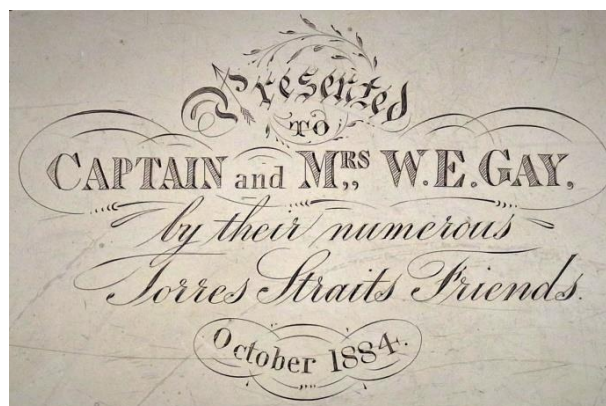


SA Australiana Study Group 56th Meeting, 6 August 2020

We recommend readers to the Australiana Society website
<https://www.australiana.org.au/> and encourage membership. Attendance: 10



Silver tray presented to Captain and Mrs. W. E. Gay, Torres Strait, October 1884.
Length 52.2 cm, width 41.0 cm, height 3.7 cm. Hallmarks for sterling silver, Sheffield UK, 1883, and mark of the manufacturer Martin & Hall.

Presented to Captain William Emmett Gay and his wife Christine on leaving Thursday Island in 1884, the tray is a memento of the China clipper *Belle of South Esk* and its part, as a hulk, in the early days of European settlement in the Torres Strait and at Darwin.

Captain Gay (1830-?) was the last master of the ship under sail, a three-masted wooden barque of 547 tons which was the pride of Montrose in Scotland, where she was built in 1865. Intended for the China trade and “magnificently furnished”, she loaded tea at Foochow (now Fuzhou) in June 1866, and left on the race home, competing against such famous ships as *Ariel* and *Taeping*. With her smaller spread of sail she was not as fast as her rivals, but was to make fourteen round-trip voyages between Britain and Asia, as well as sailing to North America and the Cape of Good Hope.

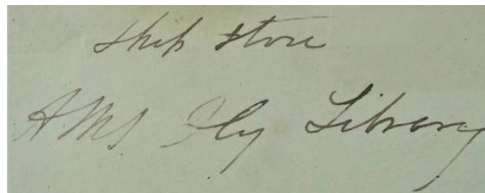
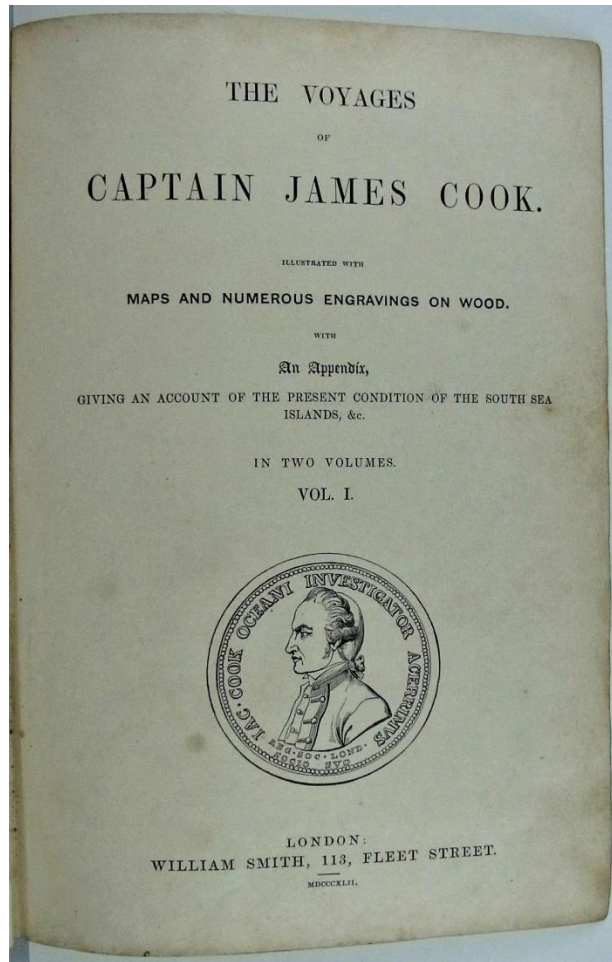
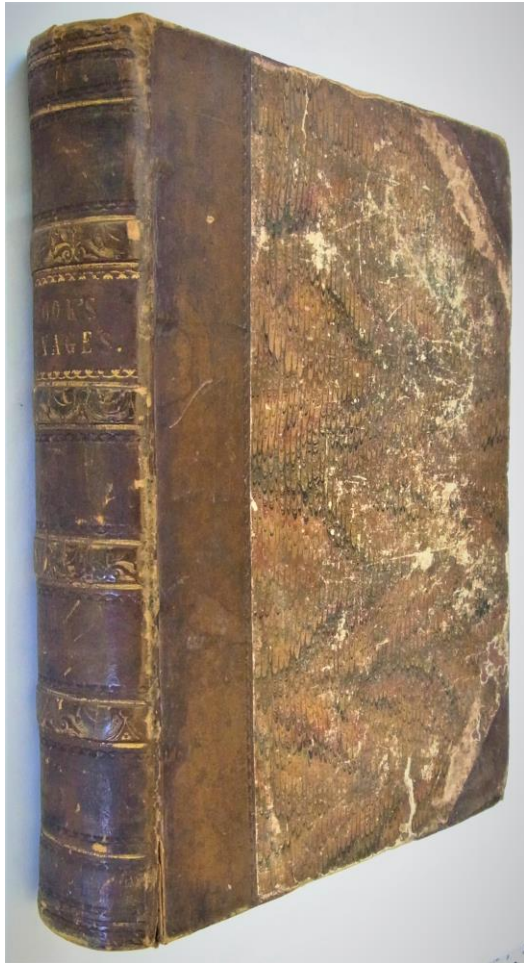
Captain Gay was her master from 1877, but in 1879 her then owners, the Eastern & Australian Mail Steamship Co. ordered him to sail from London to Thursday Island. There the ship was dismasted and moored to serve the Torres Strait pearl shell fishery, and as a transfer and storage depot for visiting steamers then making increasing use of the hazardous waters of the Strait on their voyages between the east coast of Australia, southeast Asia and beyond. With huge tidal flows and no wharves, the ship was anchored offshore where other vessels could safely moor alongside.

By late 1884, and with the ship’s capacity now insufficient for the rapidly growing demand, she was replaced by a larger vessel, loaded with coal, and towed to Darwin to bunker the government steamship *Palmerston*. It was this departure that triggered the presentation to Captain and Mrs Gay, so much appreciated by those they were leaving.

Anchored in the shipping channel off Darwin, the *Belle of South Esk* took aboard copper ore from Daly River, and transferred cargoes from the steamers passing through, with lighters taking the goods to shore. Even after the building of the first proper wharf at Port Darwin in 1886 she was in demand, sometime coming alongside a moored ship so that it could discharge at both sides.

Captain Gay retired in 1888 and left to live out his span in England. The ship continued under his old Chief Officer until age, teredo and collision damage caught up with it. In 1896 she was beached, stripped of copper, and sold. Her bell now sounds on Quarantine Island near Dunedin NZ. The tray is now in Adelaide, where his only child, his step-daughter Ada Jolly made her home.

The author wishes to acknowledge the paper by Charles R Clark “From China clipper to Darwin hulk: history of the ‘Belle of Southesk””, published in N.T. Historical Studies, No. 27, 2016.



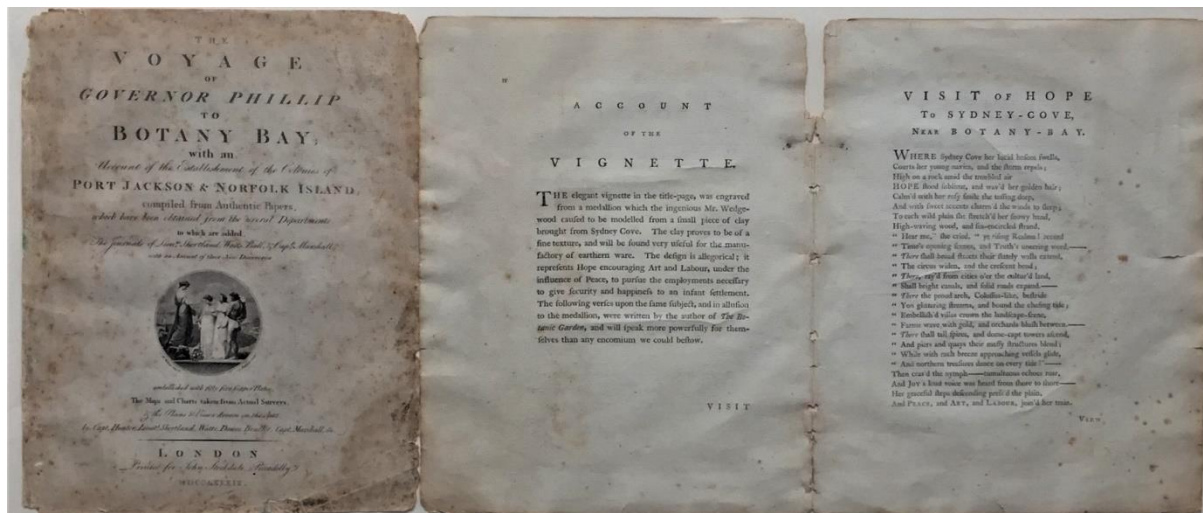
From the library of *HMS Fly*: “The Three Voyages of Captain James Cook” (vol. 1), published by William Smith, London 1842. Dimensions: 23.7 x 18.0 x 4.3 cm.

The book shown is from the library of *HMS Fly*, a British three-masted sloop-ship of 485 tons launched from the Pembroke Dockyard in 1831. Commissioned in 1841 under Captain Francis Blackwood (1809-1854) for survey work in Australian waters, during the early to mid-1840s and in company with the cutter *Bramble*, she charted an area from Sandy Cape to Whitsunday Island, recording passages and the outer parts of the Great Barrier Reef.

Following a visit to Surabaya in late 1844 they surveyed parts of the New Guinea coast, charting shoals and river mouths, including that of the Fly River, named for the ship. The Great North East Channel through Torres Strait was charted at this time. Records of hydrography and sailing directions made then still appear on modern charts.

After returning to England in 1846 *HMS Fly* engaged in further survey work in the Pacific and New Zealand, before being decommissioned and laid up as a coal hulk in 1855. She was finally broken up in 1903.

The book was acquired by the grandfather of the present owner in 1864.



Governor Phillip: The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay with an Account of the Establishment of the Colonies of Port Jackson & Norfolk Island, title page with vignette used on Sydney Cove medallion and two following pages, published 1789 by Stockdale, London.

Ex Richard L Smith of Sydney, who wrote the ‘Sydney Cove medallion’ in 1978, published by the N.S.W. Chapter of the Wedgwood Society of Australia.

Each page measures 29.3 x 23.7cm

The author: Arthur Phillip (1738-1814) sailed to Australia in 1777/78 aboard *HMS Sirius*, the flag ship of the First Fleet, as the first Governor of NSW. The owners of the item described their visit to the burial ledger stone of Governor Arthur Phillip at St Nicholas Church, Bathampton, which is a very short distance from Bath in England.

The Publisher: John Stockdale 1750-1814 was born in Caldbeck, Cumberland and as an adult worked for bookseller and stationer John Almon as a porter. When Almon retired the business was taken over by John Debrett. Around this time Stockdale set up his own business, and amongst the ten best books he published was *The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay*...

The vignette: The National Museum of Australia’s website describes its 1789 medallion ‘The medallion was designed by Henry Webber with the final finishing of the moulds done by William Hackwood, Josiah Wedgwood's principal modeller. The full title of the medallion is “Hope encouraging Art and Labour, under the influence of Peace, to pursue the employments necessary to give security and happiness to an infant settlement”. Thus it would appear that the medallion was designed before the book was published.



Mulga wood container mounted with a brass plaque impressed with the legend 'It's better to smoke in this world than the next'.

On the underside a printed label records the wood turner's name, A.J. Wiley, Prospect South Australia, and in handwriting 'Mulga Oodnadatta'. Height 10 cm. Maximum width 9 cm.

The botanical name for Mulga is *Acacia aneura*, a small shrub or tree and growing in outback arid areas of Australia. The Aborigines used it for making digging sticks, woomeras, shields and bowls.

Oodnadatta is located some 870 kilometres north of Adelaide, and the name probably derives from the Arrernte word, utnadatta, meaning mulga blossom. The Ghan train once stopped there, but it is now bypassed, the town's population is about 200.

The maker: Albert J. Wiley, of Pulsford Road, Prospect arrived in South Australia on the *Ashmore* and in 1887 moved into his Pulsford Road home, where he died in 1947. He ran a woodturning business there from about 1902, and won a medal at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition. By the 1930s Wiley had become a specialist in mulga wood ornaments. He inspired Fred Eaton, camp missionary at Nepabunna, to install lathes at the mission in 1938 in order to teach woodturning to the Aboriginal people under his care. Wiley made cricket stumps for the 1947 Test match held at the Adelaide Oval, an artificial leg for an Aboriginal woman, and many souvenirs such as this tobacco holder.



Cup, saucer and bowl produced for the Home For Incurables, Adelaide, dated 1974.

Saucer diam. 14.5 cm, cup height 7.5 cm, bowl diam. 20 cm.

The Home was founded by Julia Farr (nee Ord, 1824-1914) in 1878, when she noted the plight of destitute patients discharged from the Adelaide Hospital as “incurable”, but with nowhere else to go. Enlisting the help of Dr William Gosse to chair a fund raising committee, they were able to buy eight acres of land at Fullarton, alter the house on it, and open for patients in October 1879. The house was rapidly outgrown and a new building was opened in 1881 to accommodate 30 patients. Funded mainly by bequests and donations, the growth continued, until in its fiftieth year, 142 patients were catered for. By the end of 1978, with 826 resident patients, the Home was the largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere. Renamed in 1981 as The Julia Farr Centre in honour of its founder, the Centre navigated the changes in disability service provisions, with part of the property being sold by Disability SA in 2003. The facility finally closed in April 2020.

Bristile, the WA manufacturer of the tableware shown, traced its beginnings in chinaware to the Calyx Porcelain and Paint Co. Ltd at Subiaco, established in 1921 using skilled workers imported from Stoke on Trent. It was incorporated into the maker of Bristile terra cotta roofing tiles, H. L. Brisbane & Co. Ltd as it expanded rapidly through the 1930s and then its amalgamation with Wunderlich Ltd in 1938. WW2 saw the company as a diversified heavy manufacturer, producing Bren gun carrier parts, pontoon bridges, and refractory products among many others.

During the post war boom, as the only Australian producer of fully vitrified tableware, their products could be found in almost every hospital, hotel, restaurant and defence establishment. Mugs featuring Australian wildlife decoration were exported to Japan, and at one stage 6.5 million items were produced each year, 75% of which were sold interstate.



German map of Australia and the East Indies Archipelago, mid 19thC. 22.2 x 28.7 cm.

A steel engraved map by Austrian engraver Franz Biller showing a simplified outline of Australia and New Zealand, but not yet with the settlements at Adelaide, Melbourne or Brisbane marked or named.



Map of Oceania in Italian, steel engraving, mid 19thC. 17.5 x 25.2 cm.

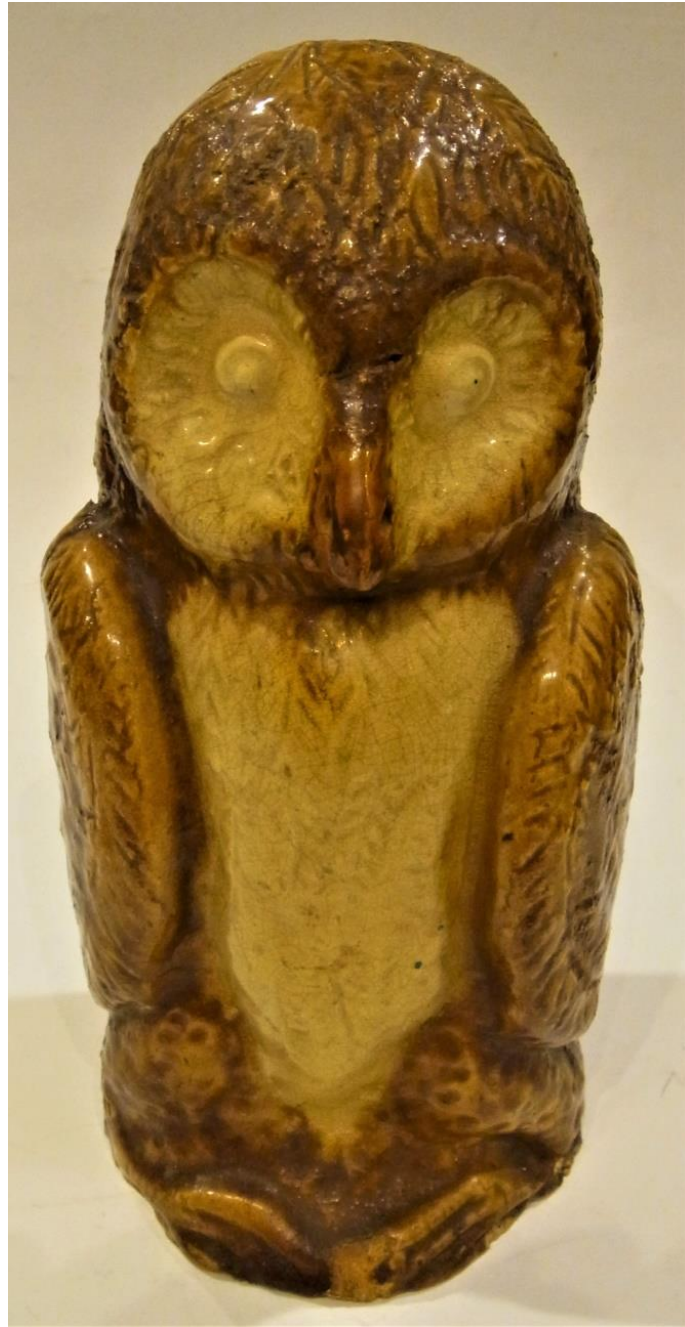
Similar to the example shown previously, but simpler, however the location of Brisbane is marked, with Melbourne and Adelaide absent. The engraver was named Allodi.

Another map of the same period was shown (not illustrated here), but with the marking in French. A steel engraving by Debissone of c1840, it was after A. H. Dufour and Arnoul. Notably these three maps all bore longitudes as measured from Paris, as the “prime meridian” at Greenwich was not established until 1851 nor generally adopted until 1884. The French however continued to use their Paris meridian for several decades after this.



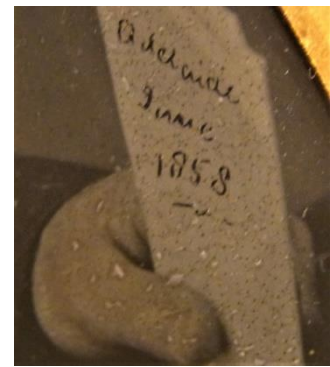
Pair of small moulded frogs, Bosley Pottery. Height 4 cm, length 5.5 cm.

Although unmarked, these can confidently be attributed to the Mitcham SA pottery of Thomas Bosley, through their characteristic coloured glazes and clay bodies. Thomas initially trained at the Hindmarsh Pottery, followed by working in brickworks. He was both the nephew and step-son of Staffordshire trained George Bosley, who was skilled at wheel work and utilitarian pottery making. Having lost his job at the Eden Hills brickworks in the Depression, Thomas turned his skills to art pottery, initially in his garage. Joined by his son Alfred, and then by his first employee in 1935, he was able to capitalise on the state's centenary celebrations by producing souvenir plates or plaques, and the business grew rapidly. Small moulded animal and bird figures proved very popular, including magpies, kookaburras, penguins and koalas, and the ubiquitous frogs. Advertising wares included the MacRobertson's two-colour Freddie frogs and a bust for a local tobacconist.



Bosley Ware moulded figure of an owl with bi-coloured glazes. Height 19 cm.

One of the most popular of the Bosley figures, this example has a prominent maker's stamp on its base. It has survived well, as the low temperature firing of both body and glazes tended to make Bosley figures liable to damage easily. Thomas Bosley himself died in 1945, and in 1946 the business changed to Mitcham Potteries Limited, under Ron Bissett. It flourished briefly in the post-war boom, but as imports became available and competition increased the ornamental wares became unprofitable, and ceased production in 1954. The pottery survived for another decade, before finally closing in 1964.



**Allan McFarlane, ambrotype photograph, by 'Professor' Robert Hall, Adelaide.
12 x 9 cm.**

Allan McFarlane (1829-1908) was 10 years old when he arrived with his family at Adelaide in 1839 from Caithness in northern Scotland. They bought land at Mt Barker and then at Wellington on the Murray. Under Allan's management, then ownership, "Wellington Lodge" became a successful merino sheep station (and is still held in the family). He was described as something of a bush engineer and constructed levees, pumps, windmills and a wind-powered sawmill. He also experimented with a compressed air shearing machine that could be fired by burning mutton fat. He was a J.P., Inspector of Sheep, and a Lieutenant in the SA Volunteer Rifles.

In 1857 he rode from Wellington to explore the country between Port Augusta and Lake Eyre "in search of a run". His notes were serialised in an Adelaide paper and the government surveyor Babbage, when finding his tracks on a salt lake, mapped it as Lake McFarlane. In 1861 he visited England and entered the National Rifle Association's competition at Wimbledon. He participated in his volunteer's uniform, and using his government issued Terry carbine won the 600 yard event. He returned to Australia on Brunel's, *SS Great Britain*. In November 1867 the Duke of Edinburgh and entourage, in touring the districts east of Adelaide and Lake Alexandrina, spent a night at Wellington Lodge.

The ambrotype is inscribed "Adelaide June 1858", and this corresponds with his parents returning to Scotland.



Two electroplated “Robur” promotional tea strainers, early 20thC.

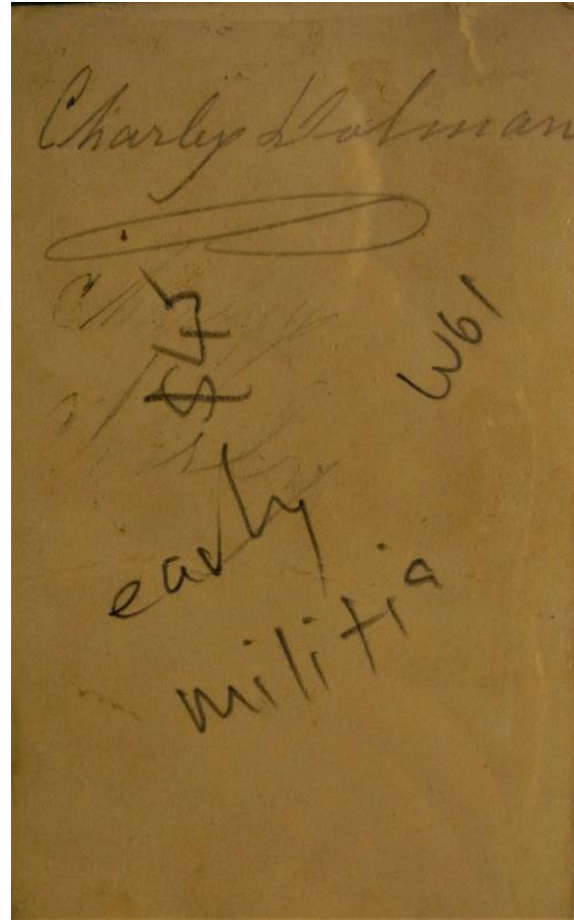
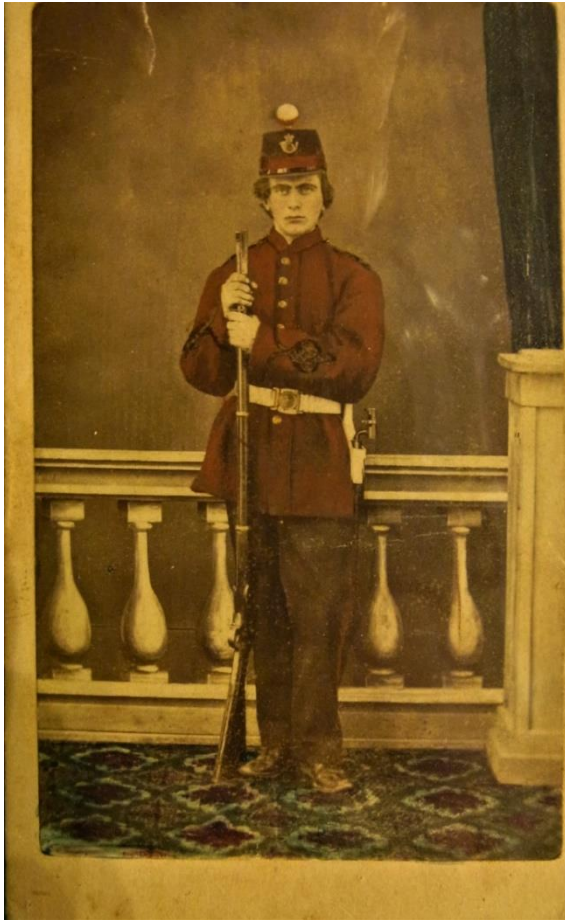
Lengths: example on left 15.5 cm, on right 15.8 cm.

The brand name “Robur” dates from c1890, when Melbourne tea importer Hawthorn Rhodes & Co. began selling blended teas with that name, as the Australian market changed from selling loose tea to packaged products. In 1900 the company was bought by James Service & Co., and then traded as the Robur Tea Company. Alive to the value of advertising and gimmicks, Robur included “guarantee tickets” in their packages, which could be traded (with additional postage stamps) for “sterling silver-plated tea strainers” at a cut price. The example on the left above is stamped in the bowl with “ROBUR IS GOOD TEA”, and carries the marks of the manufacturer (unidentified) of “B.S.&H.S”. That on the right with “ROBUR TEA” on the handle is unmarked. Similar offers were made for their “perfect teapots”, in sterling silver or plated nickel silver, which featured an integral removable strainer basket.



Promotional E.P.N.S. caddy spoons and strainers for the Robur Tea Company, one unbranded. Lengths: 10 cm to 13.6 cm.

Further examples of plated tea wares to advertise the brand of Robur, these were produced by the Melbourne firm, the Phoenix Manufacturing Company (1916-1960s), as well as by the unidentified B.S&H.S factory. The Robur Company, after taking over rival firm Griffiths Teas in the 1960s, itself was taken over in the 1980s by Tetley, and that firm then in turn was bought by India's Tata Company.



Private Charles Dolman of the South Australian Volunteer Rifles, c1865-70, coloured carte de visite photograph, by Frank Farndell, Adelaide. 10 x 6 cm.

Inscribed verso "Charley Dolman"; contemporary references indicate that this could be Charles Dolman (c1843-1922) who arrived in South Australia with a wife and small family in the 1860s. He may have lived in Adelaide before working as a labourer at Kapunda in the 1870s, then returning to Adelaide.

The South Australian Volunteer Rifles (SAVR) existed intermittently during the nineteenth century. Reformed in 1859, the SAVR were composed of dozens of individual rifle companies raised in country towns and the city. Companies were initially free to choose their own uniforms, but these were standardised in 1862, and again in 1865 (before the SAVR was disbanded in 1870). The trousers and cap (not coloured here) were blue.

Dolman holds an 1853 Enfield rifle with the bayonet visible in its scabbard. The Enfield was muzzle loaded but had a rifled bore. It was used in both the Crimean War (1853-56) and the American Civil War (1861-65) and was considered accurate to beyond 500 yards.

Frank Farndell (1831-1907) trained as a daguerreotypist in London, and emigrated to Adelaide in 1855. He had a Rundle Street studio, principally producing carte de visite portraits, from 1864 until the early 1870s, before becoming a farmer at Highbury.



**Low (gout) stool in blackwood, Australian, 2nd quarter of nineteenth century.
Height 15 cm, width 37 cm, depth 29 cm.**

Reupholstered in a reproduction of fabric contemporary with the timberwork, the stool is one of a pair. Looking beyond our local members for commentary on this, we contacted David Bedford, editor of the Australiana Society's Virtual Show and Tell project, and received this reply:

These low stools were almost always called gout stools. As you will recollect from the VS&T3 item #7, there was a differently shaped stool that I described as that. It was flat topped but had similar style of curvilinear carving. Low stools were also used by people who suffered from stiffened joints in old age or women during pregnancy.

The curved shape of this low stool would allow a lot of flexibility in its use compared to a dedicated uneven sided V shaped gout stool. With these rounded low stools the foot could be rested on the convex surface facing the sitter, with the heel on top of the stool or resting the back of the ankle on the convex surface on the opposite site to the sitter.

Jim Bertouch's feedback on VS&T3 item #7, read: "Gout (from the Latin word "gutta" meaning drop) is the commonest inflammatory joint condition and most often affects the big toe joint. Hence gout stools were made low to the ground, in contrast to a normal height stool, to rest the outstretched, affected foot. Gout is an exceptionally painful condition, as any of your gouty readers would testify, but these days there are many medical treatments available, and gout stools have faded into obscurity. The Gout stool on page 381 of *Australian Furniture* by Fahy and Simpson illustrates a more typical example, clearly made for the foot, rather than any other part of the anatomy"



"The Kanguroo", 1800, copperplate engraving from "General Zoology, or Systematic Natural History", 1800 - 1826 (16 volumes), George Shaw (1751 - 1813) author and publisher, Charles Heath (1785 - 1848) engraver, London. Image 13 x 21 cm.

The central kangaroo is posed with a 'looking over shoulder' stance - as popularised by George Stubbs in his painting "The Kongouro from New Holland" (1772). In this engraving the kangaroo's lower hind legs are emphasised and prominently show the four toes including the paired grooming claws. The five fingered hands are also made a feature of.

Charles Heath was a second generation engraver (with his father operating under royal patronage). Charles helped pioneer steel engraving in England - including the printing of banknotes. He was a co-designer and co-engraver of the Penny Black stamp (1840). He commissioned JMW Turner to produce one hundred watercolours for the engraved series "Picturesque Views in England and Wales" (1827 - 38).

George Shaw, was a keeper of Natural History at the British Musuem and authored numerous zoology publications including "Zoology of New Holland" (1794).

"The Kanguroo" is housed in a flamboyant, fiddleback figured blackwood, ogee moulded frame - custom designed and created by the engraving's owner.