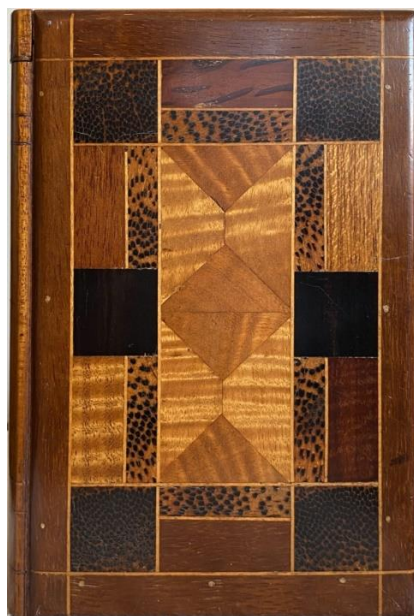


13th Australiana Virtual Show and Tell Report

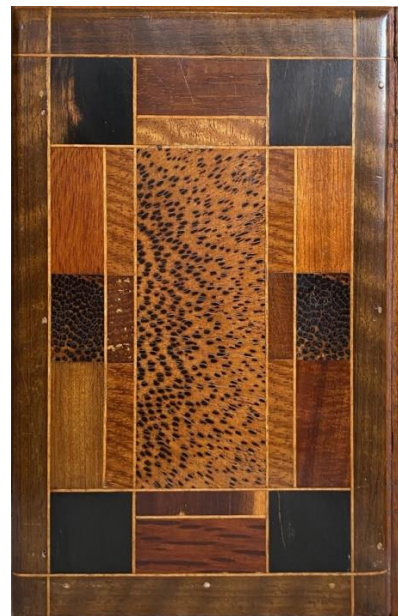
November 2021

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

1. Two extraordinary Queensland boxes in the shape of books



Front face



Rear face



**Ink stamp labelled pull-out centre of northern silky oak and silk pull.
Early C20th. Labelled Thomas Griffiths, Brisbane. Size: 20 x 13 x 4.5 cm.**



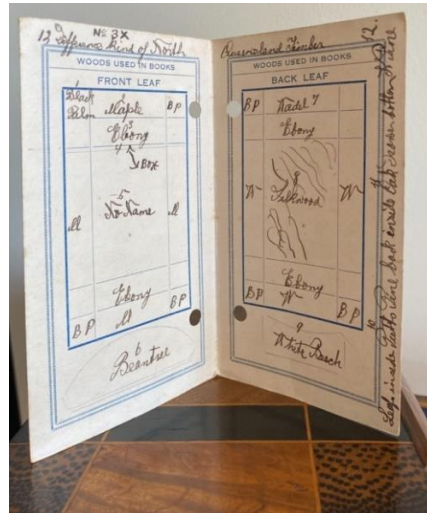
Front face



Rear face



Label



Early C20th. Labelled HA Nielsen. Size: 21.5 x 15 x 5 cm.

The interest in Australian timbers that began with the beginning of the colony and discovery of our amazing and unique timbers continued into the early 20th Century. Queensland, especially far north Queensland, and Cape York were explored in the late 19th Century. They were still being developed and their native forests actively exploited/cut out through the first two quarters of the 20th Century.

Both of these very similar boxes make the most of what are today rare or virtually unobtainable timbers. First, the similarities: 1. the form, a box-like shape with a sliding section to the top, revealing a pull-out inner compartment or drawer; 2. A very similar layout with parquetry sections separated by string inlay; 3. The extensive use of timbers now unobtainable due to rarity, black palm, *Normanbya normanbyi* in the corner squares of both makers and central sections of the Griffiths box, as well as the virtually unobtainable Queensland maple and the rare Queensland ebony. Second, the dissimilarities: 1. All known Griffiths boxes have similar northern silky oak, *Cardwellia sublimis*, unfinished pull out sections/drawers whereas the Nielsen box appears to have an ebonised pine central drawer.

Both makers had sawmills in north Queensland, though Griffiths also had sawmills in southeastern Queensland. Labelled Nielsen boxes are from Port Douglas; labelled Griffiths boxes are from Brisbane or Mount Tamborine. Griffiths also had works near Ipswich so some boxes may have originated from there.

There is an unanswered question about the production of these boxes. Did the makers work together or collaborate?

One absolute certainty? This editor is very jealous of the owners!

An article on Thomas Griffiths' life and work is planned for *Australiana* and may be in the November 2021 issue.

2. Fretwork in a cedar case



c. 1879. Maker Evelyn Whiting (b. 1860). Cedar cased fretwork, size: 6 x 48 x 32 cm

This interesting item gives a window into the past. It was purchased by the owner at a recent auction, together with excerpts from an exhibition report.

International Exhibition Miss Eveline Whiting exhibits two cases of fretwork. This work requires considerable taste and patient skill. The exhibitor evidences that she has both, her designs are good, and all the articles are nicely carved and carefully finished. Miss Eveline Whiting has used American hickory, oak, tulip, and myall woods, and has been equally successful in all." "International Exhibition Wood carving as performed, by a lady, is shown by Miss Eveline Whiting. Her representation of a well-known Sydney character, in the act of crying "Umbrellas to mend (?)" cannot fail to excite attention. cases wood fretwork ... ing, 15, Cowper-terrace, 2

SMH January 1872 reports that

When a dusty artisan, lean and ragged, like the needy knife grinder, with a hole in his hat and a rent in his nether garment, pushed before him a tray on wheels, and crying 'Umbrellas to mend', works his way along a suburban thoroughfare, he is more often an object of disdain and suspicion than of respect. Evelyn Whiting has chosen to represent him as a cheerful character.

The partial address provides a clue to the date as Evelyn's family moved to 9 Cowper Terrace, Clarence St, Church Hill in Sydney in 1860, the house where Eveline Mary Whiting (1860-1954) was born. She was the third daughter of Louisa Maria Hobson (1814-1894) and George Robert Whiting (1834-1922) and the family remained there till about 1881 when they

moved to Gore Hill. The International Exhibition referred to is most likely the one held in Sydney in September 1879.

Evelyn's wealthy, widowed grandmother arrived in Sydney in 1848 with her daughter Louisa Hobson and other extended family members. She set up a clothing business in Hunter St and following her daughter's marriage to George Whiting in 1853, he became a partner, whereupon the business became known as Hobson and Whiting. The business sold hosiery, gloves, bags and portmanteaux. They lived above the shop where daughters Lucilla and Blanche were born. Blanche married James Hobson in 1880 at St James Church Sydney and had 6 children. James started the North Shore Times newspaper in 1885.

There are many references to Evelyn's artwork in exhibitions in newspaper accounts, but she was not a professional painter and had an independent income (probably from her grandmother as her father was a bankrupt). The SLNSW contains several drawings and a family portrait.

The interesting mix of timbers used in the fretwork have international connections and indicate a high level of international timber trade in the late 1800s. They are stated as being "Hickery" (presumably American hickory) and Kauri (which could be either Australian kauri pine or the imported New Zealand kauri). Two crosses in the central box are myall wood (several Australian acacias have myall in their common name) and "tulip wood" (which could be either Australian tulipwood, *Harpullia pendula* – the most likely – or Brazilian tulipwood). The case, described as being cedar, is most likely Australian red cedar *Toona ciliata*.

3. Majolica glazed pottery vessel



Circa 1920. Details. Size: 29 x 19 diam. (base 11 diam.) cm

This attractive Majolica glazed vessel was purchased from the Ipswich area near Brisbane and is believed to have been made in one of the Ipswich potteries.

There seems to be very little information available online and illustrations seem to be of much simpler pottery water jugs. This one seems quite sophisticated with a good carrying handle, a spout for the mouth and an aperture that could be used to fill the jug as well as to control the inlet of liquid and therefore the flow of fluid from the spout.

4.- Sterling silver and *Neotrigonia* shell spoon



**Circa 1910. Maker F A Flint, Tasmania. Weight: 8g Length: 11cm.
Advertisement for FA Flint.**

By the 1890s some settlers in Tasmania finally acknowledged that the shell heaps noticeable in parts of the shoreline on the east coast were the kitchen-middens, or "refuse heaps," of the local Aborigines. Using some of these shells, these distinctively Tasmanian spoons with map-of-Tasmania finial were made when Tasmania was a popular tourist destination for mainland Australians from the turn of the century. Steamships sailed regularly from Sydney and Melbourne to Hobart and ports of the northern coast of the island. Many examples of shell spoons or jewellery incorporating the shells, were made by William Golding, also Taylor and Sharp, and F A Flint Jewellers in Hobart or Stewarts of Launceston.

This silver and small *Neotrigonia* shell souvenir spoon was made in Tasmania around 1910. The finial is shaped as the map of Tasmania and is stamped on the front "Tasmania" and on the back "Silver" and "F.A.F" for Francis Albert Flint (1858-1938) of Hobart.

Francis was born in Birmingham, England. His father Francis died in 1860 leaving his mother Elizabeth nee Britland with three very young children Harriet, Francis Alfred and Charles. Four years later she married jeweller George Martin and had two children William and Edith Martin.

In the 1871 English census Francis Alfred Flint is recorded as a jeweller, age 13, apprenticed to his stepfather George. His brother Charles and stepbrother William also became jewellers. Flint's obituary notes that he arrived in Adelaide on the ship *Forfarshire*. Its arrival in South Australia in 1877 records emigrants selected by the Colonization Commissioners London, whose passage were paid for out of the Emigration Fund. In 1877 Flint was 19 so the carpenter named Francis Flint age 19 on the *Forfarshire* was Francis Albert Flint jeweller and he acquired the 'carpenter' trade perhaps to be classed as an acceptable immigrant for South Australia. After living in Adelaide for a few years he moved to Melbourne where he married Matilda Mary Le Jeune Smith in 1881 and their first three children were born there.

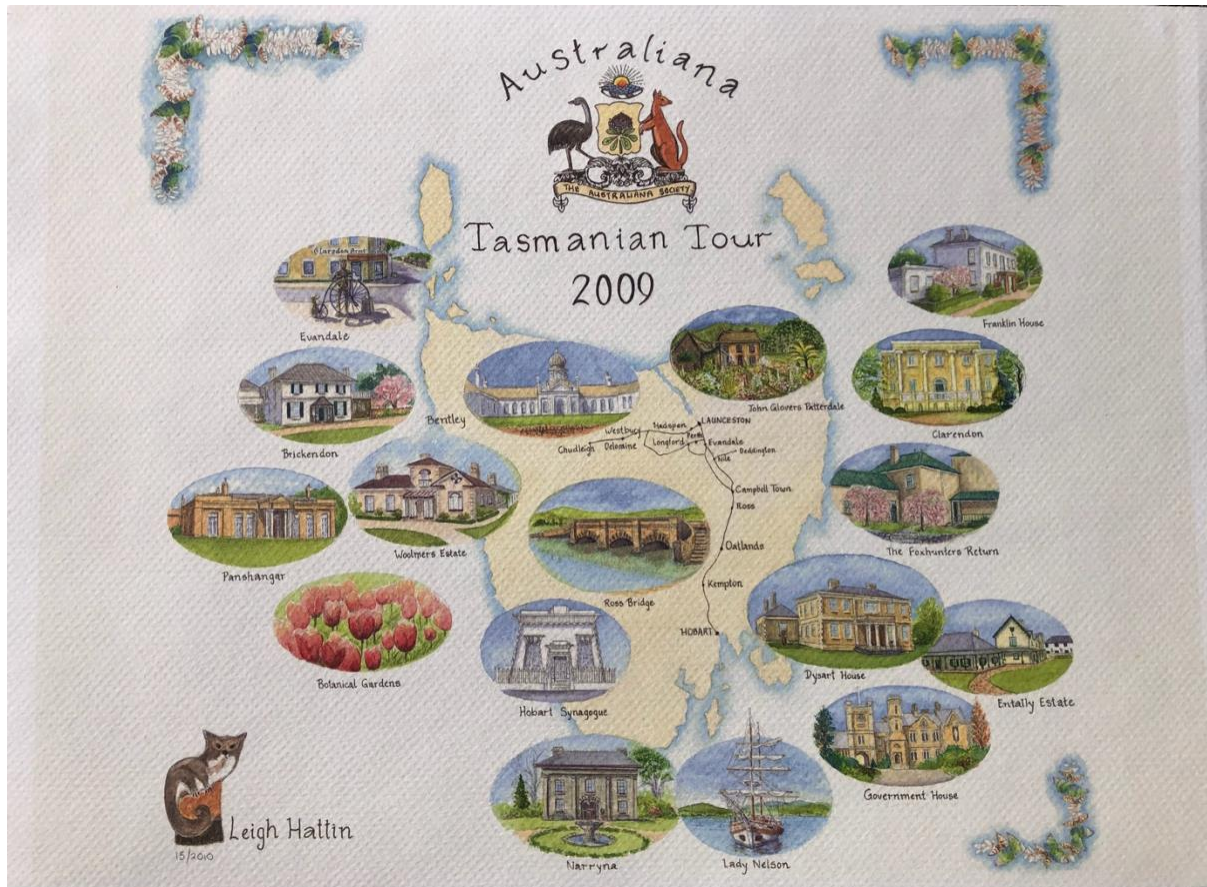
Around 1891, the family transferred to Hobart where their son Herbert was born in 1892, followed by three other children. Flint would have been employed initially by one of the manufacturing jewellers in Hobart at the time.

In 1896, Flint joined with Joseph Quarmby to form the retail business Flint and Quarmby, jewellers of Liverpool St Hobart. Two years later each had established his own business, F A Flint was listed in Wise's Tasmania Directory as manufacturing jeweller of 86 Liverpool St. Tasmanian souvenir jewellery manufactured by F A Flint of 116 Liverpool St. Hobart is shown in the advertisement which appeared in *A Century of Progress 1804-1917*.

F A Flint retired around 1930 and the business became F A Flint Pty Ltd; it was taken over by his second son Charles Ernest Flint who managed it until his premature death in 1939. The business continued until the mid-1950s.

1 Commonly termed *Trigonia* shells, but that name belongs to an extinct fossil species. The only living genus in the family is *Neotrigonia*.

5. Tasmanian Tour memento



2010. Leigh Hattin, digital print on watercolour paper. Size: 32 x 35 cm.

Leigh and Kevin Hattin were participants in the Australiana Society’s 2009 tour of Tasmania and greatly enjoyed the experience. After the tour Leigh painted the original of the above image as a memento. She then had copies printed on water colour paper and generously gifted them to each of the participants on the tour. The prints are a slightly different size to the original retained by Leigh (35 high x 35 wide) as they were restricted to the paper size available for printing.

One of the recipients of a print sent it in to the editors for the virtual show and tell, so we wrote to Leigh, who confirmed “All member couple groups and individuals travelling on their own received a print of the painting to commemorate the wonderful Tasmanian Tour in 2009”.

A great addition to Australiana and a memory for the participants of the tour.

6. A furniture history challenge



C. Mid quarter C19th. Cedar shelving unit. Size: 149 x 122 x 36 cm.

This French polished shelving unit is an attractive item of Australiana. However, the owner would like to know the original purpose of the unit. Their comments were: “Colonial cedar shelving unit, I was confused as to what it was when I acquired it, but it is very well made, good quality and in original condition, lovely warm cedar.

I have since been advised that it is likely a kitchen piece out of a large house or bakery and was a bread rack. I don’t know if this is true, but it makes sense.

The curious thing about it is its shape. The shelves narrow as the get higher, so the whole item is tapered and could stand in a walkway or similar for access both sides. The strengthening braces on one side at the second shelf level appear original and suggest the design may not have been as sturdy without them.

I wondered at first if it was a bookcase, but it doesn’t really make sense as that, because of the taper, then maybe a general kitchen equipment holder, but the finish is such that it does not suggest any mechanical use, such as heavy pots and pans. I think scratching would be evident. The two drawers at the base are full cedar, no staining, marks or damage, dovetailed with chamfered edges to the drawer bottoms.”

Further, the owner asks the following questions:

Any suggestions or conclusions as to its original use or application? i.e. what is it?

Approximate age?

Is it a rare type?

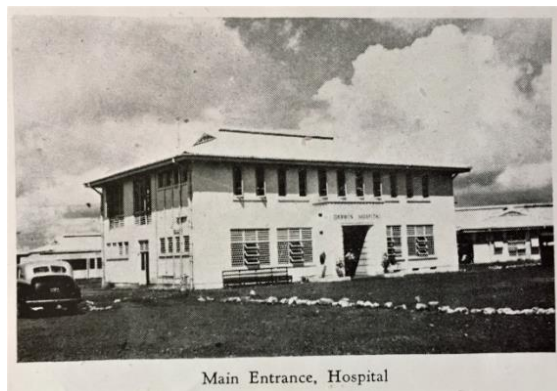
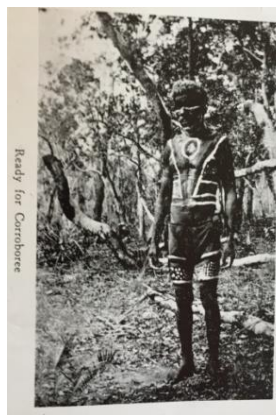
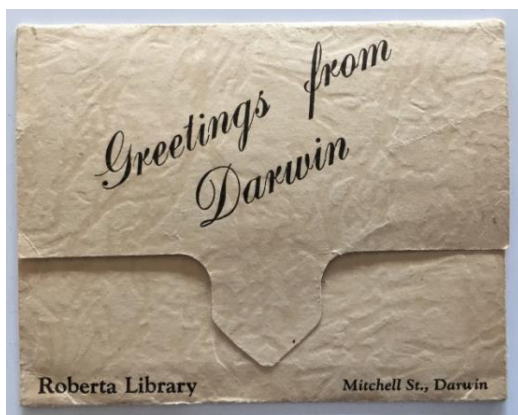
Editors' comments

The cross-braces, if original, indicate that, despite the double taper, the unit was designed to be accessed from one side only. The double taper itself is either simply a classical design feature or was designed for stability if the unit held heavy items. One editor postulates it was for use in a large kitchen or bakery but doesn't know exactly what would have been stored on it. Other possible original locations could include an hotel, club or hotel restaurant. The turning is reminiscent of the Gothic revival style, which most likely places it somewhere during the heyday of that revival from 1840 to 1860.

Remembering that rarity does not always translate to \$ value, we would agree that such shelving units are uncommon. This may be because they were specifically made for large houses, so never common, or perhaps that such units have not survived the transition to more compact living spaces.

Comments and information from members would be most welcome.

7. Darwin post cards, c 1947-1952



**c 1947-1952. Roberta library, Mitchell St., Darwin
Six of the ten pictures illustrated above. 11.5 x 9 cm**

The Roberta Library was owned and run by Jessie Sinclair Litchfield nee Phillips (1883-1956), a Northern Territory pioneer and author. She was born at Ashfield, Sydney and in 1908 in Darwin she married Valentine Augustus Litchfield and they had seven children and she had written *Far North Memories* by the time her husband died in 1931. She was editor of a number of NT newspapers. In 1942 she was compulsorily evacuated to Sydney and while there purchased the 'Roberta' and after the war reopened it in Darwin. She was a trained photographer and historian, and most likely took all the photographs in the photo album. In 1951 she unsuccessfully contested the Territory Federal seat as an Independent, campaigning by taxi over 4,828km. More information on her can found in the Australian Dictionary of Biography available on-line.

8. Waratah Fence chain tag



C1934-1960s. Pressed iron; stamped: Made by Waratah Fence 112 LBS 10 Net / Rylands Bros /(Aust) Pty. Ltd. 7.5 x 5 cm.

The 10 gauge has been described as heavy gauge and came in five chain lengths and first became available in 1934. The makers suggested various recommended fence heights and spacing for farmers for different stock.

The company began as the Austral Nail Co in 1891 but was later bought out by the MacDougall family who diversified into wire making. James Kenneth MacDougall served in WWI and was recalled in 1918 to oversee construction of his father's new wire factory in Newcastle. In 1921 the family business merged with the British firm, Rylands Brothers Ltd to form Rylands Bros (Australia) Ltd. In 1924/25 BHP acquired a controlling interest in firm, and supplied all the metal to make their wires.

During WWII James MacDougall commanded the 32nd Battalion, Volunteer Defence Corps, which guarded the Newcastle steel works. The Japanese attacked the works but no one was killed. While living in Newcastle, MacDougall and his family lived in the company cottage designed by his wife on a hill at Mayfield.

9. Carved figure of a woman dancing 1970s



1970s. Carved by Donald Friend (1915-1989). Size: approx. 22 cm high.

This unusual carving is stated to contain two timbers. The Huon Pine is Tasmanian, and a good carving timber, but the identification and origin of the rowanberry poses more of a challenge. The rowanberry species, *Sorbus aucuparia*, is a native to Europe, Asia Minor and Siberia. However, there are records that indicate the species is cultivated in Australia, which may become a problem as it has been identified as having the potential to be a major weed in some parts of the country. It isn't possible to test the identification of the timber in the legs from the photographs, so it is possible that the artist's identification was incorrect or else was 'artistic licence' and alluded to the sometimes-claimed magical properties of the rowan tree.

Provenance

Rather than see the Salamanca Place Gallery in Hobart close, Marjorie Leonora Hill (1919 - 2013) acquired it from her son Mark in May 1972 and became its third Director. This required her to give up her position as Art teacher at Fahan School and maintain it as a gallery for artists.

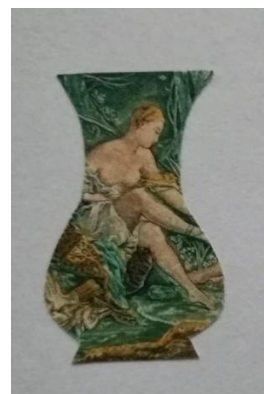
Over a period of 16 years, she established a solid foundation for the Gallery as an exhibition venue for paintings, prints, antique maps and crafts alternating solo artist shows with mixed exhibitions. Many other enterprises included evening 'Life Drawing' classes for artists in the gallery, the sale of art materials, and for about 5 years the very popular mid-Summer outdoor art show on the Parliament House lawns.

The success of exhibitions at the Gallery or works exhibited by artists such as Pro Hart, John Olsen, Mirka Mora, Clifton Pugh, Charles Blackman, Fred Cress, Donald Friend, Elain Haxton, Keith Looby, Jorg Schmiesser, Jan Senbergs, Fred Williams, Brett Whitely and other leading Australian contemporary artists built the reputation and profile of the gallery. It also enabled Marjorie to exhibit works by emerging but lesser-known Tasmanian artists. Many of these artist's works formed part of Marjorie and husband Bernie's private art collection, which was auctioned on 24 August 1990. This object is a piece of whittling (to whittle = carve (wood) into an object by repeatedly cutting small slices from it), by Donald Friend who was a friend of the Hills and always stayed as their guest when he visited Hobart.

10. Australian Postage Stamp Art



Greeting cards decorated with hand-cut used Australian postage stamps 14.7 x 9.6 cm



13.2 x 8.3 cm and 8.2 x 5.2 cm

The decorative elements on these cards are made from used Australian postage stamps. For decades franked stamps have been saved for charities and on sold to collectors.

Sydney-based Elizabeth Howells (1907-1985) also saved some for her craft activities during the 1960s and 1970s, which included the making of these very decorative cards.

At the time of her death, eight cards had been started but had not had the hand-painted gold finishing touches applied.

11. 'Victoria' and 'Pybus' farm animal bells made in Adelaide



William Pybus (? – 1854) arrived in SA on the *Orissa* with his young family, including his son William (c1820-1885). He advertised as a gunsmith, locksmith and bellhanger. He flourished in Adelaide, and was inherited by young William. The business, soon became known as the Victoria Iron Brass and Bell Foundry. William junior became a partner in 1847 and the business then traded as William Pybus & son. The following year Junior took over the business and did so until his death in 1885 and at one time employed fifty people..

12. Some Australian garden history and Australian wildlife: The “William Cox” rose and the Leafcutter Bee



“William Cox” rose

This “William Cox” rose is said to have been propagated from cuttings taken originally from the garden of *Clarendon*, the home of pioneer William Cox at Dight Street, Richmond, NSW. *Clarendon* was a 400-acre (162 ha) property which Cox commenced building in 1804. Rather than just a farm this large estate had all the appearances of a self-contained village with over 50 convict servants who acted as smiths, tanners, harness makers, wool sorters, weavers, butchers, tailors and herdsman.¹ The extent of his enterprise at *Clarendon* is well described in an advertisement that appeared in *The Australian* on 24 February 1834, p1, inserted by the new owner of *Clarendon*:

CLARENDON

LABAN WHITE begs leave to inform the Public, that he has taken the CLARENDON FARM, so well known for eminent productions, and comprising the first qualities of Land in the Colony. He has also purchased from Wm. Cox, Esq. his extensive Tannery, Flour Mill, Tobacco Manufactory, and Presses, Cloth Factory, and Piggery, &c., of the first class of Stock in the Colony. Cures and smokes Hams, and sides of Bacon, after the Hampshire fashion, so universal in request.

Cox is mainly known for his successful supervision of the construction of the first road over the Blue Mountains, as commissioned by Governor Macquarie in July 1814. He was

¹ Edna Hickson, *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Cox, William (1764-1837)*

subsequently the first to be granted land west of the mountains, 2,000 acres (809 ha) across the river from Bathurst, which he called *Hereford*². During Cox's 37 years of residence in the early colony, he made a substantial and enduring contribution to its progress in the fields of public administration, building and agricultural development. The Cox family were remarkable "house and garden" people³.

Much has been documented about his life that is readily available online, particularly the Australian Dictionary of Biography <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cox-william-1934>; Australian Royalty.

<https://australianroyalty.net.au/tree/purnellmccord.ged/individual/I66259/William-Cox>

William Cox Builder <https://www.angelfire.com/rnb/mrbirrell/pg000004.htm> and

Watercolour of Cox Homestead <https://silentworldfoundation.org.au/object/cox-homestead-1861/>

[In *The Ransom Sampler* article in the recent August edition of *Australiana* members will have read on page 18 mention of James Cox of *Clarendon*, Van Diemen's Land. This refers William Cox's second son who named his property after his father's property in the Richmond region of NSW.](#)



“William Cox” rose showing evidence of the Leafcutter Bee’s precision cutting of the leaves

The delicate heritage pink “William Cox” rose was propagated by Christine Erratt over 30 years ago and blooms virtually all year round. It has little fragrance of note and is not suitable for picking as a display rose in a vase. However, it is a delight in the garden as it blooms prolifically and does not need much care. As can be seen, it also attracts bees to the garden.

The Australian native bees, the Leafcutter Bees (*Megachile species*)⁴, are found in all states and mainland territories of Australia⁵. Their amazing handiwork makes them one of the most fascinating bees in Australia. The Leafcutter Bee snips a neat circle or oval from a leaf; curls it under her body; flies back to her nest; and uses the leaf pieces to weave tiny cradles for eggs inside her nest burrow her.⁶ Rose leaves are favoured targets, and to a lesser extent, wisteria, buddleias and gardenias.

² ibid

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cox%27s_Cottage

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/aug/14/country-diary-leafcutter-bee-archive-1916>

⁵ <https://australian.museum/learn/animals/insects/leafcutter-bee/>

⁶ https://www.aussiebee.com.au/leafcutter_bee.html



Leafcutter Bee cutting out a second section of a rose leaf

There are at least 1,700 species of “true blue” native bees⁷. They are important pollinators; tend to be solitary bees which raise their young in burrows in the ground or in tiny hollows in timber⁸. The author’s visiting bee made its nest in the fascia board area of the front verandah.

A good source of reference and excellent photographs of Leafcutter Bees can be found at: https://www.aussiebee.com.au/leafcutter_bee.html

The editors thank all those members who have contributed to this report. Their names are not recorded for security purposes as the objects belong to them, however there is just one small exception to this rule.

All Australiana Society members are invited to submit articles for the next Virtual Show & Tell. Please forward submissions to the secretary@australiana.org.au or pnj.lane@bigpond.com

Contributors are reminded that the best photographs produce the best presentations of your item. Our knowledge of Photoshop is rudimentary though we will do our best. The more information that you can provide as text descriptions the better we can do. **Please give, height, width and depth – in that order, and dimensions in cm.**

**The editors,
David Bedford
Yvonne Barber
Peter Lane**

⁷ <https://www.aussiebee.com.au/keyfacts.html>

⁸ *ibid*