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November 2019 vol 41 no 4

RESEARCHING, PRESERVING AND COLLECTING AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE





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COVER

Thomas Matthew Alcock (Sydney, fl. 1873–1900), *The Tattersall's Club Cup*, 1886, 22 ct gold and silver, in the 'Etruscan' style, detail. Collection: Tattersall's Club, Brisbane, photograph Andrew Yeo

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The Tattersall's Club cups: Queensland racing history in gold and silver, 1884–1888

Dianne Byrne shares some of the outcomes of her postgraduate research into 19th-century presentation jewellery and metalwork made in Queensland or for Queenslanders, focusing here on a series of racing trophies made in the 1880s for the Tattersall's Club Cup run at Eagle Farm racecourse. Two of these were made by the previously neglected Sydney silversmith Thomas Matthew Alcock, and designed in an international 'Etruscan' style, which contrasts with the familiar vernacular style incorporating overtly Australian motifs such as emus and kangaroos.



DIANNE BYRNE

... who among us all is blind to the blandishments of silver and gold, when accompanied by the shout of praise, the encouragement of fair women, and the glory of victory! And this additional incentive is offered in the shape of a magnificent cup and tray...¹

Sports in 19th-century Australia attracted people of all persuasions and were reported exhaustively in the popular press. In a world where work occupied so much of people's daily lives, sport offered opportunities for both participants and observers to demonstrate their abilities, to barrack for their teams or to cheer on a favourite horse.

Trophies played an important part in many of these activities, the quality or 'worth' of trophies reflecting the particular sport's popularity and prestige. Not all sports had the money or membership to warrant impressive additions. The major sporting trophies which have survived were awarded as prizes for thoroughbred racing. Treasured and passed down through the families of recipients, these pieces tell a unique story, of a sport established and nurtured by an influential group of supporters from the colonies' broader social reaches, a sport intended to reflect and to confirm 'civilising' English traditions.

This popularity and prestige were embodied in the trophies awarded for the Tattersall's Club Cup, a signature horse race run at Brisbane's Eagle Farm racecourse, usually once a year.² Tattersall's Club was named after the famous London bloodstock auctioneers, founded by Richard Tattersall in 1766. The Brisbane club was founded in July 1865 as a racing club dedicated to the promotion of social and business interaction among owners, trainers and followers of the turf. In 1883, after falling on hard times in the 1870s, the Club re-established itself, with the all-male membership consisting of a lively mix of political and legal professionals, together with bookmakers, drapers, horse breeders, tobacconists and other business and commercial figures.³

The first Tattersall's Club Cup had been staged in 1865 but suspended in 1869.

The race was reintroduced in December 1884, beginning a five-year period during which the trophies presented to the winners became potent objects of sporting and social leverage.

The Tattersall's Club Cup 1884

The press described the 1884 cup as

an exquisite piece of work ...[with] a representation of a "finish" opposite the grand stand worked on it ...it is massively made of silver and gold, the handles being especially well done.⁴

Although its present whereabouts are

unknown and no image has been located, the cup testified to the rapid social rise of John Phillip Jost, its presenter.

Now J.P.J. is widely known
To all who seek racecourses,
A man of standing and of tone,
An owner of racehorses.⁵

Jost (1835–1921) was a German immigrant who had started out as a pork butcher.⁶ In 1871, having made his fortune, he took up 10,000 acres of Franklyn Vale station, and established an estate named *Jost Vale* where he raised cattle and racehorses.⁷

1.

(Opposite page)

William Swingler [attributed], (Birmingham, UK fl. 1880s), *The Tattersall's Club Cup*, 1885. Silver. Engraved: *Tattersall's Cup/1885/PRESENTED BY/ I. A. PHILLIPS,/ METROPOLITAN HOTEL. BRISBANE./ WINNER/M & J DURACK'S/ QUAMBONESON/W MARTIN. Jockey./ December 10th 1885.* Private collection/Tattersall's Club, Brisbane, photographs Andrew Yeo

2.

Isaac Aaron Phillips, donor of the 1885 Tattersall's Club Cup. Illustration from *Queensland Figaro and Punch*, 19 October 1889 p 3

3.

The return to Queensland of the 1885 Tattersall's Cup unveiled at Tattersall's Race Day, Doomben Racecourse, Brisbane, 23 June 2018





Jost's cup was most likely imported from England, with the only indication of its value a report that it had cost "50 notes".⁸ Racing cups were intended to accompany and complement impressive prize purses and while they consistently are reported as costing more than other types of sporting trophies, there was probably a certain amount of 'hype' associated with such reports. The prices may have been inflated at times by makers or retailers. Reporting on the acquisition of the 1884 Tattersall's Club Cup for example, *The Telegraph's* writer was sceptical of its stated value, declaring that "race cups now a-days are generally more or less of a swindle, and when sold fetch about half the money they are put down at".⁹

Prior to the race, the 1884 cup was democratically displayed in the window of the Goldsmiths' Hall Company in Queen Street, Brisbane. Ladies gathered excitedly to admire it and J.P. Jost's decision to enter one of his own horses in the race caused much discussion. The cup subsequently became the property of John Finnie, a stud-master from Drayton who owned the winning horse Medusa.¹⁰

The Tattersall's Club Cup 1885

The next year brought the presentation of a trophy (plate 1) which sought to satisfy Tattersall's ambition to challenge the prominence of the Queensland Turf Club as well as southern clubs and to rival the eminence of the richest handicap race in the world at that time, the Melbourne Cup.¹¹

The 1885 Tattersall's Cup was a large, covered, two-handed silver urn purchased from an unidentified London supplier

and shipped to the colony aboard the steamship *Bulimba*. The value of the cup was reported variously as £100 or 100 guineas.¹² The donor and presenter, Isaac Aaron Phillips (plate 2), was a Brisbane publican and treasurer of Tattersall's Club, who enjoyed a reputation from the Gulf Country to Sydney and Melbourne as a "straight going, honest sportsman".¹³

Phillips had been born in Sydney 'over the shop' at the City Wine Vaults Hotel. After a period in business in Surat as a store and hotelkeeper, he moved to Brisbane where he became mine host of the Metropolitan Hotel, becoming known as an open-handed innovator, installing "patent contrivances", and as with his trophy, demonstrating a desire to outdo and impress.¹⁴ "Such a cup ... has never been seen in Queensland" proclaimed *The Brisbane Courier*, while *Queensland Figaro* hailed it as "the premier trophy of the kind that Australia has ever seen. It excels the Melbourne Cup ... and it reminds English sportsmen of the rare plate offered at the aristocratic Ascot meeting."¹⁵ Like its predecessor, the 1885 cup was placed on public display, in the window of Billy Mooney's Brisbane cigar store.¹⁶

The 1885 cup also had its detractors:

[it] is far too handsome and costly to stand idle on the stereotyped colonial chiffonier, that, in most Queensland homes, does duty for a sideboard, and, in fact will be out of place with its surroundings no matter who wins it. The average horse owner ... is not the man to live up to an aesthetic ideal, be it embodied in a racing cup,



4.

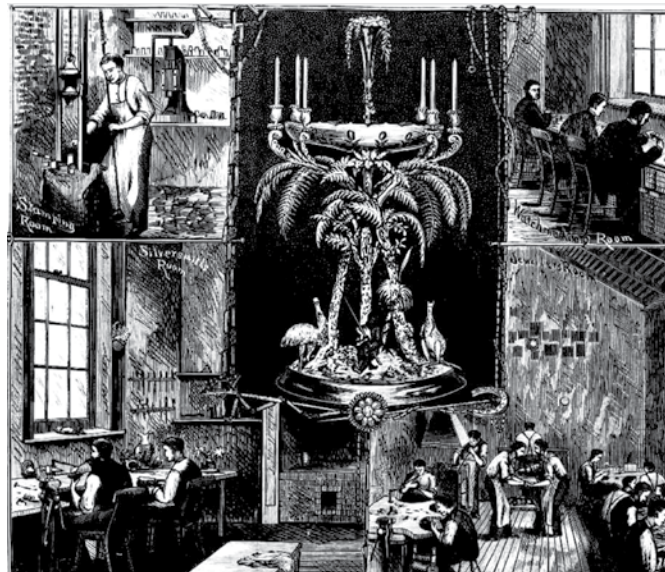
Thomas Matthew Alcock (Sydney, fl. 1874–1900), *The Tattersall's Club Cup*, 1886. 22ct gold, silver. Stamped "22CT". Engraved on obverse: TATTERSALL'S CUP / BRISBANE / Presented by / Mr C.J. McCaffery / 2 Miles / WON BY / PIRATE / Time 3.39 1/2, 10.12.86/. Engraved on reverse: THE PROPERTY / of / James McGill / PIRATE / Ridden by / Fred Brightwell./ Collection: Tattersall's Club, Brisbane, photographs Andrew Yeo

5.

Evan Jones (Sydney, fl. 1873–1917). The Wagga Wagga Gold Cup, 1883, silver and gold on an ebonised base. Illustration from *The Australian Town and Country Journal*, 1 December 1883 p 32

6.

Evan Jones' Hunter Street workshop depicted in *The Illustrated Sydney News* 21 December 1878 p 21. The Silversmiths' Room is shown lower left



a bunch of sunflowers, or a teapot, and I fear its fate will ultimately be the pawnbroker's shop or the smelting pot.¹⁷

Fortunately, this gloomy prediction did not come to pass. The cup was passed down through the family of its recipients, Queensland pastoralists Jeremiah and Michael Durack, owners of winning horse Quamboneson.¹⁸ In 2018, a chance encounter led to its re-discovery in South Australia in the possession of a Durack descendant and after being unveiled at a club race meeting (**plate 3**) is now on permanent loan to Tattersall's Club in Brisbane.¹⁹

John Hawkins has observed that “a society has to be rich to produce a demand for objects wrought from solid gold”.²⁰ Accordingly, the trophies produced for the Tattersall's Club Cup between 1886 and 1888, a period of unprecedented economic prosperity, reflect the optimism and affluence of the time and rank among the most outstanding achievements of the Australian goldsmiths' art.²¹

The Tattersall's Club Cup 1886

In 1882, E. E. Jones had commissioned Haymarket jeweller T. M. Alcock to make a gold cup for the Sydney Tattersall's Club Cup to be run on New Year's Day 1883.

The design is singularly graceful, Greek and Etruscan models being followed, and the cup, which is 20 inches high, weighs no less than 22oz. of 18-carat

gold. In form it is simple, but very beautiful, being indeed not unlike one of those lachrymatories occasionally [sic] found in antique tombs. For the most part its surface is left dull, but the handles are burnished, and they spring from a wreath, which is composed of laurel, as befits a prize of victory. The cover is surmounted by the figures of a racehorse and a jockey.²²

This gold cup was the precursor of the similar 'Etruscan' trophy for the 1886 Brisbane cup commissioned by a Sydney bookmaker from Alcock:

There is now on view at [tobacconist] Mr. W. Mooney's, in Queen-street, a very handsome vase, which is the gift of Mr. McCaffery, of Sydney, to the winner of Tattersall's Cup, one of the principal events of Tattersall's Club race meeting ... The vase was made and designed by Mr. T. M. Alcock, jeweller, of the Haymarket, Sydney, and is said to be one of the handsomest articles ever produced in the colonies.²³

For many years, the 1886 cup (**plate 4**) was thought lost, until it appeared at a Melbourne auction in March 2000, where it was purchased by Tattersall's Club.²⁴

The re-emergence of the 1886 cup has opened the way for an assessment of the work of Warwickshire-born jeweller and silversmith Thomas Matthew Alcock (c 1848–1902) whose output has been almost completely overlooked by scholars

of Australian decorative arts, mainly because he failed to mark his important pieces and few have been identified. Alcock established a store in Sydney in 1872²⁵ and by 1885 was trading as a wholesale and manufacturing jeweller. Alcock was well-connected in Sydney sporting circles, both as a racehorse owner and as the Australian Jockey Club's timekeeper.²⁶ Alcock was a businessman whose specialty was clocks, but he also employed working jewellers, as this report from 1890 shows:

Eleven hands are employed on the premises, and besides the imported jewellery with which the place is stocked, there are also some beautiful articles which have been manufactured on the premises; in fact, Mr. Alcock manufactures a large quantity of art jewellery, all of which would do credit to any kindred establishment in the world, and shows what can be done in this country of gold, silver, and precious stones.²⁷

The design of the 1886 and 1888 cups reflects the interest in classical revival styles which had started in Australia in the 1870s, prompted by reports of archaeological excavations overseas. The elongated shape was derived from the *lekythos*, a Greek pottery shape uncovered at the time in Etruscan tombs in central and southern Italy, as well as being found as marble tomb monuments in the Kerameikos cemetery in Athens. It closely resembled another work, which Alcock produced in the same year,



as a prize for the winner of the Newcastle Jockey Club Handicap.

Mr Alcock has dispensed with the conventional blackfellow and kangaroo and emu, and has introduced into his work features which are distinctly classical. In shape the prize resembles an Etruscan vase . . . Handles of dead silver in scrollwork, and a lid surmounted with a horse and jockey, are added. The lid however, is not a requisite, and the vase appears the more graceful without it. . . ²⁸

The decision to create the 1886 Tattersall's Club Cup primarily in high-carat gold rather than silver can be partially explained by the desire to compete with the gold cups then being commissioned by wealthy supporters and racing stewards for southern clubs.²⁹ Yet it cannot be regarded simply as a profligate choice on the part of its presenter Charles McCaffery (c 1843–1918), a prominent Sydney bookmaker. From the 1870s until the outbreak of

World War I, the price of gold was regulated. In the 1880s, it was priced at a little more than \$20 per oz. This artificially low value made it a viable option to silver, significantly more so than today.³⁰

Tattersall's Club Cup 1887

The running of the 1887 Tattersall's Club Cup coincided with another event, the opening of Tattersall's new Brisbane club rooms.³¹ One of the first people to use the elaborately fitted out premises was John Thompson, a Sydney bookmaker, who commissioned the 1887 cup from prominent Sydney jeweller and silversmith Evan Jones.³²

A goodly number of "the Sydney push," . . . headed by Jack Thompson . . . arrived by steamer early in the week, and held a levée or drawing-room in Mooney's back parlour, while the talent, the quidnuncs and the mob gazed eagerly or

7.

Thomas Matthew Alcock (Sydney, fl. 1873–1900), *The Tattersall's Club Cup*, 1888. 22ct gold, silver. Engraved on obverse: *Tattersalls Gold Cup / BRISBANE/ Presented by/CHARLES WESTBROOK ESQ/ ONE & HALF MILE/ WON BY/GREYWING/WEIGHT 7ST. TIME 2.40½/ 8-12-88/*. Engraved on reverse: *GREYWING /THE PROPERTY OF/ HERBERT HUNTER ESQ/STANLEY HALL*. Private Collection/Tattersall's Club, Brisbane, photographs Andrew Yeo

languidly, and open-mouthed on the handsome trophy.³³

Although the 1887 cup has not been located, a description in *The Sydney Mail* suggests it closely resembled an earlier work by Evan Jones, the 1883 Wagga Wagga Gold Cup (**plate 5**).

The vessel . . . stands on a pedestal of polished ebony; the base and stem are of solid gold, and the body is of standard silver, embellished with golden wreaths of flowers. The handles and cover are also of the same precious metal, and the whole is surmounted with a miniature racehorse and jockey, the thoroughbred fully extended.³⁴

The work of Evan Jones (1846–1917), practical jeweller, goldsmith and silverworker has been well explored by John Hawkins.³⁵ Jones set up his own business in Sydney in the early 1870s.³⁶ He served for a long period as an Alderman for the City of Sydney and had wide-ranging business and racing interests, including a share in the Canterbury Park Race Club. His extensive and well appointed workshop in Hunter Street turned out watches, medals, badges and large-scale testimonial pieces, and was particularly known for racing, rowing and sculling trophies (**plate 6**).³⁷ His early works included the Glen Innes Gold Cup commissioned by that jockey club and an 18ct gold salver with "exquisitely finished etchings of Australian flowers" for presentation to Cardinal John Henry Newman by the Catholics of Sydney.³⁸

Tattersall's Club Cup 1888

The year 1888 was a high-water mark of Queensland economic and racing prosperity. The Club had a long waiting list for entry, with prospective members drawn from new occupations associated with commerce, trade and merchandising.³⁹ Thomas Alcock made the 1888 cup, again of gold and silver. It was valued at 100 sovereigns and closely resembled his firm's 1886 Tattersall's Cup (plate 7).

The donor was Charles Westbrook, an English-born bookmaker, who had started his career buying and selling shares on the London Stock Exchange (plate 8).⁴⁰ Westbrook had arrived in Sydney in 1880 and made a fortune on the Melbourne Cup that year. He went on to challenge existing bookmaking practices which operated on credit, to become the "father of cash betting". By 1888, he was a controversial as well as a colourful figure, a familiar face in the Sydney and Melbourne courts, where he was fighting charges of conducting illegal off-course bookmaking.⁴¹

What was Westbrook's intention in presenting the 1888 Tattersall's Cup? Indeed, what was the attraction of this particular Brisbane race, supported in succession by three high-profile southern bookmakers? The main aim was undoubtedly to infiltrate the local sporting community and to extend gambling operations into Queensland. Future earnings were a focus for Australian bookmakers in the mid-1880s as they faced the introduction of machine gambling in the form of the totalizator (the 'tote'). A further reason was surely to boost personal standing. Opposition to bookmaking at the time was not just confined to the police and groups such as the Salvation Army. According to *The Adelaide Observer*, "A bookmaker is a man who earns his living by pandering to a vice, and the existence of a class of professional gamblers is a public evil."⁴²

A trophy of this kind was more than a gift to a privileged group or an 'elitist' establishment. It was a means of enlisting public sympathy, a bid for goodwill at a difficult time for an occupation that was becoming increasingly maligned.

Only two more Tattersall's Club Cups were awarded as trophies for the race, in 1889 and 1890. Both were imported and lacked the grandeur of their predecessors.⁴³ At the end of 1892 the race itself was

abandoned, a casualty of Tattersall's financial difficulties and Queensland's advancing economic depression.⁴⁴

Although a feature for only a few years, the cups awarded during the 1880s convey a message communicated in varying degrees by all sporting trophies. They speak of the ambitions and aims of their presenters, they testify to the competitiveness and engagement of their recipients, they provide evidence of the popularity of their sport, and they serve as a visible measure of their era's optimism and prosperity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks go to Michael Paramor AM, Vice-President of Tattersall's Club, and Jonathan Caldwell, New Business, Heritage and Member Relations Manager, for making it possible to obtain photographs of the surviving Tattersall's Club Cups. Special thanks to Dr Michael O'Shea, Life Member and member of the former Heritage Committee of Tattersall's Club, for his generosity, advocacy and invaluable contribution to this research.

NOTES

1. *Telegraph* (Brisbane) 21 Jun 1882 p 2.
2. The Tattersall's Club Cup was a handicap race, of between 1.5 and 2 miles open to three-year old horses.
3. The Club was affiliated with, but operated independently of, Sydney's (first) Tattersall's Club, established in 1858. Robert Longhurst, *Friendship is life: a history of Tattersall's Club, Brisbane*, Brisbane, Tattersall's Club, 1993 pp 17–21, p 45.
4. *The Week* (Brisbane) 6 Dec 1884 p 17.
5. *Queensland Figaro* 24 May 1884 p 3.
6. *North Australian* 11 Oct 1864 p 2.
7. *Sydney Sportsman* 13 Jul 1921 p 10; *Daily Mail* 13 Mar 1924 p 6. Jost's somewhat sordid beginnings are recounted in Sharyn Merkle, *Brisbane burns: How the great fires of 1864 shaped a city and its people*, Samford Qld, Australian Academic Press Group 2017 pp 53–57.
8. *Telegraph* 11 Dec 1884 p 4. A Simple Purchasing Power Calculator suggests a 2019 value of \$6,000. <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/australiacompare/relativevalue.php>. However, the cited cost should be considered in relation to wages of the time. In 1884, £50 was the total annual salary of the Health Officer at Charters Towers, half the annual salary (£100) of the Registrar of Brands and one-tenth of the annual salary (£500) of the Manager at the head office of the Queensland Government Savings Bank (*Queensland Blue Book for the Year 1884* pp 28, 35, 52).
9. *Telegraph* 11 Dec 1884 p 4.
10. *The Week* 15 Nov 1884 p 17 & 13 Dec 1884 p 17; *Telegraph* 4 Dec 1884 p 4.
11. *Queensland Figaro and Punch* 21 Nov 1885 p 4.
12. *Queenslander* 14 Nov 1885 p 773;
13. *Sydney Mail* 28 Sep 1889 p 699.
14. *Brisbane Courier* 28 Apr 1887 p 5. Phillips also took over the lease of Her Majesty's Opera House, renovating the interior and installing "the finest opera bouffe company in Australia". *Queensland Figaro and Punch* 19 Oct 1889 p 3.
15. *Queensland Figaro and Punch* 21 Nov 1885 p 4.
16. *Morning Bulletin* 5 Dec 1885 p 6.
17. *Queensland Figaro and Punch* 28 Nov 1885 p 26.
18. Jeremiah Joseph Durack ('Galway Jerry', 1853–1901) and his brother Michael (d 1894) settled at Thylungra station on Cooper's Creek in the early 1860s. In 1881/82, Michael Durack assisted his eldest brother Patrick Durack to drive more than 7,000 head of cattle and 200 horses on a 3,000-mile trek from their holdings in south-west Queensland to new land along the Ord River in the Northern Territory. Jeremiah went on to establish Rosewood and Dunham stations on the WA/NT border. Michael and Jerry became members of Brisbane's Tattersall's Club in the early 1880s.
19. Megan Houston, 'Winter racing review', *Tattler*, Spring 2018, vol 34 no 3 pp 14–16.
20. John Hawkins, 'Australian goldsmiths' work 1834–1950', *World of Antiques and Art*,



8.

Bookmaker Charles Westbrook, donor and presenter of the 1888 Tattersall's Club Cup. Photograph from *The Sportsman*, 10 October 1899 p 1

Queensland Figaro and Punch 21 Nov 1885 p 4. A Simple Purchasing Power Calculator suggests a 2019 value of around \$12,000. <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/australiacompare/relativevalue.php>. In 1885, the Chief Secretary (Premier) of Queensland received an annual salary of £1,000 (ten times the cost of the trophy). £100 was a little less than half the annual salary of the captain of the steamer *Otter*, who received £21 per month. £100 was the entire annual salary of a matron in the Immigration Department and four times the annual salaries of each of the Clerks of Petty Sessions at Allora, Adavale and Cloncurry (*Queensland Blue Book for the Year 1885* pp 16, 19, 20 & 22).

13. *Sydney Mail* 28 Sep 1889 p 699.
14. *Brisbane Courier* 28 Apr 1887 p 5. Phillips also took over the lease of Her Majesty's Opera House, renovating the interior and installing "the finest opera bouffe company in Australia". *Queensland Figaro and Punch* 19 Oct 1889 p 3.
15. *Queensland Figaro and Punch* 21 Nov 1885 p 4.
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19. Megan Houston, 'Winter racing review', *Tattler*, Spring 2018, vol 34 no 3 pp 14–16.
20. John Hawkins, 'Australian goldsmiths' work 1834–1950', *World of Antiques and Art*,

Colonial Rarities



COLONIAL INDIGENOUS TIMBERS CABINET C 1890

This unusual Australian cabinet showcases beautiful selections of indigenous timbers. The arched door panels are vibrant bird's eye Huon Pine, the side panels contrasting strips of cedar and Huon pine, the lower interior drawer is faced with diagonal sections of Huon pine, musk, casuarina, myrtle and blackwood.

Original hardware and key
H 89 W 72 D 39 cm

By appointment Philip Wheatley, Newcastle NSW

02 4957 0165 | 0417 205 298 | bpw@colonialrarities.com | www.colonialrarities.com

- Dec 2000/Jun 2001 p 16.
21. During the 1880s, the value of pastoral exports grew, urbanisation accelerated, the sugar industry expanded and gold and coal mining generated revenue and jobs. Glen Lewis, 'The Crisis years: economic development in Queensland 1885-1895.' Unpublished BA honours (history) thesis, University of Queensland, 1964 p 82f. https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/data/UQ_376083/Glen_Lewis_Honours.pdf
22. *SMH* 8 Dec 1882 p 7.

23. *Brisbane Courier* 1 Dec 1886 p 5.
24. 'The Edward Clark collection of Australian silver', Christie's Melbourne, 27 & 28 March 2000, South Yarra, Victoria, 2000 pp 94 & 97.
25. Advertisements e.g. *Evening News* 24 Dec 1890 p 6 say "established 1872"; he first advertised in *SMH* 16 July 1873 p 1; while *SMH* 20 Dec 1898 p 7 suggests 1874.
26. *SMH* 12 Mar 1902 p 9; *Referee* 12 Mar 1902 p 5. Alcock's estate was sworn at £24,592: *Evening News* 9 May 1902 p 4.
27. *Evening News* 24 Dec 1890 p 6.
28. *SMH* 29 Jan 1886 p 5. Alcock made three jewelled bracelets as prizes for "the first three horses" in the Welter Handicap run at Goulburn in January 1886 and a gold Mayoral chain presented in 1887 to former Sydney Mayor John Young, "in recognition of services performed during his tenure of office." Unusually, the chain was 'specially designed' so that it could be "divided into parts and handed down to Mr Young's family", *Sydney Mail* 26 Feb 1887 p 440. For a description of his George Street premises in the 1880s, see *Evening News* (Sydney) 20 Dec 1889 p 2.
29. John Hawkins, 'Australian secular gold cups and presentation pieces 1800-1900', *Australian Antique Collector*, 35th edition, 1987 pp 54-60.
30. Historical gold prices over 200 years: <http://onlygold.com/Info/Historical-Gold-Prices.asp> In 1870, the silver/gold price ratio was approximately 1:16, today it is around 1:80.
31. *Brisbane Courier* 1 Dec 1887 p 5.
32. *Telegraph* 30 Nov 1887 p 4.

33. *The Week* 10 Dec 1887 p 23.
34. *Sydney Mail* 26 Nov 1887 p 1144; *The Week* 3 Dec 1887 p 24.
35. J.B. Hawkins, *Nineteenth century Australian silver*, Woodbridge, Suffolk, Antique Collectors' Club 1990, vol 1 pp 144-159.
36. In 1869, Jones was working for C.L. Quist *SMH* 8 Jul 1869 p 2, but by 1875 exhibiting on his own account at the Sydney Intercolonial Exhibition *ATCJ* 10 Apr 1875 p 16.
37. *Bulletin Supplement* 11 Nov 1882 p 2. Jones produced the belt for the Anniversary Day National Regatta consisting of "five massive silver medallions linked together on a blue morocco band" and the solid gold "Laidley sculls" with malachite handles and a laurel wreath set with diamonds, *ATCJ* 26 Jan 1878 p 35.
38. The Glen Innes Gold Cup included "figurative representations of the wealth of the district, in pastoral, agricultural and mining pursuits" *ATCJ* 3 Feb 1877 p 21. For the Newman testimonial, *Evening News* (Sydney), 16 Jul 1879 p 3 and 28 Aug 1879 p 2.
39. Membership rose in 12 months from 200 to 700. Longhurst, *Friendship is life* p 65.
40. *Brisbane Courier* 8 Jun 1888 p 6; *Daily Telegraph* 4 Feb 1920 p 11.
41. *Evening News* 6 Dec 1888 p 3.
42. *Adelaide Observer* 23 Apr 1887 p 15.
43. *Telegraph* 7 Dec 1889 p 2; *Queenslander* 15 Nov 1890 p 924; *Telegraph* 29 Nov 1890 p 9.
44. The Tattersall's Club Cup was re-introduced in 1924 and continues today as the Tattersall's Cup Handicap, a Group 3 race.



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Australia's first art potters

Brothers Graham and William Ferry both trained as potters in Yorkshire, emigrated to Victoria and set up their own potteries in Melbourne's Brunswick in the last two decades of the 19th century. Noted for their sculptural domestic wares and colourful majolica wares, here Greg Hill makes the case for recognising them as Australia's first art potters.



GREGORY HILL

Brunswick was the centre of Victoria's pottery manufacture in the 19th century and was accordingly dubbed "Australia's Little Staffordshire." Many potteries and brickworks operated in this northern Melbourne suburb, making heavy wares such as bricks, pipes and roofing tiles as well as domestic pottery such as teapots, jugs and toilet ware. From this production, true art pottery evolved – and what an evolution this turned out to be!

The Ferry brothers, Graham and William, had been modellers for Dr Christopher Dresser (1834–1904) at the Linthorpe Art Pottery in Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire, England. Dresser is generally accepted as the pre-eminent British designer of the 19th century. Under his direction, Graham and William Ferry sculpted works which went into production. When the brothers came to Victoria, they started their own individual pottery works, Graham making terracotta portraiture and architectural embellishments to adorn buildings and William making art pottery in majolica.

1.

William Ferry (c 1861–1934) (Victoria Art Pottery), *jardinière and pedestal*, Brunswick, c 1898, majolica glazed earthenware, jardinière impressed WF/VICTORIA/ART/POTTERY/38. Private collection, photograph Greg Hill

Richard Sturrock probably worked for them as a mould maker. The brothers would produce their various wares from his plaster moulds. Sturrock also made pottery of a similar style for his own pleasure, but not commercially; this emerged when a cache of his pottery appeared on the market in the early 1970s, emanating from family descendants.

The Ferry brothers with Sturrock's loose collaboration produced wares from 1896 to 1910 of a type never before seen in Australia. They designed, built and fired their individual ceramic works of art. They were the early pioneers of our studio pottery movement, preceding what is generally thought to begin with ceramic artists such as Merric Boyd.

Other contenders for the title of Australia's first art potters may be Martin Moroney from Brisbane, active 1903–1915, but he was a decorator of ceramic blanks made for him at Stone's Pottery, or Thomas Stevens who is better qualified than Moroney. Stevens, trained at Doulton's Lambeth Pottery, emigrated to Australia and worked at Mashman Brothers' Pottery in Sydney. Here from about 1894–98, he made coloured salt-glazed 'foliage ware', pressing leaves into the clay surface before drying and firing, which preserved their outline as decoration, a technique developed at Doulton's in London.



2.

William Ferry (c 1861–1934) (Victoria Art Pottery), *grotesque*, Brunswick, c 1896–1912, glazed earthenware, impressed WF/VAP, h 148 mm. Private collection, photograph Greg Hill

3.

William Ferry (c 1861–1934) (Victoria Art Pottery), *jardinière* in the form of a shell, Brunswick, c 1896–1912, majolica glazed earthenware, impressed WF/VICTORIA/ART/POTTERY/25, h 330 mm. Private collection, photograph Greg Hill



William Ferry

William Ferry (c 1861–1934) was a unique force in the Australian colonial pottery industry, as he had been trained in England by the *avant garde* of the Arts and Crafts movement in the 1880s–1890s. He came to Australia, partly for family reasons and partly to start his own art pottery works. His pottery conspicuously stands out from that of other Australian colonial manufacturers because of its original design and highly artistic nature. He made coarse clay vessels but of beautiful and elegant form, a lonely attempt to marry art and industry in the colonies (**plates 1–3**).

William Ferry learned his trade at the Linthorpe Art Pottery between 1879 and 1880. This was a very exciting time for English pottery, as Christopher Dresser, a distinguished botanist and freelance designer, had helped to establish the Yorkshire pottery works to alleviate local poverty. Dresser was the art director of the works and created the very stylish and original designs that won world acclaim. William Ferry and his older brother Graham worked directly under Dr Dresser, both executing many of his designs.

Ferry then worked for 14 years at the Burmantofts Pottery in Leeds, between 1880 and 1894, where he was a designer and later a manager. He was responsible for the first art pottery that they sold in 1881. After his extensive period at

Burmantofts, he was employed for a few months at the largest pottery in the world, in Lorraine, France. This was probably the Niderviller factory.

William and his mother, Esther, were united with most of the family when they sailed to Australia on the ship *Britannia* in 1896. William immediately started producing pottery in a fairly small way and called this new enterprise The Victoria Art Pottery. He concentrated on the production of jardinières, pedestals, vases and his imaginative grotesques.

In 1904, a Melbourne newspaper praised his products:¹

too much praise cannot be bestowed upon this effort to popularise and advertise what should be an important Brunswick industry. Certainly the jardinières and other art pottery exhibited by Mr. Ferry were a credit to Brunswick, both in variety of form and artistic conception, as well as workmanship.

Ferry advertised only rarely; this 1910 example suggested jardinières as presents for special occasions:²

ART Jardinières, of Australian make, in a variety of new and original designs of distinctive character and rich colorings, make splendid wedding and other presents. William Ferry, The Victoria Art Pottery. Albert-street west, Brunswick. Established 1896.

William Ferry (**plate 4**) successfully operated the Victoria Art Pottery works for 16 years until it finally closed in 1912. He then rented part of his brother's works where he probably continued to make his art pottery. This situation continued until 1921 when he retired; he died in 1934.

William Ferry can be confidently called Australia's first art potter as his work predates both Alan Finlay (1884–1972, active c 1904–1934) and Merric Boyd (1888–1959), who did not throw his first pot until 1908.³

4.

Unknown photographer, William Ferry holding a modelling profile in the act of executing a relief design on a vase, in his Brunswick studio, c 1896. Wraith collection

5.

Unknown photographer, Graham R. Ferry (1847–1924), when he exhibited at the Centennial International Exhibition Melbourne 1888, photograph from Public Records Office of Victoria, "Exhibitors & Staff at the 1888 Melbourne Centennial exhibition"

Graham Ferry

Graham Robert Ferry (1847–1924), elder brother to William and the proprietor of the Brunswick Terra Cotta Works is today known as a talented sculptor but he had a significant earlier history in England (**plate 5**). He qualified as an architect which included the use of clay as a modelling medium for the design of architectural terracotta embellishments which in turn provided a new career direction.

He also worked at the Linthorpe Art Pottery and held the prestigious position of first modeller. He sculpted original pieces out of clay which were usually designed by Dr Christopher Dresser. Moulds were taken from his work which in turn produced the famed Linthorpe art wares.

Ferry migrated to Melbourne in 1882 and initially worked at Alfred Cornwell's Brunswick Pottery. During this period, he modelled a fine bust of Alfred Cornwell and a considerable amount in terracotta, some of which was exhibited at the colonial exhibitions.⁴ His bust of Oliver Twist was often a central attraction (**plate 6**). Ferry is almost certainly responsible for the introduction of the fanciful terracotta roof finial sculptures that the Brunswick Pottery manufactured, principally dragons, grotesques, eagles and other figures (**plate 7**).

In July 1886 he started his own pottery called The Brunswick Terra Cotta Works. The heart and centre of Ferry's terracotta works was his studio where he sculpted his figures and decorative building embellishments. A journalist compiling a series on "local industries" visited The Brunswick Patent Terra Cotta Works in 1894, at the time producing drainage pipes to fulfil a large contract for The Melbourne Board of Works. He described Graham Ferry's 'artistic' production:

On all sides may be seen specimens of Mr. Graham Ferry's ability as a modeller. Terra Cotta fixtures of every description are noticeable, flowers, fruits, animals and other designs being executed in a most artistic and truthful manner. Busts of prominent persons, panels of

the four seasons beautifully worked whilst one noticeable feature at the present time is a large framework containing busts of the Patterson Ministry modelled by Mr. Ferry from photography ...⁵

In 1898/99 Graham Ferry exhibited with The Yarra Sculptors Society, alongside such contemporaries as C. Douglas Richardson and C. Web Gilbert. He exhibited a life study and some pug dogs, all in terracotta. His brother William Ferry also exhibited with the society, making it evident from their participation that they wanted to be acknowledged as artists.

Graham had great business acumen and by today's standards he would have been a millionaire several times over. After Graham died on 24 November 1924, William continued to work at the pottery, which his sister Hephzibah managed. It was finally wound up in 1926, ending 49 years of pottery manufacture on the site.

Richard Sturrock

Richard F. B. Sturrock (1869–1953) was born in North Melbourne. His parents took world tours of the classical sites and regularly wrote of their experiences in *The Medium*, a local Brunswick newspaper. Their enthusiasm for the classical arts seems to have rubbed off on the young Richard and later nourished his artistic traits.

6.

Graham R. Ferry (1847–1924), *Oliver Twist asking for more*, Brunswick, 1885, terracotta bust, h 600 mm, signed "GRAHAM FERRY Sc." 1885, exhibited in London 1886 and Adelaide 1887. Wraith collection, photograph Greg Hill

7.

Attributed to Graham R. Ferry (1847–1924), *Dragon roof finial*, c 1900, terracotta, h 2100 mm, photograph Greg Hill





His pottery was made c 1896–1910 and produced at the family home Guildford in Albion St, East Brunswick. His style is based on the English Arts and Crafts movement and was heavily influenced by the art of ancient civilisations.

Sturrock's primary workplace occupation was that of 'moulder' which entailed the construction of plaster moulds. He seems to have come under the influence of the Ferry brothers who both had working potteries within 1.5 km of Guildford. His enthusiasm for antiquities, which he had heard about from his father, and the striking, artistic objects he had seen produced by the Ferry brothers converged to shape his artistic milieu.

How the three potters met or what their relationship was is not known. We know that William and Graham Ferry had social contact with Sturrock, however their stronger connection was probably through employment. Sturrock could have been the mould maker at either of or both the Ferry brothers' pottery works. This sustained contact between them would explain the many similarities in their work.

Richard Sturrock's grotesques (**plates 8–9**) are made in the same manner and glazed with the same glazes as William Ferry's grotesques. Some of the surface decoration used the same tools while their impressed marking systems use the same letter stamps. It is not hard to see William Ferry tutoring Sturrock or his being the 'moulder' at the Victoria Art Pottery. Its facilities would have been useful to him and would explain where his pottery was fired and glazed.



8.

Richard Sturrock (1869–1953), *grotesque*, c 1896–1910, majolica glazed earthenware, h 200 mm, c 1896–1910, unmarked from the Sturrock estate. Private collection, photograph Greg Hill

9.

Richard Sturrock (1869–1953), *grotesque*, c 1896–1910, glazed earthenware, h 110 mm, from the Sturrock estate. Private collection, photograph Greg Hill

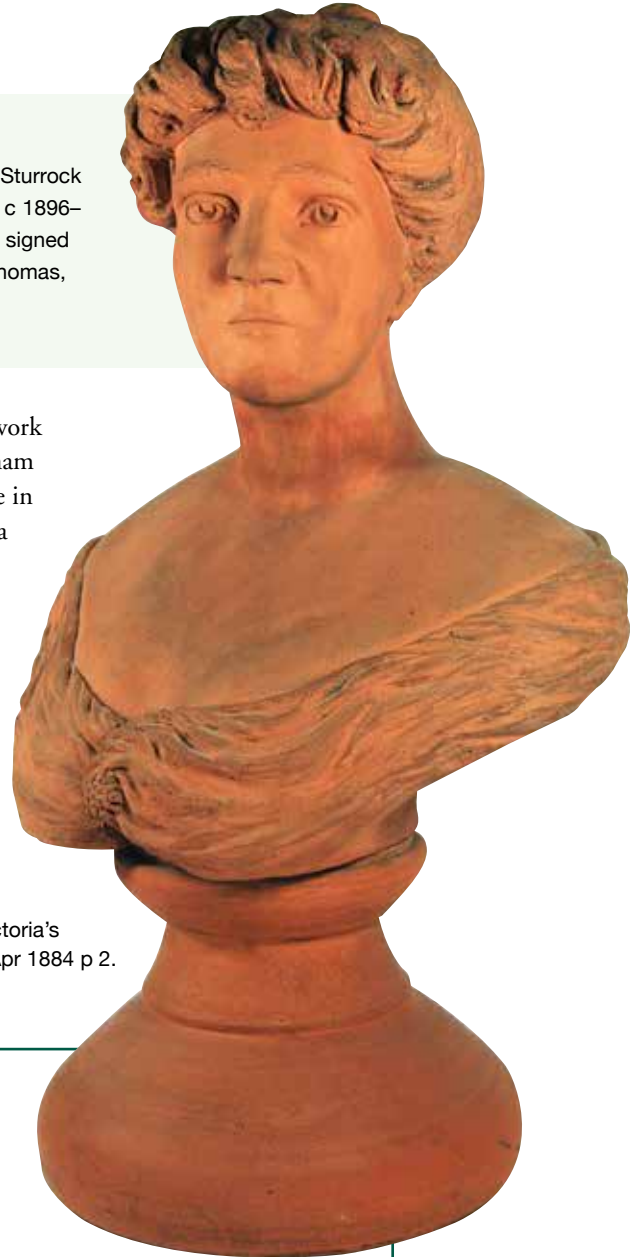
The 'grotesques' made by Sturrock and Ferry can be viewed as grotesque animals or grotesque monsters which are based on Japanese and Chinese originals. These arresting figures will catch your gaze and transfix your attention. They are so well modelled and assume such natural poses that you don't see them as figments of the imagination. The animal kingdom has been drawn upon as subjects which have been dismembered and then reassembled in confronting ways. An example might have the body of a frog, scales of a fish, legs of a bull and head of a monkey.

The portrait sculptures Sturrock made in terracotta, both small and life size, show the hand of Graham Ferry as do the finely engraved, scrolled panels found on Sturrock's work (**plate**

10.

Unknown photographer, Richard Sturrock (1869–1953), *Dame Nellie Melba*, c 1896–1910, terracotta bust, h 500 mm, signed 'By R F S'. Collection Craig W. Thomas, photograph Greg Hill

10). Often their busts and scroll work are almost indistinguishable. Graham Ferry was noted for his portraiture in terracotta but his 'Brunswick Terra Cotta Works' also salt glazed their commercial wares. This provides a further connection to some of Sturrock's other pottery, his salt-glazed crocodiles and hand-held cornucopia vase.



NOTES

1. *Coburg Leader* 29 Oct 1904 p 1.
2. *The Age* 4 Nov 1910 p 2.
3. *ADB* vol 7, 1979 p 372.
4. In 1884 he exhibited a bust of Victoria's governor, *Hamilton Spectator* 8 Apr 1884 p 2.
5. *Coburg Leader* 26 May 1894 p 2.

Greg Hill's new book *Victoria's Earliest Potteries* covers more than 30 potteries operating in Victoria from 1843 to 1875.

The 188-page hardcover book with 175 colour and 62 b&w illustrations is available from the author ghillpublications@hotmail.com for \$60 plus \$20 p&p.

A 44-page lavishly illustrated booklet about the exhibition in 2019, *Colour and Fantasy*, on which this article is based, is available from Bundoora Homestead Art Centre, or from Greg Hill, \$10 plus postage.



Gregory Hill, a collector for 44 years and an antique dealer for 28 years, is an acknowledged expert on Australian pottery.

He has curated several pottery exhibitions in Victorian art museums and is the author of *The Potteries of Brunswick* (Shepparton, 2000), *Excellence of ware: Bendigo Pottery majolica 1879–1911* (Bundoora, 2009), *Melrose Art Pottery 1931–1942* (Bundoora, 2012) and *Victoria's Earliest Potteries* (2019).

11.

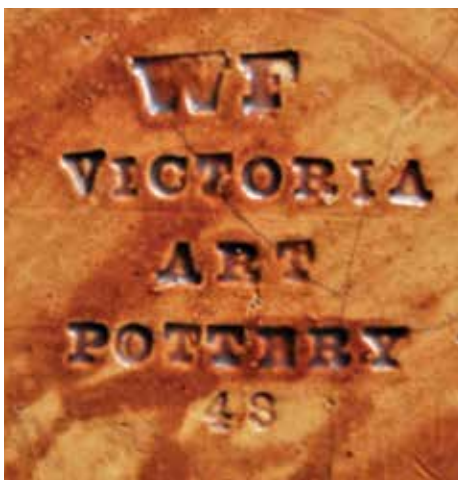
William Ferry (c 1861–1934), (Victorian Art Pottery), impressed mark c 1896–1912, "WF/VICTORIA/ART/POTTERY/42". Photograph Greg Hill

12.

Graham R. Ferry (1847–1924), signature "Graham R. Ferry". Photograph Greg Hill

13.

Richard Sturrock (1869–1953), impressed mark "? R STURROCK/GUILDFORD" c 1896–1910. Photograph Greg Hill





Forty years of collecting a love affair with Australiana

David Bedford and Jennifer Stuerzl reflect on the pleasures of 40 years of collecting Australiana. Jennifer is a practising artist, painter, print and artist's book maker and curates international print shows. David was trained as a botanist and became Director of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens before transferring to the private sector and managing a family-owned business. Now retired, David and Jennifer work collaboratively for the Australiana Society in Queensland and on art-science collaborations, while David writes articles for *Australiana* as well as doing wood-turning and cabinet-making as a hobby.

1.

Girolamo Nerli (1860–1926), *Jervis Bay NSW*, c 1900, oil on panel, 25 x 35.5 cm. Nerli, in Australia and New Zealand 1885–1904, influenced Charles Conder and brought the news of the new European Impressionist style to Australia

DAVID BEDFORD AND JENNIFER STUERZL



In 1987, David wrote an article in *Australiana* entitled “An Introduction to Buying Australian Antique Furniture.”¹ David doesn’t know whether that helped any would-be or starting collectors at the time, but he hopes so, as re-reading it today makes him realise how little he knew when he wrote that. Since then, our knowledge and understanding of Australiana, particularly Australian furniture, has grown considerably, and our range of collecting has increased with time, although we do not claim to be experts.

The 40th year anniversary of the Australiana Society has caused us to reflect on our own 40-year history of collecting: what motivated us, and what has directed our collecting passion over that time. It has also given us the opportunity to consider what we have learned since that article.

Having met many collectors over the years, we perceive that different collectors have had very different motivations for their collections. The Australiana Society’s aims – researching, preserving and collecting Australia’s heritage – seem to be fairly common underlying motivations among Australiana Society members, perhaps with each element in different degrees for different collectors. We have also seen passionate greed as an unpleasant motivator, and investment was once a consideration for some collectors, although, with the contemporary loss of societal understanding and valuation of heritage, that does not seem to have worked in most investors’ favour.

So, what has 40 years of collecting been about for us? We had a completely different, although very mundane, initial motivation – furnishing where we lived – as the start of our collecting journey. And, although the journey has taken us a long way further than that, enjoying living with the items that we collect and having them add to the richness of our lives remains a strong factor. It has truly been a 40-year love affair.



Neither of us grew up in a family of collectors, but we both seem to have a genetic predisposition to collecting, as we were both collecting objects from our early years. Our collections were different from each other and not unusual activities for children, as they included coins and natural history objects. In neither case was our collecting a major part of our childhood; it was merely an interest, and while we would not have considered ourselves serious collectors, the urge to collect was definitely there.

At no stage did we plan to collect antiques or Australiana. As a newly-wed couple, we needed to furnish where we lived. We knew very little about antiques and had not grown up surrounded by antiques. Being baby-boomers, we both grew up with what is now called mid-century modern furniture, and appreciated that it was (or in some cases only looked like) solid timber, but we were not attracted to the style. However, we both knew that we wanted quality, we did not want veneered chipboard or plastic furniture. David’s father said that we had champagne taste and beer income.

We came to collecting along different academic paths. Jennifer studied fine art, art history and archaeology at the University of Sydney and later completed postgraduate qualifications in education and in art curation before completing an MPhil in visual arts practice. This experience gave her a

2.

Unknown maker, *Marquetry and parquetry glove box*. 19th century, Marquetry veneer pieces include many timbers, some difficult to determine. Identified timbers and other materials include: *Acacia* sp., Australian cedar, *Banksia* sp., Blackwood, (*Acacia melanoxylon*, fiddleback, figured and plain), ebony and ebony-like timbers, a light coloured palm species, Black Palm (*Normanbya normanbyi*), Huon Pine (Birds-eye and plain), Northern Silky Oak, Queensland walnut (*Endiandra*), Musk or similar burl timber, Ring Gidgee, Sassafras, Satinwood, Southern Silky Oak (*Grevillea robusta*), Spotted Kauri, *Stenocarpus*, Tulipwood and tortoise shell. 7 x 32.5 x 18.5 cm

knowledge of design and style as well as understanding the importance of public collections here and abroad. David studied botany, gaining an honours degree from the University of Queensland and then a PhD at the University of Sydney. His knowledge of plants and later courses in wood technology were informed by an interest in and appreciation of Australian timbers as well as an understanding of the intrinsic value of the Australian bush.

In the late 1970s and into the 1980s one of the choices for well-designed,



3.

Unknown artist, *Fort Denison*, Sydney, later 19th century, oil on Mother of Pearl shell, 20 x 19 x 2.5 cm

elegant, solid timber furniture was Italian-made furniture, often created with Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) grown in South Africa (where it is a weed). We remember just such a finely designed, small circular table that we coveted. Unfortunately (or so it seemed to us at the time) the \$3,000 price tag was well outside our disposable income allocation for such an item in 1978. The alternative we found was an Australian solid cedar table c 1860 of a similar size, being sold by the late John Williams, an antiques dealer in Sydney's Double Bay in a shop known as The Poorhouse. Not only was the \$500 table affordable, but John let us take it home and pay it off over a couple of months. Little did we know what we had started!

John Williams was an excellent dealer with a high turnover of quality items from the wealthy households of the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney. John's business model was simple. When someone offered to sell an item through John, he would tell them what he believed it would sell for. Then he would either purchase the item from them for 60% of that amount or sell on consignment so that the seller would receive 80% of that amount.

His business model was brilliant for the time and location, as the catchment for John's business included many elderly, once-wealthy people who disliked the idea of selling an item below its real value and were very suspicious of dealers. Many had been upset by the experience of having a dealer pay them a pittance and then finding that the same dealer had the item for sale for a much higher price. John always stuck to the price he had quoted, even if he later discovered it was worth more, or less than he had estimated. That practice reassured

his sellers that he was honest. Sometimes John kept stock for a very long time when he had overestimated its value!

John had a way of encouraging more purchases and the development of a collection rather than simply furnishing. When a much better item came in to his shop (the first example for us was a much earlier and more elegant cedar table at a higher cost) John bought back the first item for what we had paid for it, which provided a very convenient way of upgrading. By doing that, John helped 'furnishers' become 'collectors' by upgrading the quality of their furnishings.

John also found some fascinating items closely aligned with Jennifer's interests in art (**plate 1**).

So, John Williams gave us a good start, but we looked more widely once we had a taste for Australiana, with mixed success. Many antique dealers at the time disparaged Australian cedar as "being fit only for wall plugs." We didn't visit those shops again. South Dowling Street Antique Centre was a popular hunting ground and we also travelled to the NSW Southern Highlands. We made some good finds (for example, **plate 2**) but paid the price of a lack of knowledge in some bad purchases. Sometimes we took what turned out to be poor advice from 'knowledgeable' friends who proved to be inexpert, so we generally bumbled our way into the field.

The next major step in our collecting journey was the Australiana Society. We attended a meeting in the Rocks area in 1980 and at first found it somewhat bewildering and overwhelming. However, we persisted and, once accepted, met many other keen Australiana buffs in those early meetings. Kevin Fahy stands out in our memory because he willingly shared his knowledge. In those days, the Society often had small auctions of items that members had found and didn't want to keep. We found a couple of items at very reasonable prices that we still own (**plate 3**).

One of the most significant outcomes of joining the Society was that Kevin Fahy and Andrew Simpson offered to come and view the few items that we had accumulated and give us their opinion. That resulted in a bit of a shock

as we were told that the item that we were most proud of, a large Australian cedar chest of drawers with rope carved, turned columns and decoration, was not particularly special and had been refinished (**plate 4**).

Kevin encouraged us to concentrate instead on “front room” higher-quality furniture, (i.e. dining room, drawing room and library) with an original finish, and advised us not to spend money repairing furniture but instead to live with any blemishes or faults. Both proved to be good advice, partially because at the time we knew so little about furniture conservation and could easily have done more harm than good. Through talking to Kevin, Andrew and other Society members we developed an appreciation of patina and original condition. The importance of these characteristics had been reinforced for us through some of the bad purchases we had made, as we found that refinishing had often been used to disguise ‘marriages’ (items made up later from separate pieces) and fakery.

In our early years of collecting, living in Sydney, we had an opportunity to visit many other collectors’ houses and to learn from the experience. We particularly enjoyed the hospitality of and seeing the lovely houses and collections of Australiana luminaries Graeme and Anne Cocks, John and Diana Houstone, Robert Hutchinson, John and Jocelyn Morris and Andrew Simpson among many others. The generosity of those collectors in opening their homes to us was an inspiration for living with Australiana as well as showing us some superb items and a taste for quality. By this stage, we had well and truly started on the path to being collectors rather than furnishers, though had certainly not achieved connoisseurship.

Our participation in the Society in Sydney included various roles on the committee and as assistant editor which greatly increased our knowledge and experience. David’s knowledge of photography and photographic printing were useful in assisting some members to document their collections and in their publishing activities.



4. Unknown maker, *chest of drawers*, with rope-carved, turned columns and decoration, c 1840, cedar, approx. 140 x 110 x 55 cm

5. Unknown maker, Tasmania, *Side table* with tapered legs in the Sheraton style, Tasmanian Blackwood inlaid with pine stringing c 1810, 78 x 108.5 x 58 cm



6.

Attributed to William Hamilton (c 1796–1885), Hobart, Musk and Myrtle Pembroke-style games table, tapered octagonal centre column and triform base, 71.5 x 101 x 58 cm

7.

John Hicks Ltd, Brisbane, *Servery* in Northern Silky Oak (*Cardwellia sublimis*), extensively carved in neo-Renaissance style, c 1920. Stamped John Hicks Ltd, 109.5 x 118 x 55 cm

When we started collecting, the literature on Australian furniture was sparse. Books such as *First Fleet to Federation* (1977), were informative, especially with the gorgeous colour photographs of superb furniture in the chapter written by Kevin Fahy. When Craig, Fahy and Robertson's *Early Colonial Furniture in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land* (1972) became available as a reprint in 1980 it added to our knowledge. Then, we were fortunate to know Kevin Fahy and Andrew Simpson when they were working on *Nineteenth Century Australian*

Furniture (1985). We were able to talk with them during the production as well as seeing and printing many of Andrew's photographs for publication. Once the book was published, we and many other collectors became much better informed and that encouraged a considerable surge in collecting Australian furniture.

That surge, of course, coupled with the fast approaching 1988 bicentenary, sent prices skyrocketing, which was not such a great outcome for a cash-strapped young couple with a mortgage. However, it encouraged many sellers and spurred other authors to publish, so the supply of furniture increased and more and more information became available.

Initially, we stayed very close to our furnishing motivation as we did not buy anything that we could not use. However, the more that we learned about the history of Australiana and the more we saw, the more we decided to collect more widely, so we purchased other affordable categories of Australian decorative arts.

Another idea that Kevin Fahy suggested was to stick to one or more themes or concepts to underpin our collecting, rather than being random. In our case, the themes we developed were based on our knowledge and education. Jennifer's fine arts and

archaeology qualifications meant that style and motifs became important. David's botanical background and training in timber identification meant that he could recognise Australian timbers and distinguish them from non-Australian timbers.

In the beginning we would have described our collecting aim as "the best early Australian furniture that we can find"; an early Tasmanian side table is an example (**plate 5**). However, David's knowledge led us to try to collect furniture made from different timbers, which automatically pushed us towards collecting veneered furniture and other items. Later, once we found items that showed the beauty and variety of other Australian timbers like Musk (*Olearia argophylla*) and Myrtle (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) (**plate 6**), the criterion of age went out the window. That is not to say that we have not continued to collect more cedar or early items, just that our collecting criteria changed and developed with time.

Over the course of 40 years we have come to focus on four criteria:

- quality of craftsmanship rather than date or maker's labels became our primary criterion (so our collection ranges from early 1800s to Deco, both labelled and unlabelled);

- the beauty of Australian timbers and trying to have items made from timbers other than cedar where possible;
- patina and original condition (when possible);
- the evolution of designs and motifs and their repetition in different forms over time.

Serendipity has been a very important factor in our collecting. We have done very little hunting for particular items but have been lucky to have items that we really like come our way. This is not to say that we sat at home and waited of course, as one of our enjoyments was to cruise through antique shops and centres with our eyes open for items of quality that fit our themes. In that way we found many fine objects that we knew very little about at the time but have since found out how they fit into Australian decorative arts history.

One example of serendipity happened when we went on a holiday from Brisbane to Tasmania and found this Queensland serving table labelled “John Hicks Ltd” in an antique shop in Ross (**plate 7**). We were intrigued to learn that L.J. Harvey had collaborated with John Hicks before joining Brisbane Technical College and founding what has become known as the L.J. Harvey school of woodcarving and pottery.²

Living in different states of Australia has been a strong contributor to the diversity of our collection, which started with NSW items and expanded to include many Tasmanian items from our time living in Hobart. Now that we live in Queensland, we tend to find more items of local interest such as a Biedemeier-style wardrobe from Toowoomba, an example of a type of Germanic item that we were unaware of before (**plate 8**). We’re still learning about this one, but we have been told it was designed to stand near the front door to house coats, jackets and shoes. Many German immigrants settled in southeast Queensland in the late 19th century, bringing their craft traditions with them, but we have not seen as many items of their furniture as are found in the more tightly-knit Barossa Valley in South Australia. They may still be in family ownership.

Another kind of serendipity has been the guidance that we have received. Kevin Fahy stands out for us, but many other Australiana Society members were of assistance.³ Dealer Andrew Simpson has been generous with his knowledge and our friend George Burrows in Tasmania was a great encourager and finder of gems. Many others have shared their knowledge and their friendship.

Along the way we have always been very keen collectors but have done our best to avoid being obsessive and have not committed more than we could afford. Sometimes this has meant letting extremely desirable objects pass us by and very often it has led to dealers failing to offer us items or to missing out on items at auction, but it has kept us financially solvent and sane. At times, other priorities have forced us out of the marketplace.

With time, the concept of custodianship has become more important to us, as has doing research and sharing the knowledge that we have gained. One very interesting and personally valuable consequence of our collecting and researching has been the insights that we have gained into Australian history. To understand the objects fully, one needs to understand the society and situation of the people who made them. Reading about early society and the economic conditions (a whole topic on its own) that drove and controlled the settlers and the original inhabitants of Australia after the European invasion has been enlightening.

We both are fascinated how different our collection is from others that we have seen. Through Australiana Society tours and the openness of Society members, we have been fortunate to see many collections that we were quite unaware of beforehand. Each collection seems to have quite a different style, perhaps reflecting serendipity, perhaps reflecting the dedication and focus of the collectors.

We plan on continuing to collect, research and publish on Australiana for many more years. While our ability to collect has become restricted by space and other practical considerations, fortunately, our time to research and publish has increased, so, as accumulation fades,



8. Unknown maker, *Wardrobe* in Biedermeier style, South-east Queensland possibly Lockyer Valley, c 1890, cedar (*Toona ciliata*), 164.5 x 89 x 53 cm

research and communication rise.

The number of friendships and connections across Australia that come with being members of the Australiana Society are continuing and increasing with time. This comes partly from organising events and activities in Queensland but also from sharing ideas with other members. Our collecting greatly enriches our lives, not only by surrounding us with the objects and their stories but also through these valued ongoing friendships.

NOTES

1. David Bedford, “An Introduction to Buying Australian Antique Furniture”, *Australiana* vol 9 no 2 May 1987 pp 37–44.
2. Kevin Fahy & Andrew Simpson, *Australian Furniture, Pictorial History and Dictionary, 1788–1938*, Casuarina Press, Sydney 1998 p 61.
3. John Wade, “Kevin Fahy (1932–2007)” *Australiana* vol 38 no 3 August 2016 pp 14–23.



An unrecorded miniature by Ludwig Becker

Dr Gary Morgan's research into a recently re-discovered Tasmanian miniature, reported here for the first time, identifies – partly by using new facial recognition technology – that it is a memento of a Tasmanian colonial family, as well as shedding new light on the technique of the artist, Ludwig Becker.

GARY MORGAN

A small, expertly executed portrait miniature, in watercolour and gouache on ivory (**plates 1–2**) appeared on the market recently, first at a Tasmanian auction in 2015¹ and later in 2017 in Melbourne.² In the intervening two years, the work had been attributed to the German-born colonial painter and miniaturist, Ludwig Becker (1808–61), based partly on an inscription in blue ballpoint pen on an

attached, but clearly later, label verso: *AGNES MATHIE SCOTT / b. 17-2-26 / m. / JAMES SCOTT / At LUDWIG / BECKER. / 1851 / ON IVORY.*³ Other, seemingly earlier, labels fixed to the verso (see below) repeated the identity of the sitter as Agnes Mathie Scott but made no mention of the artist.

Could this work indeed be by one of the rarest of colonial artists, Ludwig Becker (**plate 3**) or was it painted by some other artist working in Tasmania in the 19th century?

The sitter

In addition to the later ballpoint inscription, two earlier notes are attached to the verso of the work (**plate 4**). The first is a newspaper cutting from an

unknown newspaper, dated in pen and ink '1894' which records the death of Agnes Mathie Scott in that year.⁴ The second is a handwritten inscription in black gall ink which reads: *For Robert Scott / from Jessie Scott / March 19th, 1919.*

These earlier inscriptions on the back of the work identify the sitter as Agnes Mathie Scott (c 1826–1894), wife of James Scott (1810–84), surveyor, explorer, MP for Launceston and landowner. Agnes was the daughter of David McGowan, who owned a distillery near Launceston and who lived at the property 'Ravenswood' on Distillery Creek. She married James Scott in 1845; she and her husband lived at 'Bowhill', near Oatlands, about 130 km south of Launceston and 90 km north of Hobart.

1–2. Miniature portrait of Agnes Mathie Scott, watercolour and gouache on ivory, 7 x 6 cm, framed, c 1851. Private collection, Melbourne

3.

Frederick Schoenfeld, *Portrait of Ludwig Becker*, 1861. Lithograph on paper, 19.0 x 15.7 cm. Collection: National Portrait Gallery, Canberra

No contemporary images or details of the property apparently survive.

A photograph of Agnes, taken in 1876, is in the Archives of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG). A comparison of the miniature and the photograph (**plates 5–6**) shows a strong resemblance and adds credence to the identity of the sitter⁵ despite the two images being separated by some 30 years.

The identity of the sitter appears quite secure from research into the work's provenance, which traces the work back to the sitter. The complete provenance is as follows:

- James and Agnes Mathie Scott (1825–94), the sitter, 'Bowhill', Tasmania
- By descent to their daughter, Jessie Scott (1866–1936), Launceston
- By descent to her brother, Robert Scott (1860–1940), 'Woodlands', Tasmania, 1919. Based on a dated inscription in black ink on the verso *For Robert Scott / from Jessie Scott / March 19th, 1919*
- By descent to Mr & Mrs Chris Walsh (née Scott), Tasmania
- By descent to their daughter, Thelma Bruce (née Walsh), died 2016
- By descent to her daughter, Jean Claridge (née Bruce), Scottsdale, Tasmania, who confirmed the Walsh/Bruce provenance and the identity of the sitter as Agnes Mathie Scott, her great, great grandmother.
- Consigned by her to Tulloch's Auctions, Launceston, 12 August 2015, lot 241 as "*A beautiful portrait on ivory panel, Agnes Mathies [sic] Scott*". The catalogue entry noted "Possibly indistinctly signed and dated lower left".
- Private collection, Tasmania
- Mossgreen Auctions, Melbourne, 20 November 2017, lot 21 as "Ludwig



Becker. *Portrait of Agnes Mathie Scott*, c. 1851"

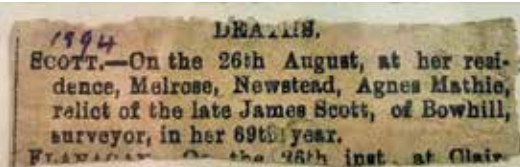
- Private collection, Melbourne.

Another approach to confirming the identity of the sitter – part of my ongoing research on the use of emerging technology in art authentication – was to undertake an analysis of the miniature and the photograph using Microsoft API facial recognition software.⁶ The API facial recognition technology uses machine learning (or artificial intelligence) and is a powerful tool, commonly used in security-related applications, that can (a) detect faces in images (b) detect and measure the different points on a face, such as the pupils, nose, chin, lips etc (c) analyse those faces to detect characteristics such as face shape and dimensions, hair colour, gender, age etc and (d) compare the measurements of two faces and assess if they are the same person.

When the photograph of Agnes Mathie Scott (**plate 6**) was analysed, the facial recognition software resulted in the

identification of the sitter as female, age 54 (Agnes would have been about 50 in 1876, when the photograph was taken). A similar analysis of the miniature (**plate 5**) resulted in the identification of the sitter as female, aged 27.

However, an initial comparison between the photograph and the miniature using the facial recognition software did not result in a match as being the same person (confidence level of being the same person = 0.22). Closer examination of the analytical results suggested the reasons for this discrepancy. First, the photograph is very 'grainy', so the MS API software recorded a high 'noise' level of 0.46. Secondly, the length of the face in the photograph (which impacts about 5 of the 40+ measurements used in the analysis) is somewhat shorter than in the miniature (particularly the forehead area), which shows a more elongated face. When this was corrected for, by using



an aspect ratio of the miniature's image of 1:0.9 instead of 1:1, the software did identify the two images as being the same person with a confidence level of 0.77. The artist may have 'enhanced' the beauty of the sitter by elongating her face when painting her, possibly to fit the face better to the shape of the ivory ground, or the face in the photograph may be shortened due to a loss of teeth in old age. Loss of teeth clamps the mouth into a thinner line as the lower jaw closes up against the upper jaw.

In summary, based on (a) the documented provenance of the work (b) the visual comparison between the miniature (plate 5) and a photograph of 1876 (plate 6) and (c) the results of the facial recognition analysis, there is little doubt that the sitter is indeed Agnes Mathie Scott (1825/6–94). Also, from the facial recognition analysis, the age of the sitter is about 27 which would date the composition to c 1851, since Agnes was born in late 1825/early 1826.

The artist

But who was the artist? Although the work was recorded when it was on the Tasmanian market in 2015 as "Possibly indistinctly signed and dated lower left", examination of the work by The Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, University of Melbourne in June 2018 using infra-red reflectography showed no indication of a signature or date anywhere on the work.⁷

So, in examining this question

of authorship in the absence of any identifying signature, three criteria were used: style, technique, and opportunity – that is, were Agnes or James Scott known to the artist? A comprehensive search was made for artists who were painting in miniature in Tasmania during the period 1845–55 which envelops the likely date of the work of around 1851. Five possible candidates for the artist were identified:⁸

Robert Hawker Dowling

Robert Hawker Dowling (1827–86)⁹ arrived in Tasmania in 1834 as a child and took drawing lessons from Thomas Bock in Launceston. In 1851 he advertised in Wood's *Almanack* as a "portrait and miniature painter, Charles Street, Launceston. Miniatures on ivory from one guinea upwards."

However, only two portrait miniatures by Robert Hawke Dowling are known, both of Aboriginal men. Both these and his other portraits are characterised, without exception, by dark backgrounds and all are in oils, on either board or canvas. No works on ivory by him are known, despite his advertising that he produced miniatures on ivory. In addition, a search of newspaper records for the period 1845–1855 did not produce any evidence that Robert Dowling knew, or was associated with, James Scott or his wife Agnes. This is not surprising since at the time the Scotts were living some 130 km south of Launceston at 'Bowhill'.

4.

Labels attached to the verso of the work, suggesting that the sitter is Agnes Mathie Scott (1825/26–1894). Robert Scott and Jessie Scott were the son and daughter of Agnes Mathie Scott

Ludwig Becker

Ludwig Becker (1808–61) was an established artist in Germany and, during the period 1840–44, was engaged as painter to the court of the Archduke of Hesse-Darmstadt. He arrived in Launceston on 10 March 1851, but by spring of that year he was in Hobart. He finally departed Van Diemen's Land in November 1852 and headed for Melbourne and the Victorian goldfields, never returning to Van Diemen's Land.¹⁰

Ludwig Becker certainly painted miniatures, including works in watercolour and gouache, during his brief stay in Van Diemen's Land.¹¹ Lady Denison wrote on 27 September 1851 that Becker had arrived [in Hobart] "on Thursday" [25 September] and that her husband Lt-Governor Sir William Denison, had "met him when he was up the country a few weeks ago and was much pleased with him; and asked him down here." She adds that Becker was "travelling in this country and paying his way by taking likenesses; – miniatures which he does very nicely indeed".¹²

In a letter from Australia to friends in Germany, Becker reveals that he had been provided with a studio in Government House which, as he records, was the room where Sir John Franklin lived while in Hobart.¹³ Becker continued living at Government House until early July 1852, when he returned to Launceston before travelling to Melbourne in the following November. While in Hobart, he undertook various short "collecting trips"¹⁴ to places around the south-east of Tasmania.

There is no record of Becker being associated with or knowing James Scott or his family from his arrival in Launceston on 10 March to 25 September 1851 when, at the invitation of Governor Denison (whom he had met



in Launceston in August), he moved into Government House in Hobart.¹⁵

However, James Scott and Ludwig Becker certainly met in Hobart. Governor Denison was President of the Royal Society of Van Diemen's Land and James Scott had been a member since February 1851.¹⁶ Becker was elected to the Royal Society in October 1851,¹⁷ shortly after his arrival at Government House. Becker and Scott shared scientific interests, particularly in geology and natural history and both are listed in the Minutes of the Royal Society as attending meetings together in 1852. By November 1852, Becker was listed as a corresponding member citing his address as "Melbourne".¹⁸

Mary Morton Allport

Mary Morton Allport (1806–95) arrived in Tasmania in 1831 with her settler husband, Joseph. She is regarded as Australia's first professional woman artist, advertising in 1832 that she would paint miniatures. After her husband resumed his profession as a lawyer in about 1840, her work was largely confined to the domestic sphere, teaching her family and their friends to draw, although she did exhibit locally. It is unlikely, but possible, that she was still painting miniatures in the 1850s.

Regardless, her style, quite naïve and always on bright blue backgrounds, was quite different to the current miniature (plates 7–8). There is no evidence that she knew or was associated with James and Agnes Scott, despite both Mary and her husband being founding members of the Tasmanian Society, which, in 1843, became the Royal Society of Tasmania.

Thomas Bock

Thomas Bock (1790–1855) was sentenced to transportation for 14 years and arrived in Hobart Town on the *Asia* in January 1824. He received a conditional pardon in 1832 and free pardon a year later, thereafter establishing a highly successful practice as Hobart's most sought-after portrait artist. Bock was particularly known for his portrait drawings utilising watercolour, pencil, chalk and pastel (or 'French crayon'), but his practice was diverse, incorporating printmaking and oil painting as well as photography. He also taught drawing, including to the young Robert Dowling.

Bock's miniatures on ivory (plate 9), while sometimes of a style superficially similar to the current work, were different in technique (see below) and mostly done early in his career. No miniatures by him

5–6.

Comparison between the miniature of Agnes Mathie Scott, c 1851 and an 1876 photograph of her. Photograph, collection Tasmanian Archives, reference PH30/1/9574, reproduced with permission of Mr Peter C. Sims, OAM

are known after about 1842, although he continued to paint portraits in oil on canvas. On his death in Hobart in March 1855, he was described as "an artist of a very high order" whose works "adorned the homes of a number of our old colonists and citizens." There is no evidence that he knew or was associated with James Scott or his family.

James Smith

James Smith advertised as a "portraitist, in oil or miniature" in Launceston, June 1848.¹⁹ There is no information on this artist and no works by him are known, apart from a possible miniature in oil on card of a naval mid-shipman, signed James Smith, which was on the London market in 2001.²⁰ This work is, however an oil on wood panel and there is no certainty



7–8.

Miniatures by Mary Morton Allport: (left) *Portrait of a girl*, Mary Louise Allport, watercolour on ivory 4.0 x 3.0 cm and (right) *Self-portrait with her children*, watercolour on ivory, 10.0 x 7.0 cm. Collection: Allport Library and Museum, Tasmanian Archives, left image SD_ILS:85436, right image AUTAS001139593461



whether this James Smith was the James Smith working in Launceston, particularly since the work appears to date from the late 18th/early 19th century, based on the sitter's uniform.²¹ There is no evidence of James Smith knowing or having any connection with James Scott or his family.

An unrecorded artist

There is the remote possibility that the work is by a hitherto unrecorded amateur artist working in Tasmania in the 1850s. However, the aesthetics of the image, and the techniques used, point to a professionally trained artist, not an amateur. Also, it would be expected that an artist of such skill would have been mentioned in contemporary accounts of the colony, an absence of which makes this possibility of an unrecorded artist extremely unlikely.

In summary, it appears that only the German artist Ludwig Becker had the opportunity to paint this portrait of Agnes Mathies Scott, since he is the only artist of those examined who is recorded as having known the Scott family. But is the style and technique of the work consistent with Ludwig Becker's works done while he was in Van Diemen's Land?

Ludwig Becker

Becker was born either in Darmstadt²² or Offenbach-am-Main,²³ near Frankfurt, Germany in 1808 to a noted family of the region with his father subsequently, in 1821, becoming auditor for the Archduke of Hesse-Darmstadt. He attended the Ludwig Georg Gymnasium [school] in Darmstadt where he studied the classics, natural sciences and art. Here he began a lifelong

association with Johann Jakob Kaup, five years his senior, who was to become one of the foremost zoologists of Europe.

By 1829 he had moved to Frankfurt-am-Main where he worked as a lithographer and painter for the printing, publishing and bookbinding firm of Heinrich Ludwig Bronner, specialising in portraits and illustrating natural history specimens. He also undertook private portrait painting commissions. During the period 1840–44 he was engaged as painter to the court of the Archduke of Hesse-Darmstadt,²⁴ although it appears that his political alliances during the 1848–49 German revolution may have forced him into exile. He is next heard of in England in 1850,²⁵ where he delivered lectures at the British Association for the Advancement of Science, before moving



9. Attributed to Thomas Bock, *Portrait of Julia Swan*, 1842, watercolour on ivory, 6.5 x 5.5 cm. This is one of the latest miniatures known by Thomas Bock. Collection: National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, acc nr 2013.3

on to the Scottish Highlands on a painting excursion.

His stay in Britain was brief. On 4 November 1850, he sailed from Liverpool for Van Diemen's Land in the *Hannah*, a 480 ton, three-masted ship. The ship had been chartered by a Mr W. A. Gardiner of Manchester, who was accompanied by his wife and family and who was bringing out at his own expense twelve young women "as a donation to the colony".

The ship docked at Pernambuco, Brazil, for a few weeks during the voyage and this enabled Becker to visit Rio de Janeiro, and later gave rise to reports that he had lived there for a while and had thought of staying in South America.

He arrived at Launceston on 10 March 1851 but, by spring of that year he was in Hobart. He finally departed Van Diemen's

Land in November 1852 and headed for Melbourne and the Victorian goldfields. He never returned to Van Diemen's Land.

In Victoria, he was active in the colonial arts scene and, at age 52, he applied to the Exploration Expedition Committee to join the Burke and Wills expedition to cross Australia from south to north. Becker kept a detailed diary while on the expedition and sent five full reports, letters, some 70 sketches and meticulous meteorological observations back to Melbourne. He died, with others of the ill-fated expedition, at Bulloo, south of Cooper Creek, Queensland on 28 April 1861 of dysentery and scurvy.

Becker often signed and dated his works, particularly his Victorian works, especially his sketchbooks of the Burke and Wills expedition, where, understandably, detailed information on location, date

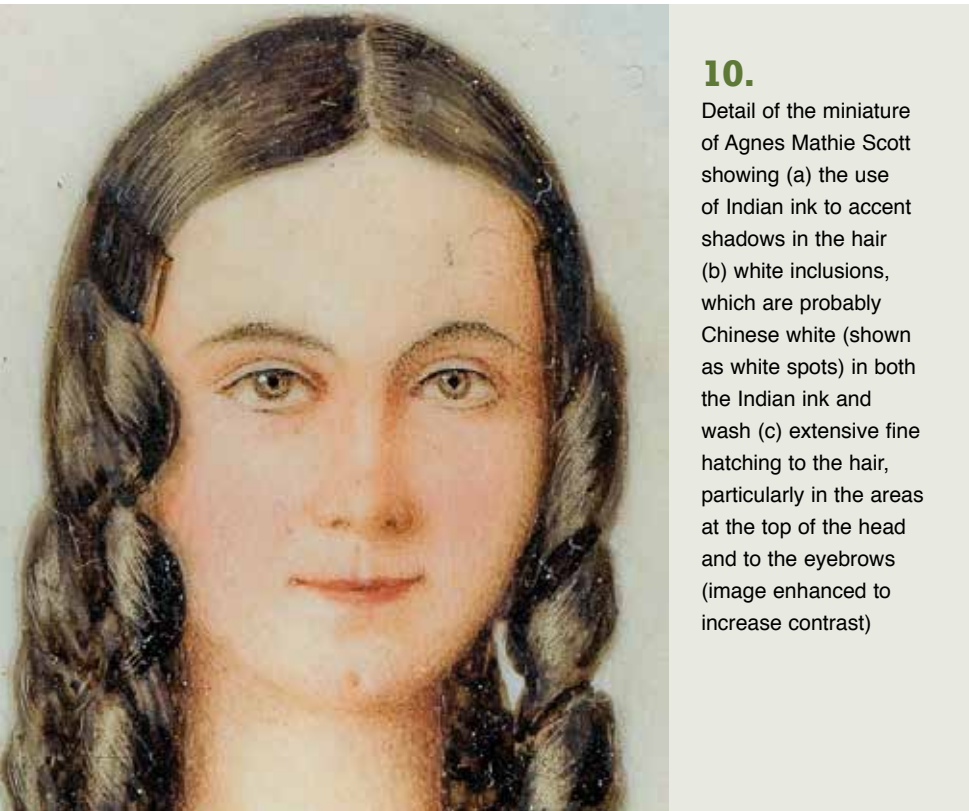
and artist were necessary for expedition record purposes. He also signed and dated several other miniatures either on the verso (on the backing)²⁶ or on the work itself.²⁷ However, others are unsigned and have been attributed to Becker based on provenance, his distinctive technique (see below) or contemporary inscriptions on the work.²⁸

Analysis of Becker's 28 known Tasmanian works from 1851–52 (excluding this work), shows that 13 are not signed and 11 are not dated. Eight are neither signed nor dated. Of the 15 signed works, six are "signed" on the mount, not on the work although these six have been included as "signed" works. The recorded, unsigned works were attributed to Becker on the basis of his technique and, in some cases to a knowledge of provenance. The lack of a signature and date was thus a common feature of Becker's Tasmanian works and not an aberration.

With regard to technique, Marjorie Tipping's comprehensive assessment of Becker's works provides an extensive and detailed description of Becker's technique for miniatures, noting²⁹ that he "added [my emphasis] Chinese White to ink and wash to accent features" and that he "hatched in darker tones with Indian ink to accent shadows". She summarises his distinctive use of Chinese White (which first became available in London in 1834 and was first advertised for sale in Tasmania in 1847³⁰) by commenting that Becker added

touches of Chinese White highlighting the transparent shadows created by the wash.

He used cross-hatching so finely and broad, simple shadows, very slightly in such a manner that even where he did not sign a portrait, these distinctive touches would help identification.³¹



10.

Detail of the miniature of Agnes Mathie Scott showing (a) the use of Indian ink to accent shadows in the hair (b) white inclusions, which are probably Chinese white (shown as white spots) in both the Indian ink and wash (c) extensive fine hatching to the hair, particularly in the areas at the top of the head and to the eyebrows (image enhanced to increase contrast)

Tipping summarised Becker's miniatures as characterised by (a) the addition of Chinese white to both ink and wash (b) the use of hatching in Indian ink to accent shadows and (c) the use of fine cross-hatching. So, does the present miniature display any or all of these distinctive techniques?

A detail of the face of the sitter (**plate 10**) shows the addition of Indian ink over the brown wash to accent shadows, white inclusions in both the ink and wash and the use of fine hatching in the shadows and the eyebrows. These features are also found in other areas of the composition, including the fringe of the shawl and the foliage to the left of the marble column. All these features are consistent with Tipping's analysis.

Comparisons with other documented Becker works show a strong similarity in techniques. Extensive use of Indian ink and the use of fine hatching to accent shadows is common in his works while the distinctive white inclusions (presumably Chinese White) are found in the ink and wash areas of the miniatures of *Portrait of Caroline Davidson*,³² *Portrait Miniature of Phillip Oakden*³³ and his

signed sketch *Melbourne and the old Prince's Bridge*³⁴ (**plates 11–12**).

The work, being painted on ivory, also raises the question of whether ivory was available in Tasmania at the time. An ivory support for painted miniatures was not unusual for works being done in Tasmania around 1850 and several companies, including J.W.H. Walch and Browne's Stationery and Toy House, both of Hobart, were advertising 'ivories for miniatures' and 'miniature ivories, palettes' for sale from as early as September 1846.³⁵ The ivories were typically cemented onto a sheet of pasteboard to prevent the danger of fracturing. Becker completed at least one small miniature on ivory where he had signed and dated the work on this backing,³⁶ rather than on the restricted space on the *frontis* of the work.

In summary, the techniques used in the work are absolutely consistent with Tipping's description of Becker's characteristic techniques, particularly his adding Chinese White to ink and wash to create white inclusions and a hint of transparency in the darker areas. In addition, the materials used in the work would have been available to

artists in Hobart when the work was painted around 1851.

When we turn our attention to consider the style of the miniature, it is certainly somewhat different to some of Becker's other works, lacking the fine attention to detail characteristic of many of Becker's works, both miniatures and larger works in oils. Becker, however, did not adhere to a consistent style, with some of his portraits being less detailed³⁷ while others include finely executed, meticulous detail (**plate 7**).³⁸

Tipping in her comprehensive account of Becker and his works, notes that fine detail, "while often there, never intrudes at the expense of the aesthetic", adding that "Even some of his miniature portraits were painted in different styles".³⁹ The composition uses the marble column and adjoining foliage and climbing ivy as a counterpoint to the portrait, thereby achieving an aesthetic balance to the composition. This is different to many of his portrait miniatures which often show no such props or counterpoints but, rather, portraits depicted against simple, monochrome backgrounds with finely executed detail providing the aesthetic focus. The lack of finely executed detail does not eliminate Becker from consideration as the artist, but more likely demonstrates Tipping's conclusions that he "not only painted in different styles" but also that fine detail "never intruded at the expense of the aesthetic".

The MS API facial recognition analysis has possibly identified an aspect of Becker's compositional style that has to date gone unnoticed, that of elongating the face of the sitter. This may have been done to suit better the oblong form of the support (in this case, an ivory panel) or merely to enhance the beauty of the sitter. This elongation of the face seems to be an artistic device Becker employed in other portrait miniatures.⁴⁰ Additional analysis of this aspect of his compositional style may be worthwhile.

The symbolism of the ivy climbing on the marble column is worth considering. Climbing ivy generally symbolises affectionate, often wedded, eternal love⁴¹



but is also a symbol (along with holly) of Christmas and love of God. This symbolism may have been an initiative of James Scott, since Becker did not usually include such additions in his portrait miniatures. By the time the miniature was painted in about 1851, Agnes and her husband James had been married six years and had produced three children. We also know that the work was painted after October 1851 when Becker had moved to Hobart and that Becker, after a short exploration trip in November, was back in Hobart “before Christmas” of 1851.

The marble column shown to the right of the composition suggests a classical, upper-class interior. Marble slabs were being imported into Tasmania from about 1845 for building material and, in 1849, marble deposits were found on Maria Island. In August 1850, Hobart newspapers reported that “Items destined for the 1851 exhibition were on display at the Government House ballroom, including pedestals of marble from Maria Island (my emphasis)”.⁴² The Royal Society, of which the Governor was president and both James Scott and Becker were members, was given responsibility for organising the Van Diemen’s Land exhibits, including items of Maria Island marble, and sending them to London for the 1851 exhibition. James Scott, with his interest in geology,⁴³ regularly showed mineral specimens to meetings of the Royal Society.

By the time Becker arrived at Government House in September 1851 (where he was provided with a studio), these

exhibition pieces were presumably already in London for the exhibition. The presence of a marble column is most likely consistent with the type of interior at Government House in which Becker was working. It is probable that some of the Maria Island marble pedestals were retained for use in Government House with the marble pedestal shown in the miniature having the appearance of the “white to pale-grey dolomites, finely veined” described for this Maria Island marble resource.⁴⁴

It is tempting to conclude that the miniature, with its dual symbolism of the ivy and the marble column, was painted around Christmas 1851, perhaps as a Christmas gift from James Scott to his wife, and showcases one of James’s (and Becker’s) interests of the important local marble products that were produced for the London Exhibition. The woman in the painted miniature is wearing a traditional formal dress tartan of the Scott Clan,⁴⁶ adding to the evidence that the sitter is indeed Agnes Mathie Scott and that the miniature was painted as part of a Scott family formal celebration such as Christmas.

Based on the evidence of technique, style and opportunity, the work is certainly by Ludwig Becker. Becker was the only artist where documentary evidence exists confirming that he knew James Scott (after late September 1851), the work is painted in a highly characteristic technique that Becker used and the style, while a little unusual, is consistent with other known miniatures of his.

11-12.

A comparison between the techniques used to provide transparency to shadows in (left) the current miniature, (right) *Melbourne and the old Prince’s Bridge* (watercolour on paper, signed lower right, 11 x 17 cm; private collection Melbourne). Both works show white inclusions in the ink and wash. Similar white inclusions are found in other works by Becker including the miniatures *Portrait of Caroline Davidson* (NGV) and *Portrait miniature of Phillip Oakden* (NGA)

Summary

This enigmatic miniature portrait can be confirmed, based on confirmed provenance and comparison with a contemporary image of the sitter, to show Agnes Mathie Scott (c 1825/6–94) and was painted about 1851.

It can also be confirmed that the artist was Ludwig Becker (1808–61) who was living at Government House in Hobart from September 1851 until early July 1852 and was provided with a studio there. Governor Denison had invited Becker to stay at the Vice-Regal residence and it was through the Governor, in his capacity as President of the Royal Society of Van Diemen’s Land, that Becker met James Scott, Agnes’s husband. Both Scott and Becker had a shared interest in geology and natural history and both became members of the Royal Society.

It is most likely that Becker painted the miniature in his studio at Government

House in Hobart in late 1851, and utilised a marble pedestal, probably manufactured of marble from Maria Island, as an aesthetic prop for the composition. The dual symbolism of the climbing ivy suggests that the work may have been a Christmas gift, perhaps for Agnes from her husband while the marble pedestal reflects James Scott's and Becker's interest in and passion for geology and mineralogy.

The Australian works of Ludwig Becker are among the rarest of all those painted by professional colonial artists, with only seven examples of his work having ever been offered at auction. The majority of his known oeuvre rests in the sketchbooks held in the collection of the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, and in particular to sketches concerning the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition.

This delightful miniature is an important, and welcome addition to his *corpus* of works.



Dr Gary Morgan

has a PhD in Mathematics and an MA in Art History and, in recent years, has combined these skills to examine the use of new

technologies, such as facial recognition, in art historical research, attribution and analysis. He is a Founder Member of the National Gallery, London, Foundation Member of the Art Gallery of South Australia and member of the Arts Committee of the Adelaide Club.

NOTES

1. Tulloch's Auctions, Launceston, 12 Aug 2015, lot 241, "A beautiful portrait on ivory panel, Agnes Mathies [sic] Scott." The catalogue entry noted "Possibly indistinctly signed and dated lower left".
2. Mossgreen Auctions, Melbourne, 20 Nov 2017, lot 21 as "Ludwig Becker. Portrait of Agnes Mathie Scott, c. 1851."
3. This inscription was not recorded when the work first appeared on the market in 2015 and seems to have been added between 2015 and 2017.
4. The *Launceston Examiner* of 28 August 1894 carried the same notice on p 1: "SCOTT. - On 26th August, at her residence, Melrose, Newstead, Agnes Mathie, relict of the late James Scott, of Bowhill, surveyor, in her 69th year."

5. A conclusion also arrived at by the Mossgreen Auctions' cataloguers in 2017.
6. The author has been working with Microsoft in the application of the Azure API facial recognition software (part of the company's Azure Cognitive Services) to painted portraits and not just photographs or video for which it was primarily developed.
7. The gall ink labels on the verso of the work were also conserved at this time
8. William Strutt (1825-1915) was excluded because, although he was a good friend of Ludwig Becker and a competent miniaturist, he did not work in Tasmania and only knew Becker in Victoria.
9. Two artists named Robert Dowling were working in Tasmania in the late 1840/1850s. An advertisement in the *Hobart Courier* of 24 Nov 1852 attempts to clarify which Robert Dowling was based at Collins Street, Hobart. Current artist databases apparently do not distinguish between these two artists.
10. National Portrait Gallery, Canberra. Available at <https://www.portrait.gov.au/portraits/2000.32/ludwig-becker>. Accessed 1 Oct 2018.
11. At least nine are known, several on ivory; Marjorie Tipping, *Life and work of Ludwig Becker*. MA Thesis, 1978, University of Melbourne.
12. Sir William Denison, (1870). *Varieties of Vice-Regal Life*, Longmans Green and Co; London, vol 1, p 170.
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20. Bonhams, London 12 Dec 2001, lot 343.
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22. Marjorie Tipping, *ADB* vol 3, Melbourne University Press, 1969.
23. Australian National Herbarium, Biographical Notes. Available at <https://www.anbg.gov.au/biography/becker-ludwig.html>, accessed 9 Sep 2018.
24. Probably as a result of his father's influence at the Court.
25. Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria: Biographical Notes. Available at <https://www.anbg.gov.au/biography/becker-ludwig.html>, accessed 1 Oct 2018
26. E.g., *Portrait Miniature of Phillip Oakden*, NGA, acc nr NGA 84.494.
27. E.g., three miniatures of Tasmanian aboriginals, 1852, sold at Sotheby's, Melbourne May 2011. All were signed and dated 1852 lower right.
28. E.g., *Portrait Miniature of Caroline Davidson, 1854*, National Gallery of Victoria, acc nr 1996.571.
29. Collated from the works identified by Tipping (1978) to which are added works, not in Tipping's list, that are (a) in public institutions (b) have been offered at auction since 1978.
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31. By J.W.H. Waich, advertised as 'new goods'. *Courier* (Hobart) 5 Jun 1847 p 3.
32. Tipping, *op cit* p 92.
33. *Portrait of Caroline Davidson*, NGV.
34. Watercolour on ivory, 5.7 x 4.6 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (NGA), acc nr NGA 84.494
35. Watercolour on paper, signed lower right, 11 x 17 cm; private collection Melbourne. Apparently, a preliminary sketch for the watercolour on board *Melbourne from across the Yarra*, Art Gallery of South Australia, acc nr 903P4.
36. *Hobart Courier*, 26 Sep 1846, p 5.
37. *Portrait Miniature of Phillip Oakden*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (NGA), acc nr NGA 84.494.
38. E.g., his portrait of the native Naplomata (1852).
39. For example, portrait of Phillip Oakden 1851 (National Gallery of Australia) and Portrait of Caroline Davidson, National Gallery of Victoria.
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41. Becker's *Portrait of Caroline Davidson*, 1854, (National Gallery of Victoria, acc nr 1996.571) has an underlined note in pen and ink on the back, *A very bad likeness!*
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44. A logical interest considering he was the Government surveyor.
45. C.E. Sharples, *The Building and Ornamental Stone Resources of Tasmania*. Tasmanian Department of Resources and Energy Report 1990/31, p 220.
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Captain Molloy's table

This is the tale of a table and desk, the first an historic table made by a master craftsman who as an apprentice is reputed to have made one of Queen Victoria's wedding presents as well as a chair presented to the Queen of Spain. This man made our table in Western Australia from native jarrah for a well-known Western Australian pioneer, John "Handsome Jack" Molloy, once rumoured to have been the illegitimate son of one of Queen Victoria's "wicked uncles". The second is a desk, also of jarrah, made for Molloy's daughter a few years later. The pair provide an interesting slice of Western Australian colonial history.

DOROTHY ERICKSON

The maker of John Molloy's jarrah table was Joseph Hamblin (1820–99), a cabinetmaker and joiner who also worked as a piano tuner, music teacher, singing teacher and undertaker, and who has been documented in an earlier *Australiana* magazine.¹ One of most accomplished cabinetmakers to work in Australia, he later lived in Victoria

where two of his pianos remain. Born in Berkshire son of the Reverend Joseph Hamblin, the musical youth undertook a nine-year apprenticeship with the Broadwood piano company, where he was tasked with making a table inlaid with 500 different timbers. This was presumed to have been a wedding present for Queen Victoria in 1840.

In 1842, one week after Joseph married Rebecca Comley, the couple set sail on the *Trusty* bound for Western

Australia. They arrived at the new settlement of Australind, then a virtual wilderness near where the port of Bunbury now stands. The Hamblins quickly moved on to Perth, where Joseph worked for wealthy entrepreneurial Methodist community leader George Lazenby, a master builder and cabinetmaker. Whenever Lazenby was overseas, Hamblin ran his business for him. Part of that business was equipping Government House and Hamblin made

1.

Joseph Hamblin (1820–1899), active 1840s, *Circular pedestal table* c 1849, Western Australian jarrah. This dining table was made for Government House, Perth. Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, The Wordsworth Collection, purchased 2010, Acc 2010.968.A-B. Photo courtesy NGA





2.

Unknown artist, *Joseph Hamblin* (1820–99), photograph c 1880–90 courtesy Jill Roy

3.

Joseph Hamblin (1820-1899), *circular table* made for Captain Molloy c 1852–54, jarrah. Photo courtesy Reynolds family

4.

Unknown artist, *John Molloy*, c 1810–20, pencil drawing (?), courtesy Patrick Richardson-Bunbury

several pieces for this building, some of which are still in Government House in Perth, while a table made for it is in the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra (**plate 1**).

Hamblin (**plate 2**) prepared the colony's timber sample entries for the Great Exhibition of the Works of Art of All Nations staged in the Crystal Palace in London in 1851. Once convicts were introduced to Western Australia, Hamblin and his family left the colony to move to the goldfields in Victoria where after starting in Sandhurst (Bendigo) they ended up in Kyneton, where one of his pianos remains in the local museum.

Meanwhile our table (**plate 3**) had been installed at Fairlawn, the home of John Molloy (**plate 4**), the widower of wildflower collector Georgiana (**plate 5**). John Molloy (1780–1867) was a Peninsular War veteran who received the General Service Medal with eight bars and later fought and was seriously wounded at Waterloo. Lieutenant Colonel Molloy, as he later became, was the Resident Magistrate for Augusta and the Vasse. Rumours were rife that he was the illegitimate son of the wicked Duke of York. However, the truth was his father was a wealthy property-owning Irish shoemaker in London, but because of society's strict stratification, Molloy kept that well hidden from other army officers, or in

Western Australia from the snobbish Bussells, whose matriarch was a friend of Queen Adelaide. He did not refute the rumours, as they opened doors for him that would otherwise have been closed; this also preserved the dignity of his well-born wife, who could trace her family back to William the Conqueror.

In 1801 Molloy went to sea with a relative and then began life as a “volunteer 2nd class boy” on a naval vessel, HMS *Penguin*, to commence working his way up.² He soon left the navy and joined the private army of the Duke of Marlborough – the Oxford Militia – where he no doubt acquired some of his polish. His father had died in 1804, leaving a trust to cover his two children's education until they turned 21.³ Molloy used some of this to purchase a commission in the army. He became an Ensign and by 1806, a Lieutenant. During 1807 at 21 he came into his fortune, purchased a second Lieutenantancy and was gazetted to the 2nd Battalion of the legendary 95th (Rifle) Regiment of Foot. His service in the Oxford Militia would have facilitated this. Before long he was in Spain for the seven years of the Peninsular War, fighting Napoleon Bonaparte, where his friends and companions were the sons of the titled Spencer and Churchill families and others of that ilk.



5.

Unknown artist, *Georgiana Molloy née Kennedy* (1805–43), c 1830, watercolour. Collection: Mrs Dorothy Blasch née Richardson-Bunbury, photograph Mike Rumble

6.

Unknown artist, *Kennedya maryattina* or *Red Runner*, watercolour, named after Georgiana's maiden name. State Library WA no 72178



Molloy had a friend near Carlisle in Jonathon Leach, a fellow officer in the Peninsular War, from a wealthy old Border family.⁴ After the war, when stationed in Glasgow they visited the Kennedy family. Molloy became a regular visitor and the family wondered if he might be interested in Georgiana's older sister or perhaps her widowed mother. The regiment moved on and soon Molloy found, as many others did, that peacetime and half pay were not enough. When news of the opportunities in the new Swan River Colony was being bandied about, he decided that it was time to join the exodus. His sister having died in January 1829, he had inherited her money as well and he wrote to Georgiana of his plans. Only a few weeks before they left, he actually declared his intentions

towards her and it was quite a rush to marry. She had to hastily equip for their new life as pioneers.

Newlyweds John and Georgiana Molloy left Portsmouth aboard the *Warrior*,

*a fine vessel of 600 tons. ... Warrior carries out upwards of 250 passengers to the colony, several of whom are gentlemen possessing independent fortunes ... two of the principal emigrants, named Byrne and Molloy, paid £1000, for the best accommodation the vessel could afford their families and suites.*⁵

Each family was required to equip its accommodation and so a certain amount of furniture went with them and the eight staff who accompanied them on the *Warrior* that docked in Fremantle in March 1830.

With two other families, the Bussells and Turners, they settled on virgin land at Augusta 300 km south of Perth at the mouth of the Blackwood River. It was a beautiful but difficult area, full of tall hardwood timbers and unusual wildflowers, but was eventually abandoned in favour of the Vasse (now Busselton) 95 km north, where the Molloys moved in 1839 and where they built their home called Fairlawn. Here Georgiana had an extensive garden but particularly enjoyed the native plants (**plate 6**). She wrote to her mother in England in 1840 "being in the bush is to me one of the most delightful states of existence".⁶ She had a long-held interest in botany and was asked to become a botanical collector for Captain Mangles, cousin of Ellen Mangles, wife of Governor Stirling. Mangles forwarded her



7.

Douglas L. Cummings (1897– after 1950), *Fairlawn*, drawing published in the *Western Mail* 22 June 1939 p 8. Georgiana lived in the section on the left

8.

Unknown photographer, *Fairlawn*, 1932. This stone part of the house was planned but not built until after Georgiana's death. State Library WA no b3003867-58

collections to Joseph Paxton, gardener to the Duke of Devonshire, of Crystal Palace fame, and to Dr Lindley, secretary of the Royal Horticultural Society.

John and Georgiana had seven children, two dying young. Elizabeth Mary, who was born in a tent in 1830

died 11 days later. Sabina Dunlop (1831–1909) married Rev. Mathew Blagden Hale (1811–95) of Adelaide, later Bishop of Perth. Mary Dorothea (1834–77) was next and then came John (1836–37) who died tragically young, Amelia Georgiana (1838–1910), Flora Elizabeth (1840–68) and last of all the youngest daughter also Georgiana (1842–74).

Continuous childbearing weakened Georgiana who was only 38 when she died. Her memory lives on in books as well as in the plants that have been named in her honour.

Fairlawn became quite a prosperous-looking property with several buildings. The wattle and daub house Georgiana lived in is that on the left of the drawing (plate 7). The building is described in the *Western Mail* as⁷

a fine old building and in the early days of the colony was the scene of some fine parties. A room in the centre of the house was used mostly as a ballroom. This is a spacious room.

The section on the right was referred to as 'the Bishop's cottage' where presumably the Hale family came regularly to stay until Jack Molloy died (plate 8).

Despite their mother dying when they were young, the girls grew up to be gentlewomen. Eleven-year-old Sabina, assisted by their servant Ann Heppingstone, saw to that. In John Molloy's home Bishop Hale found five daughters⁸

who although being in the most complete seclusion, possess a grace and dignity and ease of manner which would do honour to the most refined society to say nothing of their being, both great and small, strikingly handsome ...

At St Mary's, Busselton, on 30 December 1848 widower Hale married the eldest daughter, 17-year-old Sabina. He went on to become the first Bishop of Perth from 1857 till 1875.

Tracing the purchase of the table required investigation of Molloy's accounts in Perth with merchants Samson, Ker, Habgood and others. Extant documentation mentions only objects such as a kitchen table, knives, forks, food and farm goods purchased, with Ker noted as building one house and providing a tin bath, cupboard and sofa. Approximate dating of the acquisition of the table is however possible, as the Hamblins had arrived in 1842 and Georgiana died in 1843; it is highly unlikely that the table was made when she was still alive. Following Sabina's wedding in 1848, Captain Molloy, in an effort to sort out his affairs and the trust funds left by Georgiana's mother who died not long after Georgiana, auctioned much of what he owned including livestock, fine wine, paintings, books, furniture and bed linen and sailed for England in 1850, while his four

youngest daughters sailed to South Australia to stay with their sister and Hale.⁹

While away, Molloy was gazetted Lieutenant-Colonel. They all returned to Fairlawn in March 1852 and he needed to purchase replacement furniture, to provide a gracious setting in which his remaining daughters could live and from where they could be married. The table therefore must have been purchased between 1852 and 1854, when the Hamblin family again left the colony.

Mary Dorothea, aged 22, was first to marry. In 1856 she married Royal Engineer Edmund Frederick Du Cane (1830–1902) who had been recalled to serve in the Crimean War. They moved to the United Kingdom where he had a distinguished career as a prison administrator.

The following year 19-year-old Amelia Georgiana married William Richardson Bunbury (1817–77) son of an Irish Baronet and moved to nearby Beachlands in Busselton. In 1859, 19-year-old Flora Elizabeth married wealthy and well-connected William Locke Brockman (1833–98), with five English kings in the family tree, and moved to his northern properties. After this, youngest daughter Georgiana spent much of her time in Perth at Bishop's House where her eldest sister's husband had become Bishop and built a substantial home. Georgiana died in 1874 after a short illness. Tragically



her fiancée, Frederick Kennedy Panter, had been killed by Aborigines in 1864 during an expedition to Roebuck Bay.

Colonel Molloy died in 1867. His estate Fairlawn had the usual clearance sale after his death.¹⁰ Amelia put aside the pieces she “thought her sisters would like retained”¹¹ and sold the rest. The June 1868 list included “several tables and chairs”¹² with the furniture fetching £176.12.0 in total. This presumably was when the table came to the Reynolds family, purchased by Joseph Gardiner Reynolds (1814–1912), whose property Membenup was only 10 km away.

Molloy's table stands on a turned and carved pedestal and has a quatrefoil

9.

Douglas L. Cummings (1897– after 1950), *Membenup, Wonnerup*, 1939, ink wash on paper, 22.9 x 37.3 cm. Royal Western Australian Historical Society Collection acc. no A1996.49m. This image was published in the *Western Mail* 8 June 1939 p 8 as “Historic Homestead no 11”

10.

Unknown photographer, *Joseph Gardiner and Mary Ellen Reynolds*, dated 1903, detail. BL 8292B/B/33

11.

Unknown photographer, *Gladys Reynolds and Percy Reynolds at Membenup*, 1914, detail. BL 067208PD





12.

Unknown photographer, *Wonnerup Park old homestead*, Miling. Courtesy Terry Reynolds jnr

13.

Unknown photographer, *Terry Reynolds*, who inherited the table from his Great Aunt Gladys. Photograph courtesy Athena Paton



platform base (**plate 3**). The style is very much of the time with an ornate turned pedestal rather than plain octagonal one seen in the earlier Regency-style pieces made by Hamblin, such as the National Gallery table that rests on an octagonal column on a trefoil platform base (**plate 1**). The column and base are jarrah veneered onto pine. Similar tables were made for Captain John Septimus Roe RN, the Surveyor General, and Squire Samuel Phillips at Culham.

Roe's table was exhibited in 1870 in the Loan Exhibition of Works of Art and Industry, the first major exhibition in Western Australia, where it garnered general approval. The National Gallery table has a solid jarrah top made from two mirrored boards with a thumbnail moulded edge over a solid apron with rolled moulding while Molloy's has five boards used to make the jarrah top. Nor does Molloy's have a tilt top secured by jarrah pegs and a brass lock as the National Gallery table has, while the apron lacks a beaded edge and the feet lack lion paws.

The Reynolds family

Joseph Gardiner Reynolds arrived in Western Australia from Dooldale, Derbyshire on the *George* in 1848. According to his great, great, great grandson David Reynolds, Joseph Gardiner Reynolds was in Jamaica before coming to Western Australia but, not caring to

manage a sugar plantation and supervise slaves, he decided to move to Western Australia. This caused considerable ructions with his wealthy and snobbish family who considered Australia a lesser place than the West Indies. He appears to have had good introductions and settled first at Gingin, near the Brockmans, then moved to the Blackwood, where he leased Dudinalup (with Charles Bussell) until 1858, and then to Quangup.

Arriving in 1848 as a single man in dispute with his family and with no fixed plans, it is unlikely that he brought much if any furniture. People by this time were advised to bring cabinetmakers rather than furniture and have it made in the colony from the local hardwood jarrah that they called "Swan River mahogany". When his father died in 1860, he received an inheritance enough to purchase land, build a home, marry and acquire good furniture.

Reynolds purchased some land belonging to former Governor Stirling and the adjacent Fishleigh Farm from the heirs of John Hurford (who had been speared by Aborigines). The property was near the Vasse Estuary in Wonnerup next to the Layman's farm. Here he built a sturdy pit-sawn jarrah-and-limestone house with a shingled roof, renaming the property Membenup (**plate 9**).¹³ Furniture was required and that which was readily available mostly came from deceased estates or departure (clearing) sales in the district.¹⁴ Reynolds was apparently an astute settler and became a large property owner and pastoralist, Justice of the Peace and Magistrate for the Wonnerup and Nannup area employing some 25 ticket-of-leave men between 1864 and 1878.

Joseph Gardiner Reynolds married Mary Ellen Morgan (1844–1929), 30 years his junior, on 2 December 1861 in the Picton Church established by Canon Wollaston (**plate 10**). She was the second child and eldest daughter of John Morgan (1817–58) and his wife, the widow Maria Laura née Feast (1815–56) whom Morgan had met on the voyage out on the *Parkfield* in 1841.

John Morgan was a Welsh carpenter-joiner indentured to Marshall Waller Clifton, the leader of the new settlement at Australind that had brought Hamblin



to the colony. Morgan later became the publican of the Bunbury Hotel and the Picton Inn. He owned a 43-ton vessel *Favourite* and was known to some as Captain Morgan. Maria died when Mary Ellen was 12 and her father two years later. She, accompanied by her three little sisters, came to be the housekeeper for Joseph in his newly built home. As often happens in these cases, she soon agreed to marry him.

Joseph and Mary Ellen Reynolds had eight daughters before son Charles was born (1878–1947), then came Thomas Henry (1881–1960), Percy Llewellyn (1884–1966) and a final daughter Gladys Llewellyn (1885–1964).¹⁵ Eldest son Charles moved to farm at Dardanup where his uncle Charles Morgan settled; Thomas Henry and Percy farmed the Wonnerup property until they married, when Percy bought Lockville and Thomas Henry purchased The Island. Most of the nine girls married local gentry at fairly young ages and departed. The eldest, lively and popular Maryanne Lucy (1862–1955), was sent to live with relatives in the USA¹⁶ and after her return never married. She spent much of her time living with her sisters and nieces to assist with their households before and after pregnancies.

The Molloy table came to the Reynolds family when the eldest child was only three years old, so all of Joseph and Mary Ellen's 12 children would have sat around the table at some time. With a spread in ages across 23 years, rarely would all the children have sat around it together. The youngest Gladys,

who was born when her father was 72, lived at Membenup, never married and inherited the farm and furniture. Most of her siblings and nephews predeceased her and a number had no children.

Gladys, who was neat and attractive, had help to run the property (**plate 11**). She took advice from a stock agent and had a male friend who appeared from time to time though why they did not marry is not known. A lady companion, Mavis Avery, attended to the household tasks.¹⁷ Gladys was known as an enterprising woman and a wonderful and kind hostess, inviting relatives from England to come out and stay.

Meanwhile, second son Thomas Henry Reynolds married Virginia Prinsep (1880–1958), daughter of Josephine Bussell and Henry Prinsep of the East India Company family, in 1907. Virginia's husband was a rather difficult man and the family say that late in life Virginia left and went off to live an artist's life in Paris.¹⁸ Their son Henry Gardiner Reynolds saw more future in northern lands where his Locke relations were having financial success and, having inherited money from a relative Frances Cookworthy, purchased land at Miling, a property he called Wonnerup Park, and married Edith Clinch, daughter of Victoria Plains farmer Alfred Clinch. Henry Gardiner died in an accident when their son Terence Henry (1935–90) was very young.

His determined mother kept the farm going and in due course Terry inherited Wonnerup Park. More importantly for our

14.

George Knapton (1824–1898), *jarrah writing desk*, typical of his country style, c 1850s. Photograph Athena Paton

15.

George Knapton (1824–1898), attributed, *jarrah couch*, which came from Membenup. Photograph Athena Paton

story, in 1964 he inherited the Membenup furniture from his Great Aunt Gladys. Young Terry had spent a lot of time, particularly in the summer holidays, with Aunt Gladys and learnt the family history and legends. In 1961 Terry had married Athena Hansen-Knarhoi, who recalls her family often eating at Aunt Gladys' large dining table before she died. The extensive colonial furniture collection at Membenup was moved to Wonnerup Park at Miling, where Athena and Terry used it for dinner parties when the young couple entertained their friends.

After Terry died in 1990, their youngest son Terence Gardiner inherited Wonnerup Park, as eldest son David did not care to farm and the furniture was distributed among the children David, Fiona, Andrew and Terry. The Hamblin table, despite being inherited by eldest son David, remains in Miling. The table is in original condition and kept for best at Wonnerup Park, rarely used except for Christmas and grand occasions.



16.

Attributed to Knapton family, *jarrah side table*. Photograph Athena Paton

17.

Attributed to Knapton family, *wine table with chessboard top* c 1870s. Photograph Athena Paton



The jarrah desk

The second piece of furniture in our story was also probably purchased at the Fairlawn clearance sale. It is a small jarrah writing desk (**plate 14**) made by George Knapton, a cabinetmaker who had come to Australia in 1853 with his wife Eliza Herring and son William. Known as Georgiana's desk, it was presumably used by daughter Georgiana Molloy, as it could not have been used by her mother who had died before it was made. The desk is inscribed by an unknown hand on the side of one of the drawers as "by a Mr Knapton made for Colonel Molloy".

The maker George Holland Knapton (1824–1898) spent his early years in Manchester where he worked in a solicitor's office but changed to cabinetmaking and moved to London where he married dressmaker Eliza (1828–1902) in 1847. The family came to Western Australia in 1854 to join his wife's father, John Herring, who had arrived

in 1830 as a workman for the Bussell family and by 1853 was a yeoman farmer and local postmaster. Knapton assisted with the building of homes in Vasse and Wonnerup such as Wallcliffe House, made furniture while leasing land at Ellenbrook and by 1866 was farming at Wonnerup and leasing dairy cattle at Bussell's nearby Cattle Chosen.

Furniture made for his own home The Olives in Busselton (illustrated in antique dealers Lauder & Howard's 1989 catalogue and attributed to him) is very fine. About 1873 he set up as a cabinetmaker when he bought the business of Charles Keyser who was moving to Albany. Keyser was an American cabinetmaker, builder and carpenter who had erected Yelverton's Mill at Quindalup near Busselton and employed some 42 ticket-of-leave men. The furniture Knapton made for Wallcliffe House was in a provincial Regency style. This was an adaptation of the country style used when he was a cabinetmaker in England. As this period and the Georgian are high periods in English furniture, the work made retains its charm and usefulness and is treasured today. Wallcliffe House and its contents were destroyed in the Margaret River bushfire of 2011 when a fire broke

containment lines from a prescribed burn in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.

Three of Knapton's sons, William (1848–1910), Albert (1865–1935) and Alfred (1858–1941, made furniture, equipping many local properties. A particularly fine staircase is in Beachgrove in Busselton, a house Henry Prinsep designed for Capel Brockman née Bussell. William lived in Capel farming Happy Valley. He made furniture for Brockman's Warren House at Pemberton. Albert and Alfred were the reputed makers of the furniture at Wonnerup House though it seems likely their father was also involved.¹⁹

The small writing desk by George Knapton is in his typical country style and more ornate than the furniture lost at Wallcliffe House. The young Georgiana used the desk at Fairlawn and Reynolds purchased it for Membenuup. It was later moved to Wonnerup Park, then transferred to Peppermint Grove with Athena. An upholstered jarrah sofa (**plate 15**), also believed to be by Knapton but of unknown history, is currently there as well as other mid-19th-century jarrah pieces from Membenuup, a small round table (**plate 16**) and a wine table with chessboard top (**plate 17**). All are cherished by the family who are proud of their ancestry.

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Alexandra Hasluck published original information on Georgiana and Captain Molloy in *Portrait with a Background*, Melbourne, OUP 1955. For much of the new information on the Molloy family I am indebted to Bernice Barry, *Georgiana Molloy: the mind that shines*, Redgate Consultants 2015/Picador 2016.

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Battye Library, John Molloy records consulted:
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- 5794A/ 43, 44, 45 Molloy Bank books.
- 5794A/76 Sale of effects at Fairlawn.
- 5794A/117 Fairlawn.
- 5794A/119 List of things to be sold.
- 5794A/298 List of items to be sold.
- 5794A/320 Sale of furniture.
- 5794A/150 Plate to be forwarded.
- 5794A/161 Comments on Fairlawn.
- 2169A/1/3a Repairs Fairlawn.
- 2169A/1/3a Knapton accounts.
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- 2794A/165 Distribution.
- 2794A/327 Work carried out at Fairlawn.
- Conversations and emails 2018–19 with Reynolds family members: David Reynolds, Athena Paton, Kate Giles.
- Letter from F. Oswald Reynolds, White House, High Street, Angmering Littlehampton, Sussex, 28 May 1961 to Terry Reynolds at Wonnerup Park.

NOTES

1. D Erickson, "Joseph Hamblin, cabinet-maker and piano maker" *Australiana* vol 36 no 3, August 2014 pp 4–10.
2. Bernice Barry, *The Mind that Shines*, Margaret

River, Redgate Consultants, 2015 p 39f.

3. *Ibid* p 43.

4. *Ibid* pp 93-99.

5. *Times* (London) 5 Oct 1829. Byrne was a friend and fellow officer.

6. Alexandra Hasluck, *Portrait with a Background*, Melbourne, OUP 1955 p 194.

7. *Western Mail* 22 Jun 1939 p 8.

8. Hasluck *op cit* p 247.

9. His papers include an undated and vague list of such goods for sale. Battye Library private collections 5794A.

10. We can eliminate most of the Molloy girls inheriting it. The table would not have gone to Sabina as she moved to South Australia on her marriage, and as a second wife would have been already well equipped, apart from the fact that Molloy would have still needed it; nor would it have gone to her much later as she was set up in England when her father died. Nor would it have gone to Mary Dorothea (1834–77) who in 1856 married Royal Engineer Edmund Frederick Du Cane (1830–1902), who was set up in the UK. It could possibly have gone to Amelia and William Richardson-Bunbury at his property Beachlands but as that family were well known for bringing out every convenience when they came from Ireland it would have been superfluous especially as her husband died shortly after her father and she died in England. Daughter Flora who married wealthy William Locke Brockman in 1859 and farmed at Gingin died one year after her father and as the table had stayed in the Busselton district that is also unlikely.

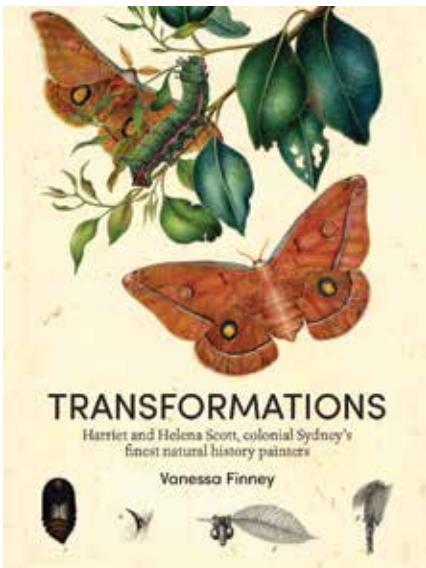
11. Battye Library private collections 5794A/117.

12. Battye Library private collections 5794A/119.

13. *Western Mail* 8 Jun 1939 p 8, "Historic Homestead no 11" and notes by Eileen Dunkley in the *Busselton Historical Society Newsletters* May & Jun 1992.

14. Featured in the *Western Mail* 8 Jun 1939, p 8, the house was reported to be full of antiques including some that came out to the colony in 1829. These could have come only from sales.
15. 'Reynolds' eldest daughter Marianne (1862–c 1952) did not marry. Evelyn Maria (1864–1943) married Eugene Norfolk Montague Locke (1855–1931); Caroline Mitchell (1866–1941) married Henry Holley in 1896, no children; Florence Edith (1868–1956) married neighbour Charles Henry Layman (1865–1926) in 1893; Emaline Laura (1868–1949) married Hugh Spicer Brockman (1868–1931); Marian Ellen (1871–95) married Alfred John Bussell (1867–1940) son of Alfred Pickmore Bussell of Wallcliffe, no children; Mary Lewellyn (1873–1976) married Horace Samuel Salom in 1901 and lived in Perth; Eleanor Frances (1875–1964) married Henry George Yelverton (1878–1972) in 1901; eldest son Charles (1878–1947) married Mary Rich in 1906, farmed at Dardanup and later lived at Prospect Villa, no children; Thomas Henry (1881–1960) married Virginia Prinsep in 1907 and farmed The Island at Wonnerup; Percy Llewellyn (1884–1966) farmed Lockville after his marriage to Hilda Jane Terry in 1923, no children; Gladys Llewellyn (1885–1964) never married and farmed Membenup, left the furniture to her nephew Terry, son of Thomas Henry.
16. Many of the local families had US connections due to daughters marrying the American whalers who worked off the south coast.
17. Information courtesy of the family February 2019.
18. This may or may not be true but has not been pursued for substantiation.
19. R. Erickson (comp), *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians pre 1829–1888* (4 vols), vol III, p 1769.

Book Review



REVIEW BY LESLEY GARRETT

Vanessa Finney,
*Transformations: Harriet and
Helena Scott, colonial Sydney's
finest natural history painters.*
New South Publishing, 2018, ISBN
9781742235806, 220 pages, \$50

Every now and then a Christmas present drops from the sky which has the power to take the recipient away to a room of their own till the end of the holidays. Happily, *Transformations* by Vanessa Finney landed in my lap this way and I became engrossed in it as soon as was politely possible.

Over 200 pages of text describing the lives and work of sisters Harriet (1830–1907) and Helena Scott (1932–1910) and their extended family are laid bare. The text is accompanied by a selection of their meticulous watercolours featuring Australia's unique natural history. From birth till death, their combined achievement is of great interest, as their lives spanned the entire reign of Queen Victoria, coinciding with an awakening interest in the natural world, and the recording of Australia's as yet unclassified flora and fauna and its place in known taxonomy.

Against this backdrop of scientific discovery in a rapidly expanding colony, the Scott sisters worked side by side in conjunction with their

Book Review

father, mother and elder half-sister Frances, ultimately culminating in the production of three works.

Firstly, the *Notebook* of 1838 was begun by their father Alexander Walker Scott when Harriet and Helena were eight and six years old and progressively collated over the following years. In it, the depictions of the moths and butterflies are shown in 'transformation', i.e. from caterpillar to chrysalis to mature moth or butterfly and rendered in notebook size. Some of these drawings are tiny pencil studies of just one leg or pupa.

Secondly, following on from the *Notebook* and painstakingly assembled over many years as the full scope of their powers emerged and many hold-ups in the production had to be endured, two volumes of the landmark *Australian Lepidoptera* were published. Here the plates are full-scale paintings of the species themselves, sometimes including written observations and the location where the specimens were collected. With this format the sisters had settled on a unique and wholistic way of displaying their subject matter: centre stage and in vivid colour, moths and butterflies are seen resting, flying or burrowing in a screen of their favoured habitat through which glimpses of their wider surroundings can be seen. These appear distantly, often executed in pencil or grey wash so as not to dominate the colourful fauna and flora centre stage. The end result is a one-dimensional diorama which includes what the artists saw beyond their specimens – in the built environment, the rustic police magistrate's house in Maitland or a distant Macquarie lighthouse at the entrance to Sydney Harbour or, most charming of all, a tiny landscape view of the sandy cove on the shoreline below Government House. Each of their creations proclaims their love for nature and the smallest of its creatures.

Drawn in by Finney, the reader is invited to look through a telescope with the Scotts' eyes, adjusting the focus to near, then far.

The sisters' personal lives along with those of their two half-sisters and parents are given equal attention as their own artworks. From the family's earliest days in Sydney and long residence on idyllic Ash Island; their removal from that much-loved home as a result of their father's bankruptcy, to their relocation once again in Sydney, their fortunes high and low are followed. A picture emerges of an unconventional and loving family, a tribe spread across several generations and in numerous dwellings which found joy in each other and welcomed the sharing of skills and ideas.

Many renowned visitors came to their homes, attracted as moths to the flame. Among them were naturalists, museum staff, artists and explorers such as Ludwig Leichhardt (who found the whole family set-up intriguing) and Conrad Martens, who lived close by and from whom the sisters received drawing instruction. His teaching certainly bore fruit as they later paid homage to him by copying some of his drawings into the background of their own work.

Not forgotten by Finney are the financial woes the family had to endure due to speculation on their father's part, nor their ongoing difficulties securing the publication of their lives' work – not to mention both the hindrance and probable jealousy encountered from some of their male colleagues. The reader is left with an overarching sense of their genius as artists and scientists, and of their tenacity.

Their professionalism can not be doubted once the number of tasks they set themselves is considered: the never-ending specimen hunts in the wild; searching out the best paper, pencils and watercolours affordable; the dissection and mounting of specimens

for closer examination; the hours accurately recording and testing the range of colours before they faded on those specimens; attaining and setting up magnifying equipment; and lastly, cleaning up at the end of the day. And all this before the post-production of finding and then securing a publisher was set in train, and finally, chasing payment for their work.

As a curator and archivist with the Australian Museum with a special interest in natural history and its evolution in colonial Australia, Vanessa Finney has had not only the privilege of easy access to the original drawings and watercolours but came possessed with the ability to select the sisters' best artworks while at the same time tracing their lives through marriages, births and deaths. The result is an introduction to an array of magnificently painted moths and butterflies recorded for the first time.

We can be grateful that Finney brought these works out of the dark lower reaches of her museum (and out of storage a stone's throw away at the State Library in Macquarie Street) and into the light of the present day. Judging by the brilliant colours seen across the Scotts' paintings reproduced in *Transformations*, there has been no fading, even among the notoriously fugitive reds, so thanks are due to both the curatorial care on the part of the Museum in keeping them intact, and to Vanessa Finney who, once she had found them and delighted in them, decided to construct a bridge between her subject and us so that we could journey with her.



Lesley Garrett is a former committee member of the Australiana Society and contributes regularly to the magazine.



Australiana Society annual report 2019

President's report Jim Bertouch

I am very happy to present my report for the last 12 months.

“MADE IN AUSTRALIA” 40TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM

As you all know we are in our 40th year and will finish our celebrations with a three-day symposium on 18–21 October 2019 at the State Library of NSW. This is going to be a very big and significant event. We have more than 25 confirmed speakers and very many different areas of Australiana will be covered in the presentations. Stephen Bowers, the well-known contemporary ceramicist and ex-director of the Jam Factory in Adelaide, will be one of three keynote speakers, along with John Hawkins and Julian Bickersteth. Richard Neville, Mitchell Librarian and Director of Education and Scholarship, will be talking about how the NSW Library collection was put together and will showcase treasures from the collection.

Other library staff will be speaking on important photographs and early maps from the collection. There will be contributions from staff members from the National Gallery in Canberra.

All our State chapters, the SA interest group and Western Australia will be represented. There will be lectures on traditional and mid-century modern Australian furniture, convict artists, colonial prints, goldfields jewellery, remote female wood carvers, china painting and pottery, Australian quilts, conservation of important Australian furniture, Australian maces, Queensland opals in Australian jewellery and much more.

The symposium will start with a reception at the NSW State Library in the evening of Thursday 17 October and will continue for the next three

days in the Dixson room of the State Library. The Kevin Fahy lecture will be held at Women's College at the University of Sydney on Saturday night 19 October. The guest speaker will be Dr Grace Cochrane on the topic “Made in Australia.”

As I mentioned at the AGM two years ago, the Society will be using a portion of accumulated funds to subsidise the cost of registration for members. I am pleased to announce that, after considerable discussion by the committee, the proposed cost to members will be \$475 which will include the reception, the three days of the symposium including lunches and morning and afternoon teas, as well as the Kevin Fahy lecture and dinner. It will be possible to buy separate tickets for the Kevin Fahy dinner and there will be a subsidised price of \$100 for delegate partners. Depending on the response from members with regard to numbers, it may be possible to open the event to the public who would pay \$675 for the symposium but not including the Kevin Fahy dinner.

We have appointed a symposium event coordinator, and all details and costings will be sent out via email very soon. I would strongly suggest that you make an early booking.

Incidentally the tour that was planned for the following week has been postponed to 2020 as some very important properties and collections will not be available in October.

AUSTRALIANA

Our Society journal remains the foremost academic publication on Australiana. The editor John Wade is here tonight and he has told the committee that since the formation

of the State Chapters he has been inundated with articles. In 2002 the journal was 32 pages long. It expanded from 40 pages to 48 pages last year as part of our 40th anniversary celebrations, and I am very pleased to announce that we are planning to expand to 60 pages next year. Not bad for a publication that started as a newsletter of six pages!

You should have noticed that this year the journal has been “perfect bound”, giving it a proper spine, which means not only that it looks and feels much more substantial and professional but also that it won't fall over on your bookshelf and we can now print the volume and year on the spine for easy reference.

This year, following a suggestion from Michel Reymond, we have uploaded pdf files of the entire contents of the first 30 years of the journal to our website. As well, an index lists the contents of every issue for the last 40 years. This means that anyone can access earlier articles of interest and can still buy a back copy of more recent journals.

I really must acknowledge John Wade's fantastic work in editing the articles and Kylie Kennedy in producing the highly attractive layouts.

STATE CHAPTERS AND ASSOCIATED EVENTS

It's very pleasing to see that the chairs of all the State Chapters are here tonight and I can tell you that their enthusiasm for Australiana and signing up of new members is quite outstanding. Since the last AGM, the Victorian Chapter has been launched by Robert Stevens who has now established a local committee and has started holding events which

Australiana Society annual report 2019

have proven to be very successful. The Tasmanian Committee chaired by Colin Thomas has continued to hold events in the south and north of the State. The Queensland Chapter co-chaired by David Bedford and Jennifer Stuerzl has started holding “show and tell” events similar to those run by Peter Lane and the South Australian interest group in Adelaide. Photos of all these events as well as many of the objects discussed are uploaded regularly to the website and you should all keep a close eye on this.

Some of the events held over the last 12 months were:

8 Jun 2019	Second “Show and Tell” meeting, Brisbane
13 Mar 2019	Werribee Tour, Victoria
17 Feb 2019	Launch of the Victorian Chapter, Melbourne
2 Dec 2019	Xmas drinks at Rothwell, Glebe
1-3 Nov 2018	Hobart events
22 Oct 2018	Joint meeting with the Ceramic Collectors Society, Sydney
20 Sep 2018	Guided tour of <i>With heart & hand</i> exhibition, Brisbane
1 Aug 2018	Guided tour of Ipswich Art Gallery and Gooloowan
15 Jul 2018	Presentation of Australiana Society Grant, Sydney Jewish Museum
13 Jun 2018	Guided tour of Miegunyah, Brisbane

MEMBERSHIP

As a reflection of the enthusiasm generated by the State groups, I can report that overall member numbers have risen to 491. This includes life members and some complimentary memberships which I will speak about

later. You will be pleased to hear that following a suggestion from the Chapter Presidents the committee is now looking at ways to introduce automatic electronic membership payments from a nominated bank account with an “opt out” option. This should stop the inevitable erosion of member numbers each year simply because people forget to renew. Given the effort required to sign up new members, we are hoping that this alternative system of payment will stop this problem.

SOCIETY GRANT FOR ITEM OF AUSTRALIANA

As you know we have established a grant of \$5,000 to purchase or help fund an item of Australiana for public display by an institution, gallery or museum. We made our first grant in July 2018 to the Sydney Jewish Museum to purchase some Australian pottery items of Jewish significance made by Vande pottery in the 1950s. A very pleasant ceremony was held at the Museum in July last year and those objects are now on display, with acknowledgment of the Society’s assistance in their purchase.

Somewhat surprisingly, despite widespread publicity, we have not received any more applications. Therefore the Committee will look at alternative ways to increase the Society’s profile perhaps by choosing an Australiana object ourselves and donating it to an appropriate institution.

MEETINGS WITH OTHER SOCIETIES

We have continued to arrange combined meetings with other special societies, most recently with the Ceramic Collectors Society, through their President Paul Simadas. A combined event was held in October on the topic of “Mid-Twentieth century design in Mosman: Ceramics,

Textiles and Jewellery” by Mosman Librarian Donna Braye. This was a well-attended event and more will follow. We are tentatively planning a second combined event with The Silver Society to showcase Alexander Dick the famous Sydney silversmith.

Earlier this year, following the possible winding up of the NSW Branch of the Furniture History Society, we came to an arrangement to assist them. The Committee decided to extend one-year complimentary Australiana Society membership to their NSW members in exchange for obtaining the list of their member contact details and their agreement to hold two combined meetings with us in the next 12 months on subjects of mutual interest. Their President Liam Bathgate has encouraged his members to submit articles to *Australiana*. I should point out that this arrangement was only for the approximately 25 members of their Society who are not already members of our Society. The committee determined that this might help us to gain members at the end of the 12-month period with the cost to us being the production and mailing of a few additional journals during 2019.

COMMITTEE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to start by pointing out how busy this committee has become. When I took over the presidency the committee met every eight weeks. This quickly became every six weeks. In the last 12 months we have had 11 meetings. Obviously, this is a very big commitment for everyone and perhaps not surprisingly several committee members have indicated that for various reasons they would like to retire. I really want to acknowledge their contributions over many years.

Michael Lech had been the secretary

since 2001 but stepped down earlier this year because of his, sadly now late, partner's ill health. He always went about his secretarial duties with quiet determination, always in the background but ever reliable. Thank you Michael and we hope to see you back at Society events in the future. Annette Blinco has been the vice president since 2003 and is also stepping down. Annette has boundless enthusiasm for organising events and a formidable list of social contacts which has allowed her to organise any number of Society events over the years. She and her husband Bill have done the lion's share of catering for so many of these events, such as their swansong catering tonight for this AGM. Thank you Annette and Bill.

Lesley Garrett has been a committee member since 2007 and Judy Higson since 2012, and they have made invaluable contributions particularly with events organisation and catering (again particularly tonight), sensible event pricing and in Judy's case with the production of a planning spreadsheet for all of those Society matters that require regular review, reminders and payments. Judy's husband Ian has taken on the task of being the unofficial Society photographer. Who will replace him? So thanks to Lesley, Judy and Ian.

The committee will be holding a farewell lunch for all these retiring committee members but please join me in thanking them all now.

For those Committee members who will renominate tonight I want to thank Andy Simpson particularly for dealing with membership matters, Tim Cha for looking after the website and email blasts and Phillip Black for his help with event planning. I would like to thank George Lawrence for keeping a close eye on our finances. Earlier this year the committee decided to present Michel Reymond with life membership

in honour of his 40 years of service. He chaired the very first meeting of this Society on 21 October 1978, is still on the committee and is still giving us the benefit of his legal expertise.

Earlier this year Lynda Summers took up the secretarial job following the resignation of Michael Lech and she has already shown her enthusiasm by taking on a whole lot of additional duties. We are very indebted to her.

I would very much like to thank Colin Thomas, David Bedford, Jennifer Stuerzl, Robert Stevens and their State Chapter committees as well as Peter Lane for their continuing enthusiasm and drive to sign up new members. The Chapter Presidents have been invited to attend our Committee meetings and to be involved in all our discussions. For the moment they are co-opted but non-voting members and this will need to be considered in our future plans. Incidentally our committee minutes and the minutes of each State Chapter meeting are now shared between all committee members.

I also want to thank Peter Walker for continuing to sponsor the annual writing award and Elizabeth Ellis for judging the Award for the last decade.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

1. We need to engage younger members. To do this we need to utilise social media and this requires committee members with expertise in this area and time to carry it out. This might include an Australiana blog site, and other modalities such as Twitter and Facebook.
2. We need to make our website more interactive. We now have help from Adam Free and Lynda is assisting Tim as well. However the website is our public face and we need to think about using it to further promote Australiana. This might include a regular news page about

topical Australiana and possibly highlighting Australiana at auction as used to be done. I am sure there will be other suggestions which are most welcome.

3. We need to consider how to make politicians and appropriate high office holders around Australia more aware of our Society and our passion. We might consider sending complimentary copies of our journal to everyone we can think of who might be useful and influential.
4. And finally I would like to see a 5-year plan that includes the setting up of an appropriate space, ideally a set of rooms, to mount a permanent Australiana collection. Michel Reymond and I have been talking for some time about a permanent Australiana collection in a building or set of rooms modelled on the Americana rooms in Washington. Ideally they would be in Canberra and there would be a tax deduction for donated objects. More importantly it would allow all areas and facets of Australian decorative arts, both traditional and contemporary, to be showcased together, rather than the piecemeal arrangements in all our public institutions. Such a space and collection would be ideal for receptions for foreign dignitaries, exactly like the Americana rooms which had provided the impetus for Mrs Tamie Fraser to set up the Australiana Fund. Unfortunately the Australiana Fund collection is now virtually invisible to the outside world.

So there you have it. My report for the last 12 months and my vision for the future.

Here's to continuing success for the Society and everything that it stands for. Share the love and the passion for Australiana!

Treasurer's report



It is my pleasure to present the financial report for the year ended 31 December 2018.

You will note, from the income and expenditure account, that the Society achieved a more than acceptable outcome in view of these difficult financial times. The entity's investments have to be in non-risk and conservative type offerings and in that regard we need to note that Westpac, our banker, is offering the lowest interest rates seen for a long time. In spite of that, we managed to achieve a higher interest income. Unfortunately costs aren't so conservative but your committee has been mindful of this and has attempted to minimise costs wherever possible. Excluding the one abnormal expense item of both the 2018 and 2017 years, the running costs increased from \$3,881 to \$4,638. This increase has been mainly caused by the way which our website host decided to levy their fee.

In this financial year we sponsored and completed the Tasmanian tour and enjoyed the long weekend sojourns in Melbourne and Brisbane. The current year will see the celebration for the 40th anniversary of the Society's founding. The planning has begun and the financial strength of the Society will play a vital part.

We ended the 2018 year some \$22,000 better than we started. At the end of December 2014, the total for members' funds was \$85,510. Four years later, at December 2018 it was \$136,596 and it continues to grow.

One final comment before I propose that the financial statements should be adopted. A member made a comment, in respect of the 2017 year financial statements, that the income and expenditure account was misleading as it didn't show the "true" income and expenses. By true I think the member meant actual amounts coming in and actual amounts going out. In that sense he was totally correct however I believe that it is a more informative presentation to show the expenses directly incurred against the income which it generated. Nevertheless, in order to (hopefully) satisfy that member's requirement the actual, ex GST, income was \$102,745 and the actual, non GST, expense was \$80,546. Figures have been rounded for presentation purposes.

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

George Lawrence

Income and Expenditure Statement For the year ended 31 December 2018

	2018 \$	2017 \$
INCOME		
Membership fees	29,775	27,800
Advertising in Australiana	9,313	13,515
Income from events	1,432	5,610
Expenses of events	-815	-2,996
Donations	1,330	25
Tasmania tour income	51,864	-
Tasmania tour expenses	-36,742	-
Sale of back copies	409	818
Production costs - Australiana	-24,875	-24,999
Editorial costs - Australiana	-7,272	-5,638
Brisbane tour income	5,750	-
Brisbane tour expenses	-1,539	-
Melbourne weekend income	1,576	-
Melbourne expenses	-478	-
Interest received	2,109	1,787
Total income	31,837	15,922
EXPENSES		
Advertising and promotion	500	775
Bank and merchant fees	836	610
Consultant's fee	5,000	-
Depreciation	430	430
General expenses	408	307
Grant	-	3,000
Insurance	386	386
Printing, postage, stationery	633	567
Website and internet	1,445	806
Total expenses	9,638	6,881
Profit from activities	22,199	9,041
Total changes in equity of the association	22,199	9,041
Accumulated surplus - 2017	114,397	105,356
Net profit for the year	22,199	9,041
Accumulated surplus - 2018	136,596	114,397



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THE MUNRO FERGUSON WOOD LIBRARY

An important and possibly unique Australian wood library of 93 individual specimens of Australian cabinet timbers, each constructed in the form of a carved wooden book.

F.W. Tod, furniture maker and specialist carver in Sydney, made 82 books of matching size for the Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, each in the form of a carved model of a reference book with a leather panelled spine, suitably inscribed in gilt letters with the Latin species name and the name of the original discoverer or identifier. Each book is punch-marked on the front cover with the Australian colloquial name of the tree from which the specimen was taken.

A separate, special group of Queensland woods is individually named and numbered, probably made for presentation during or shortly after a Vice-Regal visit to Queensland in 1920. One (No. 3) of the original 12 is missing.

Created for a gentleman forester with a serious interest in cabinet timbers for display in his library, this is one of the most desirable items of Australiana that I have had the pleasure of owning.

I suggest that Richard Thomas Baker put this collection together specifically for the Governor-General, using as his resource the wood collection in the Technological Museum. Baker, curator and economic botanist at the Museum, was the leading Australian expert in this most important and esoteric field. One specimen wood volume is stamped *Ironbark* to the front cover with the crest and initials of Munro Ferguson. This wood is not listed in Baker's *Hardwoods of Australia*, published in 1919, suggesting that the wood library was an evolving project put together over a considerable period of time. This wood volume relates specifically to a native tree that Baker discovered, identified and named *Eucalyptus fergusonii* in the Governor-General's honour, presumably as a thank you for his support of him personally and the Museum in particular, as well as the timber industry. Australian circa 1918. Sold

