

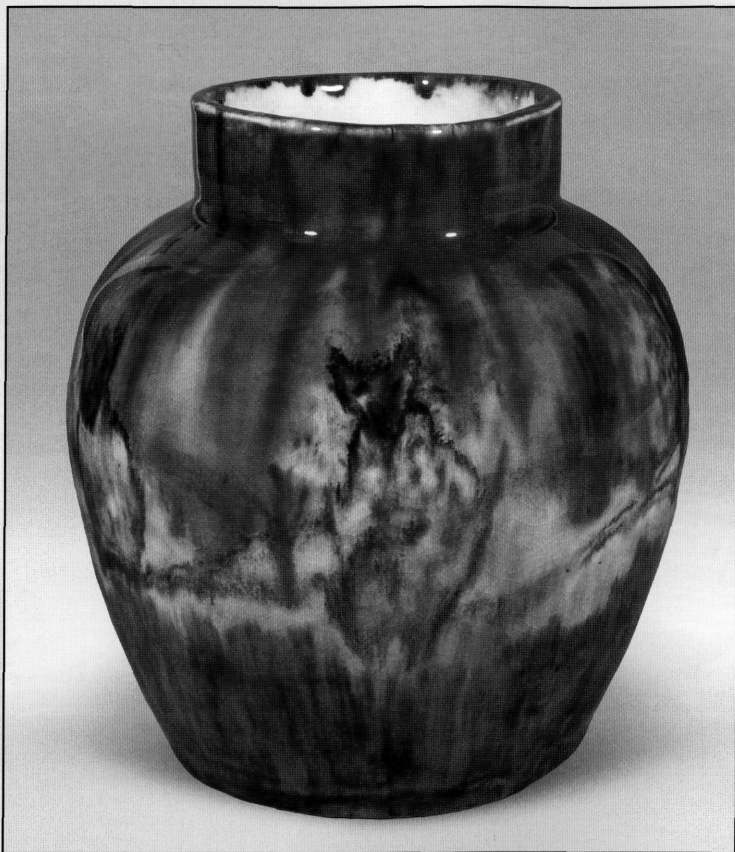
NOVEMBER 2003 Vol. 25 No. 4





SIMPSON'S ANTIQUES

FINE COLONIAL FURNITURE



*An Australian art pottery press-moulded earthenware vase by Lily Whitney with
underglaze painted decoration of marsupials and a coloured drip glaze. c.1925.
Inscribed on base: L W (h.12.5cm x diam.12cm)*

*This vase is illustrated in the forthcoming publication
Australian Art Pottery: 1900-1950
edited by Kevin Fahy, Keith Free, John Freeland and Andrew Simpson.
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COVER: George Peck (1810-1863), montage by Sarah Markland.

EDITORIAL

If Bob Carr and the boys hadn't already decided to can Sydney's working harbour, a glance at the show would surely have made the call for them. And a glance is all it would take, for the Maritime Museum's *Sydney's Working Harbour* exhibition is a slim volume, indeed.

'It is the usual stuff, tipped into glass cases like the dead-or-dying contents of a quaint sea captain's attic. A Conrad Martens here, a David Moore there; the handful of press clippings, the hands-on-block and tackle (feel the difference!); the miscellany of model boats – schooner, steamer, square-rigger, tug, all undated – that must have been lying around just asking for it, really.

'But there is no passion for this most passionately felt of Sydney icons. No intensity, no vigour, no surprise. No Hallelujah, and precious little headstuff, either.'

So wrote Elizabeth Farrelly of the new exhibition *Working Harbour*, in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. With her devastating criticism of this exhibition, the newspaper returns to the kind of assessment that John McPhee once made of an exhibition on Flinders, dominated by the colour orange, at the State Library of New South Wales, and for which he was muzzled.

It's OK for the media to criticise the work of our Rugby team, but they don't usually bother with the work of our cultural institutions. Governments do that – selectively – if the unjustified attacks on the Director of the National Museum are an indication. There are many less competent public servants who should have been in the firing line before Dawn Casey.

A pity that the *Herald* side lined McPhee, as the State Library followed up Flinders with another uninspired exhibition, *The Heritage Collection*. This one, highlighting the treasures of the Library, makes me think that the iconic objects are just hanging out at a hi-tech bus stop on a cold, wet night, rather than being presented with dignity, understanding and passion. They are caged, completely drained of life by a cold, even lighting. The exhibition design overpowers them; it snuffs out and destroys the chance for visitors to engage with them.

This exhibition is a complete contrast to *Treasures of the World's Libraries*, held at the National Library over summer in 2001-2, where one enthusiastic visitor wrote 'I wish I could live in this gallery'. The presentation at the new National Gallery of Victoria on St Kilda Road is sensational too.

Dr Lindsay Sharp set up the Powerhouse Museum before moving on to other projects, usually marked by organisational change. Now he is head of the National Museums of Science & Industry in Britain, which has produced a new small book, *In the 21st Century, What role should a Museum play?* In this manifesto, they set out the many things they want to achieve as a team.

A key strength of the organisation is that staff are eager to engage pro-actively with their audiences, not hide in their offices. So when the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television had a persistent problem with youth gangs, staff invited them into the Museum, asked them what they wanted, and set up programs for them. Problem solved, for both groups.

In the Australiana Society, we too need to think about our approaches to cultural objects, and to recognise the value of constructive criticism.

We are seeking feedback from readers of *Australiana* magazine and members of the Society. We need to deliver better services to our members and readers, through articles and events that are interesting to a broad cross-section. We need your articles, your contributions, your input, your ideas and your criticisms.

Our magazine needs to be *balanced*, presenting research from around the country, across all periods, and across all subjects. By accident, we get the geographic balance pretty right, but not the subject areas. Members show a strong interest in collecting ceramics, but the number of articles submitted (or on glass, ephemera or jewellery) does not reflect this. We tend to concentrate on objects at the top of the range rather than the more affordable, and we favour the 19th century over the 20th.

Our magazine needs to be *provocative*. Knowledge progresses through the propagation of theories, and we encourage authors to be bold. For instance, John Hawkins regularly sticks his neck out, and it's by such theorising that we will develop new ideas and new ways of looking at our subject, and encourage debate.

Our magazine needs to be *helpful*. Many people have years of experience, advice and practical knowledge to pass on to other collectors. Christian da Silva's short article on furniture in this issue aims to do just that.

Our magazine needs to be *passionate*. If you really love your subject or your collection, let it show. If you would let us do a profile of your collection (as we've done for instance with the *Clyde Bank* collection), let us know and we'll consider a story.

Our magazine needs to be *topical*. We want to keep you informed of what's happening, through our website and the magazine, so please let us know what's happening in your area. We would especially like to know if you are researching a subject, so others can get in touch if they can help. With this issue, we re-introduce a section of news and reviews.

Our magazine needs to be *value for money*. This is something we have improved and can achieve better, with more members. For just \$55 you get four issues and now 140 pages, mostly in colour. We are very proud of the quality of our publication, especially considering that we have never received a cent of Government support.

However, the Society as a whole needs to make a broader contribution to preserving, researching and promoting our national heritage. We need to strive for a more holistic view of our heritage, and with that in mind we are planning a broad-based seminar on 'Australian design 1788-2004' next year. This will be an important opportunity to see things in perspective. We are developing the program and speakers, and are looking for a venue and supporters. ■

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George Peck purveyor of the fine arts

ROBYN LAKE

Tasmanian researcher Robyn Lake reveals the extraordinary career in promoting the theatrical, musical, and visual arts in nineteenth-century Australia by Yorkshire-born George Peck.

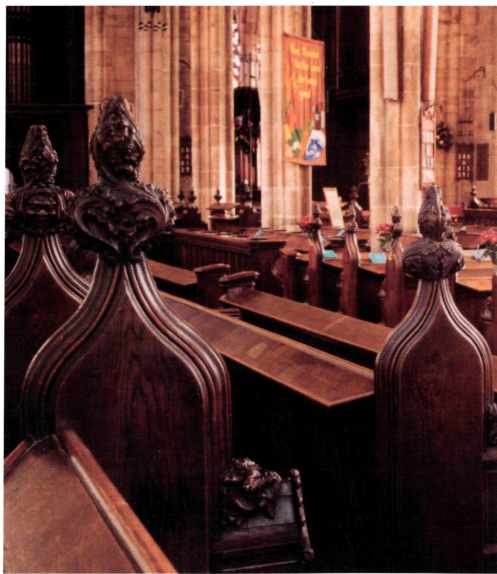
Whether lampooned in Sydney as 'Cashier Exhibitor, and principal Cat-gut scraper to the Model of Hobart Town', or praised in Hobart as 'our fellow-townsmen, Mr G.H. Peck, whose exertions to cultivate a taste for the fine arts in this remote quarter of the globe merit encouragement', there is no doubt George Peck played an important role in the introduction of 'the Fine Arts'¹ to colonial Australia.

For over 30 years George Peck (1810–1863), carver & gilder, ornamental draftsman, designer, violinist and orchestra leader, sought the uncertain patronage of those merely looking 'to while away many a tedious hour'.²

During the 1830s he spent six years in Tasmania and New

South Wales, returning to England in 1839 with the 'Magnificent Model of Hobart Town'. He remained in England for about ten years, working as a carver and gilder in his hometown of Hull, Yorkshire (plates 1 & 2). In the early 1850s he visited California, before returning to Australia in 1853. Ten years later 'George Peck, Professor of Music' died in Sydney.

Contemporary diaries and over 250 newspaper advertisements, critiques and reports chronicle the successes, failures, feuds and friendships of George Peck, Purveyor of the Fine Arts. They show the important part his creative and artistic skills played in his entrepreneurial activities, and reveal the early influences on this remarkable man.



Plates 1 & 2. During the restoration of the interior of Holy Trinity Church, Hull, in the 1840s, George Peck was commissioned to execute carvings for about 80 seats, or stalls. Most depict mythological figures, animals and birds, but one bench end is markedly different: a man with a violin. This is surely George Peck's self-portrait, in the church where he was baptised in 1810. Photograph Bill Marsden. (See also plate 23).



Plate 2: Design. Sarah Markland.



Plate 3. Trade card of Thomas Peck. George Peck's father Thomas Peck (c. 1769-1845) was associated with the furniture trade in Hull for over 50 years. Bella C. Landauer Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

George Henry Peck was born in the Yorkshire town of Hull in 1810, the eighth son of a local merchant, cabinetmaker Thomas Peck (plate 3).³ The inspiration and skills associated with George Peck's later enterprises can be traced to events in his hometown. Hull was a prosperous shipping, mercantile and ship building centre where many talented artists and craftsmen worked. Just one example of this influence is the Moving Panoramas of Hobart and Sydney that George Peck exhibited in London in 1840. Between 1827 and 1829 Hull's 'artist artisans' had created 'the Grand Moving Peristrophe Panorama of the Siege of Hull in 1643...faithfully executed on three thousand feet of canvas, containing more than 2,000 figures nearly two hundred of which are large as life.'⁴

John Earle, the local architect and sculptor who devised and directed the project wrote 'I conceived that a panorama—as it would embrace such a variety of subjects, situation, and matter—

would give each an opportunity of following the best of his genius in a way most agreeable to himself, and therefore most likely to succeed.'⁵

The qualities 24 year-old George Peck sought in an apprentice for his Fine Arts business six months after his arrival in Hobart in June 1833, are an apt description of his own upbringing and talents, or 'genius' (plate 4).

Fine Arts.

GEORGE PECK, Carver, Gilder, Ornamental Draughtsman, and Designer, respectfully informs the Public, that he has commenced business in the above branches, in his newly erected Shop in Liverpool-street, opposite the Messrs. Sadgroves' Store, where he hopes, by persevering attention, to merit a share of public Patronage. Pictures mounted and varnished, and Frames made to order; Looking Glass and Picture Frames, &c. regilded in the most elegant manner. Wood Carving, in all its various branches, executed in the first style of the Art. Ornaments for side-boards, sofas, cheffoniers, tables, chairs, &c. &c.

G. P. has on hand for Sale, a choice collection of lithographic and other prints, suitable for albums, Scrap Books, transferring, &c.; Drawing Paper, and Drawing Boards manufactured on a new principle, of a very superior description; Writing Paper, Morocco and coloured ditto of every tint, gold ditto, and gold borders, plain and fancy cards, of all sizes, &c.

An apprentice wanted to the Carving and Gilding Business; in addition to which he will be taught Drawing and Music, and kindly treated. None but a youth of genius, and of the most respectable parentage and education, need apply. A premium required.

G. P. takes this opportunity of informing his Friends and the Public, that he gives instructions on the Violin, according to the principles adopted by the Conservatories of Paris, Milan, &c. on the most moderate terms, which may be known by application at his residence. Jan. 7, 1834.

Plate 4. Hobart Town Courier, 10 January 1834. Though his use of the word 'genius' may appear brash, in George Peck's day it was used to describe 'the special endowments which fit a man for his peculiar work' (OED).

MUSIC

The colony has recently acquired a considerable accession of musical talent in the band-master of the 21st fusiliers...and Mr. Peck, an experienced performer on the violin, who, we learn, has acquired most of the peculiar talents of Paganini.

Hobart Town Courier, 5 July 1833

In 1833 most of the Tasmania's resident 'musical gentry' knew of Paganini's style of playing only through newspaper accounts. His first tour of the British Isles had not begun until May 1831 (plate 5). In the English press Paganini had been the subject of 'unmeasured eulogy or unmeasured detraction;—he has been either a divinity or a charlatan.'

PAGANINI AT HULL.

MR. SKELTON

HAS the Honour of announcing to the Public his intention of giving a CONCERT OF VOCAL and INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC, on MONDAY, February 13, at the THEATRE-ROYAL, and has the Pleasure to inform them that he has succeeded in engaging the celebrated Violinist,

SIGNOR PAGANINI.

Mr. S. hopes also to introduce a distinguished FEMALE VOCALIST,

FROM LIVERPOOL.

In addition to the Musical Talent of Hull, extra Performers will be engaged.

Particulars will be immediately announced.

Places will be secured in the Pit, as well as the Boxes. No more Tickets will be issued than the Pit and Boxes can accommodate. No Places can be secured, unless Tickets are taken at the Time they are engaged.

Prices:—Lower Boxes and Pit, 7s. 6d.—Upper Boxes, 5s.—Galleries, 3s.

Places for the Boxes to be taken at Messrs. Goddard and Brown's, Packet-Office, 51, Lowgate.

Plate 5. Hull Advertiser 3 February 1832. During his first tour of the British Isles, 49-year-old Paganini gave more than 134 concerts and was said to have netted £20,000. He performed in Hull in February 1832, a year before George Peck sailed for Tasmania; 'the Musical Talent of Hull' was engaged to take part in Signor Paganini's concert.

When Paganini plays one of his Concertos, written in the broad open style of Viotti, and full of enchanting and pathetic melodies, he is divine. When he plays his "fantastic tricks," intermixing pizzicato notes, bowed passages, and chirping harmonics, to make people stare, he certainly approaches, in some degree, to the charlatan.⁶

George Peck soon introduced Paganini's 'tricks of scraping'⁷ to Hobart. Uniting with the colony's 'old and tried favourites', a concert 'inferior to none out of London' was announced for 8 July 1833.⁸ The program included 'an air with variations, to be performed entirely on the fourth or G string, composed by Paganini and performed by him at his principal Concerts in England and on the Continent'.⁹ The concert was a success:

The musical inhabitants of Hobart-town had a delightful treat on Monday evening at Mr. Peck's concert in Mr. Deane's room. The admirable power which Mr. Peck evinced over the instrument producing with astonishing facility the most striking and wonderful effect, both surprised and gratified every one present.¹⁰

One of those present who was familiar with London entertainment was a fellow passenger from the *Warrior*, Regency dandy Edward Markham (plate 6).¹¹



Plate 6. Edward Markham (1801-1865). Hobart July 1833: 'Monday, walked out, fell in with a number of people, found Hewett's counting-house a convenient house of call. Went to my shipmate's concert C. Peck [sic], the Modern Paganini and to patronise him, paid five shillings. Faint praise, but praise indeed from Markham who was quick to mock, finding the Colonial Chaplain 'speaks as if he had hot pudding in his mouth and is a pompous ass...' Edward Markham in 'Voyage to Van Diemen's Land in the ship Warrior (and residence in Tasmania)', 17 March 1833-7 February 1834, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, Photo Edward Markham 1861, Ref. No. F-1933-112, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Te Puna Mātaunganga O Aotearoa

The program for a George Peck Concert (**plate 7**) might promise much, but what was the reality? With less puff than most other critics, the Hobart *Tasmanian*'s provides an insight into one of these concert performances:

A Mr. Peck recently arrived from England, performed a Concerto on the Violin, in which he laboured through the double stop; produced a few aerial sounds, (technically called Harmonics;) ran over a long range of difficult harpsicord movements with great ease, and introduced the air of 'Robin Adair,' the sweet tones he drew from the Instrument in the air, appeared to suspend every breath; and the effect of the appoggiature in the second part was delightful. After the Concerto, Mr. Peck performed the air of 'My Lodging is on the cold ground,' in which he introduced a most extraordinary staccato passage running through nearly four octaves likewise an accompaniment called, pinching tones this acquirement is from Paganini. In the 'Carnival of Venice,' he attempted another curiosity in imitation of the human voice; the effect is produced by one finger only. Mr. Peck certainly displayed a great mastery over the technicalities of the Instrument.¹²

George Peck did not claim to have been a taught by Paganini; but to perform 'Reminiscences of Paganini'. His Death Notice states that 'Mr. George Peck, violinist and professor of music' was 'a pupil of Mr. John Thirwall and C. Sivori.' Violinist and composer John Wade Thirwall first visited Hull in 1827 and 1828 to lead the Orchestra for performances by the Hull Choral Society, later becoming music director at Drury Lane and other London theatres.¹³ The association with Camillo Sivori, Italian child prodigy violinist and pupil of Paganini, probably took place after George Peck's return to England in the 1840s.

During his first five months in Tasmania, George Peck staged a series of Vocal and Instrumental Concerts in Hobart and Launceston, as well as participating in a 'Grand Concert' organised by John Philip Deane, who had pioneered musical entertainment in the colony. His musical skills were then turned to a new endeavour, the establishment of Tasmania's first theatre company.



UNDER VERY DISTINGUISHED PATRONAGE.

MR. PECK begs leave to inform his numerous Friends, and the Public in general, that he intends to give

A CONCERT

of

Total and Instrumental Music, in Mr. Davy's new large Rooms, British Hotel, on Tuesday evening, August 17th.

Part I.

Introduction, instrumental,.... Haydon

Song—The Rose

Concerto Violin in E, in which will be introduced the familiar Air, Robin Adair—Mr. Peck

New Song—Abdon's Fleet, adapted to a popular Air.

Scotch Medley, Violin and Violoncello, in which will be introduced an imitation of the Bagpipe.—Mr. Peck.

Song—Comic.

Part I

Adagio & Rondo, instrumental Pleyel

Song—Our King is a true British Sailor

Medley, Solo Violin, exhibiting a variety of the peculiarities of the celebrated PAGANINI, comprising imitations of the human voice, youth and age, violin and guitar, hurdygurdy, &c.—Mr. Peck.

Song—Comic.

Concerto Violin, To be performed entirely on the fourth string, composed by Paganini, and performed by him at various concerts in England and on the Continent—Mr. Peck

Finale—God save the King!

Doors to be opened at 7 o'clock; performance to commence at 8 precisely.

Front seats, 7s 6d; Back ditto, 5s.

(27 Tickets to be had of Mr. Peck, at the British Hotel; Mr. Cameron, Brisbane st. and Mr. Briggs, Charles street.

Plate 7. Independent 24 August 1833, p. 3.

George Peck's aim was to provide entertainment that offered Novelty with Merit. The program for his Launceston concerts sometimes included comic songs from gentlemen amateurs who performed 'with a most laudable desire to relieve Mr. Peck, by contributing to the amusement of their friends.'

Plate 7. Independent 24 August 1833, p. 3.

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Theatricals.

MRS. CAMERON begs to announce to the gentry and inhabitants of Hobart Town and its vicinity, that Tuesday next, the 24th instant, has been fixed upon for operating the THEATRE, on which occasion will be presented Kotzebue's celebrated play of

THE STRANGER.

Brian Stenial,..... Mr. Taylor.

Count Wintermore,..... Mr. Jordan.

The Stranger,..... Mr. Cameron.

Peter,..... Mr. Lewis.

Francis, Mr. Fenion.

Countess Wintermore,..... Mrs. Brown.

Mrs. Haller,..... Mrs. Cameron.

Charlotte,..... Mrs. Taylor.

After which, a Comic Burlesque by Mr. Lewis and Mrs. Cameron will sing the celebrated song of the "Swiss Toy Girl."

To conclude with the laughable farce of

THE MARRIED BACHELOR.

Sir Charles Courtall,..... Mr. Fenion.

Sharpe,..... Mr. Jordan.

John, Mr. Lewis.

Lady Courtall,..... Mrs. Brown.

Grace,..... Mrs. Cameron.

Stage Manager, Mr. Taylor; Ball Master, Mr. Lewis; Leader of the Orchestra, Mr. Peck.

Tickets, 6s. each; children, under 12 years of age, 4s. (not transferable) issued from the bar of the Freemason's Tavern.

Doors open at halfpast 6 o'clock, performance to commence at 7 o'clock.

Plate 8. Tasmanian 20 December 1833.

George Peck was Leader of the Orchestra for Tasmania's first theatrical season. Some of the performers had little stage experience, but Hobart audiences were fortunate in the quality of their early theatre 'orchestras' (often only three musicians, including the Leader). As well as George Peck, there was Angus McLeod, former Bandmaster of the 21st Fusiliers and 'Professor of Music' Mr. Richenberg '... three highly accomplished musicians ... scarcely to be met with in any provincial theatre.' Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review 23 Dec 1836, p. 423.

THEATRE

Mr. Peck is a violinist of great merit. He is most attentive to his business as 'leader,' upon whom so much depends in rendering every assistance to the singer, giving the melody powerfully when he finds it necessary, taking care that the combinations of harmony are properly attended to.

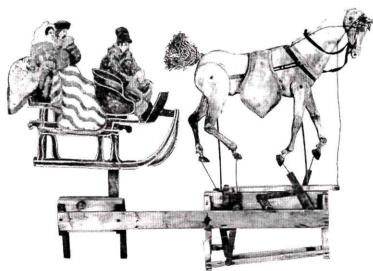
Tasmanian and Austral Asiatic Review, 23 December 1836

When actor Joseph Ray briefly visited Hobart in November 1832, en route from Sydney to England, the *Colonial Times* reported '... it is said he intends bringing to these Colonies a regular corps dramatique; should he do so, we think his expectations will not meet with the success anticipated.'¹⁴

Like George Peck, most of Tasmania's first theatre company arrived in Hobart between May and November of the following year. The *Tasmanian* of 22 November 1833 noted 'A Corps dramatique has lately arrived in this town, and are now busily preparing the furniture... The talent is spoken well of; there are no fixed stars to be here, but there are among the corps, luminaries which will quite astonish a Van Diemen's Land audience. Mr. Shribbs is scene painter. The other officials are not yet publicly known.'

On Boxing Night 1833 'The Hobart Town Theatre' (a room at the *Freemason's Tavern* with a gallery, proscenium, and a dais 18-24 inches high for a stage) opened with the romantic drama *The Stranger* (**plate 8**).

Artium Pecciano.
THE Theatre of Arts, which has been for some time in preparation, will shortly be opened to the Public.
At the Cornwall Hotel Assembly Room.
 This delightful entertaining and strictly moral amusement will be well calculated to delight ALL, from childhood to old age, and is very particularly recommended to the notice of those families whose religious tenets forbid their participation in the amusements of the stage.
 The Scenery will consist of choice selections from la Belle Italie and other celebrated places.
 The Mechanical arrangements will put into motion vessels, troops, processions, &c.; which movements will be accompanied by choice and appropriate Music.
ARTISTE AND LEADER OF THE BAND,
MR. GEO. PECK.
 Thus will open a new Era in the bright page of the History of Tasmania.
JOHN FAWKNER, Junr.
 P. S.—Further particulars will be announced in the Launceston Papers.



Theatre of Arts,
Under the Patronage of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and Family, and several Persons of distinction.
ON FRIDAY EVENING NEXT, MAY 1st, the following Entertainments will be presented:—

PART I.
THE PASSAGE OF THE
GREAT ST. BERNARD
 By NAPOLEON, and his Grand Army of Reserve, consisting of
Thirty Thousand Men;
THE MONK OF ST. BERNARD'S
And his Dog, &c.
GRAND CONCERTO, PIANO-FORTE,
By Miss Pettingell,
 A Young Lady only 12 years of Age, Pupil of the celebrated "Panorama."

PART II.
NEW LONDON BRIDGE,
WITH ST. PAUL'S,
And Part of London in the Distance.
 A Variety of Pleasing and Ingenious Mechanical Figures will enliven the Scene.

After which,
 Mr. PECK will perform his admired Imitations of the celebrated "PAGANINI" on the Violin.

PART III.
MOUNT WELLINGTON.
 As seen from Sandy Bay, with the upper part of Davey-street.
In this Scene, in addition to a variety of Local Figures,
"The Death of the Kangaroo."
 A splendid effect of Cloud and Sunshine will be presented.

BRUCE'S ADDRESS.
 With Variations on the Piano-forte by Miss PETTINGELL.

The whole to Conclude with
THE STORM AT SEA.
Doors Open at Six o'Clock, and the Performance to Commence at Seven.
 April 28, 1835. (5447)

Plate 10. Launceston Advertiser 6 October 1834. A writer for the London religious press wrote that the Theatre of Arts was an entertainment that 'may be visited by Christian people... without hampering them in their heavenly duties, or hindering them on their way to heaven' (The Spectator of London, op.cit., p. 228).

Plate 11. Theatre of Arts was known as Theatrum-mundi in Europe. Figures were about 10cm high. Each was set with a cogwheel, which ran over a strip of felt, to set the figures into their natural movements when hooked on a revolving belt running in front of the painted scenery. Theatrum-mundi figure, Theatre of Heinrich Apel, Saxonia/Germany, 19th Century. Munich City Museum.

Launceston was to have a
 'PAVILION OF RATIONAL
 AND SCIENTIFIC PLEASURE';
 the hotel's late Ballroom 'is being prepared, at very considerable expense, and will speedily be opened under the above title, as an "Artium Pecciano," or a "THEATRE OF ARTS" (plate10).²⁵

The Theatre of Arts season in Launceston was brief in consequence of Mr. G. Peck's numerous avocations requiring his presence in Hobart Town.²⁶ He had been in Launceston since June 1834, as Leader of the Orchestra in Samson Cameron's Theatre Company.

Hobart's 'respectable persons' had their first opportunity to attend George Peck's Theatre of Arts on 17 February 1835:

Plate 12. Colonial Times 28 April 1835. In creating "The Death of the Kangaroo" scene, George Peck was the first to incorporate an Australian theme and figures into such an entertainment. A more detailed article on his Theatre of Arts is on the Australian Centre for the Moving Image webpage www.acmi.net.au/AICI/PECK_BIO.

On Tuesday evening we attended Mr. Peck's Theatre of Arts, which we were happy to see crowded to excess, so much so that nearly one hundred respectable persons could not be admitted; and the exhibition was received with unbounded applause. The views of the Lake of Como, and the Island of Elba are beautiful: the perspective surpasses anything of the kind we have seen in the Colony, and the effect upon the whole surprising...the music was not so good as Mr. Peck can produce after his band gets a little practice...²⁷

Theatre of Arts proprietors were well aware of the need to introduce fresh scenes during a season. By late February a 'Splendid New Marine Drop Scene painted by Mr. Peck'²⁸ was included in the show, which closed briefly during Passion Week. One Hobart newspaper reported 'He is the cleverest Machinist in the Island and deserves encouragement'.²⁹

When the season reopened on 20 April one of the new scenes was 'a splendid view of Mount Wellington, and part of Hobart Town...In this Scene, in addition to a variety of Local Figures, "The Death of the Kangaroo" (plate 12).

His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and family attended the Exhibition on 1 May 1835. The *Colonial Times* could not resist commenting:

Such a visit was the cause of considerable discussion: some people asked why he should attend such a place, and not the Oratorio, his Government being a religious Government. The only satisfactory answer given, was, because the Oratorio cost five, and Mr. Peck's only two shillings entrance...³⁰

The *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review's* did not question Colonel Arthur's motive:

On Friday evening, His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, Mrs Arthur, and his whole family, honoured the performance with their presence. The house was filled with the respectable inhabitants to its utmost extent, so much so, that in order to accommodate the ladies with seats, His Excellency, and the gentlemen who accompanied him, were obliged to stand during the whole evening. It is impossible to express in too high terms the gratification which Mr. Peck's very ingenious performance afforded. We hear, with much regret, that it has not been so productive as its great merit entitles it to, and that Mr. Peck is compelled therefore, to discontinue it...³¹

Much of the text in George Peck's Theatre of Arts advertisements is identical to Joseph Thiodon's.³² His ability to recreate the complex scenes and figures (plate 11) that bring a Theatre of Arts to life indicate that he worked for Monsieur Thiodon in England (plate 13). The Theatre of Arts season ended in June 1835. Following George Peck's move to Sydney in 1838 his Theatre of Arts scenes and figures formed the basis of entrepreneur Edward Barlow's 1839-40 Sydney Theatre of Arts shows.³³

PECK'S REPOSITORY OF ARTS

Our enterprising fellow-townsmen, Mr. G.H. Peck, whose exertions to cultivate a taste for the fine arts in this remote quarter of the globe merit encouragement and patronage...
Bent's News, 5 November 1836

In September 1833, a few months after his arrival in the Colony, George Peck offered to teach Hobart's 'ladies and gentlemen...The Art of Transferring...the elegant art by which

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Plate 16. Benjamin Law (1807-1890), Woreddedy, an Aboriginal Chief of YDL 1836, painted plaster. 'The bust is most happily executed, and will prove a very valuable memento of a people interesting indeed to the philosopher, but peculiarly so to the inhabitants of this colony.' Hobart Town Courier 3 Apr 1835. Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston.

imposed upon by persons pretending to a knowledge of the trade to which they had no claim...' countered by Uppington Bracy Barfoot's advertisement '...As proof of the real estimation G.H.P. had...made him the offer, and was most anxious that he should join him in Partnership'.³⁹

Another carver and gilder working for George Peck at the time was 21 year old Joseph Tanner. A native of Bath, he had arrived in the colony in November 1836 to serve a seven year sentence for housebreaking. He was assigned to 'Mr. Peck'. Their relationship began badly—in December Tanner was ordered to spend seven nights in the cells for 'insolence to his mistress during his master's absence'. George Peck had married in June 1836. The assignment continued even after George Peck closed his Repository of Arts in late 1837.⁴⁰ On 14 September 1837 the 'Splendid Collection of Paintings, Engravings, &c. at the Gallery of Arts', together with the Repository of Arts stock-in-trade, was to be auctioned '...the Proprietor, Mr. Peck, retiring from business'.⁴¹

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST PUBLIC ART EXHIBITION

We are disposed to dwell very warmly upon this *first* exhibition and shall feel disappointed on *public* grounds, should it not meet with the expectations of those whose spirit and exertions have given birth to it.

Hobart Town Courier, 18 August 1837

George Peck's 'valuable collection of Paintings' formed the basis of Australia's first Public Art Exhibition, while 'several Gentlemen, who are known to have a taste for the Arts and Sciences' were willing to contribute to the undertaking 'by lending for the season, Pictures and other curiosities they may possess...to concentrate in one point all that is curious or worthy of notice in the Colony'.⁴²

The Exhibition was to open on 7 August 1837. 'In consequence of the great influx of Pictures, &c.'⁴³ the opening was postponed for a few days:

... and has quite astonished the people of Hobart Town, who were not prepared for anything so splendid. The leaders of fashion make the exhibition a complete lounging place, and as the entrance is so trifling, few people will miss an opportunity of seeing the "Somerset House exhibition" on

a small scale. Among the pictures, are some excellent ones of Colonial artists.⁴⁴

Of paintings from George Peck's collection the *Hobart Town Courier* critic reported:

The painting numbered *one* in the catalogue is a *View of St. Mark's Place* by *Canaletti*. On inspection it bears pretty evident marks of *antiquity*; although we must acknowledge scepticism as to its *originality*. The *Ruins of the Forum di Romano*, by *Marco Ricci*, we are disposed to think more highly of, than the former painting...Fifty seven (*Judith, with the head of Holofernes*) is of doubtful originality; the faces, especially that of Holofernes, do not correspond to the circumstances depicted.⁴⁵

Works of Colonial artists included 'some productions of Mr. Chapman...and, in the way of sculpture, there are two figures by Mr. Law; *Truccanini* and *Woreddedy* (aborigines, we believe of Van Diemen's Land) ...(**plate 16**)⁴⁶ as well as 'beautiful drawings of native plants and fishes' (**plate 17**).⁴⁷

Thomas Lempriere, then a Commissariat Officer at Port Arthur, was visiting Hobart when the Exhibition took place and found it 'well worth seeing', though unhappy when he 'found Peck had stuck my Abraham in his exhibition—much annoyed at seeing my name blazing at full length in his catalogue'.⁴⁸

The Exhibition not being an entertainment of a theatrical nature, Sir John Franklin (**plate 18**) did attend before it closed in September 1837:

Sir John and Lady Franklin, Captain Maconochie and Lady; attended by their families, visited the exhibition; when His Excellency was pleased to express himself highly delighted. The exhibition was also most numerously attended by the leading gentry; and from the patronage it obtains, we are satisfied the speculation will prove a fortunate one, so as to induce an annual repetition.⁴⁹

There would be no 'annual repetition'. George Peck was about to 'engage in other pursuits'.⁵⁰

MODEL OF HOBART TOWN AND PANORAMAS OF HOBART AND SYDNEY

It is not generally known, that Mr. Peck has for some time past, been actively employed, in the manufacture of a complete model of Hobart Town ...

Colonial Times, 29 August 1837

After disposing of his 'Repository of Arts' George Peck undertook 'the completion of a PERFECT MODEL OF HOBART TOWN, intended for transmission to England, where this colony is exciting daily increasing interest and curiosity'.⁵¹ He moved to premises in Brisbane-Street and in October 1837 announced that '300,000 square yards of the model is already completed...Gentlemen having plans or elevations of their houses...will confer a favour on the proprietor by a short loan of the same to Mr. Francis Low, the artist...'.⁵²

During Hobart's race week in March 1838 the 'model of Hobart Town, or at least, of that portion of it which is now completed' was exhibited at the Argyll Rooms, 'together with a Splendid Panoramic View of Hobart Town and the adjacent Scenery, painted by a very celebrated artist...the Model has already occupied the most unwearied diligence for upwards of 8 months. GEO H. PECK, Proprietor/ F. LOW, Modeller.⁵³

With much of the model already complete, George Peck moved to Sydney in April 1838, to take a position with the Orchestra of the newly opened Royal Victoria Theatre. The following January he returned to Hobart. Francis Low had been



Plate 17. William Buelow Gould (1801–1853), Native orchid, *Dipodomys punctatum*, c. 1830–1840; Soldier fish, c. 1832. Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, Hobart. George Peck's relationship with William Buelow Gould involved more than just selling works 'by that celebrated and eccentric genius "Gould"...so that gentlemen proceeding to England may provide themselves with accurate drawings of the natives, native flowers, shrubs, animals, &c...' Gould painted the scenery for 'the grand romantic Melo-drama, entitled *Frankenstein; or The Monster*', the play George Peck chose for his Benefit Night at Hobart's Theatre Royal in February 1837. One further interaction is documented between the two men. In September 1837 Gould was committed for trial on the charge of 'stealing one engraving together with a frame and glass, worth 15 shillings, the property of George Henry Peck. Eighteen days later in the Supreme Court he was acquitted of the charge. *Colonial Times* 30 May 1837, p. 175. *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review* 11 Dec 1836, p. 408. *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review* 17 Feb 1837, p. 51. *Colonial Times* 26 Sep 1837.



working on the Model of Hobart Town for over eighteen months, but the final section remained unfinished. Relations between the two men became strained, Low claiming 'the proprietor...had left him penniless, immediately following the most severe domestic affliction'.⁵⁴ While living in Sydney a few



Plate 18. Sir John Franklin / lithographic portrait published by George Peck, Hobart, 1836. On 28 October 1836 the *Hobart Town Courier* reported 'A Portrait of this Gallant Officer, appointed Governor of Van Diemen's land, taken from an authentic likeness by that eminent artist "Wageman" will be published on Monday next, 31st October, by G.H. Peck, at the Repository of Arts...' The portrait appears to be a reversed copy of the engraving, after a drawing by Thomas Charles Wageman, published in the *New European Magazine* in April 1823. Imprint beneath the title: 'Published at Peck's Repository of Arts Hobartown! On Stone by T.N.' T.N. could refer to Thomas Norrington, transported in 1832 to serve a life sentence for larceny. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, P2/458.

years later Francis Low revealed that he had received 'money for the construction of the Model of Hobart Town, a certain sum weekly, independent of all casualties'.⁵⁵

The *Hobart Town Advertiser* saw the model as a successful collaboration between the two men; 'Wishing to contribute our



Plate 19. T.E. Chapman (1778–1864). *New Wharf Hobart Town* T.E. Chapman Lith., Hobart 1836. Of the Hobart Town Model the *True Colonist* reported in 1839: 'No man who has seen it can possibly imagine the extreme correctness of the model; for not only can every house be recognized at first sight, but every little out-building, and water run, the undulations of the surface, and the broken ground in the quarries are most admirably preserved. All who have seen it express a great satisfaction and a lively interest in the sight.' *Australian* 18 May 1837 (from *Hobart True Colonist*). Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, Hobart.

GEORGE PECK,

ARTIST

IN FIGURE AND ORNAMENTAL WOOD CARVING,**GILDER,****LOOKING-GLASS & PICTURE-FRAME MAKER, &c.,****2, SAVILE-STREET, HULL.**

ESTIMATES GIVEN for any quantity or description of WOOD CARVING, COMPO, PAPIER-MACHEE, or other ORNAMENTAL DECORATION, either for Interiors or Exteriors.

GOthic CARVING

BY HANDS EXPERIENCED IN THIS DEPARTMENT.

SHIP CARVING EXECUTED IN THE FIRST STYLE. ARCHITECTURAL DECORATIONS,*Models for Brass and Iron Founders,*

The whole of which, as well as every other branch of the Business, are executed at such a MODERATE SCALE OF CHARGES as will convince the admirers of the Arts that they may obtain, at this Establishment, ELEGANCE, TASTE, and BEAUTY, in ORNAMENT, as Cheap as Ugliness and Deformity.

A VARIETY OF DESIGNS ARE ALWAYS READY FOR INSPECTION.

PATTERNS & DESIGNS are also prepared, to order, of every style of Enrichment, viz., Greek, Roman, Gothic, Elizabethan, Renaissance, Louis Quatorze, etc., etc.

FOR SALE, A FINE COLLECTION ANCIENT & MODERN PAINTINGS, CARVINGS, AND RARE CASTS.

Plate 22. Stephenson's Directory of KingstonUpon Hull and its Environs. 1848. By permission of Kingston upon Hull Local Studies Library.

WOOD CARVER

...elegantly carved 'poppyheads'...executed by Mr. Peck, of this town

Hull Advertiser, 5 December 1845

With the Hobart Town Model no longer occupying his time, George Peck returned to his home town of Hull, establishing a business as an 'Artist in Figure and Ornamental Wood Carving' (plate 22).



Plates 23 & 24. Interior of Holy Trinity Church, Hull. George Peck's commission involved the design and execution of more than 200 'medieval' carvings. Photograph Bill Marsden.

In April 1842, the Churchwardens of Hull's Holy Trinity Church called a meeting to determine whether the funds they had in hand should be applied 'to the REPAIR of the INTERIOR of the BUILDING'.⁶² An entry in Hull's Holy Trinity Church Improvement Committee Minute Book a few months later reads 'July 28 1842 [tender] Joiner and Carving G. Peck 2663'.⁶³ On 5 December 1845, the *Hull Advertiser* described in detail the 'RESTORATION OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH' which had taken place during the previous three years:

Although we speak of this church as restored, it must be borne in mind that the interior of the nave only has been rescued from misarrangement, mutilation, and progressive decay; and restored to good order and decent splendour...For some distance eastward from the font, the seats, or stalls, run transverse; so that the standards of solid oak (no other timber having been permitted to be used in the work) with elegantly carved 'poppy heads' from designs at York and Lincoln Minsters, executed by Mr. Peck, of this town, abut upon the aisles.

The largest Parish Church in England, parts of Holy Trinity date from the thirteenth century. The Church Council was not pleased with George Peck's medieval designs for the 1840s restoration, regarding them as pagan (plates 23, 24).⁶⁴ George Peck remained in Hull throughout the 1840s, the last advertisement for his Repository of Arts appearing in July 1849.⁶⁵

PROFESSOR OF MUSIC

When the census took place in England in March 1851 George Peck was in California. That month the *Hull Advertiser* had received a copy of the *Daily Balance* 'forwarded from San Francisco by Mr. George Peck, formerly carver and gilder, Savile-street, Hull' 66

As he had done earlier in the penal colony of Tasmania, George Peck sought to provide 'rational amusement' in California—a place where 'respectable inhabitants' were in the minority.

Promenade Concerts, à la Julien—Messrs. Simonson and Peck have the pleasure to announce that their first



Plate 25. The San Francisco Quadrilles, arranged from the most favourite Negro melodies was composed by George Peck c.1852. It was published by Joseph F Atwill (California's first music publisher), lithographed by B.F Butler, and signed on the same 'Rey' (Jacques Joseph Rey). They were three of the most prominent names in Gold Rush lithography. The Book Club of California, California Sheet Music Co., San Francisco, 1959. Lester S. Levy Collection of Sheet Music, Milton S. Eisenhower Library of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.



Plate 26. The Australian Masonic Waltzes, composer George Peck. Published by J.R Clarke, Sydney, 1859. La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria, LTAEF-70 Australian Cuttings.

Promenade Concert having been completely successful, they will give their second concert on Sunday evening next, May 9, at the elegant Saloon of the Arcade...on which occasion, with considerable addition to their force, they will perform a selection of the most beautiful classic and lively music; interspersed with songs, solos and a variety of new musical effect, never before heard in this country. The orchestration will consist of the following, viz: Mr. Simonson, the astonishing violinist; two pianofortes, played by those esteemed artists, Messrs Linden and McKorkell; Mr. Ehrich, the favourite violin-cellist; Mr. Peck, the admirable violinist...⁶⁷

In 1852 his composition *The San Francisco Quadrilles* (plate 25) was published.⁶⁸ Like so many others, he soon looked to the opportunities created by Australia's Gold Rush. Following a brief visit to England, he returned to Australia, after an absence of thirteen years.

REST FOR THE WEARY

Why is the Port side deck cabin in the *Kent* like a bushel measure? Because it contains four Pecks.

The Kent Chronicle or Bubbles from the Brine, March 1853

George Peck's surname provided one of his fellow

passengers aboard the *Kent* with the inspiration for this contribution to the ship's handwritten newspaper. 'Cabinn'd, cribb'd, confined', they were en route from England to Port Phillip, 'to the diggings and to wealth'.⁶⁹

In 1853 and 1854 Melbourne Directories George Peck is listed as a 'Professor of Music'. As well as teaching, he became involved in Promenade Concerts, first as one of two 'primo violinists' in the Grand Promenade Concerts at Rowe's Circus, and later as manager of Promenade Concerts at the Theatre Royal.⁷⁰

When a meeting to discuss a code of rules for the constitution of the newly formed Victorian Society of Fine Arts was held in 1856:

MR PECK and MR. L. BECKER took part in the discussion and the latter suggested the very establishment of a School of Design would be the best thing that could be done towards the great object of the society viz., the promotion of the Fine Arts only. Mr. PECK drew a distinction between Schools of Design for purposes of utility and a school for the Fine Arts.⁷¹

In Hobart and Hull, George Peck had promoted 'Splendid Raffles', Lotteries, or 'Fine Art Distributions'. The prizes ranged from a 'fine Percussion double Gun, with case &c.',⁷² to 'a beautiful CARVING in Alto Relievo, by PECK, of the justly-celebrated JENNY LIND'.⁷³ In Melbourne he called them Art Unions, his most ambitious being 'in connection with Mr. George Rowe, a water-color painter of considerable

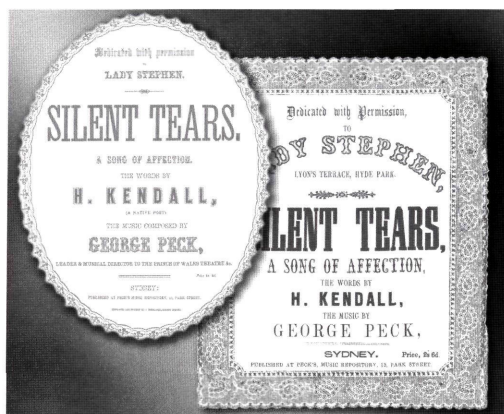


Plate 27. *Silent Tears*. Composer George Peck, Words by H. Kendall. Published by Peck's Musical Repository, Sydney, 1859. 'In private musical circles, a new song has, within the last few days, been favourably spoken of. It is entitled "Silent Tears," composed by Mr. George Peck, a musician of considerable merit, whose "Australian Masonic Waltzes" we took a recent opportunity of noticing... The song, which is dedicated by permission to Lady Stephen, is written by a young native poet, Mr. H. Kendall... If Young Australia continue to write sentiments of this character, so touchingly expressed, we need not fear seeing this colony take a position in the paths of poetry and literature.' *Empire* 8 December 1859. Jan E. McLaren, Henry Kendall. A Comprehensive Bibliography, University of Melbourne, 1987, pp. 33, 34. There were printing mistakes in the lyrics, and printer John Degonardi reprinted the work with changes to the wrapper, but not the lyrics. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW; music Files/Peck. Design: Sarah Markland.



Plate 28. George Peck (1810-1863). *Hamlet*, Act 3, scene 2, pine, cedar frame. Carved panel: 720.0 x 505.0 mm. In mid 1858 George Peck visited Hobart as leader of the orchestra for a season at Hobart's Theatre Royal by the great tragedian actor G.V. Brooke. On 28 June 1858, just before the season ended, the *Hobart Town Courier* reported: '...Mr. Brooke's success in *Hamlet* was quite equal to our expectations, and the whole of the performance had a most tumultuous and over powering effect upon one of the largest audiences which has ever assembled... The verso of the carving is inscribed "Geo Peck/Sculptor/1858", in an unknown hand. Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston

merit...consisting of views upon "the diggings" of Bendigo, Castlemaine, and adjacent locality.⁷⁴

They are fifty in number, and will be distributed between 420 subscribers at ?1 each. The collection is on view daily...together with a number of meritorious casts and designs in wood carving from the *atelier* of Mr. G. Peck, a gentleman already favourably known to the patrons of art in this city.⁷⁵

After visiting Hobart in mid 1858 (as leader of the orchestra for a season by actor G.V. Brooke at the Theatre Royal) (**plate 28**) George Peck moved to Sydney. There he joined with painter and photographer William Bradley in staging several Novelty Balls at the Rotunda Gardens in late 1858.⁷⁶

The following year George Peck opened Peck's Music Repository at 13 Park Street Sydney. In 1859 Peck's Music Repository published *The Australian Masonic Waltzes* (**plate 26**), followed by '*Silent Tears*, A song of Affection...The Words by H. Kendall (A Native Poet)/ The Music composed by George Peck, Leader & Musical Director of the Prince of Wales Theatre &c.'⁷⁷ The song was dedicated to Lady Stephen (**plate 27**).⁷⁸ During the next few years, Peck's Music Repository published other music, including *The Power of Love* and *Australian Musical Bouquet*.

George Peck died at Kingston, Petersham, Sydney in 1863, aged 52. When registering the death, his son Felix gave his father's occupation as 'Professor of Music' and the cause of death 'liver complaint'.⁷⁹ One of those present when George Peck died was stage manager and actor John Taylor. Both had arrived in Tasmania in 1833, part of the 'Corps dramatique' which staged the penal colony's first 'theatricals'.

In 1863 few other residents of Sydney would have known of George Peck's many accomplishments—there was no obituary in Sydney newspapers, only a death notice which read:

On the 20th instant, at ten minutes past one a.m. Mr. George Peck, violinist and professor of Music, pupil of Mr. John Thirwall and C. Sivori, youngest and eighth son of Mr. Thomas Peck, merchant, of Hull, England. His end was peace. He died greatly esteemed and respected by all who knew him, aged 52 years.⁸⁰

'Rest for the weary', the final words on his tombstone⁸¹ are a fitting epitaph to George Peck, Purveyor of the Fine Arts in Colonial Australia. This research celebrates his 'spirit and exertions'⁸² and the diversity of his talents.

Author

Robyn Lake and her husband Denis are collecting material on the history of furniture in Tasmania from European settlement to the 1930s. Their extensive research covers the manufacture, importation, sale and use of furniture.



Footnotes continued on
page 154

‘John Glover and the colonial picturesque’

The artist and the exhibition

DAVID HANSEN

John Glover (1767-1849) is possibly the most important landscape painter working outside Europe in the 1830s. He is without doubt the finest Australian landscape painter of the early colonial period.

Although posthumously overshadowed by his great contemporaries Turner and Constable, Glover enjoyed a successful career in Regency Britain, both as a fashionable drawing master and as a prolific and popular exhibitor.

In 1831 he migrated to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), settling at *Patterdale* in the island colony's mid-north. In a new land, a new light, he re-made his art: with sinuous blackwoods in place of sturdy oaks, Aborigines in place of classical shepherds, the dappled grey bush in place of the smooth green shade of European forest. Glover was the first artist to see and represent the precise differences between Australian and European landscape.

He was a remarkable, eccentric man (**plate 1**). More than six feet (183 cm) tall and weighing over 18 stone (114 kg), with two club feet, he rose from rural obscurity to become one of England's most widely-admired painters, a significant art scene operator, a wealthy man and the familiar of aristocrats. Energetic, good-humoured, mischievous and something of a ladies' man, he was an inveterate traveller, a keen musician, a connoisseur of poetry, a tamer of wild birds and a collector of old razors. In his retirement, he travelled half-way around the world, established a successful farm and invented Australian landscape art.

THE ARTIST

Largely self-taught, John Glover began his artistic career as a school writing master in his native Leicestershire. Extending his graphic skills and his client base, in the 1790s he became a successful freelance drawing master, teaching the Midlands gentry and their children the Picturesque style of watercolour then in vogue.

The Picturesque aesthetic combined elements of classical calm (from Claude Lorrain), Romantic drama (from Salvator Rosa) and rural domesticity (from Dutch artists such as Aelbert Cuyp). These three strands also had British exemplars, respectively Richard Wilson, John Robert Cozens and Thomas Gainsborough; their influence helped to make Picturesque painting and Picturesque tourism the great cultural fad of the 1790s and 1800s.

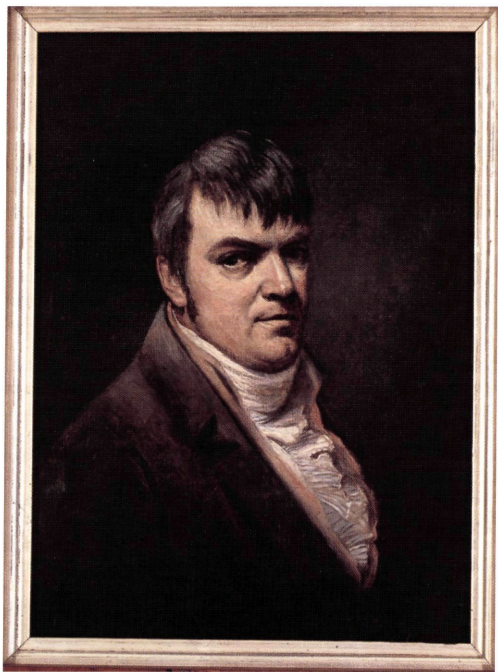


Plate 1. John Glover (1767-1849), An Emigrant to Van Diemen's Land 1830, oil on cedar panel, 38.7 x 28.7 cm. Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, gift of S.D. Bowles.

Glover rode to artistic prominence on this tide of fashion. Although never a Royal Academician, he enjoyed wide popular, critical and market success throughout the first two decades of the 19th century, as a member and sometime President of the Society of Painters in Water Colours, and later as one of the founders and again President of Society of British Artists. He was awarded a gold medal from the Paris Salon of 1814, and was one of the first generation of British artists to hold a solo commercial exhibition, staging his own shows in London between 1820 and 1824.



Plate 2. John Glover (1767-1849), *Mount Wellington and Hobart Town from Kangaroo Point 1834*, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 152.4 cm. Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery and National Gallery of Australia. Purchased with funds from the Art Foundation of Tasmania Glover Appeal and the Nerissa Johnson Bequest, 2001.

In 1829, at the height of the Swan River emigration boom, three of Glover's sons moved to Van Diemen's Land. A year later, Glover, his wife Sarah and eldest son John followed them to the other side of the world.

Before their departure, Glover wrote to his patron Sir Thomas Phillipps: 'the expectation of finding a new Beautiful World – new landscapes, new trees, new flowers new Animals, Birds, &c. &c. is delightful to me', and the Australian environment did in fact revitalise the aging artist's work. His Tasmanian paintings are, as suggested above, arguably the finest landscapes painted outside Europe in the 1830s. Most of Australia's early settler artists were naval draughtsmen, convict forgers or amateur sketchers; their work is often fascinating but in terms of style generally formulaic or coarse. As the first professional artist to migrate to the Antipodes, Glover was the first to render its light and colour, its form and foliage with real finesse, with what the distinguished art historian Bernard Smith has described as 'a fresh, unaffected and essentially empirical vision'.

Nevertheless, Glover also brought to the new landscape his conventional Picturesque language of composition and staffage. What is truly remarkable about his later, Australian paintings is the way they combine inherited artistic tradition and clear-eyed 'on the spot' observation. In the place of Picturesque Welsh and Lake District mountains, Glover shows us Mt Wellington (plate 2) and Ben Lomond (plate 3). Instead of sturdy oaks in British woods we see twisting eucalypts on the edge of open grasslands. Aborigines hunting and dancing stand in for courting nymphs and shepherds.

After six months in Hobart Town, Glover received a grant of land in the north-east of the colony, a property he named *Patterdale* in memory of his former home in Cumbria. Over the next twenty years, he and his sons (and their assigned convict servants) developed the property into a thriving agricultural and pastoral establishment, whose beauty and bounty are recorded in such iconic images as *A View of the Artist's House and Garden...* (plate 4) and *My Harvest Home* (plate 5).

Glover sent an exhibition of (mostly) Australian paintings to London in 1835, but sales were few and criticism focussed on the curiosity of the subjects rather than the artistic merits of the work. Nevertheless, he continued to paint prolifically throughout the 1830s, both local scenes and an increasing number of nostalgic Old

World images: British and Italian landscapes reworked from memory and sketchbook studies. John Glover died at his home at *Patterdale* in 1849, at the age of 82.

THE EXHIBITION

John Glover and the Colonial Picturesque is the first extensive Glover exhibition for 26 years. Apart from a single undergraduate thesis, the only previous focussed study of the artist's work was the exhibition John McPhee curated for the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston in 1977. Comprising 21 oil paintings, 28 watercolours, seven sketchbooks and three etchings, the show toured to all Australian State capitals and two regional galleries. Its popular and critical success led to the publication of a short monograph in 1980.

The market for colonial art which was becoming established in the late 1970s grew rapidly towards (and now beyond) 1988, the bicentenary of European settlement of Australia. Over the past 20 years, previously unknown or untraced pictures have surfaced in salerooms both in the United Kingdom and in Australia, among them *Ben Lomond from Mr Batman's Ground*, *A View between the Swan River and King George's Sound*, and the celebrated *Mount Wellington and Hobart Town from Kangaroo Point* (plate 2). In the same period the disciplines of art history and curatorship have matured rapidly in Australia, and Glover's importance in the stories of British and Australian art has been re-evaluated.

John McPhee retained his research interest in the artist in curatorial appointments at the National Gallery of Australia and the National Gallery of Victoria, and is a welcome guest essayist in the exhibition publication. Other scholars such as Hammond Smith in the UK and Ian McLean in Australia have provided new, extended or revised perspectives, while McLean's extensive research and theorising about Glover's Aboriginal paintings also features in the catalogue.

Given these recent developments, the current exhibition is more ambitious in scale and scope than the 1977 Launceston show. It comprises 51 oil paintings, 38 drawings and watercolours, 11 etchings and engravings and 11 sketchbooks.

But what do such statistics mean? Firstly, the oil paintings. One of the oft-quoted references to Glover in the art-historical literature is Royal Academy President Martin Archer Shee's quip that Glover 'has tumbled into oils'. Although it is true that

Plate 3, John Glover (1767-1849), Mills' Plains, Ben Lomond, Ben Loder & Ben Nevis in the distance 1836, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 152.5 cm, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Purchased with the assistance of the George Adams Estate 1935.



Glover's considerable initial success as a teacher and exhibitor was largely achieved through the medium of watercolour, he was certainly painting in oils before 1800.

The exhibition attempts to represent the full breadth of his work in this medium. In the catalogue, Erica Burgess, Senior Conservator of Paintings at the Tasmanian Museum, provides an account of his materials and methods. Primarily a landscapist, Glover's work covers several distinct sub-categories within the field: country house portraits, views of castles and churches in an antiquarian spirit, Claudean-classical and Dutch-realist pastorals, wild dramatic prospects, Romantic moonlights and more domestic local topographies. In the later, Australian work, he reiterated these modes in the context of a strange and alien geography.

In terms of location, the work traverses Glover's native Midlands, Wales, the Lake District, Scotland, London and environs, Italy and Switzerland, the Isle of Wight and the Isle of Arran, the island of Madeira en route to Australia and finally Van Diemen's Land, including both major settlements of Hobart Town and Launceston, and a range of sites near the artist's family's farms.

There are ten pictures of Aborigines are possibly the most important and certainly the most often employed of Glover's distinctively Australian motifs. He also indulged a late nostalgia for Europe, working up numerous British and Italian subjects from his

many sketchbooks, all shown (somewhat weirdly) under bright blue Antipodean skies.

While landscape was Glover's main métier, rare examples of portraits and animal pictures of cattle and birds show he pursued other classes of painting. He also famously owned, and exhibited alongside his own work, two paintings by Claude Lorrain and one by Richard Wilson. The Claudes, a version of his Wilson and a work he owned which was attributed to Salvator Rosa have all been located, and shown again alongside his work reveal the sources of his style.

With regard to works on paper, Glover's celebrated large exhibition watercolours have suffered badly from the fading of indigo and other fugitive vegetable pigments; and in five years of exhibition research none was found which survived in anything like original condition. However, several 'glorious ruins', as well as a number of smaller works are relatively well preserved, having been kept in folios or now-broken sketchbooks.

Some of these show Glover's early influences (artists such as John Robert Cozens, Edward Dayes and William Payne) or particular technical processes. Some were selected to illustrate biographical/historical anecdote, some to elucidate patterns of criticism and/or patronage. The thematic and geographical distribution of the watercolours is very much as for the oils.



Plate 4, John Glover (1767-1849), A View of the Artist's House and Garden, in Mills' Plains, Van Diemen's Land 1834-5, oil on canvas, 76.4 x 114.4 cm. Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund 1951.



Plate 5, John Glover (1767-1849), My Harvest Home 1835, oil on canvas, 76, x114 cm. Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, gift of Mrs Cecil Allport 1935.



Plate 6. *John Glover* (1767-1849), Hobart Town, taken from the Garden where I lived 1832, oil on canvas, 74 x 150 cm. Dixon Galleries, State Library of New South Wales, presented by Sir William Dixon 1938.

Unlike a number of his British contemporaries such as Turner, William Havell and John Martin, Glover produced few print editions, one possible reason for his being so quickly forgotten in his home country. However, he did pull a small number of etchings in the 1790s, and several engravings after his originals also survive, both from his early, Midlands career and from London in the 1820s. Selected examples of these works are incorporated in the exhibition, and discussed in a catalogue essay by Roger Butler, Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings and Illustrated Books at the National Gallery of Australia.

Finally, there are the sketchbooks, in many ways collectively Glover's major work; he took no fewer than 104 books of drawings with him to Van Diemen's Land in 1831. They contain not only preparatory studies for major oils and watercolours, but also a wealth of incidental information on the artist's travels, interests, aesthetics, working methods etc. The sketchbooks feature daily observations of people, places and animals including such remarkable images as an Arab camel train, a Welsh witch, performing bears, the 1809 fire at the Drury Lane Theatre and several biblical subjects. He wrote extensive textual notations, from financial accounts and teaching notes to descriptions of views and cloud formations, as well as numerous quotations from contemporary poets and novelists.

His Australian sketches are equally extraordinary, not only showing how he saw and represented a new environment, but also featuring strange and significant individual images: an *Adam and Eve* in the bush, eye-witness portraits of the last of the 'wild' Tasmanian Aborigines in Hobart Town before their deportation to Flinders Island, Aborigines enacting the classical myth of *Diana and Actaeon*, convict servants at work and at leisure, affectionate caricatures of his son John junior, even the urogenital tract of a kangaroo.

On Glover's death, the sketchbooks passed to his heirs, and then into colonial and metropolitan marketplaces. Many were broken up, or stripped of their more finished pages. The dozen shown in the exhibition serve as a reminder of their central importance to Glover's art practice, and in several cases show the first conceptions of particular oils and watercolours. Dr Max Staples of Charles Sturt University has

contributed an essay on the sketchbooks, as well as compiling a useful list of all known surviving examples.

John Glover and the Colonial Picturesque is the first extensive exhibition of the artist's work in a generation. It represents some five years work, by an obsessed curator and five distinguished scholars. Thanks to generous loans from more than a dozen public collections in Australia, Great Britain and the United States, and from as many private and corporate collections here and overseas, it contains numerous new discoveries in terms of pictures and documents, attributions and de-attributions, biographical detail and anecdote, social context and patronage, sources and influences, places and people. It features all the artist's best-known and best-loved works as well as numerous 'new' or rarely-seen pictures.

John Glover and the Colonial Picturesque is the first exhibition to attempt to define the artist's place in British art history, and represents his Australian work in the light of contemporary concerns such as indigenous reconciliation and the natural environment. It is a revelation.

John Glover and the Colonial Picturesque opens at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery on 28 November 2003. It opens at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide on 18 February (the artist's birthday, and the anniversary of his arrival in Van Diemen's Land), then travels to the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 24 April – 18 July and the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 13 August – 3 October.

Principal sponsor of the national tour of *John Glover and the Colonial Picturesque* is Mazda Australia. Sponsors of the exhibition are Channel 7, Triple M, Singapore Airlines and Accor Asia Pacific, and the Australian Government through Visions of Australia and Art Indemnity Australia. Research and development of the exhibition was supported by Visions of Australia, the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, the Farrell Fund of the San Diego Foundation, the Gordon Darling Foundation and the National Library of Australia ■

William Webster Hoare's Natural History Drawings

PETER WALKER

A bound group of 23 natural history drawings by William Webster Hoare, executed on the South Australian Survey Expedition to survey Darwin in 1869–70, was recently discovered. They have brought to light the works of a skilled artist, and some historically important works relating to the early settlement of the Northern Territory.

W.W. Hoare was appointed as Assistant Surgeon to the Survey Expedition that was led by the Surveyor General of the Colony of South Australia, George W. Goyder. Hoare had arrived in Brisbane in 1860 and then settled in Adelaide by 1865. Contemporary records show that he had some artistic training. On the Expedition, he completed many paintings of both natural history subjects, and more general scenes of camp life and the surrounding landscape. During the Survey Hoare was instrumental in many of the contacts with the local

Aborigines and contemporary reports demonstrate that he had quite a strong following among his peers.

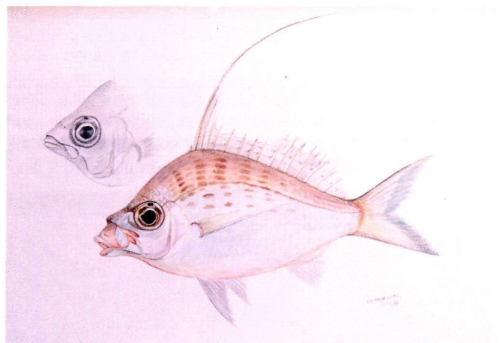
The State Library of South Australia holds Hoare's manuscript diary for 1869 and several scrapbooks that he assembled during his life which contain ephemera and newspaper cuttings related to him.

On the return of the Expedition, the South Australian Colonial Legislature received Hoare's drawings from the Expedition, which were then bound in several volumes and given to the Governor, Sir James Fergusson. As was typical of the time, the Governor did whatever he saw fit with his gifts and this group was probably presented to a South Australian acquaintance. An undated newspaper cutting of the period contains a letter to the editor in which Hoare states his displeasure at the Governor being given the works, as he had plans to lithograph them.

This group of works contains pen, ink and watercolour drawings of plants, fish and crabs. They are very well executed and highly representative of the species they depict. Each sheet measures 29.5 x 43 cm, and several of the drawings are possibly the first known of their species in Northern Australia. As the works have been bound, they have not suffered the problems created when displayed to the light over many years and have extremely fresh colours. Hoare obtained specimens from the local Aborigines as well as the other members of the expedition, and the colours used in the drawings indicate that he must have painted from live specimens or very freshly killed examples.

All the works are signed, and many dated, and it is of immense value to researchers that many can be linked to the actual descriptions and comments he makes under the related dates in his diary. Several of these examples are illustrated.

The importance of early natural history drawings both as historical documents and as tools that can help in the study of



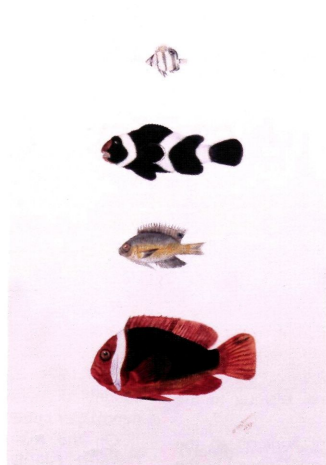
William Webster Hoare (1841–1927), diary 16/10/1869: 'I painted a curious fish (and sketch of this fish)'.



William Webster Hoare (1841–1927), diary, 20/11/1869: 'I painted an Eel of rather a curious shape head'.



William Webster Hoare (1841–1927), diary, 8/11/1869: (Blue Spotted Fantail Stingray) 'I painted a curious fish belonging to the Rays of a bright red colour with blue spots the tail is more like an Eels with a thorny projection but other rays have a whip like tail. The length of the body is 7 inches with 7 inches of tail.'



William Webster Hoare (1841–1927), diary, 4-5/11/1869: extensive diary entry with painting and colour chart of these fish.



William Webster Hoare (1841–1927), diary, 11/11/1869: 'I painted the Eugenia with young fruit and leaves also a whole ripe fruit.'

the present day environment and its changes over the years cannot be overstated. Further research on these drawings, and hopefully the discovery of more of W.W. Hoare's works, will contribute to the greater understanding of conditions experienced in the early days of white exploration of the northern areas of Australia.

These drawings from the 1869 Expedition are now in the collection of the State Library of South Australia.

References

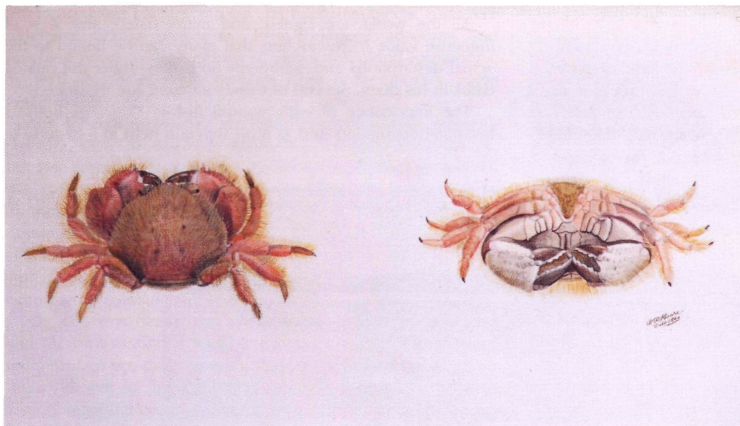
W.W. Hoare, Diary and Ephemeral Books. Held at the State Library of South Australia, Box PRG 294

J. Kerr, *The Dictionary of Australian Artist. Painters, Sketchers, Photographers and Engravers to 1870*, OUP, Melb., 1992

M.G. Kerr, *The Surveyors. The Story of the Founding of Darwin*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1971

Acknowledgements

Phillip Jones of the South Australian Museum has done considerable research on Hoare, and his thoughts and comments were much appreciated. Special thanks to Mark Griffin for photography ■



William Webster Hoare (1841–1927), diary, 27/10/1869: 'I painted a hairy crab in two views viz. Upper and undersurface'.



William Webster Hoare (1841–1927), diary, 17/11/1869: 'I painted a beautiful lilac coloured crab'

Brass galleries on early Australian sideboards

KEITH OKEY

Keith Okey reviews the evidence for early Australian colonial sideboards having brass galleries instead of wooden ones.

A brass gallery on sideboards was fashionable in the British Isles from around 1780 until the 1820s, corresponding to the period of popularity of the six-legged sideboard.

The six-legged sideboard developed from the sideboard table, which usually had four legs (occasionally six), and was normally associated with separate pedestals at either end, but differed in not having drawers. Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Adam, Sheraton and George Smith were the main designers responsible for this fashion, publishing these designs in their manuals from 1770-1802. The six-legged sideboard was usually bow fronted, with four legs along the front, two legs on the ends of the rear, and without a back attached to the top of the sideboard.

Some Australian 'six-legged' sideboards in fact have eight legs, and this should be viewed with suspicion—perhaps just a quirk of Australian cabinet making, or perhaps indicating later construction. Exceptions are seen in the very large British sideboards greater than 6'6" or 2m wide that may have a greater number of legs. The six-legged sideboard is usually constructed with the backboard as a single, large piece of timber across the full width of the back, needing support only by legs at either end. If there is a variation or other method of construction, then

extra legs are added for support.

No English eight-legged sideboards are illustrated in Ralph Edwards' *Dictionary of English Furniture*. There were several earlier sideboard tables, one with eight and another with ten legs, most having four or six. Some of the Scottish and English sideboards had brass galleries, while the Irish tended to have wooden galleries. (plate 1)

The brass gallery supported a curtain and this was usually of green washable material attached by brass rings and hooks to the rails. The function of the gallery and curtain was to stop the splash of the meat juices or gravy while serving the meat, which was carved on the sideboard. Houses of this period had expensive, imported hand-painted and stencilled wallpapers including Chinese patterns, and the gallery and curtain provided a simple practical means of protecting these wallpapers. Some Scottish houses had leather curtains, which must have been wiped clean, while cloth curtains could be washed. The gallery was not used to display china plates.

The brass gallery usually ran straight along the back of the sideboard, without returns, often consisting of four upright brass columns (sometimes three) and two brass horizontal rails.



Plate 1. Six-legged Irish sideboard with wooden back, courtesy John Wilson Antiques.



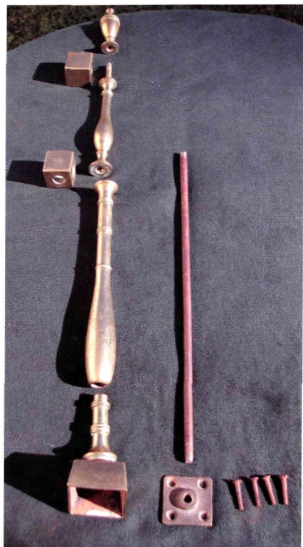


Plate 2. Brass column for supporting a gallery.



Plate 3. Six-legged casuarina veneered sideboard c. 1810, private collection.

Each column consisted of a tapered square base, lower and upper column (usually cast and turned brass) with intervening brass squares to fit the rails, adorned by a Neoclassical urn-shaped finial (plate 2). Each column was attached to the sideboard by a steel plate fixed by four screws. A steel rod inside the brass column held all the pieces together tightly.

Brass rings and hooks were fitted to the upper rail for attaching the curtain. Some variations are seen in the height of the rail, the attachment of candelabra, or patterns incorporated into the brass rails.

The demise of the brass gallery came shortly after the advent of the twin pedestal sideboard. The wooden backs that came with them often have Neoclassical, Thomas Hope architectural sloping backs, with acroteria or scrolls and acanthus leaves, and many more

variations extending through Victorian times to the Edwardian era.

In the three-volume *Dictionary of English Furniture*, Ralph Edwards illustrates 21 six-legged sideboards and eleven, or just over half, of these have brass galleries fitted. In Australia this is not the case. Though all other stylistic features and cabinet making detail together with the brass handles, escutcheons, locks and hinges have been copied exactly from Britain, no brass galleries appear to have survived today.

AUSTRALIAN SIX-LEGGED SIDEBOARDS

Searching the literature revealed more than 30 Australian six- and eight-legged sideboards. Their dates range from 1802–1850. Seven of these have eight legs, and eight have wooden backs, all post-1820. There may be more.



Plate 4. Six-legged casuarina veneered sideboard c. 1810, private collection.

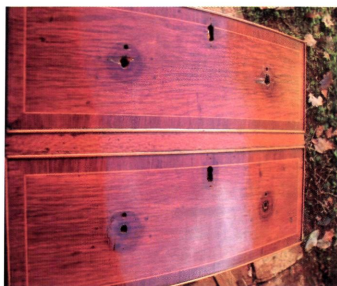
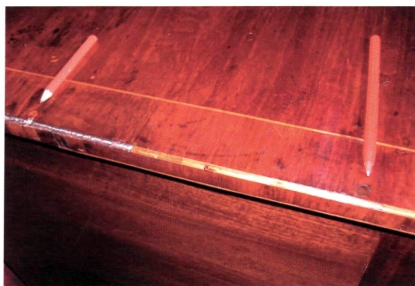


Plate 5a-c. Details of sideboard in Plate 4. Private collection.

After reviewing all these sideboards without a brass gallery, I found that only one sideboard had a brass gallery. Excluding those mentioned above as not of the right period or not having the right number of legs, this leaves about 20 period six-legged sideboards for comparison with the 21 English sideboards reviewed in Ralph Edwards' *Dictionary of English Furniture*.

Various explanations are possible for the lack of a gallery. Australians were quick to change with fashion and rapidly discard old things, or Australians didn't carve the joint on the sideboard but on the kitchen table, or didn't have wallpaper on the walls in the 1820s etc.

It must be remembered that social changes dictate furniture styles, not the reverse. There have been many lifestyle changes since Georgian times; the butler and the servants have gone, as has even the dining room in a modern house or apartment. The function and design of furniture has changed with these social changes, and change in fashion has seen furniture come and go, examples being cutlery boxes, wine coolers, tea poyes and tea caddies. Even the sideboard is out of fashion and often absent in a modern setting.

Plate 6. Six legged casuarina veneered sideboard with brass gallery added, c. 1810. private collection.



There follows a list of the extant sideboards that I have been able to trace, arranged first by the number of legs and then in approximate chronological order. A few of these may not be as early as they appear at first glance.

SIX-LEGGED SIDEBOARDS

1. Six-legged, casuarina veneered six-legged sideboard c. 1810, attributed to Lawrence Butler. Private collection, Sydney. Fahy, Simpson & Simpson, *op.cit.* pl. 136 (**Plate 3**).
2. Six-legged sideboard with casuarina veneer and central cupboard c. 1810, attributed to Lawrence Butler.¹ Private collection, Denham Court. Sotheby's sale 15 August 2000 lot 372; *Australiana* 25 no. 2 p. 57 pl. 4 (detail) (**plates 4, 5, 6**).
3. Six-legged sideboard with casuarina veneer, no gallery c. 1810. Private collection Queanbeyan.
4. Six-legged sideboard, the legs turned and ringed blackwood, no gallery, Tasmanian c. 1825, Fahy, Simpson & Simpson, *op.cit.* pl. 139.
5. Six-legged serving table with three [simulated or dummy]

- single drawers, casuarina veneer and pine stringing, no brass gallery, c. 1815. Powerhouse Museum. Fahy & Simpson *Pictorial Dictionary*. pl. 513.
6. Six-legged sideboard on turned legs with three single drawers across the top and pine stringing c. 1815. Private collection. *Ibid.* pl. 514.
 7. Six-legged sideboard, no gallery, c. 1815. Private collection, Sydney. *Ibid.* pl. 342.
 8. Six-legged sideboard, no gallery, c. 1815. National Gallery of Australia. *Ibid.* pl. 343.
 9. Six-legged sideboard, turned legs, no gallery, c. 1820. Private collection, Sydney. Fahy, Simpson & Simpson, *op.cit.* pl. 138.
 10. Six-legged sideboard, no gallery, c. 1815, now Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. It has been suggested that this sideboard may be Anglo-Indian. Fahy & Simpson *op.cit.* pl. 341.
 11. Six-legged blackwood sideboard c. 1820. Private collection, Longford. Craig, Fahy & Robertson, *Early Colonial Furniture* pl. 95.
 12. Six-legged sideboard, cedar, no gallery c. 1825. Private collection, Entally. Craig, Fahy & Robertson, *Early Colonial Furniture* pl. 208.
 13. Six-legged sideboard on turned and spiral twist legs with carved scroll back c.1825. Private collection. *Ibid.* pl. 345; Sotheby's sale 27 August 2002 lot 12.
 14. Six-legged sideboard on turned legs, classical wooden back with acroteria rising sun and shells c. 1825. Fahy & Simpson *op.cit.*
 15. Six-legged sideboard, no gallery c. 1820. *Rustic Charm* catalogue 1987 pl. 3.
 16. Six-legged blackwood sideboard c. 1820; *Rustic Charm* Commemorative Collection catalogue 1988 pl. 4.
 17. Six-legged sideboard, with acroteria c. 1830. Tasmanian origin, ex Binn's sale Hunter's Hill 1972. Dr James Broadbent collection.
 18. Six-legged sideboard with turned legs, no gallery, thought to be John Macarthur's sideboard, now in Old Government House Parramatta c. 1825.
 19. Six-legged sideboard with scroll wooden back c. 1840. Private collection. Fahy & Simpson *op.cit.* pl. 350.
 20. Six-legged sideboard, turned legs, with carved back and central cupboard c. 1840. Sotheby's 14 October 1989 lot 26.
 21. Six-legged sideboard on ringed and turned legs, top with beaded border but without gallery or back. Sotheby's sale 15 August 2000, lot 408.
 22. Six-legged sideboard, turned legs with low wooden back and stringing. Swan Murray & Hain sale, 12 June 1997.
 23. Six-legged sideboard with spiral twist and turned legs, wooden back and shelf, ebony inlay, late Regency c. 1825-50. Swan Murray & Hain sale, 8 June 2003 lot 193; *Australiana* 25 no. 2 p. 77. (plate 7)
 24. Six-legged sideboard on turned legs with wooden Palladian back c. 1850. Goodman's sale 1 July 2002, lot 402.
 25. Six-legged sideboard with Palladian wood back. Swan Murray & Hain sale, 9 June 1998 lot 670.
 26. Six-legged sideboard without back or gallery. Swan Murray & Hain sale, 28 April 2002 lot 374.
 27. Six 'screw in' legged sideboard, cedar, no gallery. Private collection c.1835.
 28. Six-legged sideboard on turned legs, classical scroll back c. 1840.

EIGHT-LEGGED SIDEBOARDS²

29. Eight-legged sideboard with low wood back, once at Experiment Farm, now in Old Government House Parramatta. Craig, Fahy & Robertson, *op.cit.* pl. 94.



Plate 7. Six-legged sideboard, c. 1825-30, Swan Murray & Hain sale 8 June 2003 104193

30. Eight-legged sideboard very similar to the above in Old Government House Parramatta. This and the preceding one both have low backboards [not quite a matched pair], no brass gallery. Fahy, Simpson & Simpson, *19th Century Aust. Furniture*, pl. 137.
31. Eight-legged, rose mahogany sideboard c. 1810. Private collection, Sydney. Fahy & Simpson *Australian Furniture Pictorial History & Dictionary* pl. 340.
32. Eight-legged blackwood sideboard without gallery, back or backboard. Sotheby's sale 15 August 2000, lot 398 unsold.
33. Eight-legged sideboard without gallery or back. Sotheby's sale 15 August 2000, lot 417.
34. Eight-legged sideboard, tapered legs, no gallery. Swan Murray & Hain sale, 31 March 1990 lot 357.
35. Eight-legged sideboard on turned legs with carved wooden back c. 1835. Swan Murray & Hain sale, 23 May 1993 lot 402.

FOUR-LEGGED SIDEBOARD

36. Four-legged sideboard with brass gallery c. 1840. Private collection, Tasmania.

This sideboard should not have been included as it has only four legs and is the 'wrong period', but it is the only four-, six- or eight-legged cedar sideboard that certainly had a brass gallery. The sideboard has two large drawers on each side, with two single drawers in the centre standing on octagonal legs. It has been in the possession of the one owner for 40 years and was bought with a three-column brass gallery, with two cross rails and a faded yellow/fawn silk curtain. Two dealers have seen and confirmed the existence of the brass gallery. Unfortunately, during moving house ten years ago, the gallery was lost in transit and no photograph is available.

A cedar twin pedestal sideboard c. 1830 with brass gallery has been found in the storerooms of the Powerhouse Museum. There are screw holes in the back of the top suggesting that it may have had a wooden back at some stage. The gallery consists of two columns and a single cross rail at the top and is considered a reproduction.

CONCLUSION

Of all the six-legged cedar Australian sideboards that I have seen, none has a brass gallery. All the other stylistic features and cabinet making detail, together with the brass handles,

escutcheons, locks and hinges, have been copied from the British sideboards exactly. Yet only one brass gallery survived.

Only two of the senior and experienced dealers that I have spoken to have seen a brass gallery on a cedar sideboard. As a result of considerable discussions, several questions need to be asked and answered. The first is, *were brass galleries ever fitted to Australian sideboards?*

When you consider that the fashion of fitting brass galleries was in vogue for 30-40 years on British six-legged sideboards and persisted into the 19th century, it is reasonable to assume that this fashion reached the Australian colonies. There is a high probability that a brass gallery was fitted to a few of the very limited number of cedar six-legged sideboards produced in New South Wales and perhaps Van Diemen's Land during that period.

If so, *what has happened to the galleries?* They were removed because they became unfashionable and the metal was scrapped, brass being in great demand during two World Wars.

What about the screw holes in the rear of the top of the sideboard? With four screws in each of the four columns, there should be 16 holes. Surely there would be detectable repair signs? This proved to be a difficult question, until one dealer suggested the answer. These sideboards had considerable overhang of up to six inches (15 cm) at the back, due to the kick board on the skirting board keeping the furniture away from the damp wall so that mould does not develop.

Another dealer stated that it had been the procedure in the past with English sideboards, that if a new purchaser requested a gallery removed, then two inches (5 cm) or so was sawn off the back of the top, then planed, thus removing the tell tale screw holes from the gallery.

'But brass was in short supply in the early colony.' Without doubt this was partly due to the tax on brass imposed by UK Prime Minister Peel who, to finance war with the French, taxed everything from men's pocket watches to glass window panes. Copper was needed for gunmetal in cannons and rifles, but on the other hand brass handles, locks and hinges managed to make it to the cabinet maker's shops and it is reasonable to assume that some galleries also arrived in the colony.

A problem has arisen in the restoration of an early cedar six-legged sideboard, circa 1810 with profuse casuarina veneer on all drawers, casuarina cross banding on drawers and top with pine stringing and inlay to the front four legs.³ This sideboard (**plate 4&6**) is unusual in that it has a central cupboard with deep shelf to hold china urinal for the male guests to relieve their overfull bladders when the ladies had retired.

Hawkins attributes it to Irish-born cabinet maker Laurence Butler.⁴ Butler⁵ came out on the transport *Atlas* together with the *Hercules* arriving in Sydney Cove in 1802 and out of 320 convicts loaded 127 died on the voyage out. No doubt the 2,166 gallons of rum on board left little room for fresh provisions.

Butler was assigned to the Government Lumber Yard and was allowed to practice his trade as a cabinetmaker, making furniture for the army and administration. Butler set up his cabinet making business in Pitt St, and his first advertisement appeared in the *Sydney Gazette* of 2 November 1811. Pardoned in 1813, he ran his own workshop till his death in 1820.

This sideboard by Lawrence Butler now resides in *Denham Court*, the house first owned by Captain Richard Brooks, captain of the *Atlas*, on that fateful voyage that Butler was lucky to survive.

The problem that was encountered during restoration of the Butler sideboard was the finding of repaired screw marks at either end of

the top, four at the left and two on the right side but none on the back. Questions were asked, *had there been a brass gallery?* It was thought that these marks were not from a brass gallery (**plate 5a**).

There was evidence that the fourth set of handles were being fitted, the third set of old locks, the third set of escutcheons, and we decided to fit the 'second brass gallery circa 1800' to the sideboard (**plate 5b**).

The method chosen to fix the gallery was the reverse of what may have happened in the past. Two inches (5 cm) of old cedar was screwed to the back of the sideboard top, increasing the rear overhang to 3.5 inches (9cm), and the gallery screwed into this, thus not altering the top of the sideboard as bought. The gallery was 6 ft 3 inches wide (the sideboard was 6 ft 6 inches wide), and came off an English sideboard of c. 1800 some 20 years ago (**plate 6**).

I feel that this is 'authentic restoration' and have been unable to find written sources stating that galleries did not exist. I have discussed fitting a gallery to an Australian sideboard of the right period with numerous people interested in Australian furniture and of these 50% of personal opinions were positive.

Perhaps I am barking up the wrong tree? I think not, in any case there is now one four-legged and one twin pedestal colonial sideboard found with brass galleries, and now a six-legged colonial sideboard fully dressed out in the fashion of the period in which it was made (**plate 6**).

Are there any more that we have not heard of?

References

- Ralph Edwards, *Dictionary of English Furniture* Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge, vol 3 1986 pages 130-138
Historical feature *Daily Mirror* 12 September 1984 on the voyage of the *Atlas* and *Hercules* and events leading up to.
K. Fahy & A. Simpson *Australian Furniture, Pictorial History and Dictionary*
K. Fahy, C. Simpson and A. Simpson, *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*
J. Hawkins, *Australiana* Vol 25 May 2003
W.G. Joyner, 'Christina Brooks Essay', 2001 Liverpool Local History Library, Library title *The Brooks of Denham Court*
Sotheby's catalogues Colonial Furniture sales 1988-2002
Swan, Murray & Hain, Tocal Colonial furniture catalogues, Maitland 1988-2003
G. Dodd, Commemorative Collection catalogues Rustic Charm 1987-88

Notes

- 1 We know from early records that Laurence Butler favoured the use of casuarina, and was the only cabinet maker skilled in the cutting and use of casuarina veneers at that time.
- 2 The eight legged sideboard in the Australiana Fund (The Australiana Fund, 1990, pl. 43) is now considered to be of Indian origin; see J. Broadbent et al., *India, China, Australia*, p. 102.
- 3 Evidence from a senior cabinet-maker that the mode of construction used on the carcass, doors and drawers of the sideboard is 18th century, giving a very high probability of very early 19th Century manufacture in Sydney.
- 4 Sotheby's Sale Catalogue 15 August 2000 lot 372. John Hawkins illustrated a detail of this sideboard in his article 'Australian decorative arts in the Clyde Bank collection', *Australiana* May 2003 p. 57, where he attributes the stringing on this sideboard to a workman trained in the Edinburgh tradition, working in Butler's workshop. The pattern of inlay in the legs is identical as is the style and pattern of a similar sideboard (Fahy, Simpson & Simpson, *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture* plate 136) also attributed to Laurence Butler.
- 5 John Hawkins, 'The art of the cabinet-maker from the first settlement 1788-1820 - Part 2', *Australian Antique Collector* no. 26, June-December 1983, pp. 50-54 ■

Australia at Montreal Expo '67

SIMON JACKSON

The role of the International Exposition, Exhibition, World's Fair and Expo in the promotion of the art and design of the Northern Hemisphere has been often explored. Australia's participation at overseas events is less well known. Dr Simon Jackson from the National School of Design, Swinburne University of Technology, reports on the Australian Pavilion at Montreal's Expo'67, featuring live kangaroos and several hundred talking chairs.

Held in Montreal, Expo '67 was a reaction against the commercialism of the 1964 New York World's Fair. Whereas the US event had been little more than a huge carnival, the Canadian event attempted to be an educational and cultural event. This lofty ambition may be seen in the theme – 'Man and His World' – inspired by a quotation from writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: 'To be a man is to be convinced that one is taking a hand in building the world'. According to one critic, Expo '67 raised the vital point that the 'problems of urbanisation, over-population, and pollution of the environment are shared [by all nations]'. It was hoped that subsequent world exhibitions would arrive at shared answers.

Despite this emphasis on education at the Canadian event, the other aspects common to world exhibitions – propaganda and trade – were again in evidence. Photographs published in *Life* magazine of the interior of the US Pavilion with the Apollo

capsule and parachutes and the extraordinary Geodesic Dome itself reveal the aggressive propaganda of the world's 'super-power' nations was hard to stop.

THE AUSTRALIAN PAVILION

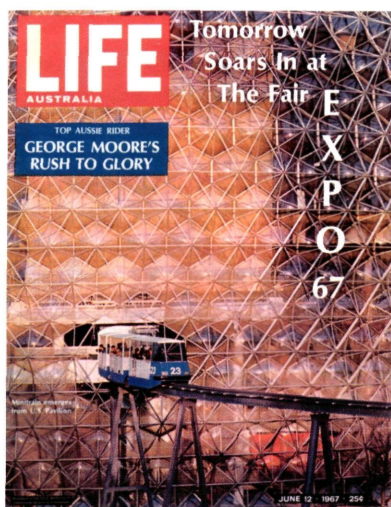
Expo '67 was the first event at which Australia exhibited abroad as an independent country with its own exhibition space. Australia's previous participation in a major international exhibition had been at the New York World's Fair three decades earlier as a part of the British Pavilion. Prime Minister Robert Menzies decided it was time Australia again presented itself to the world. Apparently some officials favoured a kangaroo-shaped building, but the Pavilion architect James Maccormick happily thought otherwise.¹

The architectural partnership of (Fredrick) Romberg and (Robin) Boyd were the exhibits architects, in charge of the interiors and displays. While most exhibition buildings are only ever intended to be temporary, the architecture of the Australian Pavilion was highly esteemed and considered worthy of remaining on site by the Canadian authorities. Built at the (then) enormous cost of \$3,000,000, the Australian Pavilion was one of the most popular with an estimated 20% of total Expo visitors attending.

The chief attractions of the Pavilion were the live kangaroos and the 240 flamboyant Expo '67 Talking Chairs. It is thought there were 1,000 visitors per hour who were guided through the building by 21 Australian 'hostesses' wearing clothes designed by the Prime Minister's wife. The display was organised into four categories: 'The Australian Way-of-Life'; 'The Arts'; 'Science' and 'National Development'.

An idea of 'the Australian Way-of-Life' was given to the Canadian public through panels of photographs of Australians in characteristic activities, commentaries on the local culture by leading Australian newspaper cartoonists, and a display of Australia's flora and fauna – gum trees and live kangaroos and wallabies.

'The Arts' was an important display within the Australian Pavilion. While at earlier expos (such as the 1937 Paris Exposition Universelle) conservative 'impressionist' landscape paintings of sheep, cattle and agriculture seemed to represent Australia's reliance upon rural primary industries, the works on



Cover, Life Australia 12 June 1967 showing the Geodesic Dome of the US Pavilion



Interior of the Australian Pavilion with screens displaying Australians' "Way of Life", *Life Australia* 12 June 1967 p.33



Interior of the Australian Pavilion featuring Grant Featherston Expo Sound chairs, *Life Australia* 12 June 1967 p.32

display at Expo '67 were described by the Australian media as 'modern' and 'challenging'. The artists chosen were Fred Williams, William Dobell, Stan Rapotec, John Olsen, James Cant and Roger Kemp. But while Australia was eager to be regarded as a 'vital', modern country, the art display at the Australian Pavilion also challenged the widely held international notion that Australia was culturally 'young'. Aboriginal art was used to demonstrate the country's age and cultural depth.

'Science' was demonstrated by a scale model of the giant radio telescope at Parkes, which would subsequently transmit images of the successful American moon landing. Graphic displays showed 'three notable branches of original Australian research in medical science...and six examples of pre-eminent Australian research in agricultural science.' Australia's industrialisation seems to have been a dominant theme of the Australian Pavilion. 'National Development' was represented through further displays of high technology ranging from the gimmicky to the serious. Among the former was the automatic shoe-shiner which accosted visitors as they entered the Pavilion, while a more serious display contained a model of the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme, the world's largest such project of its day.

Furniture design is the intellectual plaything of designers and Expos are where they strut their stuff. Three local designers produced chair designs specifically for this Expo. Scottish-born industrial designer Kjell Grant was invited to design a chair specifically for Expo '67. He based the seat on a single cantilever leg mimicking the spring of a kangaroo's tail, but it was named the Montreal Chair in honour of the event.² Fred Lowen, Chief Designer for the Fler Company, also created a chair.³

But it was the talking chairs that drew the Canadian crowds' attention. The exhibits architect, Robin Boyd, commissioned Victorian designers Grant and Mary Featherston to produce a

chair for these conditions: a lounge chair, it had to withstand an estimated 20,000 people sitting on it and yet be light and comfortable. To meet such a tough brief, the method of construction of the Expo '67 Talking Chair was highly-engineered and completely new to Australian manufacturing. The shells were moulded in expanded, rigid polystyrene. This was undertaken by Danish De Luxe, a manufacturer of quality furniture based in Melbourne. The shell was then upholstered in polyurethane foam and wool by Aristoc Industries.⁴

Sitting in the chairs, one activated tape-recordings of the voices of prominent Australians discussing aspects of Australian arts and sciences: Sir Robert Menzies on natural resources, Rolf Harris on humour, Harry Hopman on sport, Morris West on the Australian character, Googie Withers on literature, and Prime Minister Harold Holt on industrial development. The languages spoken were French and English – orange upholstery signified the former, green the latter.

These chairs, along with the other exhibits of technology and the fresh 'modern' artworks on display helped redefine Australia's national identity away from the old emphasis on rural themes to one based on science, technology and the modern arts. The Australian Pavilion at Expo '67 also attempted to tell the rest of the world that Australia had moved from being part of the British Empire and was an independent country ready to do business.

Notes

¹ Robin Boyd, 'Expo '67: A Designer's World.' *Design Australia*, no. 1, 1967, p. 24.

² 'Soft-Spoken Chairs and Australian Art.' *Life Australia* vol. 42, no. 11, June 12 1967, p. 32.

³ Conversation Kjell Grant, Melbourne

⁴ 'Sebel Design Award 1967.' *Design Australia* vol. 1, no. 1, April/May 1967, p. 47.

⁵ Conversation Ian Howard, Melbourne ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

DEAR EDITORS,

At the end of our article 'Misdescription at Auction: Whose Responsibility?' in *Australiana* (Vol 25 No 1, February 2003, p 22), we referred to the practice of vendor bidding at auctions. We noted that undisclosed vendor bidding was likely to be outlawed in relation to real estate auctions in Victoria. We suggested this approach might be adopted in other jurisdictions, and that it might be extended to antique auctions as well.

Readers of *Australiana* may be interested to learn of two recent developments in this connection:

First, the Parliament of Victoria has now passed legislation forbidding undisclosed vendor bidding in real estate auctions (*Estate Agents and Sale of Land Acts (Amendment) Acts 2003*). The legislation is expected to come into force after being proclaimed by Executive Council early next year.

Second, the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission recently announced that it is investigating the practice of vendor bidding in real estate auctions. It is doing so on the basis suggested in our article – namely, that undisclosed vendor bidding may be a breach of section 52 of the Commonwealth *Trade Practices Act 1974*, which forbids misleading or deceptive conduct. The new Chair of the ACCC, Mr Graeme Samuel, said some time ago that the ACCC was encouraging numerous industry groups to put their own houses in order by adopting acceptable Codes of Practice to govern the conduct of participants in the industry. We hope that auctioneers of antiques will respond swiftly and favourably to this encouragement, and will develop a Code of Practice that outlaws existing practices indulged in by some auctioneers and dealer-vendors that do not meet the standards of commercial behaviour required by the *Trade Practices Act*.

Helen and David Kelly

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DEAR EDITORS,

Since we wrote the article 'Rediscovered: the Jules Joubert inlaid cabinet by Peter Thomle' in the August issue of *Australiana*, further information has come to light concerning the remarkable Frenchman, Jules Joubert.

First, the South Australian genealogist, Kingsley Ireland, has kindly drawn our attention to three publications containing details of Jules's initially fruitless pursuit of the young Adelaide Levi, whom he eventually married in 1855 after she became of age. Each account refers to her brothers' distaste for the attention paid to Adelaide by the recently bereaved Frenchman, and to private and public confrontations stemming from the brothers' disapproval of the relationship and the proposed marriage.

The details can be found in J.I. Watts, *Family Life in South Australia*, Libraries Board of South Australia, *Australiana Facsimile Edition*, 1978, Ch 12; Kingsley Ireland, *Bibliophile*, The Friends of the State Library of South Australia, vol 7, no 8, 1994, p 10; and *The Register*, 18 August 1851.

Secondly, the recent publication by James Broadbent et al., *India, China, Australia, Trade and Society 1788-1850*, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 2003, reveals a further link between Joubert and notable Sydney cabinetmakers (a direct link to Charles North Hunt is referred to in our article, at note 33). At p. 150, Broadbent refers to the fact that Andrew Lenahan was at one time the owner of the mansion *Potsdam* (later called *Windermere*), which was one of the houses built at Hunter's Hill in the 1850s by Jules and his brother Didier.

Hopefully, information will continue to come to light to add to our knowledge of this gifted early Australian adventurer and entrepreneur.

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The State Library of Victoria's Cowen Gallery

The State Library of Victoria has gathered up some of its treasures in one new exhibition space, the Cowen Gallery, which opened on 27 November.

Curator Michael Galimany has selected 150 works, highlighted by William Strutt's panoramic painting of the horrendous bushfires *Black Thursday, 1851* and Thomas Robertson's painting of the *The Clipper Ship Marco Polo*. Sir Redmond Barry, founder of the Library, Chancellor of Melbourne University and the judge who passed sentence on Ned Kelly, is one of a group of portraits of civic-minded men.

Helping mark the Library's 150th birthday in 2004, the Cowen Gallery is named after benefactors Alan and Mavourneen Cowen. The gallery is located in two octagonal rooms linked by the main hall. The North Rotunda displays 19th century portraits of Victoria's early settlers and personalities against rich red walls, while the South Rotunda features mainly 20th century portraits of authors, artists and donors against a soft blue recreating the original 1928 colour scheme.

It's not the most scintillating collection of art, but there are interesting topographical views of Victoria, and the formal portraits of worthy citizens might have been instructive and uplifting in their heyday. Entry is free ■



(Above) Watt Webb, Miss Janet Russell (later Mrs John Biddulcombe of Golf Hill), 1890, oil on canvas, gift of Mrs Robina Lockyer 1980.

(Left) Thomas Robertson, The Clipper Ship Marco Polo 1859, oil on canvas, 87.4 x 136 cm.

(Below) William Strutt, Black Thursday, February 6th, 1851, 1862, oil on canvas, 107 x 188 cm.



The Low-Down on Successful Antique Furniture Buying

CHRISTIAN DA SILVA

To minimise mistakes and paying too much, furniture conservator

Christian Da Silva offers some super-easy tips.

Whether you buy your antique furniture from auction houses, antique dealers, second-hand stores or even garage sales, the principles are the same. There are bargains to be had if you have the know-how and the patience. All over the country, well-priced items are found lurking in dusty corners, and in some cases, right under everyone's noses!

First and foremost, stand well back from a piece of furniture and ask yourself, Does it have good proportions? Does it look complete? What was it used for? Do I actually like it? As the saying goes, first impressions count.

Secondly, inspect the piece very carefully. Try to identify the primary timbers used, and if there are any secondary timbers. For example, a cedar chest of drawers is not always made entirely of Australian Red Cedar. In many cases, the backboards and drawers are often made of pine or Western Red Cedar. Ensure that a piece that is described as cedar actually is cedar and not mahogany. It is a tricky one that has fooled professionals and amateurs on occasions. Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty to look underneath or behind it. If the piece is bulky and up against a wall, ask for it to be moved so you can examine the back.

If the piece comprises of more than one section, examine all the components to ensure that they are made in a similar fashion. For instance, some bookcases have an upper and lower section. If the lower section has well-constructed joints and the upper section looks like it has been slapped together, chances are that the two pieces don't belong together! Check for corresponding stylistic details such as moulding and decoration. Hardware, such as hinges and locks, should also match.

Search for any evidence of alterations. Look for some type of 'witness marks', whether it be a visible fixture point, i.e. a nail or screw hole, or a shadow line caused by uneven patination or oxidation.

You will find that antique pieces of furniture can have many incarnations over the course of their lives. Families move to smaller houses and adapt their furniture accordingly. The enormous elevated bookcase that once sat in the library is now a glass door bookcase with Queen Anne legs, and the bookcase base has become a chiffonier with an added gallery. Eventually tops and bases become united but not always with their original partners.

Consider the surface appearance of the piece. If the item is 150 years old, expect it to look its age and not brand new. Most items of furniture are utilitarian pieces, e.g. chests of drawers,



Christian Da Silva turns a chair over to examine its construction at an auction viewing.

wardrobes, tables and chairs etc. and wear and tear will be evident. Don't be put off by scratches and general wear. Bear in mind that these pieces often need some conservation work, whether it be a light clean and wax or replacing worn drawer runners. Most conservators, for a small fee, can provide condition reports and quotations for work required. With this knowledge, the buyer can factor in expenses before any large purchases.

Arm yourself with the best weapon possible... KNOWLEDGE! Ask the seller questions, speak to people in the know, ask your conservator or restorer. Read all relevant magazines and books. There are several books on Australian furniture that are invaluable to collectors.

Know your market. Go to as many shops and auction houses as possible and find out what the collectors are buying and how much they are paying.

Finally, and I can't stress this enough, always opt for quality over quantity. Buy the best that you can afford. It is better to have one very good piece than several average pieces.

At the end of the day, it's YOUR money, so make the most informed decision possible. Happy buying!

Christian Da Silva of Da Silva Restorations specialises in Australian Colonial furniture and traditional upholstery. Da Silva Restorations can be found at 30 Sydenham Road, Brookvale NSW, telephone 02 9905 4404 ■

Acknowledgements

George Peck's story led me from cabinetmakers, carvers & gilders, etc. to less familiar subjects. For guidance in researching his other activities, I am most grateful to the following: Ralph Hyde, London (Panoramas); Russell Naughton, Melbourne and Richard Bradshaw, Bowral (Theatre of Arts); Norman Staveley, Hull (Music), and Richard Neville, State Library of NSW. My thanks also to Jean Fenwick for video taping the carvings in Holy Trinity Church Hull; Gareth Watkins, Family History Unit, Kingston Upon Hull Central Library, and the Institutions who gave permission to reproduce works in their collections.

Note

To aid legibility, some contemporary newspapers extracts, sheet music etc. used in the article have been scanned and cleaned up.

- ¹ 'In the first half of the nineteenth century the meaning of the word "art" had not yet contracted to its present scope. Works of "fine" art and works of mere artifice or ingenuity were not as sharply differentiated as they are today, and, in the prevailing condition of public taste, the latter were at least as interesting objects for public exhibition as the former'. Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978, p. 397.
- ² *True Colonist*, 28 Feb 1835, p. 3, in this instance referring to Hobart's recently established Theatre.
- ³ George Peck baptism 24 Oct 1810 (Holy Trinity Church, Hull) and death notice, *SMH* 26 Sep 1863.
- ⁴ Arthur G. Credland, *Artists and Craftsmen of Hull and East Yorkshire*, Kingston Upon Hull City Council, 2000, pp. 22, 23.
- ⁵ *ibid.*, p. 23.
- ⁶ *Hull Advertiser* 17 Feb 1832 (from *Metropolitan* Feb 1832)
- ⁷ *ibid.*, p. 3
- ⁸ *Hobart Town Courier* 5 Jul 1833, p. 2.
- ⁹ *ibid.*, p. 3.
- ¹⁰ *Hobart Town Courier* 12 Jul 1833, p. 3.
- ¹¹ Edward Markham's controversial story is told in the Introduction to *New Zealand or Recollections of it*, Alexander Turnbull Library monograph, Wellington, NZ, 1963.
- ¹² *Launceston Independent* 23 Aug 1833, p. 3 (from the Review).
- ¹³ Norman Staveley, *Two Centuries of Music in Hull*, Beverley, Yorkshire, 1999. Camillo Sivori performed in concerts in Hull in 1843 and on 26/9/1845 when he was the chief artist at a concert staged by Louis Jullien, who was responsible for the establishment of Promenade Concerts in England.
- ¹⁴ *Colonial Times* 20 Nov 1832, p. 2.
- ¹⁵ *Tasmanian* 27 Dec 1833, pp. 411, 412.
- ¹⁶ *Colonial Times* 18 Nov 1834, p. 372.
- ¹⁷ *Morning Star and Commercial Advertiser* 28 Nov 1834.
- ¹⁸ *Morning Star and Commercial Advertiser* 28 Nov 1834.
- ¹⁹ *Bent's News* 13 Jan 1838, p. 2.
- ²⁰ When Hobart's Theatre Royal finally opened in 1837, George Peck was Leader of the Orchestra. It has a longer record of continuous service as a home for drama than any other playhouse in the Commonwealth. The name 'Theatre Royal' had been used earlier in Hobart for less permanent theatrical venues.
- ²¹ *Colonial Times* 28 Mar 1836, p. 287.
- ²² *Colonial Times* 5 Jan 1836, p. 7.
- ²³ *True Colonist* 22 Jan 1835, p. 1.
- ²⁴ John Pascoe Fawknor was an auctioneer, builder, butcher, baker

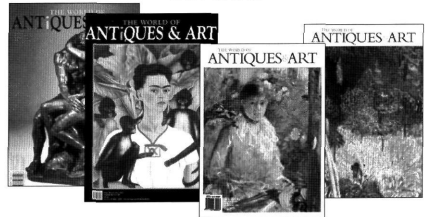
and orchardist. He ran a circulating library, coach service, and Launceston's first permanent newspaper, the *Advertiser*. In 1835 Fawknor and John Batman established the new settlement at Port Phillip. Peck and Fawknor continued their interest in 'the Fine Arts' throughout their lives; both were present at the inaugural meeting of the Victorian Society of Fine Arts in 1856.

- ²⁵ *Independent* 4 Oct 1834, p. 2.
- ²⁶ *Independent* 11 Oct 1834, p. 2.
- ²⁷ *True Colonist* 19 Feb 1835, p. 3.
- ²⁸ *True Colonist* 28 Feb 1835, p. 1. The only extant painting attributed to George Peck is an undated oil of Timsbury, Glenorchy, Tasmania (p.c.), reproduced in Michael Clark's *Big Clarke* (Carlton, Vic. 1980). It is inscribed 'G.H.P.'
- ²⁹ *Morning Star and Commercial Advertiser* 10 Apr 1835.
- ³⁰ *Colonial Times* 5 May 1835, p. 143.
- ³¹ *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review* 8 May 1835, p. 151.
- ³² For the story of Thiodon's Theatre of Arts see Richard Bradshaw, 'Thiodon's Wonders in Puppet History', *Australian Puppeteer* (The Magazine of UNIMA Australia), Part 1 Autumn/Winter 2000, pp. 19-21, Part 2 Spring 2000, pp. 25-27. For a fuller description of Theatre of Arts entertainments see www.acmi.net.au/AIC/PECK_BIO.html
- ³³ Anita Callaway, *Visual phenomena*, Sydney, 2000.
- ³⁴ *Hobart Town Courier* 28 Nov 1834, p. 3.
- ³⁵ *Colonial Times* 27 Oct 1835, p. 1.
- ³⁶ *Colonial Times*, 27 Oct 1835, p. 337
- ³⁷ *Hobart Town Courier* 9 Jan 1835, p. 3
- ³⁸ *Colonial Times* 4 Oct 1836, p. 339.
- ³⁹ *Trumpeter* 3 Feb 1837, p. 4. U.B. Barfoot's attempt's to gain patronage as a carver and gilder in Hobart met with little success. Between 1839 and 1848 he was a stationer, writer and clerk, and was declared insolvent in 1848.
- ⁴⁰ AOT CON31/44. Joseph Tanner's Conduct Record shows few misdemeanors, but shortly before George Peck left Tasmania for Sydney in April 1838, Joseph Tanner was returned to the Government 'for assignment in the Interior'.
- ⁴¹ *Hobart Town Courier* 1 Sep 1837, p. 3.
- ⁴² *Bent's News* 29 Jul 1837, p. 4.
- ⁴³ *Colonial Times* 8 Aug 1837, p. 255.
- ⁴⁴ *Colonial Times* 15 Aug 1837, p. 269.
- ⁴⁵ *Hobart Town Courier* 18 Aug 1837, pp. 2, 3. The critic's scepticism was understandable in an age 'when the philosophy of art attribution being as yet more imaginative than scientific, misrepresentation was rampant...' Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London*, 1978, p. 410.
- ⁴⁶ *Hobart Town Courier* 18 Aug 1837, p. 3.
- ⁴⁷ *True Colonist*, 18 Aug 1837, p. 671.
- ⁴⁸ Lempriere Papers and Diaries, Mitchell Library, ms A577, microfilm CY1682. Transcript courtesy of Geoff Lennox.
- ⁴⁹ *Colonial Times* 22 Aug 1837, p. 277.
- ⁵⁰ *Colonial Times* 8 Aug 1837, p. 255.
- ⁵¹ *True Colonist* 28 Jul 1837, p. 649.
- ⁵² *Bent's News* 21 Oct 1837, p. 1.
- ⁵³ *Hobart Town Courier* 15 Mar 1838, p. 1.
- ⁵⁴ *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review* 26 Apr 1839. For an account of Low's life and work see Peter Mercer, 'A Small Imitation of a larger Reality: Francis Low, Model Maker, and the Original Government House of Van Diemen's Land', *Australiana*, Nov 1990.
- ⁵⁵ *Australian* 8 Aug 1842
- ⁵⁶ *Hobart Town Advertiser* 19 Apr 1839, p. 3.
- ⁵⁷ *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review* 2 Apr 1839 p. 1.

- 58 Lady Jane Franklin Diaries 1839-40 NLA, MS114. Transcript courtesy of Jenny Parrott.
- 59 *Commercial Journal* 8 Jun 1839. Both George Peck and Edward Shribbs were part of Tasmania's first theatre company.
- 60 AOT CON31/38, 23/3
- 61 Under 'Mechanical and Useful Arts', the *Year Book of Facts*, London 1841, notes that 'A Model of Hobart Town was among the sights during the season'.
- 62 *Hull Advertiser* 15 Apr 1842, p. 5.
- 63 Holy Trinity Records, Archives and Records, East Riding of Yorkshire Council. Mrs Jean Fenwick, wife of a current Holy Trinity churchwarden, advises 'There are possibly about 160 pew ends, and this can be multiplied by 2 or 4 dependent on the faces on the poppyheads and then there are the lower carvings near the seating'. Personal communication to Robyn Lake, 19 Apr 2000.
- 64 Information from Mrs Jean Fenwick to Robyn Lake, 19 Apr 2000.
- 65 *Hull Advertiser* 22 Jul 1849, p. 1
- 66 When George Peck sent the *Pacific News* in May 1851 the *Hull Advertiser* carried a story headed 'CALIFORNIA NOT PARADISE', alerting potential emigrants to the dangers of the Gold Rush society.
- 67 *Daily Alta California*, May 1852, quoted in *History of Music in San Francisco*, volume 1, Jan 1939.
- 68 *California Sheet Music Covers*, The Book Club of California, San Francisco, 1959.
- 69 C. Sconce, D. Stratton, *The Kent Chronicles or Bubbles from the Brine*, MS, Latrobe Library, State Library of Victoria
- 70 *The Arm Chair*, 19 Nov 1853, p. 2; Joan Kerr (ed) *Dictionary of Australian Artists*, Melbourne, 1992, p. 614.
- 71 *Argus*, 18 Nov 1856, p. 4. In 1856 George Peck exhibited carvings in Huon pine at the Victorian Exhibition of Art and the Victorian Industrial Exhibition. At the latter he was awarded the silver medal for a relief 'Emblematic [of] Christ and the Four Evangelists'; a similar carving in oak, executed by George Peck c.1845, formed part of the lectern for Holy Trinity church Hull restoration.
- 72 *Trumpeter* 10 Jan 1837.
- 73 *Hull Advertiser* 10 Sep 1847, p. 1.
- 74 *My Note Book* 25 Jul 1857, p. 247.
- 75 *Bendigo Advertiser* 22 Jul 1857
- 76 Joan Kerr (ed) *Dictionary of Australian Artists*, p. 614
- 77 *Empire* 8 Dec 1859, p.8
- 78 NSW Chief Justice Sir Alfred and Lady Stephen moved from Tasmania to Sydney in 1839. When *Silent Tears* was published in 1859 there was much political debate on whether he should be granted leave. On 7 December a motion providing for his full salary was 'violently opposed by Mr. Arnold and Mr. Windeyer in very offensive speeches'. (ADB)
- 79 NSW Death Registration 1863/2417
- 80 *SMH* 26 Sep 1863.
- 81 Society of Australian Genealogists, Camperdown Cemetery Inscriptions B/241, No. 173. The inscription reads: Erected by ROBERT SHOOBRIDGE/In Memory of/GEORGE PECK/for sometime leader of the /Princess Royal Theatre Sydney /Died 20th September 1863/aged 53 years/"Rest for the weary". When it was erected is not known. Robert Shoobridge married George Peck's widow Sophia in 1867. I am not aware of a 'Princess Royal Theatre Sydney' in George Peck's time; the reference is confusing.
- 82 *Hobart Town Courier* 18 Aug 1837, p. 2

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NEWS & REVIEWS

Though we post news on our website regularly, some members do not have access to the Internet, and some items might be useful to keep in printed form. So it's back to the early days, with a news section in Australiana. We are seeking your input, along the lines of the stories here.

EXHIBITIONS



Football, meat pies, kangaroos and Holden cabinets

General Motors Holden switched to all steel car bodies in the 1930s, so 200 woodcarvers at Adelaide's Woodville plant faced the axe. GMH's MD, Sir Laurence Hartnett, got approval to place a personal order in 1937 for 52 pieces of furniture for his home, *Rubra*, at Mount Eliza. Some of the craftsmen were assigned to designing and making his furniture, made in solid Tasmanian oak. The Art Deco cocktail cabinet, given to the Art Gallery of South Australia in 1996 and displayed in their *Style* exhibition in 2003, has chromed steel and wood handles, curved edges and heavy support columns.

Giant – ancient and historic trees

Geelong Gallery, 29 November 2003 – 15 February 2004

Colonial Victorians were proud of the tall trees they had not yet cut down, some claimed to be over 120 metres high. A farmer named Cornthwaite cut down a 114m high mountain ash at Thorpdale in South Gippsland in 1881. For the Centennial Exhibition held in Melbourne in 1888, a competition invited entrants from all nations to identify the world's tallest tree.

In Geelong Gallery's latest exhibition, director Geoffrey Edwards explores the notion of ancient and historic trees in art. *Giant* provides a general introduction to the story of 'great trees of the world', with images such as David Roberts's illustration of *The Holy Tree, Metereah* (c. 1846), a gloriously ramshackle old sycamore near Cairo, supposedly a resting place of the Holy Family during their flight into Egypt. An

outline of 'famous trees in Australia' follows, before focusing on significant and historic trees in Victoria – trees such as the historic 'Separation Tree' in Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, Gippsland's famous 'Ada Tree', and specimens in colonial and Heidelberg School paintings.

Contemporary images of famous trees appear in photographs by John Gollings of notable Victorian trees and wood engravings by Tim Jones and Rosslynd Atkins of sites at Hanging Rock, Geelong and Melbourne.

Red Cedar in Australia

Museum of Sydney, 8 May – 15 August 2004

John McPhee has been commissioned to mount an exhibition on Cedar at the Museum of Sydney on the site of First Government House. This show will cover the discovery of cedar, controversy over its botanical name (now *Toona ciliata*), the devastating clearance of cedar by the timber-getters, and the difficulties in identifying the timber. Cedar's broad range of uses go far beyond furniture and building, and the show will include cedar used for picture frames, coffins, boats and boxes. There will be a one-day seminar on 15 May.



Unknown photographer. Portrait of Hughes being carried along George Street, Sydney, 20 September 1919, gelatin silver photograph; 19.5 x 24.4 cm. National Library of Australia Pictures Collection

In a New Light

National Library of Australia, till 26 January

The invention of the daguerrotype in the late 1830s meant for the first time that images could be produced more readily and cheaply. Ordinary people and new subjects came to be part of the repertoire. As technical mastery was achieved and exposure times decreased, photographers really could capture a moment in time.

From the 600,000 images in the National Library, visiting curator Helen Ennis has selected 300 for the first part of the



Unknown photographer, Cookery class, Warrnambool High School, Victoria c.1911, gelatin silver photograph; 18.6 x 23.8 cm. National Library of Australia Pictures Collection



Unknown photographer, A Miner's Hut, Lithgow Valley, N.S.W. (between 1880 and 1899) albumen photograph; 27.1 x 35.2 cm. National Library of Australia Pictures Collection

Library's photographic exhibition, covering the period from the 1850s to the 1930s. They show the development of the medium and the development of Australia, as seen through the lens.

The second part of the show, from the 1930s till 2000, will be on view from 19 August till 14 November 2004.

BOOK REVIEWS

Patrick McCaughey, *The Bright Shapes and the True Names. A Memoir*. Text Publishing, Melbourne 2003. Soft cover, 285 pages,

Alva Allen and Constance Little, proud members of the public, *aka* got a double whammy. First they made it proudly to the letters page of *The Age* for applauding the removal of a 'monstrosity' when the National Gallery of Victoria's Picasso was 'borrowed'; now their philistinism is commemorated in Patrick McCaughey's memoir. (Think of them when you visit Melbourne's superb new NGV displays.)

The publisher's breathless blurb tells us this book is 'the story of his brilliant career', but it's more the story of one man's journey from Ireland to London to Melbourne to America. McCaughey was *The Age* art critic, Professor of Visual Arts at Monash, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, Visiting Professor at Harvard, Director of the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford Connecticut, and Director of the Yale Centre for British Art.

McCaughey has skillfully avoided the hubris of an autobiography by choosing his title from a Vincent Buckley poem: the 'bright shapes' are the works of art he's encountered, and the 'true names' are the people who have impressed and influenced him. None of the true names are bureaucrats, whose rises in the arts bureaucracy are often described as meteoric, matched by their inconsequentiality.

This entertaining read draws you into the maelstrom of the art world, with its competing interests, especially the racy chapter on the acquisition and theft of the Picasso. McCaughey is both a fine observer and a scintillating writer, who generously acknowledges the help of friends and editors.

As an influential art critic 1966-74, he admits to being too opinionated and making pronouncements that were designed to attract immediate attention rather than make lasting impressions. His admiration for major artists, such as Fred Williams, is backed up by anecdotes and perceptive

observations of their work. Brack, Jacks and others get fair treatment; some other artists get brief mentions, which in retrospect may be all that they deserve.

He emanates a genuine charm in admitting mistakes and faux pas. His personal assessments are deliberately balanced, and where I know the people mentioned, I'd generally concur with his views of them. I did not find, as others have, that McCaughey's book is pompous and self-serving.

Looking back, he's aware of errors of judgement he's made along the way, for instance how slow he was to recognise the importance of women artists and Aboriginal artists. It is ironic that such a relentlessly Anglo book bears a cover designed by Chong Weng-Ho.

Deborah Edwards, *Presence and Absence. Portrait Sculpture in Australia*, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra 2003. Soft cover, 90 pages, colour illustrations. Price variable.

For quite a small institution, the National Portrait Gallery has a wonderful publishing program, which this catalogue continues. Quite properly, the NPG publishes catalogues to make its exhibition program accessible to a wider audience, in both space and time, and to encourage scholarship.

In this case, it is even more desirable as the NPG does not have the means to light every sculpture in an exhibition in the way it should be lit. Nor does it have the capacity to allow the viewer to vary the lighting, as you can in a photographic studio, and see how changes in lighting can affect the impact of a three-dimensional work of sculpture.

Curator Deborah Edwards points out that for a variety and reasons, not least the hijacking of sculpture by totalitarian regimes overseas, nowadays 'there are very few figures Australians would wish to place on a pedestal'. Much sculpture has disappeared; it was only in the 1970s for instance that the many works of postman-carver John Baird came to light.

Worth buying just for its excellent photographs, this elegant work by the curator of the superb Robert Klippel exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW adds to the literature and scholarship on Australian sculpture. Curiously, it lacks a contents page, list of illustrations and photo credits, and the author's name is missing from the spine, cover and title page.

Terence Lane, *Nineteenth Century Australian Art in the National Gallery of Victoria*, National Gallery of Victoria, 2003. Soft cover, 136 pages, colour illustrations. Distributed by Bookwise, \$39.95.

Anything written by Terence Lane, Senior Curator of 19th century Australian Art at the National Gallery of Victoria, is worthy of attention. He is always insightful, and can be relied upon to have a comment of his own, or to have found one in an obscure place, which will add to your knowledge and understanding of a work.

His introduction outlines the development of the NGV collection over nearly 150 years, the tension between collecting Australian and international art, and the key roles of Directors and staff. Brian Finemore was appointed the first curator of Australian Art in 1962. Preparations for the new building in St Kilda Road, first opened in 1968, led to an expansion of curatorial departments, including Decorative Arts under Ken Hood.

The James Cook bicentenary exhibition in 1970 was the first to integrate Australian art and decorative arts, a tradition the NGV continues, especially at St Kilda Road. In 1997, the collections were split, with the Australian collections opening last year in Federation Square, where they have attracted two million visitors in the 12 months.

This book has over 100 works of art and decorative arts from the collection, arranged chronologically. Where a painting retains their original frame, it is included. The compact essays encapsulate much that there is to know about the development of Australian art, and not just in Victoria. The photographic reproductions often don't match the sparkle of the text.

This is one of a series of publications about the collections of the NGV. A whole volume is devoted to the international decorative arts. It has to be said that the Australian collections, and especially the decorative arts, have come off as poor cousins to the international collections in the refurbishment of the NGV.

Giulia Grazi, *Per Andrea Corsali*, Empoli, 2003. Soft cover, 102 pages, monochrome illustrations.

Andrea Corsali (b. 1487) the Florentine navigator who sailed with the Portuguese to India, is most famous in Australia for his depiction and naming of the constellation of the Southern Cross. He wrote a letter from Cochin to his patron Guiliano de Medici, describing the constellation and its behaviour among the stars. A copy of his 15-page letter, published in Italy with a woodcut illustrating the stars, survives in a Sydney private collection. This slim volume compiles some information about him, his family and his memorials.

MAGAZINES

Articles on Australiana can be scattered through many publications and we ask our readers to send us details of any, like these, that deserve notice with our specialist audience.

Jewellery collectors may be interested in an article I wrote, called 'Fanny Richardson's Brooch', in the October issue of *National Library of Australia News*, on a gold brooch donated to the Library in 1965 by Lady Darwin. The brooch had been given to her grandmother Fanny Richardson (b. Goulburn, NSW, 1837) about 1860, either when she left Australia with her father, or when she was married in Scotland in 1861.

The brooch must have been nostalgic for Fanny, consisting of a spray of Australian flora tied with a fillet. It came in a box that showed it was retailed by Flavelle Brothers in Sydney, but possibly made in the workshop of Hogarth, Erichsen & Co. The

Library may still have copies of *NLA News* (02 6262 1111).

Reflections, the NSW National Trust magazine, devotes some of its October issue to the Trust's extensive collections. Curator Patricia R. McDonald writes on decorative arts and gallery director Jane Watters reveals the 400 works in the collection of the Trust's S.H. Ervin Gallery. Deputy President Julian Bickersteth discusses the many issues involved in cleaning outdoor bronze sculptures.

Dr James Broadbent (whose house we visited in November) dispels the notion that historic interiors are all about fanciful perceptions of 'good taste' and Colonial grandeur, and proposes a more rigorous, research-driven approach to the perennial works at Government House, Parramatta. Refurbishing an historic interior is not decorating, he says, but 'writing history in three dimensions.'

NEWS

Society News

For the first time, Australiana Society membership has passed 400. We hope that you can't tell from the magazine that readership is skewed heavily towards NSW. We must increase our membership in all states, and the numbers in NSW show that it's possible.

A few years ago, we started to nominate people for recognition in the Australian Awards system, for their work in promoting the study of Australiana. We are seeking your suggestions for whom to nominate for an Order of Australia Award – but remember that it must be for service above and beyond. Proposals need to be strongly justified; go to the website www.itsanhonour.gov.au for information.

Australiana in Slovenia

In Slovenia, they study Australia. When they go to the Internet for help, our website pops up. An occasional email correspondent says that her class 'discussed words like sickie, batter, dole bludger, silvertails, whinging Pommies, black stump, Pitt Street farmer, to go bush, squatocracy, the word thanks, old money, capital cities and Anzac day.'

Pugin in the Antipodes

Brian Andrews' catalogue *Creating a Gothic Paradise: Pugin at the Antipodes* was a thorough catalogue of the work of this famous British architect of the Victorian period designed for Australia. The catalogue, published by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, is one of six works short-listed for the 2003 Berger Prize in British art history, awarded under the auspices of the *British Art Journal*.

Peter R. Walker Fine Art

Peter Walker is defying the trend and going from dealing from a website in cyberspace to a shopfront as well. In December, his new gallery at 101 Walkerville Terrace in Walkerville, Adelaide will be open Thursday to Saturday, 11–5. Peter is a generous supporter of the Society through the annual writer's prize.

Australian furniture book

Society founder and former Treasurer Andrew Simpson has moved from his Queen Street shopfront, Simpson's Antiques, to deal from his home in Sydney's inner west. Andrew still has copies for sale of the indispensable book he produced with Kevin Fahy, *Australian Furniture: Pictorial History and Dictionary*. You can buy a new copy from him a lot cheaper than the \$624 paid at Lawson's Australian History auction at Moss Vale in October ■

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Thomas Clark (England/Australia 1814–1883),
The Wannon Falls, c.1860, oil on canvas



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A LADIES COMPANION

An important Australian Silver Ladies Companion by Henry Steiner of Adelaide, exhibited at the Melbourne Exhibition of 1880 as the centrepiece to Steiner's silver cabinet, (see *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver* by J B Hawkins. Vol 2, p. 313). The idea for this marvellous conceit seems to have originated in Steiner's workshop, being copied less successfully by the Melbourne silversmith William Edwards. The presentation inscription for 1883 confirms that these costly-to-produce, well-designed scent caskets, were, as one would expect, constantly in demand over a fifteen year period. Today they must be considered items of museum quality.