

Christmas 2020 edition show and tell - actual for some – virtual for others



Hoop Pine Australiana Christmas Tree

Editors of the Virtual Show and Tell wish all Society members a safe and comfortable Christmas and new Year's festive season

This edition is based on the Australiana Society Queensland Branch Christmas meeting show and tell, 5 December 2020 and is provided for the enjoyment of all members.

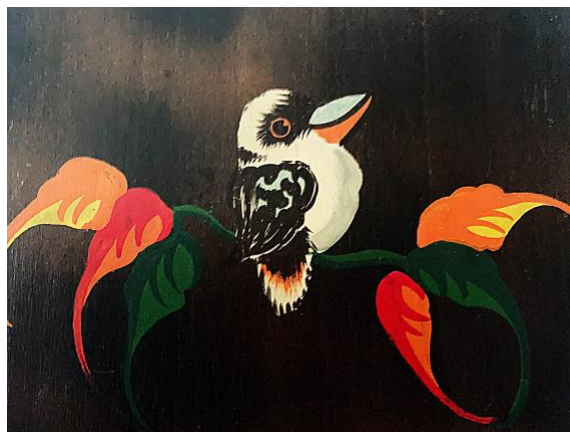
A group of 14 members attended the meeting at David Bedford and Jennifer Stuerzl's home. It was a very enthusiastic and joyful meeting with members enjoying the opportunity to get together and enthuse about Australiana after the trials of 2020. Brisbane's weather did not look promising with a 34-degree day forecast and the same delivered during the day.

However, the house is airconditioned so we had some faith the meeting would be comfortable. In the event, the airconditioning was immaterial as the sea-breeze up the Brisbane River quickened significantly during the evening. That made the weather delightfully cooler, though still pleasantly balmy for our outdoor socialising.

After lots of discussion and exchange of news from the year past over drinks and food on the terrace, we relocated inside for the show and tell. What an interesting and varied range from our group – see the details below. There was a lot of discussion and exchange of ideas on the items, showing how membership of the Society brings great value to improving our knowledge about our objects and about the amazing range of Australiana.



Overseer in action: King cat Dexter, sitting on an 1850s side chair and watching on carefully. Show and tell items (last item hidden in the box) and the obligatory COVID-19 hand sanitiser on the 'Christmas theme' dressed circular table.



A Christmas Kookaburra

Show and Tell

1. Cribbage board, circa 1930, unknown maker, Tasmanian timbers and silver map emblem marked with Lands Department boundaries. Size 6 x 48 x 18 cm



This large distinctive Art Deco cribbage board stands on four feet and displays a number of Tasmanian timbers. These include fiddleback-figured Tasmanian Oak (*Eucalyptus obliqua* and other eucalypt species with similar pale-coloured timber), Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) in both fiddleback and plain figure, King William Pine (*Athrotaxis selaginoides*), Australian cedar (*Toona ciliata*) and an unknown very finely figured timber with numerous small medullary rays evident.

The silver map emblems are usually associated with the work of Shott and Son of Launceston, but other makers are also recorded as applying them. A member of the Stewart family has recorded that Stewarts had many similar maps – whether they were made for Shott or for other makers is unknown. Members are referred to VS&T8 for a short review on these emblems and items bearing them.

Underneath the board can be seen the Tasmanian Oak frame, King William Pine carcass timber and a timber compartment made of Blackwood with a three-ply sliding lid.

The compartment contains a boxed set of playing cards. Interestingly, the cards are a special set marketed for the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. They therefore appear to be about 20 or more years later than the board itself. When this was commented on at the meeting a participant pointed out that sets of playing cards wear out, so this was probably the last set played with the board.

Although this is a two-row (four street) board it came with spilikins for four players.

David Bedford is surveying Australian cribbage boards and planning to write more on the subject as an affordable collectable. Members who have unusual or special cribbage boards are invited to contact David.

2. Pottery vessel made by David Boyd, circa 1930



This little vase (measuring 13 cm high) by David Boyd was originally owned by Marjorie Johnstone (1911-1993) who for two decades, with her husband Brian, operated Brisbane's Johnstone Gallery (1952-72), a revered showcase for contemporary Australian art. Marjorie, who started out as an actress, gifted it to her close friend Rhoda Felgate, a pioneering Brisbane speech and drama teacher who in 1936 founded the Twelfth Night Players, and subsequently, (supported by the Johnstone family) the Twelfth Night Theatre. The vase remained in her possession for many years, passing to its present owner after Rhoda Felgate's death in 1990. It serves as a reminder of the close association between theatre and art and the contribution of two distinguished and determined Queensland women.

Dianne Byrne

3. Engraved seal of the Queensland National Bank (established 1888)
Engraved by Robert Capner (1832-1899), Brisbane. Size: approx. 5.7 (diam.) x .8 cm



The Queensland National Bank (QN) was established in 1872. The once very important in Queensland, with a wide network of branches operating in Brisbane. QN was quite separate from the National Bank of Australia (NAB). However the bank had trading difficulties and was eventually merged with the NAB in 1947. The owner of the seal inherited it from his father who worked for the QN at the time it amalgamated. The bank's head office in Brisbane city, designed by former Colonial Government Architect F.D.S Stanley, was considered the most magnificent in Australia, but was sold many years ago. At one stage it is believed that much of the bank's history was preserved in upstairs rooms, it is not known if this is still the case.

Bernie Begley used his magnifying loup to find that the die-sinker and engraver for the seal was marked as Capner. Robert Capner was recorded in his 1899 obituary¹ as being a "well known [sic] die sinker and engraver" and "In his business capacity as a die sinker and engraver, Mr. Capner has made a very large number of the official seals in use in Queensland."



'signature' on the seal.

¹ The Week (Brisbane, Qld. : 1876 - 1934), Friday 29 December 1899, page 3

**4. A pressed metal advertising plaque for the Wunderlich company, embossed with Kookaburras and holding a calendar
1926, steel, 38 cm diam.**



The owners believe the calendar is for 1926, but the years 1897, 1909, 1915, 1926, 1937 and 1943 all had the first of January fall on a Friday. Wunderlich pressed metal ceilings became available in Australia in 1890 and remained popular for 40 years, so the calendar could technically be for any of the above years.

**5. A salt-glazed stoneware vessel with internal piping and dividers, stamped JC & S for James Campbell and Sons pottery, Brisbane
Size: 10 x 9 (diam.) cm**



Four different views of the vessel

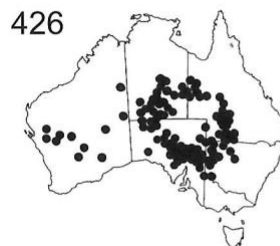
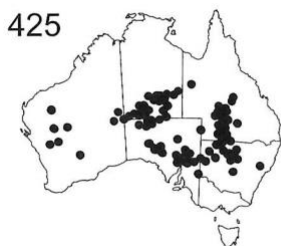
This very interesting/intriguing object was much admired and its purpose was discussed around the meeting. It is stamped JC&S, plus what are presumably the craftsman's initials of P.W.

The leading hypothesis about the item was that it was most likely a factory sampler for a septic tank made by Campbells. The 'inlet' (left hand side above) is 1 cm higher than the 'outlet'(rhs above). The owner estimates that the sampler is most likely 1:10 scale so the full-size unit would have been 100 cm high and would have been very heavy.

6. A mixed set of nine turned souvenir wooden napkin rings in Australian timbers



A very varied set of Australiana napkin rings including four in the distinctive two-tone timber, Mulga wood (*Acacia aneura s.l.*), indicating how popular that timber was for souvenirs in the first half of the C20th. One has a tacked-on enamel badge of "Brisbane Town hall" although Mulga doesn't grow close to Brisbane. A further three Mulga wood rings have different place names associated with them (also not in known Mulga country) one has "Souvenir of Tamworth" written in 3 lines, another with "Greetings from Tamworth" and another with "Souvenir of Murrurundi"; the last has an L.S.D. price of "2/11" (now 29 cents) in ink - which would have been a substantial price any time before Decimal Currency came in (Feb 1966).



Mulga distribution maps (From *Flora of Australia* Vol 11b p 477).

Botanically, *Mulga sensu lato* has been subdivided into numerous subspecies and varieties. The term *sensu lato* (abbreviated s.l. after a taxonomic name) means “in the broad sense”. These two distribution maps are indicative of where two of those subspecies occur. The species is very widespread in the arid or semi-arid parts of Australia. Please note that the outlying ‘dot’ for a record in NSW near Tamworth is most likely an error as the maps were prepared from uncertified specimens and that one is possibly a misrecording.

One napkin ring is made of Tasmanian Blackwood with engraved silver Map of Tasmania 17x18mm, and is almost certainly the product of the Shott and Sons Launceston workshop. Of particular interest to the meeting, and apparently very rare, was the napkin ring with a silver Map of Queensland 13x9mm; Another ring was inscribed with the legend "21st Inst./327 O.E.S./ 1950' (probably the 21st Installation for Lodge 327 of the Order of the Eastern Star 1950). That order is an appendant order of the Masons and is open to both men and women who have a relationship with a Mason.

Coloured pokerwork design on a ring with the (transfer?) view from the South of the "Sydney Harbour Bridge" with that legend on it.

A ring of "Lightwood" with silver map of Tasmania 7x10mm "TASMANIA" punched across the map is the far right front example of the second phot above. Lightwood is *Acacia melanoxylon*, and another name for that species – usually known as Blackwood, because the sapwood of Blackwood is very light-coloured. It is unusual to have an item made entirely of lightwood, although two-tone items including both sapwood and lightwood are more common.

All rings have a central void of either 35 or 40mm, most were around 35mm high, with 2 being 40mm or so.

7. 1830s fabrics from an early sofa and the replacement fabric used to reupholster the sofa



Bob Fredman demonstrates the camlet fabric that he chose, the original glazed chintz fabric in the foreground. Interested members look on.

As a follow-on from his recent article *Tasmanian Magnificence part 2* in *Australiana* 42, 4 (November 2020) Bob Fredman brought along examples of the original fabrics on the sofa as well as the Camlet fabric that he chose to re-cover it.

Those who have read Bob's article will recollect the process that Bob followed to recover his magnificent cedar sofa. It was a real pleasure to see some of the original fabrics from the sofa as well as the interesting traditional fabric that Bob chose. Bob talked us through his processes as he demonstrated the fabrics. There was a general agreement from the knowledgeable people in the room that the original glazed chintz fabric was likely to have been imported direct to Australia from its production in India as there was considerable communication between the colonies.

8. Pineapplealia - Glenn Cooke



Glenn demonstrating, David recording and members looking on.



Items of 'Pineapplealia'

Harry Memmott: Dish painted with pineapple inscribed: SURFERS PARADISE SUNNY QUEENSLAND

Harry Memmott: Mug: Sunshine plantation (9 cm h)

Glass with shell and pineapple gilt details for Yeppoon Bowling Club (10.5 cm h)

Crystal Craft pineapple letter rack (13.5 cm)

Japanese: Pair of pineapple salt and pepper with smiling faces (7.5 cm h)

Jug with pineapple over map of Queensland

Miniature demijohn printed with pineapple over map of Queensland

Glenn writes: "One of my interests is the establishment of regional identities which may be demonstrated by the pervasiveness of plants and agricultural production. I have published two articles reflecting this aspect of my researches in the magazine of the *Australian Garden Journal*: 'Poinciana: Icon of a Queensland Summer' in 2019 and 'Sweet fields: Cultural landscape of the sugar cane' (2020) This miscellany of small souvenir wares reflect the importance that the industry of growing pineapples has on economy and image of Queensland and the contribution it has made to the tourism industry.

Pineapples (a type of bromeliad) native to the dry inland forests of South America were introduced to Queensland from India about 1838. During the 1840s, commercial plantings were established by German Lutheran missionaries at Nundah but by the time the pineapple (a traditional symbol of hospitality in England) was carved in the backboard of the Glengallan sideboard (Collection QAGOMA) photography had arrived in Queensland. Images of pineapple cultivation as far afield as Bowen and Cardwell soon proliferated and newly popular postcards signified a distinct Queensland imagery. The massive Agricultural

Arch (Collection SLQ) which was erected in upper Queen Street in 1901 to celebrate Australia's Federation incorporated pineapples and other products of Queensland's farms into the overall design, reinforcing its symbolic significance.

After World War One the Soldier Settlement Scheme opened up farming around the Glasshouse Mountains which soon became (and remains) a major area for the production of pineapples. The iconic Queensland canning company 'Golden Circle' was initially part of the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing in Queensland (COD) and when the factory was opened at Northgate in suburban Brisbane in 1947 provided employment for generations for migrants. Fresh pineapple was a luxury in southern states (a friend from Adelaide confessed that they even chewed the fibrous core) but the canned equivalent was distributed through Australia. (In 2009, Golden Circle was taken over by the US Corporation, Heinz.)

Pineapples contributed to the visual character of Queensland as farms were spread along the Eastern seaboard but most particularly when the Sunshine Plantation was established outside Nambour (1971-2009) as a tourism destination venue."

The importance of the fruit is indicated by the fact that Queensland sent 100 cans of pineapple to England for Queen Elizabeth's wedding banquet.

Editor's comment: We know that one item is a ring-in; Evans' Head is in NSW.

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As usual, comments and feedback are invited from any members who believe that they have alternative views or something to add to the information above.

David Bedford and Jennifer Stuerzl (photography)

The VS&T series edited by Yvonne Barber and David Bedford will recommence in 2021 – as members send in their contributions.