

Third Australiana Virtual Show and Tell Report

June 2020

All reports are on line: <https://www.australiana.org.au/news>

Helping to keep Australiana active during the pandemic

The VS&T is intended to entertain members and offer an opportunity to share, inform, discuss and ask questions about items they hold in their private collections.

Questions asked by collectors have been answered by our editorial team to the best of our knowledge and, when possible, any specialists that we know have been consulted, but it should be borne in mind that there are limitations to identification when only seeing photographs.

Any members who believe that they have better or additional information or alternative hypotheses than those recorded in the reports are invited to provide them by email to [australiana.queensland@gmail.com](mailto:australiana queensland@gmail.com). Please reference the Report number, item number and page number (e.g. VS&T3, page 1, Item number 1) and the information will be passed on to the owner. When opportune we will circulate some items of feedback that add to the reports.



1. Brass 'maquette' in the shape of a kangaroo.

Circa first quarter of C20th? Size: 13.5 x 28 x 2.5 cm.

The owner thinks that a good title for this one would be "Ready to go" as it shows a kangaroo (facing left) about to hop. The underside has three threaded holes showing that this kangaroo was once attached to something larger. To the owner, this one looks quite *Art Deco* in design. The lack of any detailing of the fur, plus the *gestalt* of the item seem to indicate an early C20th design. The owner would like to know the origin and original use of the maquette.



**2. Brass 'maquette' in the shape of a standing or 'boxing' kangaroo facing right.
Marked verso Ds or Dc. Circa last quarter of C19th? Size: 23 x 18 x 2.5 cm.**

The owner's invented title is "Alert for trouble". The kangaroo stands on a small area of grassy or rocky ground, with its front paws crossed. The fur is well-detailed, its ears are erect, as though waiting, alert. The reverse shows some indications of signature initials, Ds or perhaps Dc. The owner would love to know who made this, and when. The underside (verso) also shows a small area of what looks like lead solder.

The owner seeks advice and information from the knowledgeable members of the Society.



3. Silver snuff box, by Francis Clark, Birmingham, 1839.

Size: 9.2 x 6.3 x 2.9 cm.

Presented in Newcastle NSW in 1842 to Henry Rees on his leaving the district. Rees had been the architect and engineer, designer and auditor for the then recently completed Mechanics' Institute at Newcastle. With his family he moved to Sydney, where in a legal dispute in 1843 he was referred to as *...the architect...* and later as *...an officer of the Engineer Department.* A Mr & Mrs Rees and six children were recorded as having departed Sydney aboard the ship *Autumnus*, with Captain White, bound for London, in April 1845. It is not known whether this was the snuff box recipient or another person of the same name.

Francis Clark (active 1824-1850) was a successful Birmingham silversmith and merchant, probably completing his apprenticeship with silversmiths William Lea & Co., and becoming a partner (as Lea & Clark) in 1824. In 1826 he registered his own mark at the Assay Office, and went on to produce a range of small silverwork, primarily boxes, but closed the business and moved to Adelaide in 1850.



4. The Annie Montgomerie Martin Medal awarded to Donald D Harris for French senior exam 1922.

Maker: Stokes & Sons, Medallists, Melbourne

Cased: makers name printed on underside of lid, bronze 3.8 cm, diam.

Description; Obverse: Female head facing three-quarters to left, immediately below in minute letters STOKES and around THE ANNIE MONTGOMERIE MARTIN MEDAL * Reverse: AWARDED TO and engraved in four lines DONALD D HARRIS FOR FRENCH SENIOR EXAM 1922 all within a wreath. Below in minute letters STOKES & SONS – MELB.

The medal maker: In 1851 the business was established in Melbourne, trading under the name of its founder, Thomas Stokes, and from 1873 to 1893 as Stokes and Martin, 1893 to 1896 as Stokes & Son, 1896-1910 Stokes & Sons. In 1911 it became a propriety company (Pty Ltd) and in 1962 a public company, renamed as Stokes (Australasia) Pty Ltd. The firm ceased business a few years ago.

1922 was the inaugural year for this medal to be awarded, and the recipient was Donald Dunstan Harris (c1906-2002), a student of Prince Alfred College, who later obtained an Arts Degree at Adelaide University. From 1929 to 1971 he taught at Kings College, Kensington Park (SA), now Pembroke School, and wrote many books on Australian Geography.

Anna Montgomerie (Annie) Martin (1841-1918), teacher, was born in Dale End, Birmingham, England, into a Unitarian family. In 1850 the family migrated to Adelaide. In 1864 she established a small school and taught students, but closed her school in 1874 before teaching elsewhere. She spoke and taught French, German and Italian and also taught Latin and Greek. After travel overseas Martin re-established her school in 1884 but retired to Europe in 1902 and died in Rome in 1918. In 1922 the Old Scholars of Miss Martin's School established a State memorial to her as the first headmistress of the school; two annual prize medals, one for senior history and one for senior French (secondary school). They were to be awarded to the candidates, whether boy or girl, who gained the first place in each subject. The value of each prize being about £2/10/, and each to be accompanied by a bronze medal.



5 & 6 Two scrimshaw pastry-crimping tools.

Size (upper): 6 x 16 x 1.3, (lower) 3 x 17 x 2.5 cm.

Upper: Expertly made scrimshaw pastry-crimper made from two whale's teeth, the handle highly decorated with cross-hatch design, forked to hold the wheel with a zigzag-edge shaped slice of whale's tooth. C 1840s

Lower: Relatively primitive but quirky scrimshaw pastry-crimper made of whale bone with whale-tooth cross section wheel. A shaft carved from whale bone and shaped at one end like a whale's tail and that other end forked to hold the wheel with a zigzag-edge shaped slice of whale's tooth. C 1840s

Colin Thomas in *Scrimshaw, the Ancient art of the Mariner, 2011* records that the men aboard whaling ships had a lot of idle time between finding, killing and 'deconstructing' (editor's words) whales for their blubber and oil. Some of their 'payment' for being stuck on a ship out to sea for up to three years on a voyage was being given whale bone and whales' teeth to use to make items, either for family members, sweet-hearts or for later sale.

Perforce, in the C19th families had to bake their own food and pies – take-away did not exist to any great extent (if at all, historians please let us know). When baking a pie, it is necessary to seal the pastry top to the pastry case to seal in the flavour and also that the contents did not desiccate in the oven. Enter the pie-pastry crimper; a device to run around the edge of the pie to force together and bond the top and the case. (a) is an up-market, expertly made item, requiring the sacrifice of two whale's teeth and a lot of carving. (b) is a fairly primitive example, but with the quirky example of a whale's tail decoration,

Both items may have been carved 'green', that is when the bone and teeth were recently 'harvested' from the brutally slaughtered animal - because they were softer and easier to work at that time.

The 'owners' of these items are totally opposed to whaling of any sort, at any time, but can be their custodians because of their age and their history. They form part of our culture, but their bloody past should be remembered along with their record of the craftsmanship of their times.



7. Red Cedar low stool.

Size: 15 x 36 x 36 cm.

This beautifully carved low foot stool is what was often called a Gout Stool, as they were used by people who suffered from gout (a very painful disease caused by deposits of urate crystals in the joints). Gout often results in a limited range of motion in joints – hence the help of a stool. It was a more common disease before modern medical care and tended to be a disease of older people, so the stool may have been acquired later in life and made to order to match earlier furniture and styles. That can make such items difficult to date. The high-quality and style of this stool suggest an origin in the first half of the 19th century.

Comments and input from furniture historians would be welcomed by the owner.



8. Carved wooden kookaburra and koala on a tree.

C late 20th c. Maker unknown, height 22.5 cm.

Crudely carved kookaburra and koala located on twigs assembled to look like tree branches. At the ‘base of the tree’ there appears to be some lichen to resemble undergrowth. The animals were carved in pine wood and the ground made from pine bark. The base has a moulded edge and may be either a commercially made standard item (possibly a door push-plate) or a woodworker’s practice routing piece. This item was acquired from a shop on SA’s Fleurieu Peninsula. It may have been made as a children’s amusement but, more likely as an Australian tourist display item.



**9. Salt-glazed stoneware pottery money box, attributed to Nathan Welham, C 1860s.
H. 15.5 cm**

While there is no maker's mark on the above money box, the owner has researched similar examples and attributes it to Nathan Welham of Newcastle, NSW, c 1868. One example was illustrated by Marjorie Graham in her article in *First Fleet to Federation, Australian Antiques* (1977) p 97. Graham described it as 'thrown and salt-glazed'. Another example is held in the Australian National Gallery, Canberra (NGA 80.1553). Both of those are marked for Welham Pottery Newcastle on the front under the money slot but have different foot designs.

Instead of a factory mark, this example has 'alfred' in script incised lower down in the same area. The knob differs as well – this one having what could be interpreted as a stylised crown, and a different foot design, though within the range of variation expected for hand-thrown stoneware.

Nathan Welham's Pottery, Newcastle, located at the 'Junction' appears to have commenced about 1857, when he advertised for staff. The business made pipes, bricks, chimney pots, tiles, spirit kegs, jars, ginger beer bottles, churns, jam pots, coolers, money boxes and other domestic items. His goods must have been well made as when he submitted 'pottery ware assorted' to the Melbourne 1866 Intercolonial Exhibition of Australasia he won a medal. By mid-1868 the pottery appears to have closed.

There are two hypotheses for the inscription of the name Alfred. One is that, as it was a relatively common Christian name at the time, it may indicate the money box was a gift for someone with that name and made to order.

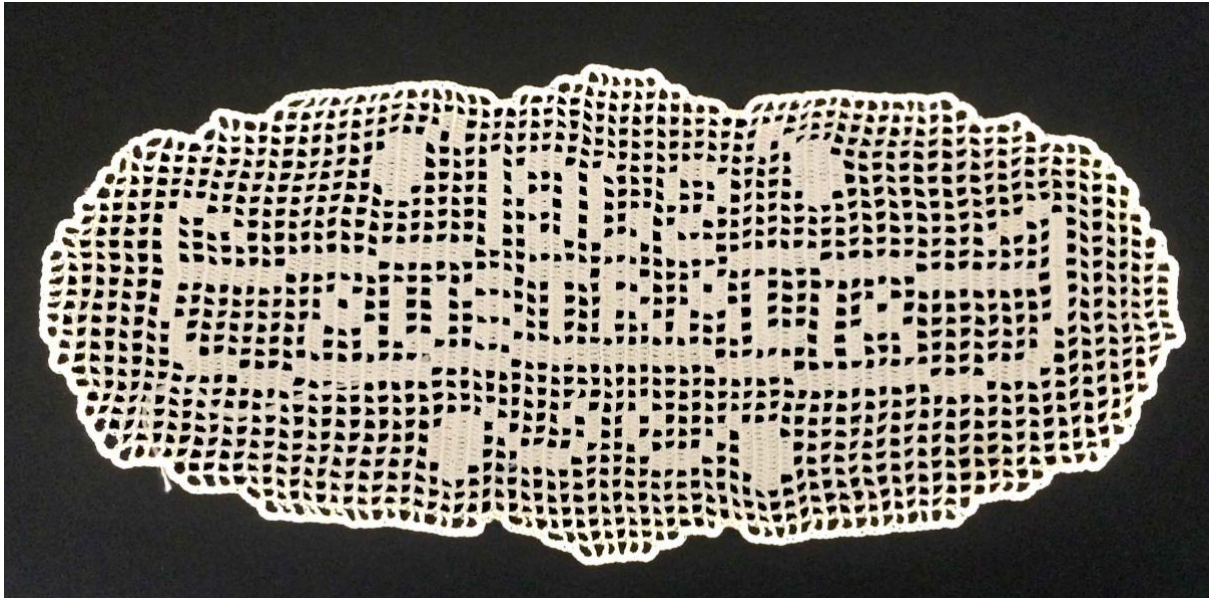
The current owners have an alternative hypothesis. They suggest the inscription concerns a Royal visit to Newcastle. The first member of the British Royal family to visit Australia was Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, second son of Queen Victoria. His world tour, 1867-8,

brought him by the *Galatea* to South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland and New South Wales, including Newcastle in March 1868.

While it is understood that the prince was reasonably popular in Australia, not all went well for him. His visit was 'marred by rioting, farce and tragedy' as well as an attempted assassination. In January 1868 while attending a picnic at Clontarf in Sydney he was shot in the back by an Irishman, Henry James O'Farrell. He was not seriously injured and recovered to continue his tour and then return to England. O'Farrell was hung for his crime.

Many souvenir items were made to celebrate the Prince's visit, including medals. Perhaps this money box is also a commemorative item.

The usual way to retrieve the contents from such a money box was to turn it upside down and shake it. However, it could be assumed that either in haste or by accident, the container could easily be broken during that process. That would be a likely reason for the rare survival of such items.



10. Crochet doily alluding to the 1962 British Commonwealth Games held in Perth.

Description: 1962 above AUSTRALIA within a ribbon, and a decorative device above and below the ribbon. Designer and maker unknown. Size: 25 x 11 cm.

A search for the crochet design could not be found in Trove Newspapers or in major public institutions websites. This example was acquired in South Australia.

The British Commonwealth Games ran from the 22 November to 1 December. Australia won the Games with 38 gold, 36 silver and 31 bronze medals; England came second with a total of 78 and New Zealand third with 32. Australia's swimming stars, Murray Rose, who was born in Birmingham England, won four gold medals as did Dawn Fraser of Balmain, Sydney.



11. Writing slope once the property of Architect John Verge.

Believed to be mahogany veneer on cedar, it closely resembles English writing slopes of the 1820s and 1830s. Size: 26.6 x 50.6 x 17.7 cm. (closed)

This writing slope was the property of John Verge, the architect who produced designs for some of the most fashionable houses built in Australia in the 1820s and 1830s. It was found in a house in the Macleay River Valley in 1970. At that time, the slope was owned by a descendant of Verge who resided on land that had once been part of the Verge Estate.

John Verge designed Elizabeth Bay House for Alexander Macleay, Colonial Secretary, and Camden Park House for John Macarthur. Verge retired to Austral Eden, an estate of 2560 acres on the Macleay River, in the late 1830s and was accompanied there by Mary, his second wife, who was the great-great-grandmother of the owner of the writing slope when it was located. Verge died at Austral Eden in 1861. The writing slope is the only item of furniture known to have been owned by Verge and the only surviving piece from his house. It was inherited by his son, German, who had taken it to his home on a hill not far from his father's house. It thus survived the flood that destroyed the family home in 1864.



12. Decorative marble item in the form of a book.

Possibly last quarter of C19th? Size: 13.5 x 17.5 x 2.5 cm.

This lovely carved, inlaid and inscribed marble item was described as a paperweight when it was sold in the Houstone sale. The purchaser is not convinced that it is, as it is heavy and a bit cumbersome to move easily, so thinks it is possibly just a decoration but would be glad to have any expert opinion on the item.

On one of the 'outside covers' is a heart-shaped, painted scene with water in the background and trees in the front, surrounded by what looks like ivy leaves on their stem. The other 'cover' has a large fern leaf in the middle and in each corner, there is an acorn with a leaf on each side of the acorn. The 'inside pages' of the book show an emu and a kangaroo with a joey in its pouch, with a tree behind each animal.

The owner is always happy to learn more so seeks input please.



**13. "Unidentified Australian bush hotel", ambrotype photograph.
Circa 1860. Size: 12 x 15 cm (case).**

The owner writes: "Recently unearthed in a provincial English auction and repatriated to Australia (but with no other provenance). The gum trees in the background, and the adjoining bark roofed structure on the extreme right, set the scene in Australia - almost certainly eastern Australia. The building's architecture seems more New South Wales or Queensland than the flat facades common of early timber hotels in Victoria. The vertical slat work of the extensive verandah may indicate a northern NSW, or southern Queensland location. The small and out of focus shingle (pictured) appears to show two words in the hotel's title (possibly separated by an "&"). An extensive search of Queensland hotels for this period has not identified a match (although the newly rebuilt "The Downs" at Toowoomba remains a possibility). A search of New England hotels is yet to occur. The decorative patterns on the brass mat and pressed leather exterior of the case would suggest a c 1858/59 date.

"Any suggestions as to region, name or location are most welcome."

Expert comment: "This is a great item - but - given the lack of focus on the sign - I do not think it is possible to suggest a 'region, name or location' for these premises. All I can see are two words - with perhaps an ampersand in the middle - and I certainly wouldn't hazard a guess as to where this building might have stood.

I think it might also be best to put a slightly more cautious date on this ambrotype as well - ca. 1860 - in this format outdoor images were rarely taken as early on as studio portrait images. Further, given that this image was taken in the country, roving itinerant photographers are known to have continued to use the ambrotype process and their stocks of imported cases for some time after city practitioners had ceased to do so."



14. Leatherwork handbag with embossed Kookaburra on a boomerang one side and Kangaroo and Australian crest verso.

**Full-grain leather, leather thong, cotton thread and plain copper split-pin style rivets.
Size: 28 x 30.5 x 6 cm. (height includes the plaited handles)**

An example of the leatherwork popular in the early to mid-C20th and still in remarkably good condition considering its age. The plaited handles are attached with copper rivets and finely stippled work surrounds the embossed emblems. The Rising Sun badge appears to read “Australian” on LHS and “Commonwealth” on RHS but the wording is very faint, no words can be read in the lowest section. Found in Queensland.

Expert advice: Australian soldiers wore Rising Sun badges on the up-turned side of their slouch hats and on the collars of their tunics. This is the third type, which has the words “Australian Commonwealth Military Forces”, c 1904 to 1949.

The highly stylised embossed forms look to be ‘art modern’ in style so this is possibly from the WWII period. The bag was empty when found, so no personal provenance remains.



15. Huon Pine Sewing Box.

1878. Maker Ernst Emil Kieszling. Inlaid Huon Pine and Rosewood with Huon and Australian Cedar fitted sectional compartment. Size: 29 x 12 x 13.5 cm.

Ernst Kieszling was born in Adelaide 1854 and was the son of a Prussian immigrant Johann Carl Gotthelf Kieszling. He made this beautiful veneered sewing box as a present for his wife Alice Emily Margaret on the occasion of their wedding. It is relatively rare to find an Australian-made, signed sewing box with known maker and complete with its original interior. Although described as a sewing box by its owner, the mirror in the lid of the box also suggests it could have served as a dressing box – used when applying make-up.



16. Commemorative moulded glass mug, Greener & Co., England C1880.

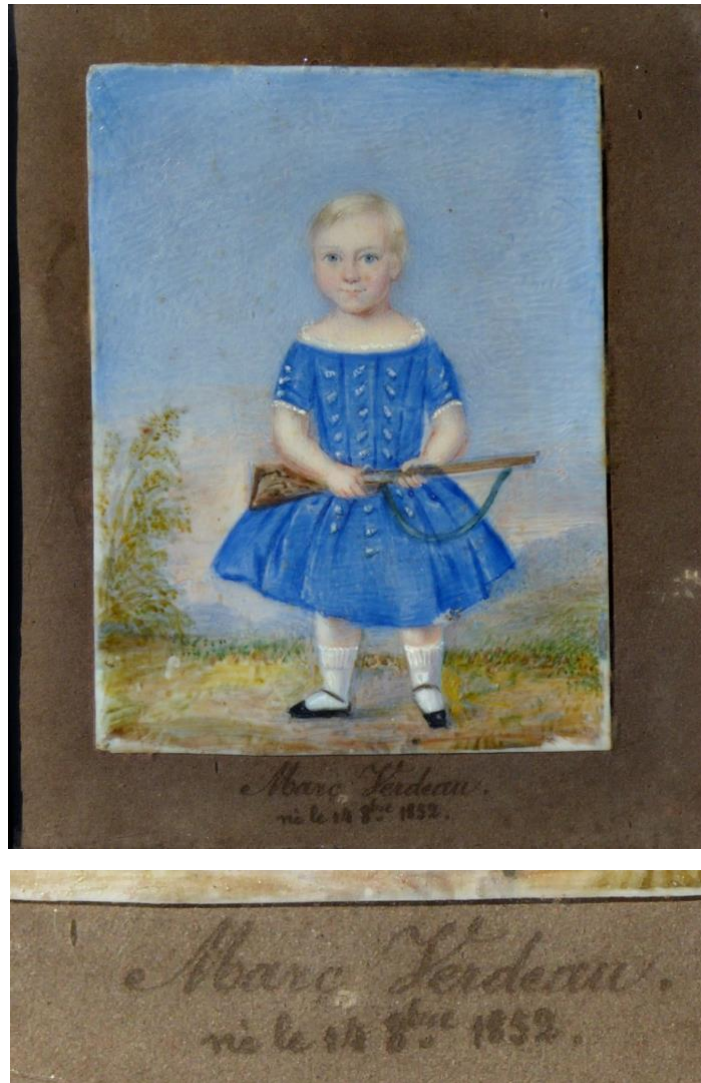
Size: 10.7 x 10.9 x 7.6 cm.

Made by Greener's Wear Flint Glass Works at Sunderland, England, the press-moulded mug marks the triumph of Canadian sculler Edward Hanlan over the Australian Edward Trickett (1851-1916). Trickett had been Australia's first sporting world title holder, having defeated the then world champion James Sadler on the River Thames in 1876.

A tall and powerful quarryman, Trickett came to public notice in 1868 when with C. Bullivant he won a sculling race at Sydney's Anniversary Day Regatta. Further successes led to him being taken to England in 1876 to challenge for the world title. Returning in triumph to Sydney to be met by a crowd numbered at 25,000, his local successes continued. With his winnings and popularity, he established himself as a publican at Trickett's Hotel, and then at the International Hotel in King Street Sydney. Trickett managed to defend his title twice, the second time, in 1879, despite having badly damaged a hand at work. Returning to England in 1880, he met defeat on the Thames on November 15, outclassed by Ned Hanlan.

Attempts to regain the title in 1881 and 1882 in Canada and England failed. Moving to Rockhampton in 1884 Trickett ran a hotel for several years before heavy investment losses drove him back to Sydney, where he took up minor government employment until retiring in 1916, when a mining accident resulted in his death at Uralla.

It is ironic that this item of Australiana is the result of a defeat. The mug is marked inside the base with a diamond-shaped design registration mark. The rustic handle is flanked by pairs of crossed oars, while the profile of Hanlan bears above it "EDWARD HANLAN CHAMPION OF THE WORLD", and below "NOV 15TH 1880 / BEAT TRICKETT OF N.S.W."



17. Framed portrait on ivory of Marc Verdeau as a young boy in a dress.

1852. Painter unknown, purchased in Hobart, Tasmania.

Size: 12 x 10 cm. (inside frame)

The name Marc Verdeau and the date 1852 are written on the front and on the back, where, underneath his name is written 'Marie Louise Verdeau's brother'. The owner's questions are: Is it a Costantini? Who are the Verdeaus? Where did they live?

We sent it to experts for comment, one response: A delightful little portrait, but believed unlikely to be by Costantini on the basis of 'exactness of detail, and the carriage/stance of the subject isn't quite typical.' However, Costantini was still in VDL in 1852, although he later died in Hawaii. Another response: the inscription is in French (Marc Verdeau Ne le 14 [Sbre? ie Septembre] 1852 – Born (male) 14 September 1852) so the painter may have been French, as was Costantini.

Standard internet searches did not reveal anything about the subject or his sister and a specific search in Trove was similarly unsuccessful. The names do not appear in the Tasmanian Names Index but there were several people with that surname in Sydney, notably J B Verdeau, also a T Verdeau, and a Captain Verdeau who may be one of those. There are no births/deaths/marriages register records (BDM) for a Marc Verdeau in NSW.



**18. 10-ounce Bastard Brothers, Hindmarsh South Australia, Codd (marble) bottle with an Eclipse Patent Bulb neck. Made by FBH (base mark), at the South Australian Glass Bottle Company at Brompton, of Frederick Bolton Hughes.
C 1900-1919 Size: 23.5 cm x 6 cm (base diameter).**

The Codd bottle was designed and patented by Hiram Codd of Camberwell, London in 1872. His bottle became universally popular and was made under licence throughout the world.

The Bastard brothers were born in Clare SA; their father was John Bastard, who arrived as a child in July 1853 with his parents Thomas and Elizabeth Bastard aboard the *William Stewart*. Their mother was Elizabeth Dench. In 1900 the brothers, Thomas Dench and John Kiteley, established their aerated waters business at Susan Street, Hindmarsh. The business ceased in 1919.

Frederick Bolton Hughes was born in Angaston, SA. In December 1896 he purchased all the assets of the Australian Glass Works Company Ltd (in liquidation - established 1878) and commenced trading under the name of the South Australian Glass Bottle Company. Hughes kept all the employees of the former company on, and remained at the same location in Chief Street, Brompton. In 1913 Hughes, after experiencing hard times, sold out to Melbourne Glass Bottle Works Pty Ltd.



19



20



21

19, 20 & 21. Australian-made silver-plate serviette rings.

18. Oval serviette ring surmounted by a kookaburra sitting on a boomerang, Maker's mark not recorded, possibly Tilbury and Lewis 4.5 x 8 x 3 cm.

19. An oval serviette ring with a vertical boomerang mounted on top. Marked EPNS and one of Stokes and Son's marks. Size: 3.5 x 7 x 2.5 cm.

20. A pierced and decorated, inscribed oval EPNS serviette ring with attendant well-moulded and detailed 3-dimensional kangaroo maquette. Stamped inside base the mark of Stokes and Son. Size: 4.5 x 8 x 3 cm.

Before TV dinners and the pandemic meal times were very 'civilised' occasions. Adults and children had to learn etiquette and manners – as well as how to handle cutlery and eat with their mouth closed! In those 'good old days' each consumer had their own cotton or linen 'serviette' table napkin, and each had their own serviette napkin ring (to ensure they kept their diseases to themselves).

These three Australiana-inspired EPNS napkin rings from the first-quarter of the C20th are an historic record of Australian culture in the early C20th. Many Australians wanted to be 'cultured' and patriotic but could not afford Sterling Silver or Australian timber serviette rings (more information on those in a future issue!) so they had EPNS (electro plated nickel silver). These have all been well-used.



22. Musk veneered box with interior tray.
C 1845-50. Size: 23 x 15 x 13.5 cm.

This box is described by its owner as “Early South Australian Barossa Valley Biedermeier Jewellery Box made of Tasmanian Musk with thick book matched and figured Musk veneers on Musk. Inlaid ebonised escutcheon and ebonised base edge. Fitted Musk sectional compartment. First period settlement circa 1845-50”

The plant *Olearia argophylla* is known as Musk because of the smell produced when crushing fresh leaves of the plant. The timber is most usually associated with items made in Tasmania, and this box closely resembles examples made in that state. However, the species occurs naturally as far north as the south coast of NSW. Early ships’ manifests show the trading of ‘fancy woods’ around the world, in addition to cabinetmaking and construction timber, so the natural origin of the timber does not necessarily determine the locality of manufacture. However, the carcass and secondary timbers often give some clue as to origin.



23. Crochet cushion cover depicting the 1908-12 Australia Coat of Arms.

C 1914-1930s, Designer and maker unknown. Size: 42 x 38 cm.

This is a patriotic interpretation of the 1908-12 Australian coat of arms, with vine leaves and grapes above. There were many examples of this design shown in the women's exhibits section of shows around the country.

The official version had the word 'Advance' preceding Australia and the original official arms are thought to have been inspired by the 1805 Bowman Flag, which showed the rose, shamrock and thistle supported by a kangaroo and emu. While the official Australian coat of arms changed in 1912, the public related to this design for decades, as all Australian silver coins throughout the reign of George V kept the 1908-12 version on the reverse. Surprisingly the sixpence kept the obsolete Arms until 1963.



24. Crochet doily depicting the 1912 Australia Coat of Arms.

C 1940-50s, designer and maker unknown. Size: 50 x 33 cm.

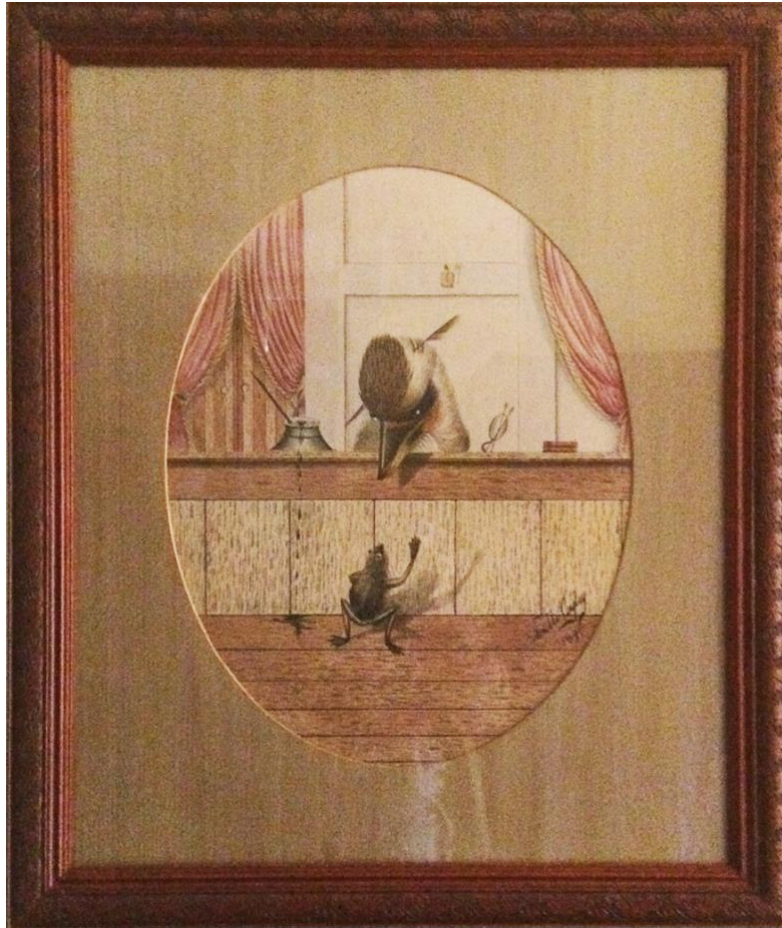
The 1908 arms were redesigned in 1911, and officially granted by George V on 19 September 1912. The main reason for the change was that the 1908 Arms did not individually recognize all the states. The word 'Advance' was removed.



**25 & 26. Two oil on canvas paintings by Clara Johnston
LHS - Sulphur Crested Cockatoo, RHS - Kookaburra.
1916. Details. Sizes: 60 x 40 cm.**

Pictured here without their frames for clarity, these two, framed oil on canvas paintings are described by their owner as “a bit naive in style, so is unsure if she was actually an established artist. In fact, we know nothing really about them and cursory research attempts have returned no information. They were sold as a pair at auction in NSW.”

They do have some stylistic similarities to the work of Neville Cayley. Any information or suggestions by other Australiana members would be most welcome.



27. A watercolour painting by Neville Cayley snr (1854-1903) painted in 1894
Tentative title *Can I please have a room with a bath?*

A scene of a Kookaburra clerk serving a frog customer. Size: 65.5 x 54 cm inside frame.

There is a considerable amount of literature on the work of Neville Cayley and his son. In 1894, when this was painted, Cayley was living in Sydney and then at “Yamba Farm”, Woonona in the Illawarra.

Dr Mark Cabouret wrote about Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903) in *Australiana* vol. 34, August 2010 pp 10-27. Later, Penny Olsen wrote *Cayley & Son*, Canberra, NLA Publishing 2013, which illustrates many works by the father, Neville Henry and son Neville William Cayley. The NLA has about 200 examples, but few are illustrated on the website. Nothing is known that has been written specifically on the humorous paintings. Olsen says Cayley Sr probably painted 1500 kookaburras.

Cayley often gave his humorous paintings a name, so the editors have made one up for this painting! It has been re-framed, very securely, so the owner has not had an opportunity to see if there is a title on the back.



28. Inscribed Gold Key in fitted blue velvet case.

Case labelled "A. BRICKWOOD,/JEWELLER./WOLLONGONG". 1907.

Size: Case 2 x 10.5 x 5.5 cm. Key 7.5 cm long.

The inscription reads "PRESENTED TO / THE HON. / J.H. CARRUTHERS / PREMIER / ON THE OCCASION / OF HIS / OPENING THE / ALBERT / MEMORIAL HOSPITAL / WOLLONGONG / JULY / 27 / 1907."

In 1897 Carruthers had been Minister for Lands in the NSW government and a strong pro-Federation voice. He had been elected on a policy platform of local issues, free trade, social reform, land reform, industrial conciliation and arbitration. Carruthers was Premier of NSW from 1904 to 1907 and is credited as being a strong force in the foundation of the current Liberal Party.

The reverse top plate of the key is inscribed with the initials "JHC" in florid script. No details for the quality of the gold and no hallmark. It looks like 22 or 24 carats but may be less than that and plated with the higher quality – an unknown, although having been presented to a Premier it may be as it seems?

About the jeweller: The standard reference books on Australian gold and jewellery that have been searched reveal no details on Mr Brickwood. What appears to have been an ‘advertorial’ in the Catholic Press (Sydney, NSW : 1895 - 1942), Thursday 13 December 1906, page 18 states:

A LIVE JEWELLER.

These are the days of the men who do things, and Mr. A. Brickwood, of Crown and Keira streets, Wollongong, is a man who fills this description. He sells his large stock of splendid watches and jewellery at cut city-prices, and has a reminder in this issue that wedding rings, diamond and gem engagement rings, are a specialty with him.

A Brickwood was still in business in 1919¹ when there was a record of the theft of a mail bag containing a registered item he had sent to a customer. The business seems to have later been renamed to S Brickwood and Sons, jewellers, at possibly the same address (Kiera St Wollongong) as recorded in the details of a robbery from their shop in 1952².

According to the experts consulted “Brickwood seems to have been a typical suburban jeweller, and is likely to have been quite capable of making the key, which is an attractive but not particularly complex object. Being made for a one-off function, there would have been no need either to mark it or to use a higher quality of gold than necessary, and there was no legal necessity either. Even a relatively low carat gold can be made to look of much higher quality by surface treatment, and the item was never going to be worn by use. It is a delightful little memento and survivor.”

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1. New South Wales Police Gazette and Weekly Record of Crime (Sydney: 1860 - 1930) Wed 14 May 1919 [Issue No.20] Page 220 Burglaries, etc.
 2. Sydney Morning Herald (NSW: 1842 - 1954), Wednesday 3 September 1952, page 3



29



30

29 & 30 Going Gnostic: Arta!

29. Arta Ware *Tree Stump Night light* c. 1950, Earthenware, slip cast and pierced with applied green snail and gnome (painted facial details and red hat) 10 x 14 x 12 cm. Unsigned.

30. Arta Ware *Mushroom vase* c.1950 Earthenware, slip cast, central opening surrounded by 8 holes, maroon and green glaze and applied gnome and snail 10 x 9 x 7 cm. Unsigned

Australian pottery expert Glenn Cooke writes:

After the austerity of the World War Two years and the continuing scarcity of imported items a cottage industry of small potteries sprang up in Sydney to supply colourful and decorative wares such as these gnome-embellished items. They are part of a continuum of

gnomes from the early 19th century when an enthusiasm for statues of dwarves/gnomes developed in Germany and spread to France. They were introduced to England in 1847 when Sir Charles Isham, brought 21 and placed them around his home, Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire and further popularized when Sir Frank Crisp, the eccentric owner of Friar Park, Henley-on-Thames opened his estate to the public 1910-1919. Garden enthusiasts and international visitors saw his collection garden gnomes, adding to the trend.

The interest in gnomes in Australia probably began with illustrations in children's books and gained impetus with the release of Disney's 1937 animated film 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' so that at the end of the decade 'realistic little fellows' which will 'look ever so attractive in garden or fernery' were available at Farmer's Department store in Sydney. (The Sun, Sydney, 5 January 1939 p 20) It was also at this time that Thomas George started "Bosley Ware Pottery" in Mitcham, Adelaide and produced what has become the most highly collectible range of gnomes in Australia.

Before Japanese imports swamped the market in the 1960s there were a host of small cottage potteries working in Sydney. Those potteries showed different levels of sophistication manifested from the modernist wares produced by Studio Anna to modest and charming wares such as the Arta, which I consider to be a commercial pottery version of folk-art pottery. Like many pieces produced during the 1950s they were identified with a foil label which has since been worn off. These ceramics are noted occasionally on the Facebook group 'Everything Australian Pottery' with the designation 'Arta'. Inquiries revealed that none of the collectors had a piece so labelled but that a senior group member had acquired several of these works, appropriately labelled, from an antique outlet in Hornsby some ten years ago. Those pieces had been packed away and were therefore unable to be photographed. Perhaps this article will bring to light another example with an intact label that can be recorded? Little is known about the pottery and now that the 1950s is a generation past the people associated with the pottery will have passed-on and it will be only any surviving family members (if they can be identified) who could add to the history. Geoffrey Ford's book 'Encyclopaedia of Australian Potters Marks' (1998) has the basic information that the Arta Pottery operated at Bondi Junction, Sydney, from 1954 until 1968.

Night-lights are unusual for the time and considering the survival rate of such a fragile item a substantial number must have been made for nurseries. The night-light and mushroom vase which head this article are the commonest items found. The bright-red of the cap couldn't be obtained in glaze colours at the time and together with facial details were painted on, much of which has since worn off.

END OF THIRD VS&T REPORT

**OTHER ITEMS ALREADY RECEIVED BUT NOT INCLUDED HERE WILL GO
IN THE FOURTH REPORT (JULY 2020).**

We encourage all members to submit their items for publication in the VS&T.

David Bedford, Peter Lane, Richard Phillips June 2020