

SA Australiana Study Group 81st Meeting, 4 August 2022

Australia's history told through objects

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



Silver mug presented to Daisy Ghest, c1885. Maker – W.K. Vanderslice & Co., San Francisco. Height 9 cm, width 11.5 cm.

The inscription on the mug reads: *Presented to / Daisy Lillian Australia Ghest / on her first voyage to sea / by her many admirers / on board R.M.S.S. Australia.* Daisy (1884-1955) was born at Milson's Point in Sydney, the first child and only daughter of Captain Robert Ghest, at that time master of the *Australia*, and his wife Susie.

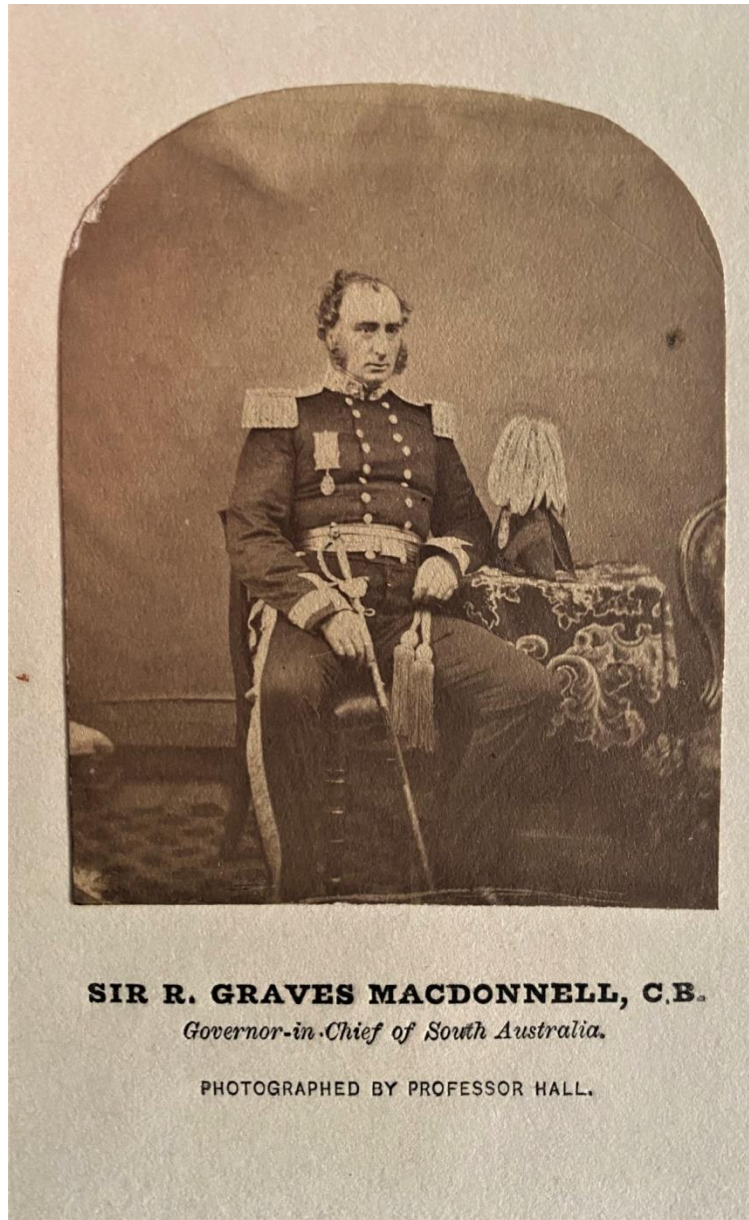
The *Australia* had been built in Scotland in 1875 for J. Elder & Co., to be used for the mail route between Sydney and San Francisco, and set the record for the fastest passage from Plymouth to Sydney on her delivery in 1876. She was a highly regarded ship for comfort and reliability when Captain Ghest became her master in 1883, a command he relinquished in 1885 for shore life. One of his notable achievements was securing a lion, named Garfield, from the USA for the Sydney Zoological Gardens, and shipping him out successfully in 1884.

It seems most likely that Daisy's first voyage to sea would have been while her father was master of the *Australia*, and that she bore the ship's title among her names to commemorate that command. Captain Ghest had something of a chequered career after giving up seafaring and died in 1930 at the age of about 83, his widow died in 1934, and Daisy outlived her three brothers to die in Sydney, a spinster, in 1955.



Tinplate picture frame made from a kerosene or petrol tin, maker unknown, early 20thC. 35 x 36 cm.

The end of a tin made to contain Shell company kerosene or petrol has been decoratively cut out and scrolled, before being brightly painted with yellow, red and black paint. A rare survivor of a legion of such tins which have largely rusted away or been discarded or scrapped. They can still be seen occasionally in country areas where they were flattened out and used as building and roofing materials, as we saw on the recent visit to Holowiliena Station. In earlier days of scarcity and ingenuity such tins had a wide variety of uses.



Sir R. Graves Macdonnell, C.B., Governor of South Australia, c. 1861, albumen photograph on printed carte de visite, 'Professor' Robert Hall, photographer, Adelaide. 10.4 x 6.6 cm.

Born in Ireland, MacDonnell studied law in Dublin then practised in London. He was appointed Chief Justice in the West African colony of Gambia in 1843 and later made Governor. A cousin of the explorer Sir Richard Burton, MacDonnell also organised exploration and military expeditions beyond the Gambia River.

He was Governor of South Australia from 1855 to early 1862 and, unhappy with Sturt's and Eyre's expeditions that "generally have a knack of getting into the most dismal places and finding barrenness from Dan to Beersheba", MacDonnell mounted his own three month, three thousand kilometre journey to the Far North. He also encouraged Stuart's expeditions that eventually resulted in the crossing of the continent (and the routing of the Overland Telegraph to Adelaide). Stuart named the MacDonnell Ranges at Alice Springs after his supporter.

MacDonnell was later Governor of Hong Kong, before retiring and returning to England.

The carte de visite format for paper-printed albumen photographs replaced the ambrotype

in the mid-1860s (that in turn had replaced the daguerreotype). Unlike its forerunners, the paper photograph could be printed numerous times, and was considerably cheaper. They were used as a new form of visiting card, but cartes of famous people, events and scenes, were also sold as souvenirs.

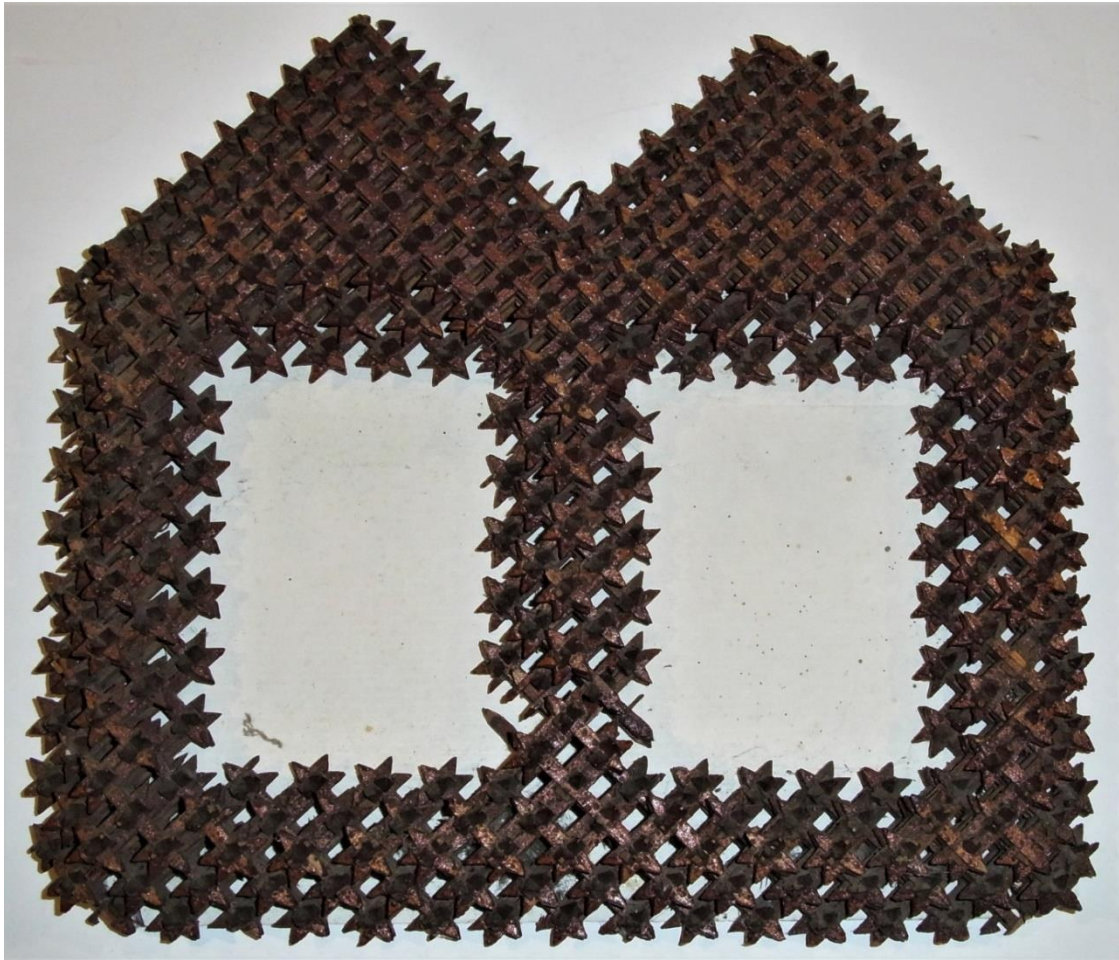
'Professor' Robert Hall displayed the first carte de visites in Adelaide in February 1861 (English examples of the Royal Family) in the windows of his photographic studio. This carte of Governor MacDonnell wearing his Companion of the Order of the Bath medal may be his personal visiting card - likely dating from 1861 (he left Adelaide in early 1862) - or else it is from a small unrecorded run of souvenir cartes.



Gold-miner inspecting a nugget, carte de visite photograph, late 1860s, James Weller, Maryborough, Victoria. 10 x 6 cm.

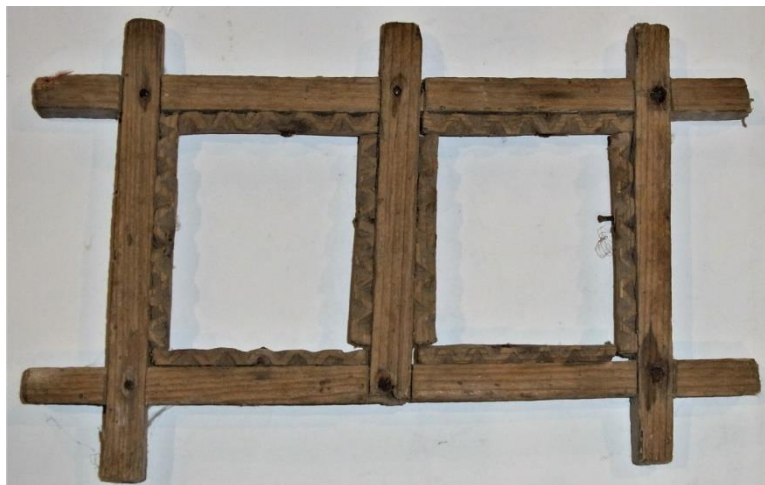
At first glance the photograph appears to be a genre scene of a pensive, down-at-heel prospector reading a well-worn letter from home, but a closer inspection shows that the 'letter' is coloured yellow and is in fact a gold nugget. The carte may indeed have been intended as a genre scene - but as an image of luck on the Australian diggings. It is also possible that the photograph is an actual portrait, commissioned by a miner who has stepped into the photographer's studio straight from the field in working clothing and with his pick. As other examples come to light the photograph's original story may become clearer.

James Waller (1839 - 1910) was a photographer in the central Victorian gold-mining towns of Creswick and Maryborough from 1865 - 1891. The studio imprint verso implies a late 1860s date.



‘Crown of thorns’ double picture frame, unknown maker, late 19th to early 20thC.
32 x 35 cm.

The intricate structure of this frame and of the one below is made in three layers of interlocked shaped cedar pegs, fitted without the use of glue. One account of the origin of such items heard by the owner was that they were made by seafarers during quiet times aboard, but the use of cedar and the stability they would require for assembly makes that seem unlikely. Probably they fall into the loose category known as ‘tramp art’, craftworks made during spells of enforced idleness, using only basic materials.



Double picture frame of pine, maker unknown, early 20thC. 14.5 x 23 cm.
The frame held together by nails and with the apertures edged with zig-zag carved slips.



**'Crown of thorns' picture frame, maker unknown, late 19th to early 20thC.
45 x 45 x 13 cm.**

A similar example to the one shown above, but containing what appears to be an oil on panel religious icon of unknown origin.



**Lampshade in silk, thought to be of Chinese make but Australian origin. 19thC.
25 x 22 x 22 cm.**

The lampshade was bought from the goldfields region of Victoria by the current owner, who believes that it was either made there, or was imported from China for local sale. The fabric has suffered damage from light exposure, while the braiding and pendant tassels are similarly frail. Time does not treat such relics well, and this is a rare survivor.



Promotional tobacco pouch of Duhst & Biven, Adelaide, early 20thC. 12.7 x 8.5 cm.

Made of a very light and finely woven canvas-type material, the pouch is a memento of the tobacconist and hairdressing shop of Oscar Duhst (1872-1942) and one Mr. Biven. Duhst was born in Hamburg, arrived in S.A. in 1889, and initially worked for the Beltana Pastoral Company. Coming to Adelaide in 1895 he set up in business with Biven as a tobacconist in Rundle Street, but after the death of his partner a year later moved to the SE corner of Rundle and King William Streets where he traded until 1927.

Duhst's business must have been quite successful. He married Hans Heysen's sister Valeska, and in the patriotic fervor surrounding popular support for the South African War he offered free hairdressing for those who enlisted. A member of the Liberal Union, he was also a councillor at St. Peters. Taking his wife and daughter on a European trip in 1911 he was deeply impressed with the coronation celebrations in London for King George V, and while in Berlin took photographs of great military parades there led by the Emperor. He commented in an Australian newspaper that "... *there might be some little friction between Great Britain and Germany, fanned to some extent by a section of the press...*"

One newspaper report seen while compiling this can't pass unnoticed. While giving a lecture on battlefield first aid to the Mounted Contingent before departure for South Africa, Major Xavier detailed some of the gruesome effects of Mauser, dum-dum and explosive bullets, but helpfully pointed out that "... *the mere fact of a bullet being inside the skull was not necessarily so harmful as might be expected, for there were records of men who had not previously distinguished themselves by evidencing the possession of much inside their heads who were now unquestionably the possessors of a bullet, which seemed in no way to impair, but rather to improve their mental condition.*"



Rose's Stereographic Views

Duke of York Celebrations, 1901.3150: Decorations in Rundle Street.

3140: The Arrival of the Duke and Duchess at the Railway Station.

**Photographer: George Rose. Two gelatin silver stereographs mounted on printed card.
each 9.4 x 14.8 cm (image) 10 x 17.8 cm (card mount)**

George Rose (1861-1942), Australia's pre-eminent stereo-photographer, produced and marketed more than 28,000 images under the banner of the *Rose's Stereographic Views* imprint, which includes more than 10,000 stereographs taken by Rose himself over a career that spanned 60 years. He travelled extensively throughout Australia, the Pacific, Asia, India, the U.S.A., Canada, Great Britain, Europe, and North Africa. He also documented the Duke and Duchess of York's visit to Australia (1901), the Coronation, and later funeral of Edward VII (1902/1910), and the Coronation of George V & Investiture of The Prince of Wales (1911).

The opening of the first Australian parliament, uniting the separate States to form the Commonwealth of Australia, took place in the Melbourne Exhibition Building on 9 May 1901. The Duke and Duchess of York (later King George V and Queen Mary), who presided over this landmark moment in the history of the nation, travelled to Australia aboard the Royal Yacht 'Ophir'. The Royal entourage also travelled to Sydney, Hobart, Adelaide, Ballarat, Albany and Fremantle – feted by large and loyal crowds wherever they went.

Although not the only photographer to record the Royal visit in stereographic form, Rose followed the Royal Tour assiduously, producing by far the most comprehensive and candid documentary series of the Royal couples' official engagements and the lavish processions that surrounded their progress through each city. The two stereographs reproduced here typify the ambience present on the streets of, in this case Adelaide, and the creative efforts to which Rose went to obtain his viewpoints. Carefully documented by Ron Blum in his book *George Rose, Australia's Master Stereographer*, Adelaide, 2008, (2022, 4th Edition), the *Duke of York Celebrations* series comprises 227 separate titles.



Norwood Football Club membership and Captains Club badges

The 1956 and 1957 enamel badges were manufactured by S. Schlank & Co Ltd (1887-1971) of Adelaide. A history of Schlank is available online.

<http://www.numismatics.org.au/pdfjournal/Vol23/Vol%2023%20Article%204.pdf>

The other badges (epoxy) do not record who made them, however they were made in China.

The Norwood Football Club was established in 1878 and is a team in the South Australian National Football League (all the teams are located in greater Adelaide). The Norwood players wear a red and blue uniform and are known as 'Redlegs'. The Club's Latin motto translates to 'Strength in Adversity'. Their home ground is on the Parade, Norwood, an eastern suburb of Adelaide.

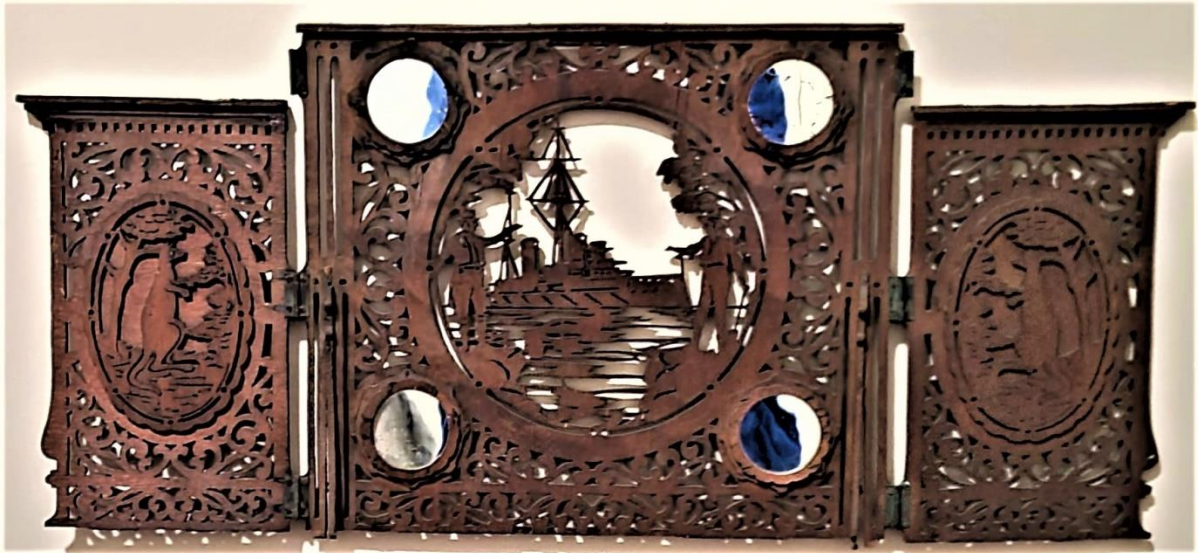
The dates on the badges were relatively and highly successful years, as the team made the finals, 1956 – came 4th in the competition, 1957 4th, 1975 and 2018 they were premiers.

The Captain's Club entitles members special privileges and is a form of sponsorship. The current cost to become a member is \$650 per year.

Unofficially, a number of past members have had their ashes spread on the oval and on the garden at the front entrance.

Editor's notes

Australian Rules football is played on a cricket oval and has eighteen players on the field at a time. During summer the East Torrens Cricket Club play their home matches on the Norwood Oval.



**A triptych WWI fretwork panel
encouraging enlistment to support the British Empire 66 x 30 cm**

Within the centre circle, a battle ship, HMS *Dreadnought*, and on left John Bull, the personification of England and an Australian colonial digger standing on right. Around four round mirrors. The side panels have a kangaroo facing centre.

Made from plywood from a tea chest. Maker unknown, C. WWI.

The central scene is a subtle World War One recruitment plea from Great Britain for Australians to join in the fight against Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, Bulgaria and their colonies. The owner of this item has researched this scene as a recruitment poster but has not found one, perhaps it was too subtle. Posters during the war often were very direct and pointed the finger at the viewer to enlist.

John Bull originated as a satirical character created by John Arbuthnot in 1715, was often illustrated by William Hogarth and Thomas Nash, and written up by George Bernard Shaw. At the beginning of World War One, Bull was used on recruitment posters, later Lord Kitchener replaced him and is more widely known.

John Bull's Recruitment song c1914

John Bull one day at Westminster was sitting at ease
 And dangling at his side, of course that famous bunch of keys,
 When a rat-a-tat-tat on the knocker roused him from his reverie,
 The first peruse his soul enthused, for this is how it read:
 The first one from Australia's side made John look up with pride,
 We have not seen the gun swing round on our Australian shore,
 But we'll be there, you need not fear,
 When you give us the word.

Australian Digger: The emblematic portrayal is of a 1850s Australian gold digger. In a military sense 'digger' was first coined during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) when many Australian and New Zealand troopers were former miners, and at the Battle of Elands River (1900), the Australian defenders earned a reputation as diggers, who hastily constructed dugout defences in the hard ground. During the Gallipoli campaign the term 'diggers' was widely used to describe Australian troops for the same reason, and the term is still used today.

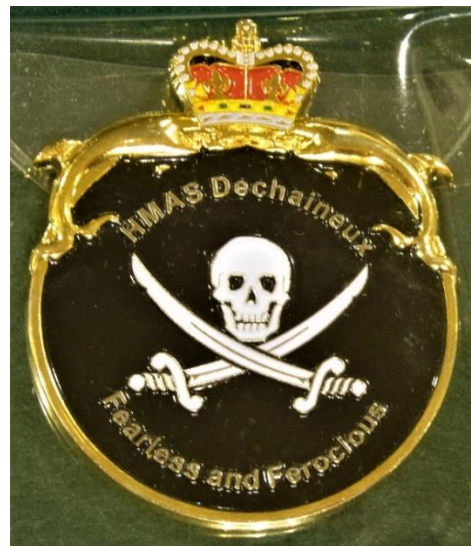
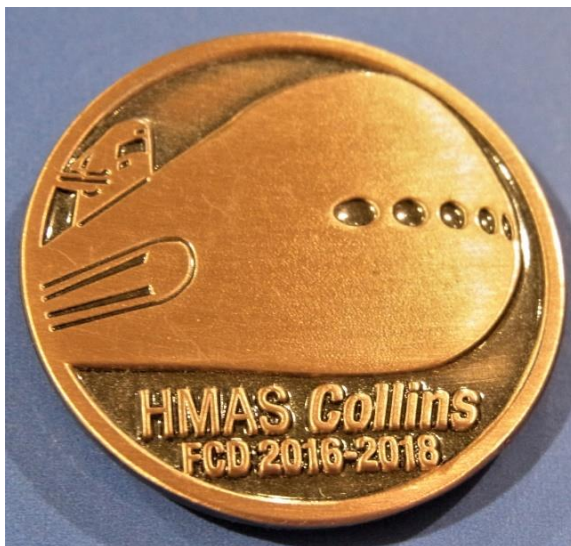
HMS *Dreadnought*: Many British Navy ships have been named *Dreadnought* and it was also a class of battleship. The ship illustrated in the fretwork was built in 1906, and it was the fastest battleship in the world at the time, however it actually saw little action during WWI, apart from ramming and sinking a submarine. That *Dreadnought* was sold as scrap in 1921.



**Model of a Collins Class submarine, manufactured by Cutting Edge Models NSW.
Resin. Plinth 88 x 380 mm.**

Presented to an acoustic/mechanical engineer at the end of his stint at working on two of the Collins Class submarines, HMAS Collins and HMAS Waller, and the air warfare destroyer HMAS Sydney over a period of about four and a half years. These were built at the Adelaide headquarters of the Australian Submarine Corporation at Osborne in Adelaide.

Every system in a submarine contributes to its unique “acoustic signature” – the characteristic sound which can identify it – and which can indicate to an enemy its location, movements and identity. The task of the acoustic/mechanical engineer is to reduce this sound to the absolute minimum.

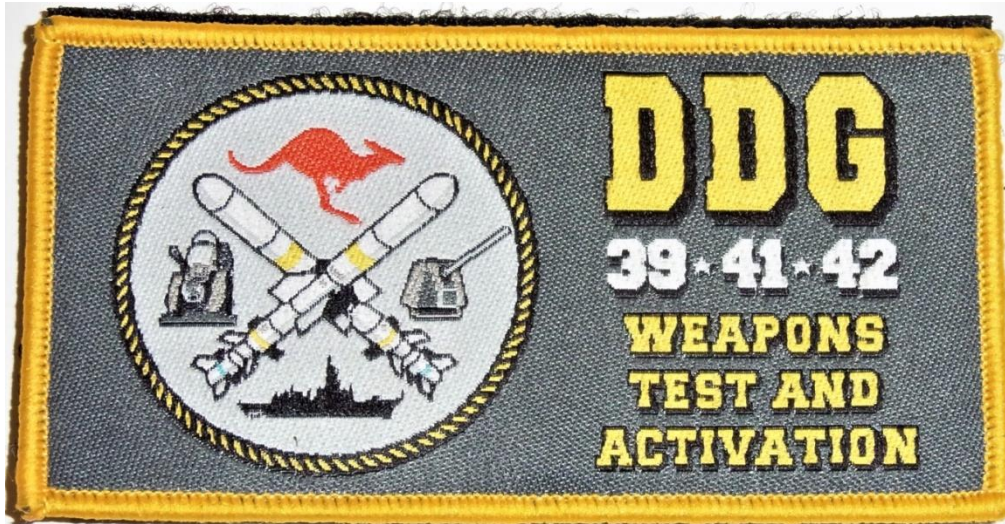


Medal acknowledging “Well Done” on completion of the full cycle docking of HMAS Collins SSG 73, the first of the six Collins Class submarines. Diameter 25 mm.

Medal acknowledging “Well Done” on completion of the full cycle docking of HMAS Dechaineux SSG 76, the fourth of the six Collins Class submarines. Height 60 mm.

HMAS Collins was named after Vice Admiral Sir John Collins KBE CB RAN, who as Captain of the light cruiser HMAS Sydney (II) led his crew to distinction in the Mediterranean during WW2. Later in the war as Commander of the Australian Squadron in the Philippines, he was severely injured when his flagship HMAS Australia (II) was attacked by a Japanese suicide aircraft. The submarine was launched in 1993 and commissioned in 1996.

HMAS Dechaineux was named after Captain Emile Dechaineux, the Commanding Officer of the heavy cruiser HMAS Australia (II) during the latter stages of WW2. In the action of 21 October 1944 at Leyte in the Philippines when the kamikaze dive-bomber hit HMAS Australia injuring John Collins, Dechaineux was fatally wounded. The submarine was launched in 1998 and commissioned in 2001.



Cloth badge of the Hobart Class air warfare destroyers, HMAS Brisbane, Hobart and Sydney, built at the Adelaide HQ of the Australian Submarine Corporation at Osborne, Adelaide. 53 x 100 mm.

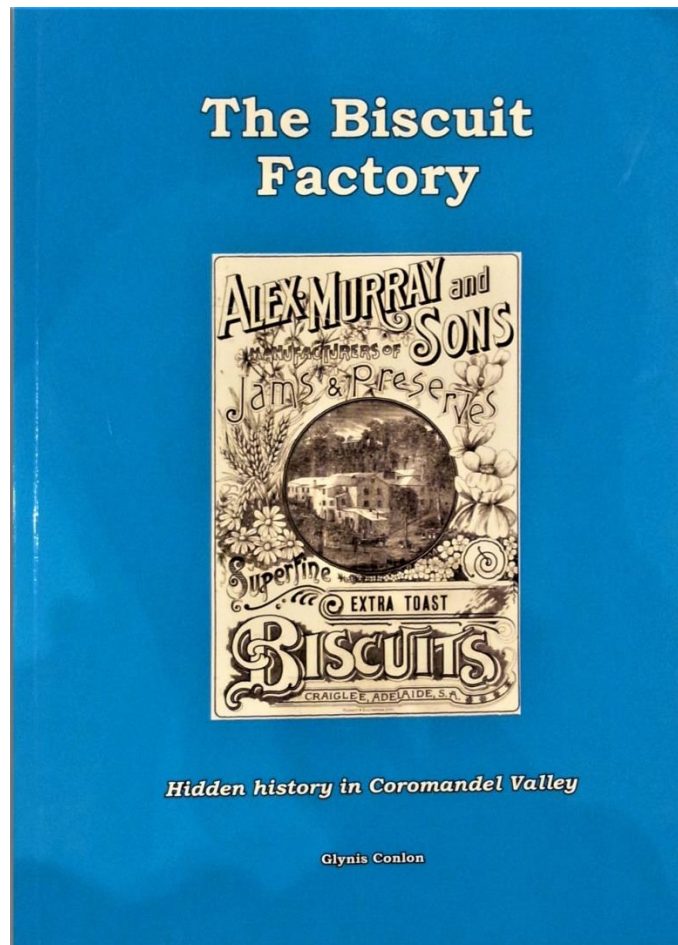


Cloth cap of HMAS Sydney (V), the last of the air warfare destroyers, DDG 42. Commissioned May 2020.



Submariner's badge, presented to a submariner on completion of training and acceptance as a submariner. Diameter 73 mm.

Following celebrations after a Dawn Service one Anzac Day a naval engineer was in no condition to drive home. Given a lift home, he showed his appreciation to his comrade by giving him this badge (he was able to apply for a replacement).



The Biscuit Factory, a local history by Glynis Conlon, Freestyle Publications, Yankalilla 2021. ISBN 978-0-6483159-5-7.

This publication celebrates the pioneering South Australian family of Alexander Murray (1803-1880) and his wife Jean (1802-1889), who had arrived in SA with their two children in 1840. After farming for four years at Morphett Vale they bought land at Coromandel Valley, with a view to planting it with trees to provide fruit for a planned jam and biscuit factory. Murray's family in Glasgow had a baking business, and a later newspaper report credited him with being the "inventor of the first machine used in Great Britain for cutting biscuits"

Keen to promote the colony, he organized an exhibition of his own sketches and some paintings by other artists, to be shown in Glasgow and London in 1845. Once his own two-storey stone house called *Craiglee* was built in Coromandel Valley, he commissioned the local stonemason John Weymouth to start work on the nearby factory. In 1857 he was advertising four varieties of the "Coromandel Machine Biscuit, and within three years was making 12 varieties and supplying at least 10 grocers. The expansion of trade continued, and by 1877 he was exporting overseas to other British colonies.

Murray's products were shown at the Great Exhibition, London, in 1861, as well as being exhibited locally, while in 1876 he travelled to the Philadelphia Exhibition where he bought new machinery. On the civic scene Murray was an MP, a JP, a member of the Baptist Association, and supported the local school and Institute. Murray's son Alexander (1835-1898) took over the business when his father died in 1880, and for a while it continued to flourish. By 1893 more than 80 varieties of biscuits were being produced by a workforce of more than 60. Alexander junior continued the family involvement in the community, but his accidental death in 1898 combined with changes in trade and transport saw the business close in 1903.



***The Reception, Gwendoline L'Avence Barringer, nee Adamson (1883-1960).
Signed but undated. Watercolour. 32.0 x 23.0cm.***

On the back of this calligraphic watercolour, a label titles the work as “The Reception,” with the artist’s name, her studio location of Stirling and the price, 10 guineas, #9.

In 1927/28, Gwen and Herbert Barringer sailed on a cargo ship for eight weeks to Europe

for an extended sketching tour. She was the only woman aboard. Whilst in Hamburg, Gwen visited the new opera house where a Chinese opera was performed and this may well have been the source of inspiration for her oriental themed subjects, given that no other explanation has been forthcoming. Back in Australia she gave several lectures on her overseas travels, and her travel paintings were exhibited in a highly successful solo exhibition at the Society of Arts. Not long afterwards, she made her first and unsuccessful attempt to divorce her husband on grounds of desertion.

In November 1935, and as a single woman, Gwen Barringer moved from her flat in North Terrace, Adelaide to the Adelaide Hills town of Stirling. She worked with an architect to design a large studio as the central focus with domestic living rooms attached. Gum trees crowded in on the studio windows and this was important to Gwen because the Australian landscape was a constant source of inspiration and the gum was one of her main motifs. Although in the 1920s she painted a number of industrial subjects, her oeuvre mainly focused on other characteristic matter such as the almond and other spring blossom so often seen in the landscape of the Adelaide Hills. As well as gum and blossom subjects, she became known for her floral still life watercolours which frequently included small oriental figurines at the base of the vase. One contemporary art critic described these as the artist's ability to blur reality with idealism and it is these oriental figurines that ally with her fourth main subject matter: travel.

Gwen was an avid traveller. Prior to her unhappy marriage to Herbert Barringer, she and her brother rode their bicycles from Adelaide to Port Elliot for Christmas. In South Australia, she was well known for her driving exploits around the steep Adelaide Hills. Once, she narrowly escaped serious injury when she swerved to avoid a head on collision with a truck on the steep road down from Montacute. Her car somersaulted and she was pinned underneath until the blaring horn brought help that found her miraculously unhurt, laughing and in good spirits. Gwen frequently drove her baby car interstate, and by 1934, she had driven herself to Sydney and back three times. In 1950, she pre-purchased a car in England and drove herself over 6000 miles around Britain and Norway. On this trip, she often had to resort to sketching and painting from inside the car because of the inclement weather. She continued to travel throughout her life until she died in 1960.



Re: maker of cast echidnas shown in the SAASG 80th meeting report, where images of two cast echidnas were shown along with the unidentified maker's mark, SB.

Christine Erratt has identified the maker as Suzanne Brett and, having corresponded with her, the following information sheds more light on the subject.

Suzanne's entry on page 62 in Christine's book *Marks on Australian Silver 1950-2005*:

BRETT, Suzanne May

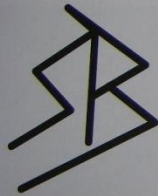
b1953 Melbourne, Vic, Australia

Active years: 1970-current (as at 2005)



B surrounded
by symbol of a
bower
incuse

Early 1970s four years training as a gold and silversmith under Alan Shaw, Melbourne, Vic; employed as a freelance model maker specialising in wax sculpting and lost wax casting, Melbourne; 1984-current (2005) own business, Bowerbird Silver Art, Melbourne. Specialises in wax sculpting and lost wax casting.



SB
incised into
wax master
pattern
pre-casting

Exhibitions: National and international.
Represented in public collections including the Pusan Museum of Art, Pusan, Korea.

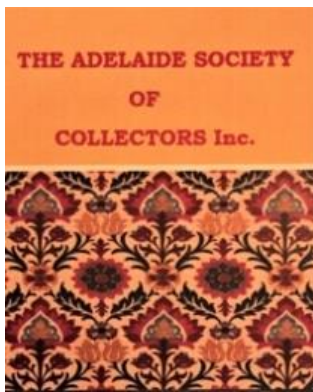
Suzanne lives in southern Victoria and is the Director of Australian Contemporary, an online gallery representing works by many Australian glass artists. She is the owner of Bowerbird Silver Art and former manager and curator of Kirra Galleries in Federation Square, Melbourne.

The sculptures were made in the 1980s for a company called Gemstones Australia. Companies would sometimes buy the silver models or the original pewter ones and use them as their own. It was impossible to stop them from re-casting them. Suzanne went to a Fair in Melbourne and found an Indian company selling a group of cast Australian animals which had been originally made by her. They denied it of course but they had her SB mark on them. The master patterns need to be remade or touched up every few years as they lose their detail as has happened with these particular echidnas. The spines are not pointy anymore and the feet are chunky. Suzanne states that one is gold plated and the other is probably pewter.

Seen in and around Adelaide



To the manor born.



The Adelaide Society of Collectors Inc.

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AGM (very brief) followed by members brief talks on their favourite item.

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241 Melbourne Street, North Adelaide

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[Exhibition: Fantastical Worlds, 13 August -24 December 2022](#)

September

Thursday 22: 6PM: *Fantastical Worlds* curator Eva Czernis-Ryl from Powerhouse joins us to speak on the development of the exhibition

October

Saturday 8: 1PM – 4PM *Fantastical Worlds* contemporary artists and designers talk about their practice: Kate Rohde, Jordan Gogos and collaborator Denis Vukcevic, and Stephen Bowers

Thursday 20: 6PM: Jewellery in *Fantastical Worlds* is explored with renowned expert Anne Schofield in conversation with curator Eva Czernis-Ryl

Friday 21: 10.30AM: Join us for morning tea and a special tour of *Fantastical Worlds* with curator Eva Czernis-Ryl from Powerhouse

For further information visit: <https://www.rochefoundation.com.au>



Art Gallery of South Australia

North Terrace, Adelaide

AGSA Kaurna yartangka yuwanthi. AGSA stands on Kaurna land

Image detail: Tempe Manning Self-portrait 1939 (detail), oil on canvas, 76 x 60.5 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, acquired with the support of the Art Gallery Society of New South Wales 2021 © Estate of Tempe Manning

Image detail: still Robert Wilson, born Waco, Texas 1941, Lady Gaga: Mademoiselle Caroline Riviere, 2013, HD Video, music by Michael Galasso; Courtesy RW Work Ltd.

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Burnside Treasures Cabinet. Burnside Library.

Objects displayed include: The Erindale Tram Line Pick to commemorate the start of construction of the line in 1943, War Savings Street sign, and Coopers Brewery bitter beer.