Glover in his Sketchbook No 97, currently in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and now published in facsimile. From this sketchbook Glover painted a now lost painting exhibited in his London exhibition of 1834, as catalogue number 10. "The top of Ben Lomond; the Rocks called

the Stacks are of great height evidently split asunder by great violence; the small lake is supposed to have been a volcano, three fourths of its side remains perfect, the rest broken down by water". The above wash view appears to have been taken north along the treeless ridge, above the snow line, looking towards Ben Nevis. It shows a "Sydney Native" conversing with Batman or Wedge on the summit with two seated dogs at foot.

The dog is not endemic to Tasmania; its introduction allowed a quantum leap in Aboriginal technology from traditional fire farming to hunting with dogs. The Tasmanian Aboriginals traded their wives or children for dogs, a practice particularly prevalent with sealers on the islands. This change of lifestyle, when combined with the common cold and close contact with Europeans rapidly destroyed an ancient way of life.

This early drawing depicting a "Sydney Native" and a European standing with his dogs on the summit of what was then considered the highest mountain on the island is, in the above context, rare and extremely evocative.

Height 6.1cm Width 9.5cm