

SA Australiana Study Group 72nd Meeting, 2 December 2021

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

Attendance: 13



"Caleb and Phoebe Fidler", daguerreotype, possibly by Robert Hall in February 1853, Adelaide. 9 x 8 cm.

Caleb Fidler (from a farming family) and Phoebe Webb (daughter of a storekeeper), married in the English market town of Newbury, Berkshire, in July 1851. Eight days later they were on board the *Candahar* at Plymouth and sailing as unassisted passengers for Adelaide. On arriving in December the exodus to the Victorian gold-fields was in full flight, and in January Caleb followed. He returned five months later (June 1852).

At the time of this photograph (possibly February 1853) the Fidler's were landowners and farmers at Islington (near the junction of Churchill and Regency Roads) and Phoebe was six months pregnant with their first child. In 1854 they were farmers and storekeepers at

Willunga, and the following year opened a store at Aldinga with Phoebe's newly emigrated brother, Samuel Webb.

At the first sale of Crown Land at Mt Gambier in 1858, the Fidler's bought 700 acres, and months later, the two families moved. They established the 'Fidler & Webb' store which was to last for a hundred years and sixty years and was known as the largest department store in country South Australia. Caleb was also recognised as an experimental farmer, importing English pasture grasses, sugar beet, and excavating bat guano for fertiliser from the Naracoorte Caves (now a World Heritage site). He was also a witness, from the shore, of the 1859 *Admella* shipwreck.

Daguerreotypes were first produced in Adelaide in 1846. Over the next eight years a succession of intermittent studios came and went. Robert Hall established his long-lasting studio in mid-1854 after two earlier short-lived attempts. This daguerreotype would seem to best fit the style, and time, of Robert Hall and his temporary studio of February 1853. Phoebe would be six months pregnant. Shown crocheting, perhaps this was a clue to the coming event. Caleb holds a stamped and addressed letter, likely about to be sent to family back 'home'. The daguerreotype, sourced from England, was perhaps part of that distant communication.

An insight into the voyage taken by Caleb and Phoebe Fidler in 1851 can be found in the book *Sophy Under Sail*, the diary of Sophy Taylor as edited by Irene Taylor, and published in Sydney by Hodder and Stoughton in 1969.

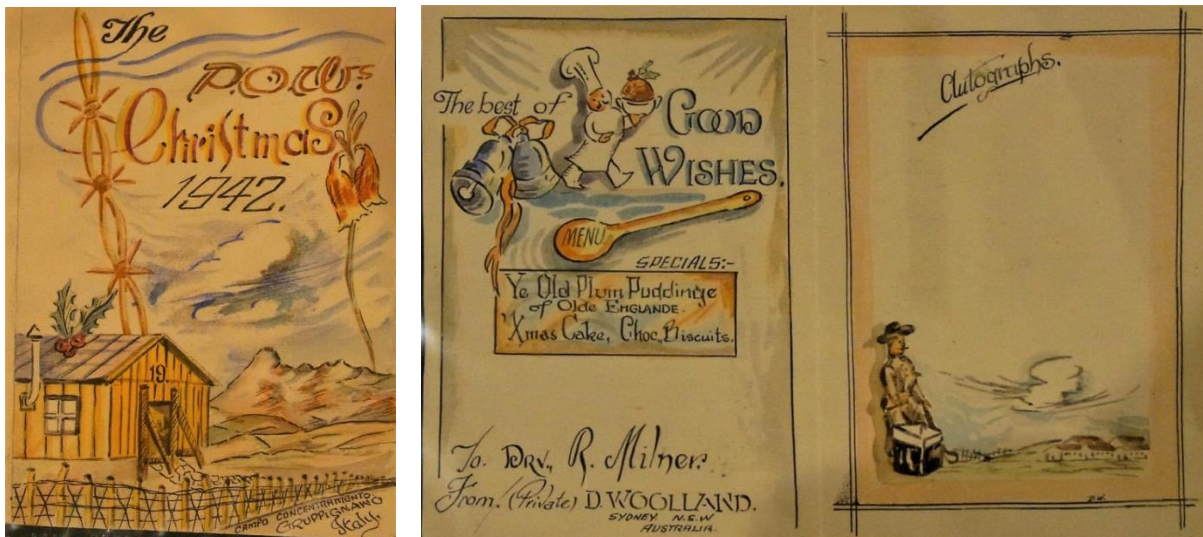


Transfer printed earthenware plate for Fidler and Webb of Mount Gambier, by Powell & Bishop of Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, 1876-1878. Diameter 26.7 cm.

The plate was retailed by the Mount Gambier firm of Fidler and Webb, which had been founded by brothers-in-law Caleb Fidler (1823–1874) and Samuel Webb (1834-1911) in 1858. Both from Berkshire, they had previously been in business at Aldinga Plains near Sellicks Hill, south of Adelaide, but saw in the opening up of pastoral land in the South East, new opportunities at Mount Gambier. Initially relying on deliveries of goods coming by ship into Rivoli Bay, and then by dray to Mt Gambier, the partners supplied the rapidly growing district. Both were staunch Methodists and heavily involved in the community. Following Fidler's death in 1874 the firm continued until his widow's retirement in 1881, when Samuel Webb became the sole proprietor. At the end on the century it was regarded as a "universal provider", supplying everything from millinery to horse shoes, groceries to sheep dip, reapers to gelignite.

The plate is decorated in the *Asiatic Pheasant* pattern, probably the most popular pattern for such wares in England throughout Queen Victoria's reign. Dating the plate so closely relies on its markings, an impressed caduceus with "P&B" above, only used between 1876 and 1878, although the business existed in various iterations between 1851 and 1891. With their substantial orders for crockery, Fidler and Webb were able to have it branded with their name by the maker.

The business of Fidler and Webb traded into the 21st century, clocking up 150 years, before changing shopping habits and the inroads of major chains like Bunnings and Target put an end to it, with the Commercial Street East site sold in 2013. A new development there is now known as the Fidler and Webb retail centre, and today houses Aldi and Coles stores and some smaller retailers.



"The POWs Christmas 1942", coloured pencils and ink on card, Donald "Bert" Woolland (1912-1974), Campo 57, Gruppignano, Italy. 14 x 10 cm.

A prisoner of war Christmas card illustrated on three sides with drawings and inscriptions. The cover features Hut 19, Campo 57, set in front of the mountains of northern Italy. The scene is decorated with sprigs of mistletoe, barbed wire and the "Christmas bells" wildflower of New South Wales. Inside is an inscription "To Drv. R. Milner from (Private) D. Woolland".

David "Bert" Woolland was a gardener in Manly, NSW, who in mid-1940 enlisted in the 2/13 infantry battalion. In April 1941 at Er Regima, Libya, they became the first Australian

army unit to engage German forces - fighting a rear-guard battle against Afrika Korps infantry and tanks, as Commonwealth forces retreated to Tobruk. Woolland was listed as missing, presumed dead, but three months later reported as a POW and shipped to Italy. After the war he resumed as a gardener in Manly and remained unmarried. Similar illustrations by Woolland are in the Australian War Memorial collection.

Reginald Milner (1908 - ?) was a married senior ambulance officer living in Prospect, South Australia. He joined the 2/8 Field Ambulance at Wayville, and was sent to North Africa as a driver. Listed as missing in the first month of the siege of Tobruk (May 1941) he was confirmed as a POW two months later and sent to Campo 57. Mrs Milner, in 1942, was mentioned in the 'News' as an example of a busy and energetic war-worker who continued her job as an office-worker and a volunteer at the Cheer-up Hut despite her husband's situation. In July 1943 Reginald was repatriated home as part of a prisoner exchange with Italy.



Frosted silver milk jug, by August Brunkhorst, Adelaide c1900. Height 10.0 cm.

Perhaps once part of a small tea set, the jug is of note for its preserved surface finish, which could be described as frosted, or pearl. It does not readily show marks from handling, and is

attractive, but cleaning and polishing tends to remove it over time, so it is rarely seen. The engraved monogram of the letters “ED” may indicate ownership in the Dutton family, as they were known patrons of Brunkhorst.

August Ludwig Brunkhorst (c1849-1919) was a watchmaker and jeweller from Nienburg in Lower Saxony, and had arrived in Adelaide on the *Earl Dalhousie* from London in 1875. By 1877 he was a partner in the jewellery firm of Kindermann and Brunkhorst, but this closed around 1882, after which he was associated with the major silversmith Henry Steiner. On Steiner’s retirement and return to Germany in 1884, Brunkhorst bought Steiner’s stock and goodwill, along with a 20 year lease, later renewed. Silverwork made during Brunkhorst’s period of trading tended to be plain, stylish, well made and well proportioned. As with rivals such as Wendt, his business suffered from the difficult conditions of the late 19th century, competition from international firms, and a changing retail market. Brunkhorst died in 1919 at the age of 71.



Brooch featuring the exceptionally rare Australian marsupial squirrel *Sciurus Australis* in 18 carat gold. Dated speculatively to the late 19thC. Maker unknown. Width 40 mm.

The editors wish to point out that for this particular object, we are relying entirely on the veracity of our (up until now, impeccably credentialed) informants.

Depicting the very endangered species *Sciurus Australis* in carefully crafted white and rose gold, the brooch shows a creature few, if any, have ever seen. The plume-like tail in white gold achieves that colour through alloying with Broken Hill silver, the rose gold itself is probably from the deposit known to have been mined on the Fitzgerald farm at Moppa in S.A., alloyed with copper from Kapunda, found nearby, and known as Australia’s first copper mine.

The rose cut .01 carat diamond eye is probably a late replacement of the original from the Echunga diamond field, and recently sourced from the W.A. Argyll mine. In its paws this rare marsupial is holding an 8 mm carved round coral flower, most likely purloined from the

Great Barrier Reef, and representing a macadamia nut, the main food source of this most interesting creature. With its exceptional strength the squirrel is able to remove the outer and inner casings around the nut, storing it away to dry for its future use.

With the brooch marked only with an incised “750” for the gold standard of 18 carat, and a tiny oval mark of the numeral “320”, the owners have not been able to satisfactorily identify the maker. However showing considerable resourcefulness they consulted *The Book of Old Silver*, by Seymour Wyler, where on page 363 an entry led them to suggest perhaps an unlikely origin – Augsburg in Germany, 1829. That led to further speculation – had this indeed been brought to S.A. by an early German immigrant – and had their earlier suggestions been astray?



A sprig of Macadamia integrifolia X tetraphylla hybrid.

This sprig was brought along to our meeting, and came from a tree raised by the owners of the brooch shown above. They are growing it to provide a familiar food source for an Australian marsupial squirrel (*Sciurus Australis*), should they ever be able to find one...



**Commemorating the Centenary of South Australia's first Proclamation.
28 December 1836-1936**

The crochet cover depicts a map of mainland Australia in the centre, and around is CENTENARY 1936. Under the crochet work is a padded pink velveteen cushion. 22 cm.

Provenance: This example was acquired in the Barossa Valley SA in 2021.

The designer/maker is unknown. A negative Trove Newspaper search suggests it was not commercially designed. It is likely that the maker submitted it to one of the many show exhibitions throughout the state. Newspapers were given information supplied to them by the show secretaries. Entries like the cushion would have come under the section titled 'Fancy and Needlework'. During 1936 they had a centenary section like; 'Knitted or Crochet Articles in wool'. It was common that an entry fee of one shilling was charged, and prizes of five and two shillings in addition to a trophy.

The Proclamation

By His Excellency John Hindmarsh, Knight of the Royal Hanoverian Guelphic Order, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Province of South Australia.

In announcing to the Colonists of His Majesty's Province of South Australia, the establishment of the Government, I hereby call upon them to conduct themselves on all occasions with order and quietness, duly to respect the laws, and by a course of industry and sobriety, by the practice of sound morality and a strict observance of the Ordinances of Religion, to prove themselves worthy to be the Founders of a great and free Colony.

It is also, at this time especially, my duty to apprise the Colonists of my resolution, to take every lawful means for extending the same protection to the Native Population as to the rest of His Majesty's Subjects and of my firm determination to punish with exemplary severity, all acts of violence or injustice which may in any manner be practiced or attempted against the Natives who are to be considered as much under the Safeguard of the law as the Colonists themselves, and equally entitled to the privileges of British Subjects. I trust therefore, with confidence to the exercise of moderation and forbearance by all Classes, in their intercourse with the Native Inhabitants, and that they will omit no opportunity of assisting me to fulfil His Majesty's most gracious and benevolent intentions toward them, by promoting their advancement in civilization, and ultimately, under the blessing of Divine Providence, their conversion to the Christian Faith.

By His Excellency's Command,
Robert Gouger,
Colonial Secretary.
Glenelg, 28th December 1836.
God Save the King.



Watercolour by H.P. Gill, untitled, shore view. [18]91. 23.5 x 16.5 cm. visible

The owner found the site, (see the second image) –130 years after the watercolour was painted.

This is the second watercolour by this artist shown to this group, refer Report 71, p9.

This landscape reflects an accurate rendering of light, a rare quality in Adelaide before 1900. The owner of this painting located the scene of this shoreline; at Hallett Cove, about two kilometres south of a foreshore restaurant, being some 25K south of the Adelaide CBD. The photo and the watercolour show the subsidence over a 130 year period. An attendee noted that boulder perched on the hill in the photograph was further downhill than the blob in the watercolour. That reminded him of the story of a historian locating the exact spot that Tom Roberts had painted a coastal landscape at the end of Mentone beach. By lining up certain points he was unquestionably 6 metres beyond the edge of the cliff. So (also 130 years later) the cliff there, in a very protected marine environment, had eroded at least that far. So, perhaps, with a certainly more aggressive environment, and the much softer glacial till sediments, the cliff at Hallett Cove has eroded back to the blob / boulder which is also now drifting downhill. There are strong similarities of the colour of the slate, (chocolate-purple) on the beach in both the watercolour and photograph. The owner/photographer was unable to take a photo from where Gill actually stood while painting the scene due to the dangerous terrain.

The artist, Harry Pelling Gill (1855-1916) took up the position of Director of the School of Design in Adelaide, in September 1882. Apart from his heavy workload with students and painting, he found time to acquire coins for the South Australian Museum and in 1902 he joined a group headed by Rev. Percy Billings that successfully argued that their numismatic collection be transferred to the Art Gallery Department.



Pencil drawing, *The First Holden, bursting onto the Australian scene.* 65 x 91 cm.

The black and white framed picture is skilfully rendered, perhaps by a graphic artist, and may have hung in one of the offices of the many Holden dealerships throughout Australia. The island state does not appear on the map but the Holden car was sold there. Holden was a subsidiary of General Motors (GM) of Detroit USA and the Holden firm had immediately prior to this takeover been an assembler of GM cars in Adelaide. Holden's history dates back to 1856 when James Alexander Holden established J.A. Holden & Co., a saddlery business. In 1885, German-born H.A. Frost joined the business as a junior partner and the company became known as Holden & Frost Ltd. In 1905 the business started a number of partnerships relating to automobiles and in 1908 it had a car repair shop. The company began to re-body older chassis using motor bodies produced by F T Hack & Co and around this time produced complete motorcycle sidecar bodies.

H.J. Holden founded a new company in late 1917, and registered Holden's Motor Body Builders Ltd (HMBB) which assembled body parts for Ford until that company built its own plant in Geelong. From 1924, HMBB became the exclusive supplier of car bodies for GM in Australia, with manufacturing taking place at the new Woodville plant.

The Holden motor car (as illustrated) was built in Australia from November 1948 to October 1953 and marketed simply as the Holden, without a model name. It was assembled at Pagewood NSW, Fortitude Valley Queensland, Birkenhead and Woodville SA, Mosman Park WA, and Fishermans Bend in Victoria. Holden's was a subsidiary of General Motors of Detroit USA and on 20 October 2017 the last existing vehicle plant, located in Elizabeth, SA was closed as the production of the Holden ended.



Aerated waters bottle branded for William Stocker of Moonta, c1900. Length 27 cm.

Round-bottomed bottles such as this were produced from about 1870 through into the early 20th century, and were used to hold aerated drinks, such as ginger beer and soda water. The round bottom ensured that they were stored lying flat, hence keeping the wired-in cork moist. And since they would not stand up, it encouraged rapid consumption. Vast numbers were exported from England to the USA and British colonies, and could be ordered, as this one was, to be moulded with the drink manufacturer's name.

William Stocker (1861-1933) was born in Cornwall, and arrived in Australia at the age of 15, staying for a few months before becoming a miner in New Caledonia. Returning to Australia a year and a half later he was a miner at Moonta, before buying the local aerated water and cordial business of Mr. Admore in about 1891. Apart from running this business until his death, he was heavily involved in the community as a councillor (and mayor), as president of two local swimming clubs, president of the Male Voice Choir, a member of several lodges, and member of the Moonta Bowling Club. In all he lived at Moonta for 55 years.

Stocker's business was in George Street Moonta, the main shopping strip of the community. Many undamaged bottles such as this owed their survival to the fact that they were useful for drenching livestock on farms, and so were looked after carefully by the farmers.



South Australian musician and songwriter Leigh Newton performing at Rosefield.
Image used by kind permission of the artist.

For our final meeting of the year we were treated to a recording by Leigh Newton of the song *Christmas where the gum trees grow*. The song itself has lyrics by Lesley Sabogal, with the score based on a traditional tune, arranged by Val Donlon.

Leigh writes and performs largely for a Christian context, influenced by his upbringing in Broken Hill with its strong union background, and focusing on themes of compassion, justice, and a fair go for all. After many years as a primary school teacher he has returned to his musical career. Formerly in Australian bush band Three Corner Jack, he has nine albums of his own to his credit including *Christmas in the Scrub* and its sequel *Christmas in the Shed*, one reflecting a country experience, the other a more urban one. He is also associated with the Bridgewater Arts Centre, a performance venue sponsored by the Uniting Church in the Adelaide Hills, and welcomes enquiries from possible performers there.



**James Ashton, untitled. [*Moonrise over a river bend*], signed in lower left *J. Ashton, n.d.*
Watercolour on paper. Sheet: 36 x 54.5 cm, frame: 66 x 85cm.**

James Ashton (1859-1935) was one of the most influential artists and art teachers of his generation in South Australia. Born in Isle of Man, England, he trained at the South Kensington School of Art, London. He emigrated with his wife Mary to Adelaide in 1884, establishing the Norwood School of Art in 1886, later moving to premises in Grenfell St., and to Victoria Buildings, Victoria Square.

His students comprise a who's who of South Australian art, counting Sir Hans Heysen, Sir Ivor Hele, his son Sir William Ashton, Edward Davies, Marie Tuck, and Helen and Millicent Hambidge among his many pupils. Serving as Art Master at Prince Alfred College for 39 years until his retirement in 1927, his punctuality earned him the nickname "Old One O'Clock" in the familial atmosphere of P.A.C. In that year he held an important exhibition at the Galleries of the S.A. Society of Arts, in The Institute Building, North Terrace.

The present work is a fine example of his facility to render the play of reflecting light on water, and for nocturnal marine subjects. The 1927 exhibition catalogue records a subject, *The Rising Moon* (No.42), a work likely to be an affiliate of this untitled watercolour. Further details are recorded in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.7, 1979, by Allan Sierp, and the catalogue *Paintings by James Ashton*, a record of a loan exhibition curated by Constantine Raptis for the Flinders University Art Museum, 6-20 January, 1981.



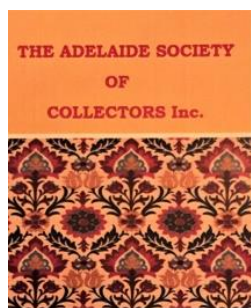
Moya Dyring, *Spring Flowers*, 1930s, oil on canvas. 39.5 x 22.5 cm.

Moya Dyring (1909-1967) was born at Coburg, and following her secondary schooling and a visit to Paris in 1928, studied at the National Gallery Art School in Melbourne. There she met a fellow student with similar artistic interests, Sam Atyeo, who she would later marry. Her interest in modernism was furthered by studies with George Bell and Rah Fizelle, and

fostered by her friendship with John and Sunday Reed and their circle at Heide at Bulleen. The property is now the Heide Museum of Modern Art.

After visiting America Dyring was in Paris in 1938, her studies there helped by Sam Atyeo's contacts in the art world. Leaving Paris in 1939 the two of them settled on a farm in the French Riviera at Vence, however with the onset of WW2 and Atyeo away on a commission, Dyring evacuated to Australia. The couple married in the West Indies, but were working apart, and once the war was over Moya returned to Paris and her career as an artist while Atyeo worked elsewhere, their marriage ending in 1950.

Well accepted locally in France, and with her apartment on the Ile St Louis, *Chez Moya*, established as a centre of art and hospitality for visiting Australians, Moya flourished as an artist. She exhibited and travelled in Australia through the 1950s and into the early 1960s, had a solo exhibition in London, and was part of a network of expatriate Australian artists. Her life was ended by cancer in 1967, after which a group of friends established a studio apartment in her memory at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, for which the Art Gallery of NSW grants two month tenancies to artists each year.



Adelaide Society of Collectors

Next meeting: Thursday 24 February 2022: Speaker Richard Phillips, topic “Silver of the China Trade”.

For further details email: theadelaidesocietyofcollectors@bigpond.com

South Australian Museum, North Terrace Adelaide

***Balgo Beginnings* Free Exhibition opens 15 October 2021 closes 6 February 2022.**

10am – 5pm daily & closed 25 Dec.

Balgo is one of the most famous schools of desert painting. Curiously its founding works went missing in the early 1980s and have never been seen publicly ... until now. The paintings were rediscovered in 2019 after four decades in a shipping container, and the South Australian Museum has since worked with the artists and custodians (Warlayirti Artists) to bring the works together at the Museum. They will be displayed during Tarnanthi for the first time, alongside works from the next generation of Balgo artists, which have been created on Country in response to these early works.

Art Gallery of South Australia, North Terrace Adelaide

Tarnanthi Free Exhibition: 15 October 2021 to 30 January 2022

10am – 5pm daily & closed 25 Dec.

The Gallery has its Australiana exhibition in the Elder Wing and International Art in the Melrose Wing. There are also a number of other areas worth visiting including Asian and Arts & Craft textiles exhibitions.



The David Roche Foundation House Museum
241 Melbourne Street, North Adelaide
<https://www.rochefoundation.com.au>

TDRF open dates over the Christmas/New Year period:

Closed Sunday 19 December 2021 - 3 January 2022 inclusive

Tours of Fermoy House (at the same address) will re-commence Wednesday 5 January 2022

TDRF will also be closed Saturday 8, 15 & 22 January 2022

To book visit: <https://www.rochefoundation.com.au/book-now>

Next Exhibition:

Silhouettes: Fashion in the Shadow of HIV/AIDS opening Saturday 29 January 2022

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

Thank you to all those who visited us during 2021, and we look forward to welcoming you again in 2022!