

THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

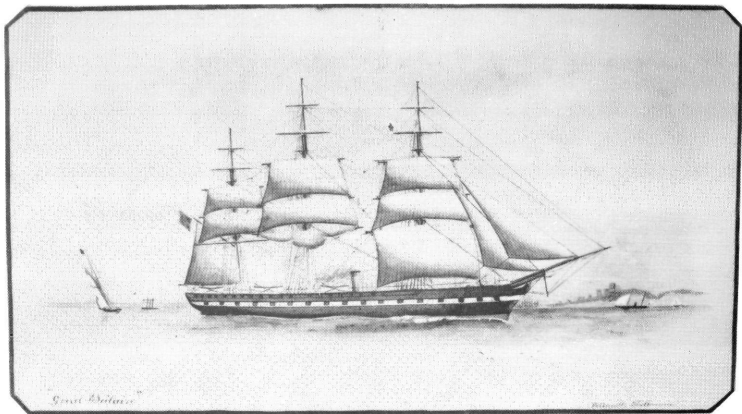
NEWSLETTER



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EDITORIAL

The Australiana Society has just turned five.

It was set up at the end of 1978 and held its first meeting on 2nd December 1978. Since then, we have achieved a fairly stable membership of about 150, a more or less regular Newsletter which meets with more or less general approval, and regular meetings which are well attended. Some of the meetings have been outstanding successes leading to a much better appreciation of the depth and diversity of Australiana. We have also mounted two special exhibitions, at Lindesay in 1981 and Elizabeth Bay House in 1982. Even more important, we manage to have a lot of fun too.

This is not a bad achievement for a small society which relies entirely on voluntary support from its members and especially the Committee.

While the Society appears to be flourishing, is it developing? Is its membership growing? Is it fulfilling its aims, promoting and encouraging the preservation and research of Australiana? Should it develop State branches? Is it seeking new projects to undertake - for instance, should the Society now be considering a major project to be completed in the Bicentennial Year of 1988?

These are questions which we should be addressing to ensure that the Society does not stagnate. We believe that it has an important mission. As will be apparent from a reading of the *Newsletter*, members do not just sit and gloat over their collections; they research them, and they share that research with others. The spirit of co-operation that exists in the Society is perhaps the healthiest sign that we are here to stay. It is time however to look more towards the future, so that the membership will grow and the Society will develop into an even more effective organisation than it is now.

Through the knowledge that we collectively have and are publishing here and elsewhere, we are setting the foundations on which can be built a proper appreciation of the arts and products of our Australian ancestors - the artists, craftsmen, tradesmen and workers who produced what we are collecting and preserving. Although the information is still piecemeal - and of necessity must be so in our present publication - we should be giving consideration to some more solid contribution to knowledge from the Society as a whole, not just from individual members.

A project of major significance for the Bicentennial would ensure the viability of the Society in the near future, and add to its prestige in the longer term. However, nothing will be achieved without your support. Lets have your suggestions on what we might do and how we should go about it.



Society Information

MEETINGS

With this issue you will receive a card listing our program for 1984, but in case the card is misplaced, we list the program here. Please note these dates in your diary, as the card will now supersede reminder notices, saving the Society money and the Secretary time.

All meetings are held in the auction rooms of James R Lawson Pty Ltd, 212 Cumberland Street, The Rocks, Sydney, at 7.30 pm.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Thursday June 7 | Guest Speaker: Shar Jones, Curator of Elizabeth Bay House |
| Thursday August 2 | Annual General Meeting and Auction. |
| Thursday October 4 | Guest Speaker: Randall Reed, prominent Sydney antique dealer |
| Thursday December 6 | 'Trash or Treasure?' and Christmas Party. Members are asked to bring along interesting items for discussion, and a contribution towards the catering. |

Members can bring along pieces for discussion to any of the meetings, especially if they relate to the subject for the evening.

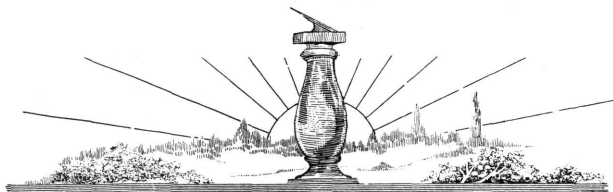
EXCURSION

The excursion to Tooth's Kent Brewery has been postponed due, to factors beyond our control, to a date to be fixed.

In Spring there will be an excursion to Parramatta, including a visit to Elizabeth Farm House. Suggestions for other excursions are welcomed.

QUERIES

Your Editor undertakes to answer or try to find answers to queries which readers send in regarding Australiana. This is a new service which your Committee felt would be of benefit to members, especially new collectors or those who do not have the benefit of frequent contact with other collectors.



Australiana News

PRESSED METAL CEILINGS REMADE

Pressed metal ceiling panels are now being reproduced in aluminium sheet, known as Wunderlite. At present only one pattern is being used, reproducing a common Wunderlich diaper pattern and now named "Reminiscence". The new aluminium sheets are light and easily fixed, each measuring 910 by 1811 mm (3 x 6 feet), and sell for \$38.50. There are distributors in most states, and for further information contact Susan Stewart at Box 412, Woollahra, 2025, or telephone (02) 331 4545.

BIT BITER BITES BACK

Anyone who missed Terry Ingram's column in the *Financial Review* of 24th February would be well advised to look it up on their next trip to the library. The author is at pains to point out that there is no resemblance between our Society and the Australiana Collectorama Society, which he exposes.

AUSTRALIAN SILVER RESEARCH

Sally Kabat is undertaking a master's degree on silver hollow ware of English and Australian origin of the 18th and 19th centuries, through the Design Department at the University of Minnesota in St Paul. She will be visiting Australia in July and August and anyone who would like to assist her could write to her at 2 East Pleasant Lake Road, North Oaks, Minnesota, 55110, USA.

CERAMIC CONFERENCE

Theme for the 4th National Ceramic Conference proposed for Melbourne in May 1985 will be "Tradition and Diversity". The conference will bring together many contemporary potters and also look partly at historical developments which have brought Australian contemporary ceramics to their present diversity. Further information is available from the Theme and Content Committee, 4th National Ceramic Conference, 146 MacPherson Street, North Carlton, 3054.

ENGINEERING HERITAGE CONFERENCE

"The Value of Engineering Heritage" is the theme of the 2nd National Conference on Engineering Heritage, also to be held in Melbourne on 20-21 May 1985. Synopses of papers are being sought by 30 June 1984, the final program to be available next February. Contact the Conference Manager, Institution of Engineers, 11 National Circuit, Barton, 2600, for details.

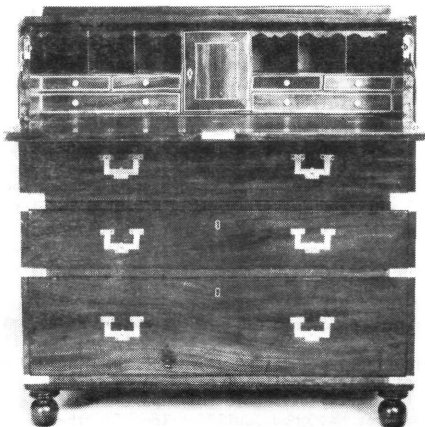
MCCORMICK CATALOGUE

Anne McCormick has produced for Autumn 1984 a new illustrated catalogue of

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rare books, paintings and prints. Some items, such as the Knut Bull lithograph of "Hobart Town 1855" and oil portrait of Mary Anne Sparke by Marshall Claxton are shown in colour. The catalogue is well researched and a valuable record of items which are mostly destined for private collections. Copies are available from Anne McCormick, 2 Regent Street, Paddington, 2021. Further catalogues are promised.

REGIONAL NEWS

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

NEO-AUSTRALIANA

Canberra's Australian National Gallery mounted an exhibition, "Australian Decorative Arts: the past ten years" at Melville Hall of the Australian National University from December 1983 to February 1984. A commentary by John McPhee and catalogue (\$1.50) by Helen Maxwell have been produced to accompany the exhibition.

Although developed especially for the art public of Canberra, the exhibition has wider relevance and the catalogue much value for its survey of high points in the development of Australian decorative arts over the last decade, and for its explanation of some of the trends discernible in recent ceramics, glass, metalwork, textiles, and woodwork.

A review in the *Canberra Times* of February 8 by Meredith Hinchcliffe suggests the show fell short of its aims of surveying craft in Australia over the past ten years, partly because some crafts are under-represented, others represented by atypical examples, and partly because the display was not logically set out. The result is a picture of diversity; were patterns also discernible?

John McPhee has also contributed an article on "Folk Art" in the ANG collections to the Ansett flight magazine *Panorama* for March/April 1984.

FINE ARTS ADVISER

Margaret Betteridge, presently Curator of the Mint and Barracks at Sydney's Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, will be leaving in July to take up her new post of Fine Arts Adviser to the Department of the Prime Minister in Canberra. Margaret has good qualifications for the position with her record in museum management (the Mint won the Museum of the Year Award in 1983), publications such as *Australian Flora in Art*, and personal charm. Former Assistant Curator at the Mint, Peter Timms, who left a few months ago, is now overseas on a Churchill Fellowship related to his forthcoming book on Australian studio pottery.

NEW SOUTH WALES

STATE LIBRARY EXHIBITIONS

"All in a Day's Work" is a good display around the theme of workers in

Australia from 1788 to 1939. Included are artefacts from First Government House, Sydney; an oil portrait by Angelo Collen Hayter of Mrs Caroline Chisholm; and a collection of trade union badges. Other exhibitions now showing are one on the colourful history of the Domain and an extensive display of the engravings and publications of Rudolph Ackermann (1764-1834), including some relating to Australia.

ELIZABETH BAY HOUSE

Following the exhibition "Portraits in the Landscape: the house paintings of William Tibbits 1870-1906", EBH has a new display "Upstairs and Downstairs at Elizabeth Bay House". Two tiny attic bedrooms have been refurbished as servant's rooms. A display in another room shows what the house and garden were like a century ago, when it stood in 54 acres, and how the establishment was serviced - where, for instance, the kitchen was located.

Two other bedrooms on the *piano nobile* are being restored from the 1977 conversion of the house by Clive Lucas, to reflect family occupancy in 1838 rather than the possible requirements of a Lord Mayor.

ELIZABETH FARM HOUSE

The long-awaited re-opening of Elizabeth Farm, postponed from Australia Day 1984, is now scheduled for "mid-1984" - or so it is reported in an article on the house in *Classic Decorating* for Autumn 1984. The house, built in 1793 and restored under the direction of the Heritage Council of NSW and the NSW Department of Public Works by architect Ian Sansom, will not be a museum of decorative arts like other historic buildings. The article quotes curator James Broadbent as saying "visitors should have free access to the house, and not be roped off from rooms full of furniture". To achieve this, reproduction furniture is being used in "stage settings". Visitors can expect to see a house - maybe even a farmhouse - museum, and it will be interesting to see what impression the recreated house will give of its 180 years of occupancy, especially from the long (1904-68) Swann period. Advertisements for three museum guides have been placed in the press, and these people will help the visitor to gain an understanding of the house and what its new managers are trying to achieve.

RESTORATION OF THE HYDE PARK BARRACKS CLOCK

Margaret Betteridge, Curator of the Hyde Park Barracks, reports that in March the clock from the Barracks was removed for restoration and over-haul and then returned. The work was carried out by clock expert Dennis Eccles with funding from the National Estate Program.

When the clock was taken down, it became clear that the mechanism had been completely dismantled a number of times and some minor repairs made.

The clock was installed by former convict James Oatley in 1819. It bears the name of the London maker Benjamin Vulliamy, and is similar to other clocks made by him. However, many people believe that the £75 Oatley was paid for installing the clock, and his claim that he made the first clock

in the Colony, are convincing evidence that the clock itself was made in the Colony. It is hoped that careful examination of the clock during its restoration, and of the records, will clarify the matter once and for all.

Visitors to the Hyde Park Barracks Museum will be able to inspect the mechanism of the clock through glass panels, when the museum opens to the public in July 1984.

MINT SILVER

Part of a private collection of Australian silver will soon be going on display at the Mint Museum in Macquarie Street, supplementing the collections of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Works by William Edwards and William Kerr are represented in the dozen examples which will be put on display, and include the Kerr cradle presented to the Mayor of Mosman, and previously shown in the Society's exhibition held at Elizabeth Bay House in 1982.

SWIFTS PRESERVED

The new Minister for Environment and Planning, Terry Sheahan, has placed a permanent conservation order on the Swifts at Darling Point. The well-known landmark was built in 1882-4 by G A Morrell for (Sir) Robert Lucas Tooth, and later acquired by another brewer, Edmund Resch, in 1923. His son Edmund Resch willed it to the Catholic Church in 1963.

The Church objected to the PCO and wanted the right to re-develop part of the site. The Heritage Council and the Land and Environment Court of Enquiry recommended the site be protected and the new Minister, in upholding the recommendation for a PCO, not only accepted the advice he was given but presumably ignored any "informative phone calls" which have previously been alleged in matters of this sort. It seems that Mr Sheahan has more commitment to his portfolio than his predecessor.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

COLONIAL CRAFTS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

A survey of the colonial crafts of South Australia from first settlement to the 1930s, is being undertaken for the Crafts Council of South Australia. Liz French and Steph Schrapel are researching, photographing and documenting a wide range of handcrafted articles: furniture, pottery, jewellery, silverware, leather and poker work, embroidery and patchwork, agricultural implements and household items. Even those crafts of necessity, like coat-hangers and kitchen utensils made from fencing wire during the 1930s Depression, will be included.

The research is funded by the Crafts Board of the Australia Council and the South Australian Department for the Arts. It will be the basis for the South Australian component of a national register of Australian colonial crafts, to be compiled for the bicentenary in 1988. There will also be an exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia for the South Australian 150 Jubilee celebrations in 1986 and a book about these South Australian colonial crafts


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to be published in the same year.

Liz or Steph would be very grateful to hear from anyone who knows of pieces hand made in South Australia or made by a South Australian elsewhere at the relevant time which would relate to the project. They can be what-nots or whatever - the name of the maker, approximate date, and/or place of origin are all of particular interest.

You can write to Liz French or Steph Schrapel at PO Box 294, Blackwood, South Australia, 5051, or telephone (08) 278 4346.

TASMANIA

NO SEX PLEASE, WE'RE TASMANIAN

John Morris sends us this genuine ad (not a Tasmanian joke) from the Hobart *Mercury* of 14 January:

"Blackwood buffet, Queen Anne legs; ladies walking boots, size 5, \$35. Ph 28 4278".

John is now organising coach tours of historic Tasmania which include, like the tours so many Australians are happy to enjoy in Europe, wonderful scenery, good food, historic places and great variety. Brochures on the tours are available from John Morris Heritage Explorers, 13 Simmons Street, Balmain, 2041, telephone (02) 810 2565.

PUBLICATIONS

Barbara Chapman, Curator of Fine Art at the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston, has written several catalogues in the last few years since moving from Western Australia. They are *Geoff Tyson Watercolours 1936-1980* (1982); *Lloyd Rees Late Drawings* (1982); *Elaine Haxton Printmaker* (1982); and *The Launceston Art Society in Retrospect 1891-1983* (1983). These are available from the Museum. Readers may also be interested in the *Art Bulletin of Tasmania*, published by the Tasmania Museum in Hobart.

VICTORIA

SOTHEBY'S AUCTION

Sotheby's are having an auction sale of colonial and modern Australian paintings at the Regent Hotel, Melbourne on Tuesday 29 May, at 8 pm. Artists represented include Buvelot, Boyd, Chevalier, Gill, and J P Russell.

BANYULE GALLERY

The NGV's Banyule Gallery at Heidelberg is showing seventy five paintings by Rupert Bunny and E Philips Fox until 30 June, supplemented by lectures, study days and talks. The NGV itself will be showing Australian water-colours from 25 May to 8 July.

LA TROBE LIBRARY

On display at the Queen's Hall, La Trobe Library in Swanston Street until May 13 is a collection of photographs showing "Housing as it was; Melbourne 1900-1940". Judging from the poster, the exhibition did not just explore the architecture, but also the way of life of the period.

ENGRAVERS AND LITHOGRAPHERS

Dr Thomas Darragh is compiling a directory of Victorian engravers and lithographers. It consists at the moment of hundreds of cards filed by name of the firm or individual, with biographical information, partnerships etc (for firms), addresses and examples of their work. Dr Darragh is developing the directory towards publishable form, and would welcome input from, or correspondence with, members. Write to Dr Thomas A Darragh, Deputy Director, Division of Natural History and Anthropology, Museum of Victoria, 285 Russell Street, Melbourne, 3000.



From Here & There

compiled by *Ian Rumsey*

Officials in Canberra are pondering the future of Burley Griffin's temporary Parliament House. Built at a cost of £644,655/-/- in 1927, it was intended to be only a provisional house for Parliament with a lifespan of about 50 years. With the new Parliament House taking shape on Capital Hill, several proposals are being considered for the old building. The least likely is complete demolition. Others consist of 3 separate plans bringing the building basically back to its 1927 form. Another 2 proposals are centred around modifications to the building in its current 1984 form. The final choice is complicated further, because bureaucrats do not know exactly what purpose the original Parliament House will be put to after the Bicentennial.



The current exhibition titled "Drawn from Life" at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney is highly recommended. The show features works by world renowned artists specialising in botanical specimens, such as Sydney Parkinson (Cook's artist on the Endeavour); Ferdinand Bauer (Mathew Flinders' artist); and R D Fitzgerald, famous for his C¹⁹ orchid illustrations. Also on display are some original botanic samples collected by Sir Joseph Banks from Botany Bay in 1770.



A STATUETTE OF SIR HENRY PARKES by NELSON ILLINGWORTH

by *Sally Cantwell*

Towards the end of the nineteenth century there was an influx of immigrant sculptors to Sydney. The arrival of such people as Simonetti, White, Sani, Henri, Macintosh, Hutchison, Leysalle, and Illingworth meant that Sydney was a lively, competitive place for sculptors throughout the 1890s and into the first decade of this century. One product of this era forms the subject of this analysis: the statuette of Henry Parkes (c.1898-9?) by Nelson Illingworth. This will be examined in its artistic and social context.

The figurine of Sir Henry Parkes is made of bronzed terracotta. Parkes is depicted in a standing position with his right arm raised¹ above his head. The left arm is by his side and his left hand is holding a rolled-up scroll. The figure is clothed in a knee-length frock coat and trousers and is placed on a round base. On the front of the base is a ribbon which has the inscription "The Crimson Thread of Kinship", the back has the sculptor's signature "Nelson Illingworth Sc." The statuette is 0.43m high and the base is 0.14m in diameter.

This particular statuette (Registration No.A7335) was presented to the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in 1980 by the antique dealer Stanley Lipscombe shortly before his death. It is alleged that Illingworth gave the sculpture to Parkes himself. Parkes later gave it to a neighbour who passed it on to his daughter. It then went from her to Lipscombe. If this is the correct provenance then the suggested date of c.1898-9 would have to be brought back to at least 1896, the year of Parkes' death.

At least five other examples of the statuette exist today², the reason for the multiple copies of the image being that the statuette was issued by subscription. It was not unusual for Illingworth to prepare several statuettes and sell them in this manner: two other examples are "For Honour's Sake" and "When the Empire calls"³. Selling some of his work in this manner meant that Illingworth would have kept in mind the general market appeal rather than the wishes of a single patron. As opposed to large, expensive and commissioned sculptures, statuettes of a more commercial nature would have been more easily afforded by individuals, as well as providing an extra means of income for the sculptor.

A further reason for issuing the statuette by subscription was because it represented a well known politician, Henry Parkes⁴. In Sydney the "great-man" market meant that local sculptors were in demand. Parkes led a long and eventful life as a journalist and politician. Born in 1815 he emigrated from Birmingham to NSW in 1839, where he was active in the Colony's political life for over fifty years and, after 1872, was five times its Premier⁵. As a politician he was extremely tough in order to survive the rigorous faction system of politics at the time, which was a highly personal form of politics where leader's personalities played as important a part as actual policies in determining events. Two of Parkes' greatest concerns were education and the promotion of free trade. A third and even more consuming interest towards

the end of his life was the Federation cause for which his oratorical skills were particularly suited⁶.

Due to the obvious appeal of Parkes as a subject this statuette was not Illingworth's only representation of Parkes: he made a terracotta plaque of Parkes in 1895, and was responsible for the sculpture of Parkes on the Lands Department building, Sydney, according to family tradition. An exhibition leaflet advertising Illingworth's work at Anthony Hordern's Gallery (no date) says that "Mr Illingworth is prepared to execute orders for Terracotta or bronzed plaster busts (the same size as Sir Edmund Barton) provided a reasonable number subscribe. Choice of selections: Sir Henry Parkes, Sir George Reid and Sir Edmund Barton"⁷. A number of other artists also chose to depict Parkes: both Julian Ashton and Tom Roberts painted his portrait; Theo Cowan did a bust of the politician; so did Giovanni Fontana, to name a few examples. Apart from the popular appeal of the artist as a subject Parkes was also considered by many to be a loyal friend and patron of Art⁸.

For many of his sculptures Illingworth worked from photographs (of which he had a large archive) and published drawings. If one accepts a later date of 1898-9 for the statuette then Illingworth would most definitely have used photographs, Parkes having been dead for at least three years. If it is not a posthumous sculpture of Parkes and the sculpture was executed in Parkes' lifetime then Illingworth may have had a sitting, although the likelihood of this would have depended on his reputation at that stage. A letter of introduction however, from the Hon. Bruce Smith to Sir Henry Parkes of 2 July 1895, suggests that Illingworth quickly established a name for himself. The letter of introduction requests a short sitting to allow Illingworth to finish a terracotta medallion representing Parkes⁹. If granted the sitting, this would have meant that Illingworth "worked from life" on at least one occasion. By 1899 Illingworth was sufficiently established to obtain a sitting with Cardinal Moran, although he still often worked from photographs as his subjects were usually very well known members of society.

In relation to Illingworth's other sculptures Henry Parkes is a typical work as it is a realistic depiction of the politician. Contemporary comment often noted Illingworth's attempt to portray his subjects realistically. For example the bust of Cardinal Moran was considered to be "a faithful likeness of the prelate"¹⁰. When compared to photographs taken of Parkes in the 1890s the head is an accurate representation of Parkes' features. A close examination of the face, (which is fairly small remembering the statuette stands only 0.43 m high), shows the carefully added details of creases on the forehead and at the corners of the eyes. The hair has been modelled in a very naturalistic manner as was the long beard. The statue of Parkes on the Lands Department building by Illingworth, although much larger, is also depicted very naturalistically.

Although it must be remembered that Illingworth's primary consideration was the realistic portrayal of the subject's physical appearance, Henry Parkes is, however, given an elevated quality in the figure's stance. The pose is sombre and earnest, the uplifted arm is used to stress a point and/or acknowledge the applause of an audience listening to Parkes' speech. Henry Parkes is not the only example where Illingworth ennobles the work. For example "When the Empire calls", a statuette of a trooper, while "true in every detail of uniform and equipment... is portrayed in a striking pose with hands uplifted and the face exhibiting patriotic emotion"¹¹. The

statuette of Henry Parkes can be taken as an allegorical reference to the notion of good leadership. The pose is reminiscent of classical figures which sought to reflect heroic and stoic qualities, such as the Augustus of Prima Porta, a well known Roman sculpture. Illingworth most probably did not rely on classical sculpture as *first hand inspiration*. It could be suggested however that he was drawing on long established conventions, whose original source was classical art, for elements such as the rhetorical gesture which is a symbol of oratorical power. This statuette reflects in miniature those conventions used in conventional public portraiture.

The inscription on the base reinforces the allegorical nature of the work. The words, "The Crimson Thread of Kinship", come from a speech delivered by Parkes at a banquet in Melbourne on 6 February 1890 held to mark the Federation Conference. The Conference, attended by representatives of the six Australian colonies and New Zealand resolved that "the best interests and the present and future prosperity of the Australian colonies will be promoted by an early union under the Crown"¹². Parkes, being a most enthusiastic supporter of the Federation movement, was asked to respond to a toast of "A United Australasia" proposed by the Hon. James Service.

The speech Parkes gave on that occasion is in a similar vein to the many other speeches he gave that advocated Federation. He stresses that "...in this country of soil and climate, with such vast stores in the hidden wealth under the soiland with such a people occupying that soil unequalled in nation-creating properties, what is there impossible to these peoples?"¹³ Parkes was careful to stress that Australia's best interests would be served by a Federation under the Crown of Great Britain. The emphasis on his continued allegiance to the British Crown was to allay the fears of the Victorian representatives who thought that Parkes would try to push the separatist aims of the National Party which wanted a complete separation of Australia from the Motherland. "The crimson thread of kinship" Parkes declared, "runs through us all. Even the Native-born Australians are Britons, as much as the men born within the cities of London and Glasgow"¹⁴; further on he says: "our interests cannot be separated by any rash, thoughtless, and crude separation from the grand old country of which we are all so proud"¹⁵. The statuette therefore while it can be seen as a reflection of the move towards Federation, and of the confident attitude reflected by Parkes that Australia could govern itself and "appear before the world as a nation"¹⁶, was also a reminder that Australia owed allegiance to the British Crown.

In terms of artistic context Henry Parkes is part of a long standing tradition in portrait sculpture and does not reflect any of the new ideas that were explored in some of the contemporary sculpture at the time. In the 1890s the 'new sculpture movement' influenced a number of Australian sculptors. Rodin was one of the leaders of the movement; he greatly influenced Bertram Mackenall with his more simplified, less classical style with its greater movement and drama. Alfred Gilbert, an English sculptor was also important; his work was very Art Nouveau with its long, elongated forms.

Illingworth's statuette does not reflect any of these new attitudes to sculpture. His work is more conservative in its approach, with no interest, for example, in naturalism of movement or simplification of form. Similarities in style can be seen between Henry Parkes and Achille Simonetti's John Henry Challis of 1893, which is also of a more conventional nature. Simonetti trained in Rome and arrived in Australia in 1871¹⁷. Like Illingworth he was very well known as a portrait sculptor when in Sydney. The figures have a

similarity of dress, attention has been paid to facial details and both have a rhetorical pose which serves as a reference to more general statements. Simonetti's sculpture was, unlike Illingworth's statuette, a unique image. It is much larger than Henry Parkes and serves more of a memorial function.

Today Nelson Illingworth is a relatively unknown artist. In his own time however, he appears to have been a portrait sculptor who was 'well known to the art-loving public'. In coming to Sydney his chances of obtaining a reputation as a sculptor were probably greater than if he had remained in London. The number of portrait busts he made of important personalities in Sydney indicates that the respect he attained as a sculptor justified his migration. Illingworth however, found that to survive even in Sydney he had to both advertise his work and make donations to various institutions in order to gain recognition. Whilst the work that Illingworth produced was favourably received as contemporary comment reveals, towards the end of his life his work became eventually a little too old-fashioned, seen by the difficulty he experienced in finding commissions. His statuette of Henry Parkes is an example of his fairly conservative style, however it was a style that catered well for the tastes of the people in Sydney at the time who admired and bought his work.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 Two digits from the right hand are missing.
- 2 Illingworth gave one to the Art Gallery of South Australia in 1899. It is illustrated in N Hutchison, *Early Australian Sculpture*, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery Catalogue, Ballarat, 1976, catalogue no.17. Two other examples can be found in a Sydney private collection (one lacking the bronze finish); the National Library in Canberra; and Tenterfield School of Arts.
- 3 *Building and Engineering Journal*, 3 February, 1900.
- 4 Illingworth must have also had an admiration for Parkes if indeed he did present Parkes with the statuette under discussion.
- 5 A W Martin, 'Henry Parkes: in Search of the Actual Man Underneath', *Historical Studies*, 63, 1974, p.218.
- 6 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, entry on Parkes by A W Martin.
- 7 Leaflet on Exhibition of "Interesting Particulars of Mr Nelson Illingworth and his Work," Anthony Hordern's Gallery, Sydney, no date.
- 8 William Moore, *Story of Australian Art*, Sydney, 1934, (Reprint 1980), p.141.
- 9 Parkes' correspondence, volume 37, pp.234-5.
- 10 *New Zealand Graphic* (Auckland), October 28, 1899.
- 11 *Building and Engineering Journal*, op. cit.
- 12 T Bavin, *Sir Henry Parkes, His Life and Work*, Sydney, 1941, p.54.
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I also wish to thank John Wade, Senior Curator in Ceramics at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, who gave me access to information held by the Museum.

■■■■■■■■■■

THE SHELL OF THE S.S. 'GREAT BRITAIN'

by Ian Rumsey

Battered and almost derelict, on July 9th, 1970, the shell of the once mighty steam ship 'Great Britain' was eased stern first into the Great Western Dry Dock in Bristol, with Prince Philip on board. To the day 127 years previously she had been launched from the very same dry dock by Prince Albert and no doubt it seemed fitting that her restoration should begin in the place of her birth and on such an anniversary. It must have also been evident to those spectators on that day in July 1970, that the ship had passed full circle, via a varied and eventful life reflecting glory, respect, use, abuse, and abandonment before her salvage in the Falkland Islands, and her physical rehabilitation to that of her past legend, as one of the most notable vessels of all time and forerunner of the modern ship.

While Britain was embroiled in the Napoleonic Wars, much of the trans-Atlantic trade was taken over by American ships. In an effort to regain this trade, the Great Western Railway Company planned to build a small



Captain John Gray, R.N. (retired), master of the 'Great Britain'. Disappeared mysteriously on the ship's outward bound voyage to Australia in November 1972.



fleet of ships for that task. The first of these, the 'Great Western', made a great impact on the Americans and helped re-assert British prestige over the Atlantic trade. But even before the 'Great Western' was finished, a second bigger and better ship, the 'Great Britain' was designed to ensure the advances made by her sister ship would continue to uphold Britain's maritime prowess.

The 'Great Britain' was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who had originally planned his ship to be a wooden auxiliary steam paddle sailing vessel of such a size that it would dwarf all others of her day. But, as a result of seeing a small iron-hulled ship, the 'Rainbow', Brunel made the first of many design changes to his vessel. The 'Great Britain' was, in fact, so far in advance of other builders' conceptions of what was possible, that no-one could be found to run the risk of building her. One can comprehend their reluctance, for the plans called for a ship of iron to be built that was three times as large as any ship ever built. Brunel had to persuade the reluctant Great Western Company to build her themselves under his guidance. It was a mammoth task for the era, even before work

could start, a dry dock capable of handling the ship had to be built. The cost of this alone was £53,081/12/9. By 1839 Brunel was able to lay down the keel of the 'Great Britain', but in 1840 the 'Archimedes', a screw-driven vessel visited Bristol and influenced Brunel to such an extent, he purchased her and halted the 'Great Britain's' construction for some months until he had evaluated the Archimedian screw propulsion system and its possible adaptation to the 1,000 horse power engines already purchased for the uncompleted 'Great Britain'.

Once again, design changes were made to incorporate the superior propeller to the ship. The six bladed four ton propeller shape, designed by Brunel, was surprisingly efficient and teamed up well with the adapted engines after many earlier problems were sorted out. The 'Great Britain' was also rigged for sail, with six masts; of those only the main mast went through to the keel. The others were attached to hinged bases on the deck. The ship's steering followed sailing ship practice of the day with a wheel aft, but Brunel once again showed his genius with his balanced rudder, that is, the addition of a small area of blade forward of the rudder post which lightens control and gives more precise steering. This is the principal standard on all ships today but then was unique to the 'Great Britain'.

Many people about Brunel thought that an iron ship of that size and complexity could not be built and, even if it was possible, the hull would sink under its own weight. They did not reckon with Brunel's brilliant mind and determination to overcome all obstacles. By 1841 the hull was taking shape, with its covering of 6ft by 3ft iron plates being overlapped clinker fashion and rivetted together. Brunel departed from the normal bluff bow to a design of his own with a rakish bow with hollow lines to compensate for the extra weight of the iron and so aid the ship's speed by cutting drag on the hull, allowing it to slice rather than punch its way through the water. Her classic clipper lines predated the tea clippers by some twenty years. Brunel also devised weight-saving techniques, doing away with bulky timber supports and replacing them with iron frames and bulkheads with wrought iron plating, which proved far lighter and stronger than solid timber.

To gauge how far ahead of his time Brunel was, it must be remembered that in the 1840s, with the types of ships about, it could take an emigrant or convict ship six months to reach Australia. The 'Great Britain' easily covered the same distance in a third of the time.

Launched in 1843 by Prince Albert, the ship was the largest afloat, being 322 ft overall with a beam of 51 ft. She was 3,500 ton burthen, with a registered tonnage of 1,016 tons. There was a capacity for 250 passengers with berths plus another 110 using makeshift bunks. Although primarily a passenger ship, 1,200 tons of cargo could be carried and the coal bunkering capacity was 1,000 tons. This gave her 20 days at sea under full steam, which was more than adequate on the Atlantic run. (Her average time was 14 days). The completed ship cost her owners £117,295/6/7, not including the other ancillary costs of the building facilities and dry dock.

The 'Great Britain's' maiden voyage from Liverpool to New York in 1845 was a triumph, taking 14 days under steam all the way. On the second voyage, trouble struck when in New York the ship suffered a minor stranding, causing the loss of a propeller blade, so the return voyage was completed under sail in 20 days. A new four-bladed propeller was fitted and the No.3 mast removed. In 1846 the ship ran aground off the coast of Ireland at Dundrum Bay and was left there for the winter due to bad weather and towed back to

Liverpool in 1847. The ship was under-insured and the repair costs of £22,000 forced the owners to sell the 'Great Britain' and her sister ship, the 'Great Western', to avoid insolvency.

The new owners, Gibbs, Bright & Company of Liverpool, planned to transfer the 'Great Britain' to the Australian service, sailing under the flag of the Liverpool & Australian Navigation Company, for which she underwent further alterations. Another mast was taken away, giving the ship a four masted rigging; two small side by side funnels replaced the single large one; a deckhouse was added to greatly increase passenger accommodation and, finally, the engines, damaged off Ireland, were replaced and a new propeller fitted with a clutch so that it could revolve freely during the long voyage while under sail.

The ship made passage to New York and then in 1852 she left on her first voyage to Melbourne, carrying 630 emigrants. The trip out was mainly powered by sail so as to conserve coal and her voyage was not a fast one by her later standards. On her arrival in Melbourne, she immediately created great public excitement. The Melbourne *Argus* reported that large crowds milled around the docks of Port Phillip to see the arrival and that 4,000 enthusiastic sightseers paid 1/- each to tour the ship. After her return voyage, her new rigging was found to be unsatisfactory and the drag on the propeller excessive. In 1853 the ship was virtually re-built. She was given a single small funnel and a large three-masted ship rig, with a new long bowsprit. A two-bladed propeller was fitted in a lifting frame that could be taken out of the water while under sail. In that form, the 'Great Britain' made more than 30 voyages to Australia carrying immigrants and cargo to the goldfields; and wool, wheat, and gold, back to England. From 1855 to 1858 she was lost to the Australian run, being commandeered to carry troops to the Crimea, then to the Indian Mutiny. Between 1858 until her withdrawal in 1877, she remained on the Australian Colonial Service. By 1869 it was estimated by the Melbourne periodical *The*

Welcome, that: "This ship had brought out 10,000 immigrants and taken back from the Victorian goldfields 1,659,096 ounces of gold, not to mention the thousands of tons of colonial wheat and wool. All by the Grace of God and good stewardship of her Captain John Gray R.N.R."

Her passage times were remarkably dependable. Ten prior to 1870 averaged 62 days. Her best passage was 55 days 17 hours. All told, she made 34 voyages to Australia over a span of 22 years. A passenger, Rachel Henning, who travelled in her to Victoria, in 1861 told of one of the advantages of travelling in the 'Great Britain' when she wrote:

"We were fortunate enough to steer through (the calm) while the unhappy sailing ships we overtook were flapping their sails in vain....their inhabitants must ave almost roasted in the heat."

All through her days on the Australia run, the 'Great Britain' enjoyed tremendous popularity and was often accorded a warm welcome and farewell, far in excess of other ships. By 1877, the ship had carried over 20,000 passengers to our shores along with countless tons of cargo, both in and out of port. The 'Great Britain', although not built to ferry immigrants to Australia nevertheless managed to carry more people here in shorter times, over a longer period and with greater reliability than any other ship that



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century. Her Majesty's colonial government in Victoria knew all too well the importance of the 'Great Britain', and the new generation of steam ships that would follow her, when George Verdon, Agent-General of that colony, said:

"Until there is more steam communication between England and Australia, of which passengers of all classes can take advantage, we shall not have done all that is possible to shorten the distance which is now the chief drawback to Australian immigration and trade."

By 1877 the ship was beginning to show her age and was taken off the Australia run and offered for sale. In 1882 she was finally purchased by Anthony Gibbs, Sons & Company and converted to sail only. The engines, deckhouse and all passenger accommodation were removed. Hatches were cut for loading cargo and timber cladding was placed around the hull between the low and high loading marks so she could be loaded to 25ft, 50% over her original draught. On the third voyage as a sailing ship in 1886, she was damaged in a storm, but managed to put into the Falkland Islands, where she was condemned and used as a hulk for storing wool until 1933. Finally in 1937 the hulk was towed to shallow water in Sparrow Cove near Port Stanley and scuttled. There she stayed, the decaying shell of her former self until 1967 when plans were first enacted to salvage and return the wreck to England.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"The History of Ships"

"Collecting Australiana"

"Ships in Southern Waters"

"Settlers under Sail"

The Argus), Melbourne Newspapers.
The Welcome)

Special thanks to those collectors who lent items to illustrate this article; to Bill Chapman for help in researching newspaper files; and to Andrew Simpson for his photographic expertise.

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PAINTING ON GLASS

by Brian Easterbrook

In the latter part of the last century, the Australian capital and chief provincial cities had become firmly established. The mining boom added to the prosperity brought by the agricultural and pastoral industries and with this prosperity came an increased amount of leisure time to practise and to pay attention to arts and crafts. A look through surviving catalogues of the various exhibitions and shows held from the 1870s onwards reveals the forerunners of studio potters in the amateurs who displayed an occasional

vase, bowl, or modelled head; china painters; painters on glass or terra cotta; woodcarvers and similar craftspeople.

Painting on glass usually employed one of three methods. A flat glass sheet was painted in oils and framed against a suitably coloured background to show up the painting. The paint did not always adhere strongly to the smooth glass, so that these paintings when found today often have worn or rubbed areas. The second method was to treat a glass sheet, bowl, or vase with an abrasive or sandblasting to produce a white, matt surface suitable for painting, and known as ground glass. The paint work was done in enamels which were subsequently baked in a muffle kiln as in china painting, or in unfired oils. The third method was to paint on milk glass which is sometimes confused with ground glass. True milk glass was treated during manufacture with an additive to produce a translucent, milky-white body. It could be painted with unfired oils or with fired enamel pigments.

The example illustrated on the bottom of the inside back cover is a concave, ground glass plaque 25.6 cm in diameter and painted with a spray of wild-flowers in unfired oils. The inevitable Victorian butterfly hovers nearby. The flowers include two endemic Tasmanian species, the heartberry (*Aristotelia*) and the wild laurel (*Acradenia*), suggesting a Tasmanian origin for the piece. There is no artist's name or initials. M E Gurr was one artist who used this sort of medium in the latter part of the last century and at the 1891-92 Tasmanian Exhibition in Launceston won an award for a spray of flowers on ground glass. However, there were several other artists around Launceston in the same period, painting on china, terra cotta, or glass, and there is at present no way to identify the artist

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BOOKS

AUSTRALIAN COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS AND MEDELETS FROM 1788, by Leslie Carlisle, A.F.A.N.S., B&C Press Pty Limited (1983). Hard covers, 312 pp, illustrated (1200+). First standard edition 1,000. Price \$40 + \$5 postage and packing, from Mr L Carlisle, PO Box 427, Paddington, NSW, 2021. Enquiries as to limited (160) de-luxe, signed edition by phone (02) 36 1574.

REVIEWED BY *Pat Boland*

Prior to the advent of printing as a means of mass communication and propaganda, this role was largely filled by the use of commemorative coins and medals, the earliest of which is probably the famous "Marathon Dekadrachm" of Athens, struck shortly after the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC.

It was not until the time of the Roman Empire that coins (and medals to a much lesser degree) were used as an instrument of policy to disseminate information and propaganda on behalf of the Imperial Authorities. Indeed, the prolific issues of the Imperial mints in the declining years of the Empire were largely devoted to "propping up" Rome's declining fortunes.

Following the collapse of Rome, the use of coins and medals for commemorative purposes virtually ceased for over a thousand years; to be revived

during the great days of the Renaissance, when magnificent medallic issues were common. Thereafter the custom spread in Europe where such issues were widespread, particularly in England; so that it is not surprising to find that Australia's first medal, the "Charlotte" medal was probably contemporary with the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788.

Lacking both the technical capacity and the public demand to support such an industry in the early years of settlement, Australian medals prior to the early 1850s were usually individual, hand engraved pieces. With the increase in population and general prosperity arising from the discovery of gold, coupled with the introduction of mass production techniques, it became possible to produce medals profitably for public distribution, and within a few years their use was widespread for various purposes, throughout the Australian colonies.

Commemorative medals are but one theme of the many which comprise the overall field of Australian medals, medallions and medalets. It is however that theme, the study of which is central to the understanding and appreciation of the many other fields available. These medals provide windows on the past through which we can glimpse the events of Australia's march to nationhood over the last 200 years, both great and small, both national and local, as they appeared at the time to contemporary viewers. Their value then as historical documents in their own right is evident.

It is this vast and complex field which numismatist Les Carlisle has chosen to study, and to present to the public in his major pioneer work on this subject. His book covers the whole period from First Settlement to Federation, through to the issues of the early 1980s, and many of the pieces listed appear in the 1200 plus photographs which are the core of this book.

Its importance lies in the fact that for the first time an attempt has been made to establish the content and scope of the core theme of commemorative medals; establishing parameters and a wealth of reference material which will encourage many numismatists to approach this field in the future with confidence and renewed interest.

Australian Commemorative Medals and Medalets from 1788 will appeal to a far wider public than numismatists alone, as its attractive format, histories of some of the medals, and the many fine illustrations of medals relating to our past will interest anyone who has an interest in the history and development of Australia.

The author is to be congratulated on the scholarship and high standard of research evident in this book, and for producing a reference work which will remain the standard reference work in this field for many years to come. His publishers B&C Press Pty Limited are also to be congratulated on the fine standard of production which they have attained.

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LADIES DIDN'T, RECOLLECTIONS OF AN EDWARDIAN GIRLHOOD.

by Eugenie McNeill, retold by her daughter Eugenie Crawford. Penguin Books, Melbourne, 1984, 112 pages, \$4.95.

This short and entertaining book continues the story of Eugenie McNeil (nee Delarue) told in *A Bungyip Close Behind Me*, republished by Penguin in 1982. It is a very readable and fascinating account of the life of an enlightened middle class girl in Edwardian Sydney. The collector will find it especially interesting, as the author was the daughter of noted silversmith H F Delarue; she relates how she and her sister sold Delarue's best known piece, a claret jug exhibited at the Sydney International Exhibition in 1879, for £40 in 1945, and which re-sold in 1979 for \$12,000.

JUDY CASSAB. PLACES, FACES AND FANTASIES.

by Elwyn Lynn. Macmillan Australia, 152 pages, 155 colour plates, \$100.

If you like European-born Cassab's work, you might prefer the leatherbound limited edition at \$500, which comes with "an original Cassab, valued at \$500, for absolutely no extra charge".

PORTRAITS IN THE LANDSCAPE. THE HOUSE PAINTINGS OF WILLIAM TIBBITS.

1870-1906, by Shar Jones, published by the Historic Houses Trust of NSW, \$4.00.

The State Library of Victoria and private collectors in South Australia, Victoria and NSW lent house paintings for an exhibition at Elizabeth Bay House, of which this is the catalogue. The watercolours range from humble cottages to grand mansions, made as a record for the owners rather than for art galleries. The catalogue maintains the usual high standard of publications from the HHT, and is a worthy addition to the literature on the history of Australian architecture and domestic life.

MUSEUMS GUIDE (NSW AND ACT).

compiled by the NRMA in association with the Museums Association of Australia Incorporated (NSW), 1983. Distributed free of charge to NRMA members.

A 54 page booklet with a revised and expanded list of museums in NSW, now totalling several hundred. Full of useful information including phone numbers where the information can be checked in advance of a visit. Minor drawbacks are the use of some odd symbols, e.g. a dollar sign for a shop; a triangle in a circle for a cloakroom (what's wrong with a coathanger symbol?); and an out of date phone number for the co-publisher. There is no differentiation between the entries for major and minor museums, e.g. a cemetery at Liverpool rates a longer entry than the Power House Museum.

AUSTRALIAN DECORATIVE ARTS.

by John McPhee. Australian National Gallery, \$20.

This is a catalogue of some items of Australian decorative arts in the Australian National Gallery Collection, each illustrated on a full page with a short essay opposite. A quality publication, inexplicably illustrating an English item of Australian interest on the cover.

THE AUSTRALIAN HOME.

by Ian Evans, Sydney, Flannel Flower Press, 1983, \$24.95.

Society member Ian Evans in this book deals with many elements of the Australian home - furniture, floor coverings, lighting and so on - in his usual informative way, well illustrated with appropriate contemporary or new photographs and drawings. The book is well researched with detailed footnotes for those who want to explore further, and there is a very full list of photograph sources, all too rare nowadays.

OUR SIDE OF THE COUNTRY - THE STORY OF VICTORIA

by Geoffrey Blainey, Methuen LBC Ltd., Sydney, 280 pages, \$19.95

List of Illustrations

FRONT COVER: "The Crimson Thread of Kinship" a statuette of Sir Henry Parkes by Nelson Illingworth. Height 43 cm. Courtesy Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney.

INSIDE FRONT COVER: Watercolour of the 'Great Britain' entering Port Phillip Bay by Vellacott, Melbourne, painted some time after the ship retired from the Australian run in 1877.

Nautilus shell depicting the SS 'Great Britain', engraved "This magnificent Ocean Steam Clipper is the most celebrated afloat/Grt Britain/Jno Gray Esqr Commander/ Souvenir/ Leng 328 FT/ Brea 52 "/Pow/Tons 3,209". The ship is shown in the form of her days on the Australian run. It is similar to a shell in the Tasmanian Museum, showing another Brunel ship "Great Western" illustrated in Hooper's *A Guide to Collecting Australiana* p.109 and attributed to C H Wood of London.

INSIDE BACK COVER: Silver cup by H Steiner, engraved "Gewidmet v.a. Hahndorfer Kranken-Verein ihrem Secretaire R Strenz 1869". Height 19.4 cm, wt 195 g.

Ground glass plaque painted in oils with Tasmanian wildflowers, circa 1890s by an unknown artist. Diameter 25.6 cm.

BACK COVER: Silver medal dated 1823 engraved by Samuel Clayton, Sydney. Courtesy Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney.



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