

SA Australiana Study Group

51st Meeting, 5th December 2019

We recommend readers to the Australiana Society website
<https://www.australiana.org.au/> and encourage membership.

Attendance: 13



Pearlshell: Dugong, etched, Thursday Island with Japanese seal 林 (Hayashi), a common family name meaning 'Forest' its components are 2 trees [translation supplied by Dr Jennifer Harris] c. pre WWII. Height 19 cm. (photographed side on)

In the mid-1870s Japanese divers arrived in the Torres Strait, using Thursday Island as their main base, and by the 1920s, virtually all divers working in the pearling industry were Japanese. In the period up to the beginning of the Second World War the Japanese also controlled the boat building industry there. This influence was to end with the outbreak of war, with many Japanese people being interned and later sent home. Pearl diving was inherently dangerous and more than 700 Japanese people died in the Torres Strait between 1878 and 1941 with more than half of these being younger than 21 years old.



Pearlshell: Painted - H.M.A.S. *Platypus*. To Marg with Love Amor Jack, 1942.

Artist unknown. Height 17.5 cm.

The shell was most likely painted for Jack, a sailor on board HMAS *Platypus*, for his wife or girlfriend Margaret.

HMAS *Platypus* was built by John Brown and Co. Ltd, Clydebank, Scotland, with a length of 325 feet and a beam of 44 feet, commissioned in 1919 as a submarine Depot Ship. In 1920 *Platypus* proceeded to Port Phillip where a Submarine Depot had been established at Geelong. In 1922 the Naval Board decided to abandon the policy of maintaining a Royal Australian Navy Submarine service, and the *Platypus* proceeded to Sydney, and was recommissioned as a Destroyer Depot and Fleet Repair Ship. She operated with the Fleet, mainly in home waters, and served in this role until 1929 when she was recommissioned as a submarine tender. In 1930 she was renamed as H.M.A.S. *Penguin* and used as a Depot Ship at Garden Island, acting also as parent ship for the submarines. In February 1941 she was recommissioned as HMAS *Platypus* again, to resume seagoing service as a training ship. In May 1941 she sailed from Sydney to Darwin, and was present during the first Japanese bombing of Darwin Harbour on the 19th February 1942, and while the ship survived the lugger alongside her was sunk. The *Platypus* remained there as a Base Ship until 1 January 1943 when she sailed to Cairns. She was de-commissioned in 1946 and in 1958 the ship was sold to Mitsubishi Shoji Kaisha Ltd, of Tokyo, Japan, for scrap.



Pearlshell painting of sailing ship B5 [*Ida*], Broome. C 1924-1929.

Artist unknown. Height 18.5 cm.

The pearling lugger illustrated, the *Ida*, registration number B5, was rebuilt in 1922 with a larger new hull (some reports say the original ship was a ghost ship [did not exist], and she was created for some sort of financial gain). The *Ida* was described as ‘the pride of Gregory’s fleet’. On 3 February 1929, Captain Ancell Clement Gregory sailed with his fleet of six luggers to establish a pearling base in Darwin. The fleet encountered a storm and the *Ida* was abandoned, however the crew were saved.

Gregory was born in Wales in 1877, served in the Boer War as a trooper, a naval lieutenant (wounded) Boxer Rebellion, Russo-Japanese War (a prisoner), then established a fleet of pearling luggers in Broome and later in Darwin. He became a mayor of Broome, President of the Broome Pearlers’ Association, Lieutenant Commander of the Royal Australian Naval Reserve and held many other positions relating to the North West of WA. He died in December 1942 in Broome.



Firebrick, Kangaroo Island China Stone & Clay Co., South Australia 1905-1910.

Height 11cm, width 23cm, depth 7cm.

The chance discovery of deposits of china stone or clay (kaolin), feldspar, fire-clay and other mineral components of ceramics near Penneshaw on Kangaroo Island came as a brief earlier production of semi-precious tourmalines there ceased around 1903-04. As the K. I. Amalgamated Gem Syndicate was liquidated and plant and equipment auctioned off, the buyers were the newly-formed K. I. China Stone & Clay Co., run largely by the same people.

By the end of 1905, and with about fourteen employees, the company was producing high quality raw materials, which the general manager, Joseph Provis, promoted in NSW and Victoria as well as in SA. Alfred Capper, of the Australian Pottery Company at Longueville near Sydney visited the site. He experimented with their materials and regarded them as the equal of those imported from England and Europe. In 1906 Provis was able to show important visitors some “pretty china ornaments” made there from the clay. Then in October that year the “Fireclay pit” – a large deposit of refractory clay - was discovered nearby. Within six months a large drying shed was built, then another, and then a larger brick kiln. By this time the workforce had reached about forty men.

Around this time Australia was importing vast numbers of firebricks, so following the first shipment of silica firebricks on the *SS Kooringa* in 1906, along with trial shipments to Sydney and Melbourne, the future looked bright. The BHP Company used KI bricks for lining the Port Pirie zinc furnaces, and they were supplied to Adelaide’s main foundries and the Islington Railway Workshops.

Despite all this promise, the cost of transport to the mainland (in view of the brickworks across the strait), and aggressive competition from competitors took its toll. Even the awarding of a gold medal diploma for its products at the great Franco-British Exhibition in 1908 could not save the day. Declining demand for bricks saw the kiln close in November 1908. Then unusually heavy rains in 1909 followed by an exceptionally wet winter in 1910 inundated the mine and caused chaos. The mines and brickworks closed in November 1910, with the company liquidated two months later.



Blackwood folding top games table carved by Sarah Squire Todd (nee Mason 1861-1959), Tasmania, early 20thC. Height 62cm, top (folded) 43.2 x 42.6cm.

An example of the Arts and Crafts Movement that flourished in Tasmania for two decades or so early in the 20th century, with the founding of the Tasmanian Arts & Crafts Society in

Hobart in 1903. Following the British Arts and Crafts movement, but influenced by the onset of Art Nouveau and the nationalist sentiments around Australia's federation, Tasmanian artists, particularly women, were to use the rich local timbers to express a unique identity.

Sarah Squire Todd was a relatively prolific carver, vigorously adopting designs based on gum leaves and gumnuts. She had studied woodcarving at Hobart Technical College, probably under Lucien Dechaineaux and W Russell, and was also a skilled needleworker, showing both woodwork and needlework at the International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art in Hobart 1894/95. She exhibited at the first showing of the Arts & Crafts Society of Tasmania in 1903 and at the 1907 Exhibition of Women's Work at Melbourne.

Sarah's husband was Thomas Stannus Todd, who by 1892 was head brewer and manager of the Cascade Brewery. As her family grew up in the manager's house Sarah had her most prolific period, with her three daughters who were to follow in her footsteps. With advancing age, and moving to a smaller house, Sarah gave up woodcarving and concentrated on embroidery and other needlework and rug-making.

Several good examples of Sarah's work are held by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in Hobart, while her creations and those of her daughters are to be found in numerous homes and churches around Hobart.



Cast brass fitting from the Unicorn Brewery, Burra, c 1873.

Diam. 71mm, height 21mm.

With a coarsely pitched tapering external thread below the collar and a slight internal taper, this appears to have been a plug-hole.

The Unicorn Brewery was built at Burra S.A. in 1873, with a tall malting tower, coopers' workshop, steam engine and boiler, manager's residence and offices. With its newer technology it outclassed the established Burra Brewery, while with the recent (1870) arrival of the railway, transport of materials and beer was easily integrated. The population of Burra had fallen from its peak of the early 1860s, but there were still nine busy pubs in the town and some expansion of the northern settlements. Its seven underground cellars built of stone and brick could hold 500 hogsheads of its brews, and the Unicorn was in a strong position. By 1889 it was supplying all of the town's pubs, the surrounding areas, and railing its barrels to Broken Hill.

An economic recession in South Australia, drought, and then the levying of a 2d per gallon duty on locally produced beer in 1894 combined to weaken profitability. Changes to the Licensing Act also took their toll, and in December of 1902 the local newspaper the *Burra Record* reported on the "Death of the Unicorn". Although some equipment and machinery

was sold, there was no buyer found for the brewery itself. Gradually material from it filtered off to be used elsewhere, such as the brewing tower, the stone of which served as a quarry for the building of local houses.

All that remains of the Unicorn Brewery are the manager's residence, storeroom, walls of the brewery block, and the cellars. Tourists visiting Burra can gain access to the cellars by calling at the Visitor Information Centre in Market Square, Burra. But the plug-hole remains elsewhere...



'Captain' William Randell and family, c1859, ambrotype photograph, Robert Hall, Adelaide. 15 x 12 cm.

In February 1853 William Randell (1824 - 1911) ran the first paddle steamer (*Mary Ann*) on the River Murray (six months earlier than Francis Cadell) and then pioneered navigation and trade along the Murray and the Darling. Randell constructed the 55' boat in sections at his father's flour mill at Gumeracha, then carted them to the river to be assembled and planked with red gum.

A base was later established slightly downstream (which became the town of Mannum), more steamers built, and by 1860, 20,000 bales of wool per year were landed before carting to Port Adelaide.

William is photographed here with his wife Anne (nee Nickels), their eldest son, also William, as well as Anne's sister Sarah (who later married William's brother - a squatter on the Darling).

Ambrotypes are unique images, but another hand coloured ambrotype exists from the same sitting - the only difference being that young William is on his auntie's lap.



Randell's dock and boatyard, Mannum, with the paddle steamer *Nil Desperandum*, photograph, early 1870s (?), Robert Stacy. 17 x 24 cm.

Detail: Black Swan painted on the deckhouse of *Nil Desperandum*

Faded and foxed, but possibly the only copy of a photograph showing part of William Randell's boatyard and dock.

The image likely taken from the family home - with the *Nil Desperandum* at the landing and with a rail-line evident back to a wool store out of frame. A barge is in the wet dock and a standing steam engine, possibly powering a saw mill, is in the foreground.

The *Nil Desperandum* was built in 1870 from an 1865 barge derived from the *Gemini*, which in turn, was partly built from the original 1852 *Mary Ann*. She was easily identifiable with the profile of a black swan painted on the side of the deckhouse and on a flag at the bow. In 1899 she was rebuilt as the *Alpha* and in the 1950s was a floating home at Mannum.

The photograph is inscribed verso "Capt Randell" and may have been commissioned by him. It is signed at the base "R. S. Stacy, Photo Artist". Robert Stacy (c1833 - 1890), had a studio in Strathalbyn in 1871, and was also a travelling photographer throughout the Mount Lofty Ranges and the mid-North from the 1860s to 1880s.

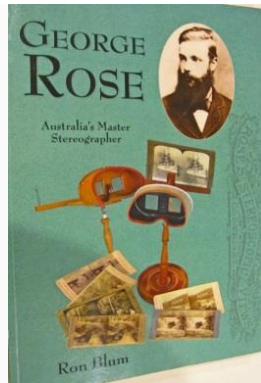


"Great Suffragette Demonstration to London", 1911, three stereo-view photographs, Rose Stereograph Company, Melbourne. 10 x 18 cm.

Five days before the coronation of George VI, a 40,000 person march was held through London demanding women's suffrage. It was also known as the "Women's Coronation Procession". The Australian group was part of the "Imperial Contingents" representing Commonwealth countries. It was preceded by the Empire Car - shown here in Trafalgar

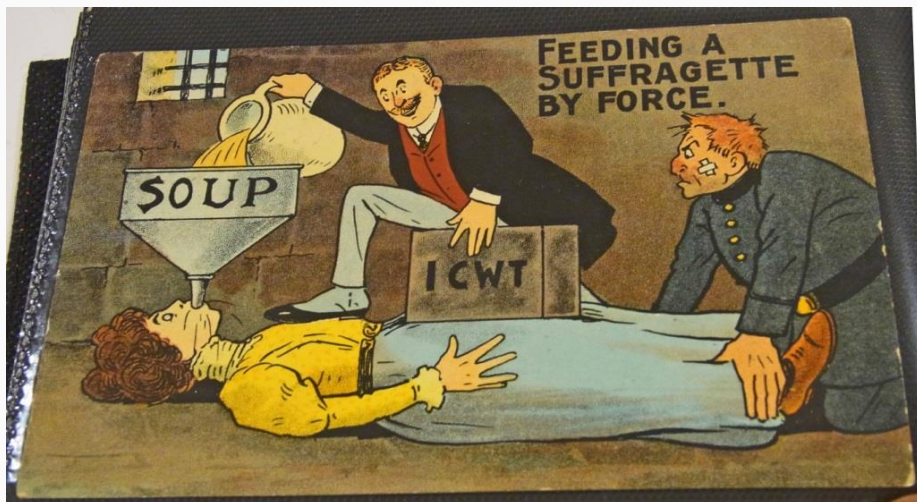
Square - a float symbolising unity amongst the British dominions overseas. Another of the cards shows the more prominent Australian marchers - including Vida Goldstein (1864 - 1949) who stood for election five times in Victoria as a suffragette and social reformer. (This photograph is currently on view at the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra). A third stereoview shows the Australian processional banner. The wearing of white dresses was emblematic of the movement.

George Rose (1861 - 1942) worked at his father's boot-making business in Melbourne while studying photography. In 1880 he founded the Rose Studio Company, specialising in stereo views (and later - postcards). Thousands of images were produced of Victoria, interstate, and from 38 countries - including the battlefields of World War 1.

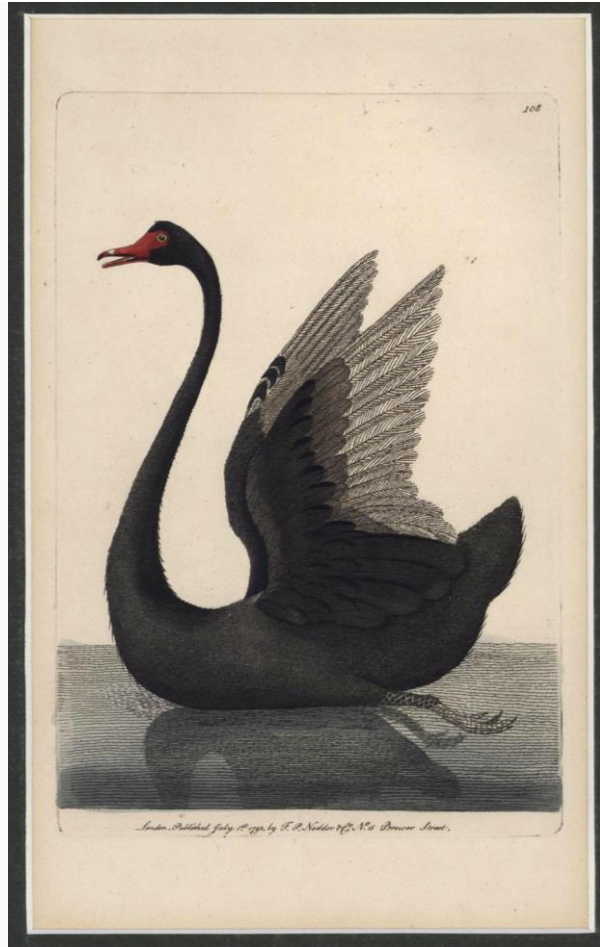


Book: *George Rose – Australia’s Master Stereographer*. Ron Blum, Oaklands Park, S.A., c2008.

“The story of George Rose, a great Australian photographer with a catalogue of all his known 3-D views taken from the 1880s to 1920. Illustrated with over 280 photographs taken on his stereoscopic journeys around Australia and the world.” (from the back cover). The third edition of 2014: ISBN 9780958957236.



A collection of postcards from the UK contemporaneously with the Suffragette Movement, of which this is an example, were shown with the stereoscopic view cards. It was a century ago that the first British female MP, Nancy Astor, took her seat in the House of Commons. This year in South Australia we commemorate 125 years of a landmark victory that changed the course of women's rights. The Adult Suffrage Bill, passed on 18 December 1894, awarded South Australian women the right to vote in general elections and to stand for parliament, for the first time ever in Australia.



"Black Swan", "Cassowary", "Turcosine Parrakeet" and "Splendid Parrot", four copperplate engravings by Frederick Polydore Nodder (1751 - 1800), early 1790s, from *The Naturalist's Miscellany* (1789 - 1813), George Shaw (1751 - 1813), Nodder & Shaw publishers, London, England. Dimensions from 21 x 11cm to 10.5 x 15cm.

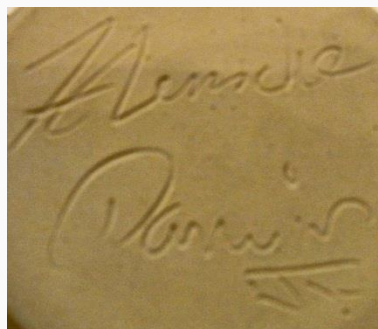
Nodder was an English illustrator, engraver, water colourist and publisher. He assisted Joseph Banks with the "Banks' Florilegium", converting most of the plant drawings from the Endeavour expedition to watercolours, and was then one of the eighteen engravers. In 1789 he began engraving and publishing *The Naturalist's Miscellany* as a periodical. George Shaw was a medical practitioner, a lecturer in botany at Oxford University, a founder of the Linnean Society of London, and an assistant keeper of Natural History at the British Museum. He was the author, and assisted with publishing (he also wrote *Zoology of New*

Holland, 1794). After Nodder's death in 1800, the periodical continued to be published by his wife, Elizabeth, and Shaw, until his death in 1813. 24 volumes were published in all.

At a time when naturalists accompanying exploration expeditions were spanning the globe, particularly in and around Australia, New Zealand and the South Seas, there was intense interest “at home” in the birds and animals, marine life and insects, plants and peoples that they recorded. The *Naturalist's Miscellany* was notable for the quality of its paper, and the hand-coloured illustrations with watercolours and layered gouache of the over 1,000 species represented. In it was published in 1799 the first scientific description of a platypus.

The "Cassowary" here is obviously now known as the emu, the “Splendid Parrot”, is now known as the crimson rosella, and the "Turcosine Parrakeet" as the turquoise parrot (first described by George Shaw also).

A brief discussion of the phrase “black swan” ensued – a term used first by the second-century CE Roman poet Juvenal – at a time when such a bird was thought an impossibility, and thus represented an unimaginable occurrence. It was a common expression in 16th century London, with the same meaning. Their initial discovery by Europeans was in 1697 when Willem de Vlamingh's expedition sighted them at the Swan River, and a century later they began to be appreciated in Europe as an ornamental and exotic souvenir of Australia.



Tea strainer on base and lidded sugar bowl, ceramic, Helen Lemke, Darwin, 1990s.

W 12.5 H 8cm and D 9 H 9.5cm respectively.

Helen Lemke began as a hobbyist in the late 1970s, and became a founding member of the Rural Potters Association of the Northern Territory. Largely self-taught, she attended workshops held locally in Darwin by visiting ceramicists, and also travelled to Toowoomba to attend summer schools. Over the next two decades she produced mainly domestic wares,

using high firing white clays bought from the southern states, and these she sold at local craft shops and galleries, as well as at the Mindil Beach and Parap Village markets.

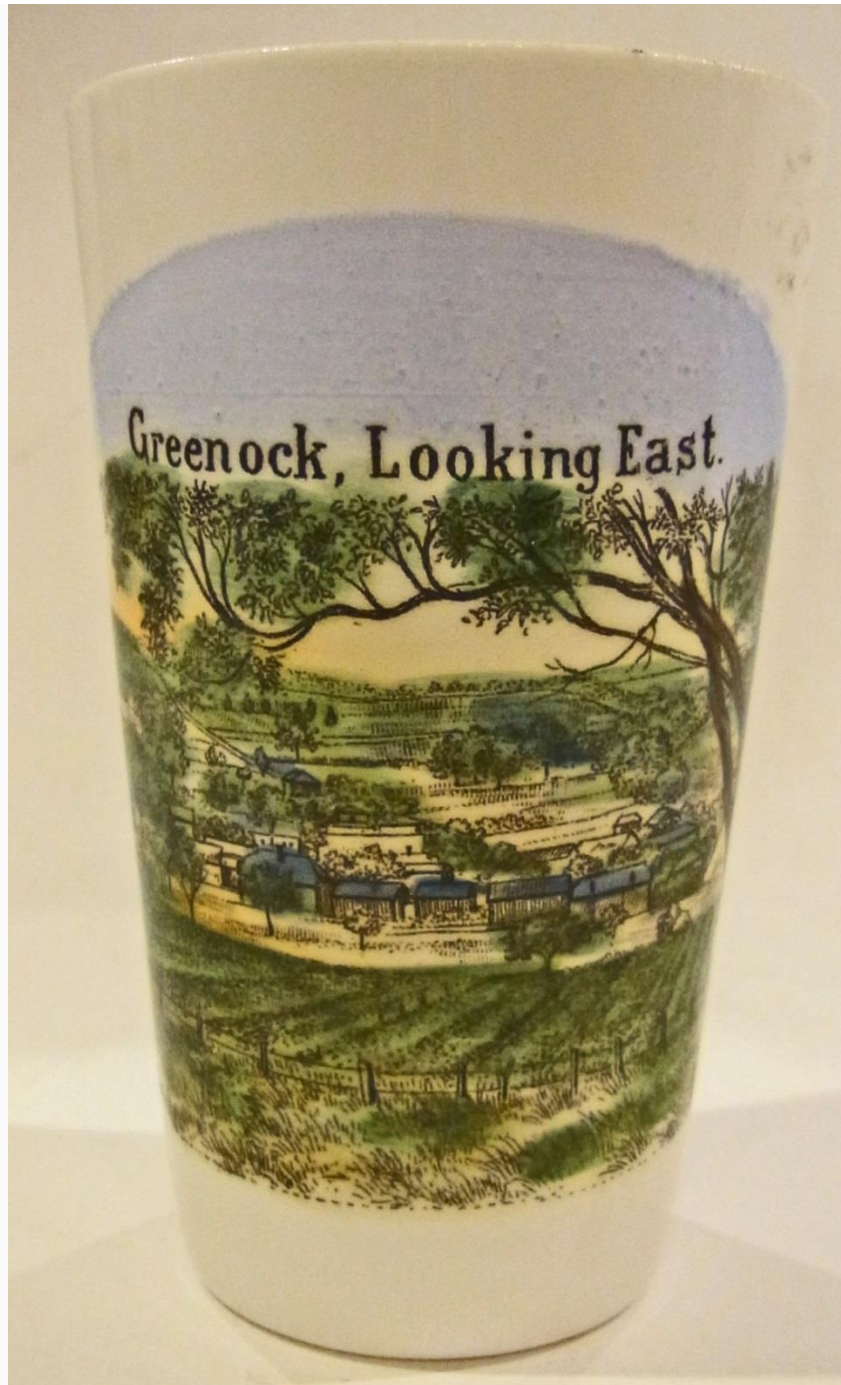
Sawdust-fired ceramics were produced, mostly for exhibitions, and like the wares above, these were marked with an incised or painted signature *H. Lemke Darwin NT*. Owing to the cost involved, particularly for shipping materials from the south, Helen Lemke ceased trading. N.B. It has been noted that another Helen Lemke (no relation) is currently active as a potter in the Albury Wodonga region.



Souvenir bone china egg cup or small vase, English, 1950s. Height 42mm.

With its hand coloured transfer print of the Civic Hall at Port Lincoln, South Australia, this was squarely aimed at the tourist market. The art deco design of the hall was chosen when a replacement for the earlier Soldiers' Memorial Hall was built during the depression years. The site was that of the original Institute Hall on the waterfront at Port Lincoln, built in 1879. That was rebuilt and renamed in 1924, but only ten years later fire destroyed the Soldiers' Memorial Hall, and the building shown was the replacement, opened in May 1936. In turn, this building was itself redeveloped, to be opened in 2001 as the re-branded multi-purpose Nautilus Theatre and Arts Centre.

The souvenir shown was a product of A.B. Jones & Sons Ltd., of Longton in the Staffordshire Potteries, who adopted the Grafton China name as one of their trademarks when they opened in 1900. This particular mark dates from the decade of the 1950s.



Transfer printed milk-glass beaker with scene of Greenock, South Australia. Early 20thC (?). Height 87mm.

The hand coloured image is of the small township of Greenock, situated on the northwest edge of the Barossa Valley about 66 kilometres north of Adelaide. The original settlement by Scots accounts for its name, but early German settlers also established themselves there on the land which was soon given over to mainly wheat growing. In 1866 the township boasted a (nearby) steam mill, as well as Wesleyan and Lutheran chapels, each with an associated school. By the time this scene was chosen for the beaker wine grape vines were spreading through the region.

Of surprisingly light weight, this beaker of moulded opaque white glass is unmarked as to origin or maker.



Painting, still life, oil on board, Abraham Derby roses, John Dowie AM, Adelaide, Nov. 1999. 59.5 x 48.8cm.

South Australian artist John Stuart Dowie (1915-2008) literally occupies a central place in Adelaide's artistic life. His *Three Rivers* fountain sculpture reigns over the southern end of Victoria Square, *Alice (in Wonderland)* is in the East Parklands, *Girl on a Slide* in Rundle Mall, the *Victor Richardson Memorial Gates* at Adelaide Oval, and busts of notable South Australians on North Terrace all add to our sense of living history. Further afield *The Skater* at Burnside and the *Great Air Race of 1919* sculpture alongside the winning Vickers Vimy aircraft at Adelaide Airport celebrate the joy of life and significant events and people in South Australian history.

From studying architecture at the University of Adelaide, and painting with local artists Ivor Hele and Marie Tuck, Dowie developed into a painter, sculptor and teacher. War service in WW2 saw him as an assistant to Australia's official war sculptor Lyndon Dadswell and working in the Military History Unit of the AIF, while as a soldier he was one of the Rats of Tobruk. Further art studies overseas in London and Florence prepared him well for the over 50 public sculptures he was to carry out. Dowie was made a member of the Order of

Australia in 1981, and was nominated for Senior Australian of the Year in 2005. His life is recorded in *John Dowie: A Life in the Round*, edited by Tracey Lock-Weir, Wakefield Press Adelaide, 2001. ISBN: 9781862545441.

“A SUNDAY AFTERNOON WITH ROSES” - *a reminiscence of the painter and the painting...*

A lovely day in early November 1999 – sunny and breezy - Sunday around 3.30. A knock at the front door – our old friend John Dowie – “just out for a bit of exercise...”

John had a lovely habit of dropping in on us – the old bike still serviceable though creaky – and a well-worn brown velvet riding hat serving as his safety helmet – and usually just as I would have been thinking of afternoon tea.

On this particular day, a group of six rose bushes planted the year before had come into flower – a glorious mass of large creamy pink ruffled blooms – Abraham Derby.

After the usual coffee and home-made cakes (obviously the reason for the frequent visits!) John asked if he could take some flowers to paint. I was happy and gave him a pair of secateurs. An old knapsack he always carried was soon filled and brimming over, some white daisies having been added to most of my show of roses.

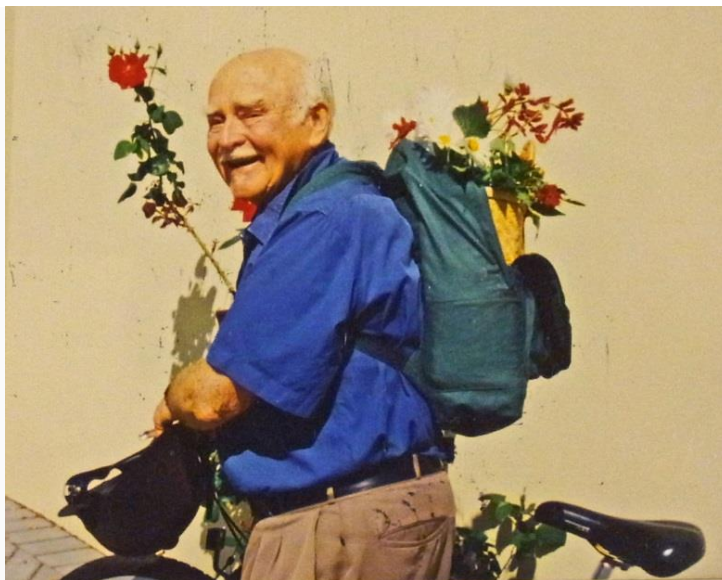
On his way an hour later whistling as he went, I looked at my depleted garden and felt slightly annoyed with myself for giving him free rein with the secateurs!!

Next morning a cheery phone call: “I finished it – painted till two in the morning!”

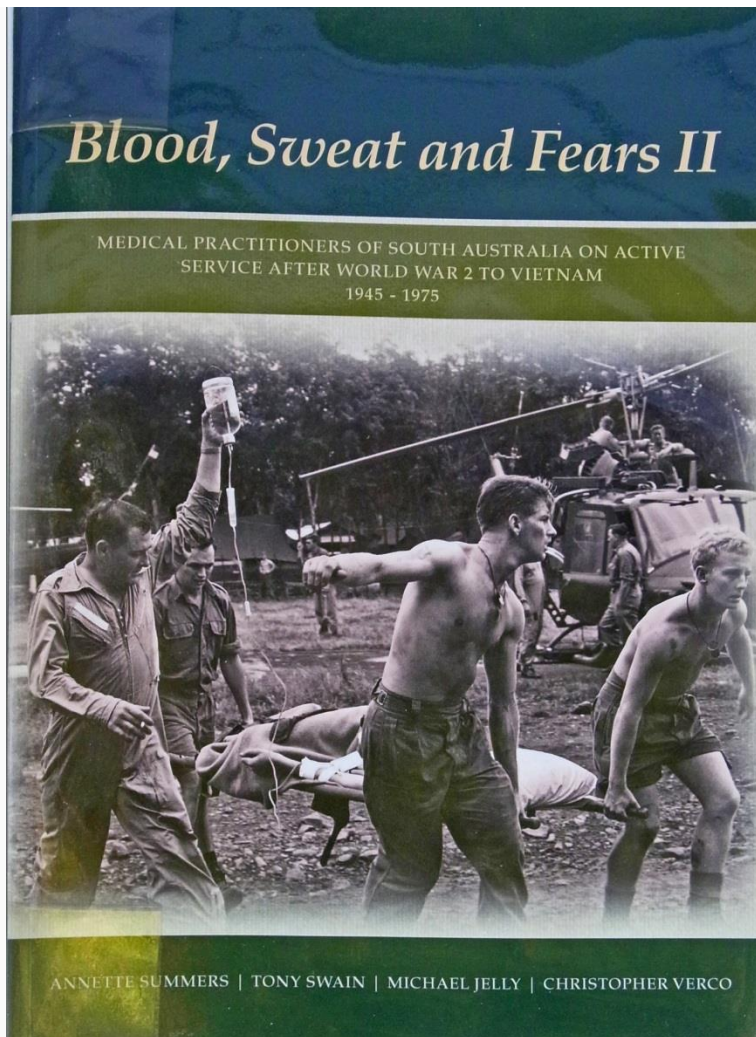
My husband Philip and I went round to John Dowie’s large old house in Dulwich – and there in his studio was this vivid painting with the flowers put into a white vase that had been his mother’s, and which often appeared in his still life paintings. Some fruit had been added in the foreground to complete the composition.

The painting hangs in my Maylands bedroom where I now live. Wonderful memories of a lazy sunny Sunday afternoon – and sadness of old friends and partners no longer here to share the pleasure.

Barbara Fargher



John Dowie raiding the roses – a snapshot – November 1999.



Following our introduction at the last meeting, number 50, to the book *Blood, Sweat and Fears, vol. 1*, by Verco, Summers, Swain and Jelly, we were introduced this time to the following volume in the series, by the same authors: *Blood, Sweat and Fears, vol. 2*.

Published in 2016 by the Army Museum of South Australia in Adelaide, and written by an eminent group of medical friends, members of the South Australian Medical Heritage Society, this book records the military service of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps in SA. The volume covers the period from the end of WW2 to the end of the Vietnam War (1945-1975), including those who were born, educated, or practised in SA before that period, regardless of where they enlisted or served, or in which branch of the Australian or British armed services they served.

This period of history was chosen to give the authors the best opportunity to interview those of the 68 doctors honoured by their inclusion who were still living – about half that number. With a moving foreword written by His Excellency Hieu Van Le AC, the present Governor of SA, himself a refugee from South Vietnam, the book tells of the service of those present in theatres ranging from Occupied Japan to Malaya, Malaysia, Korea and Vietnam. Of these doctors, eight had also served in WW2, and several in more than one of the above theatres.

It was noted that volume 3, covering the period of WW2, and by the same authors, was launched on 30 August 2019.

Note for ASG 50: In the report of our meeting number 50 of November 2019 and relating to two wax sculptures by or attributed to Theresa Walker (1807-1876), her maiden name was referred to as Theresa Chauncey. It has been pointed out to us that although that spelling is and was commonly used, within the family the spelling of Chauncy was the accepted version.



The ending of another successful year of meetings was celebrated with a most successful supper.