AUSTRALIANA

FEBRUARY 1995

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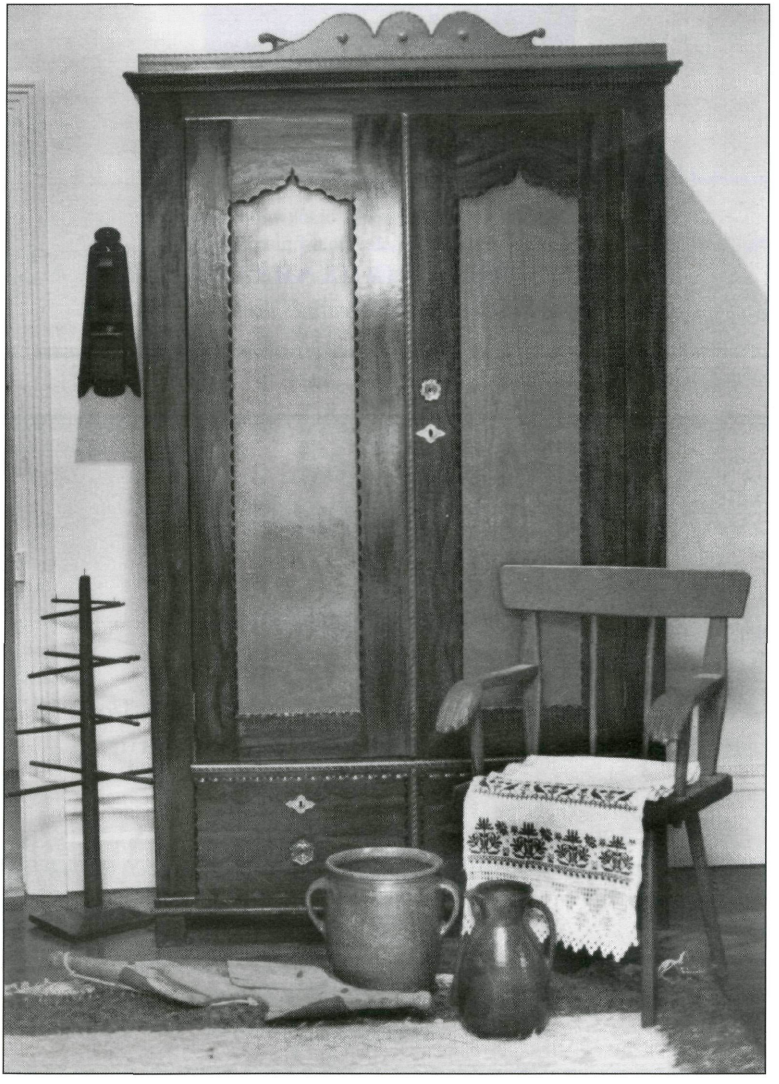

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Cover: Graetz wardrobe with grained finish and inlaid decoration, c.1890; wall-mounted candleholder, c.1880; red-gum Christmas tree, c.1860; primitive gum slab and stick red-gum child's high-chair, c.1850; Samuel Hoffmann lead-glazed earthenware jar and jug, c.1860; Embroidered mantle runner and carved pine shoulder yoke, c.1860s.

THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

PO BOX 643, WOOLLAHRA NSW 2025

— SOCIETY PROGRAMME —

MEETINGS — 1995

THURSDAY **6 APRIL 1995**	Ann Watson, curator Powerhouse Museum, will give an illustrated lecture on Walter Burley Griffin and his work.
THURSDAY **1 JUNE 1995**	Guest lecturer to be announced.
THURSDAY **3 AUGUST 1995**	Annual General Meeting Guest lecturer to be announced.
THURSDAY **5 OCTOBER 1995**	Guest Lecturer to be announced.
THURSDAY **7 DECEMBER 1995**	Christmas Party "Australiana Showcase – Show and Tell".

Society meeting are held at 7.30pm at the Glover Cottage Hall, 124 Kent Street, Sydney. Convenient Street parking. Drinks served 7.30-8.00pm, followed by Australiana Showcase (bring your Australian treasures for general discussion). Lectures will commence at 8.30pm.

Special Announcement

THE POWERHOUSE PRIZE FOR 'AUSTRALIANA'

The Australiana Society and the Powerhouse Museum announce that the POWERHOUSE PRIZE FOR AUSTRALIANA, sponsored by Simpsons Antiques, for 1994 was awarded to **Kenneth Cavill** for his article, "Commemmorative and Souvenir Spoons of Australian Interest 1894-1994", which was published in *Australiana,* Vol 16, No 4 (November 1994).

A definitive and scholarly account of its subject this article is an important contribution of original research in Australiana.

Because of the few submissions for this year's award the Australiana Society's Committee has decided to discontinue the prize in 1995 but hopes a sufficient response by both members and non-members of the Society will enable it to be resumed in the future.

Notice

David Dolan has resigned as a vice-president of the Australiana Society as he has left Sydney again, this time to go to Perth. David has been Manager of Collection Development and Research at the Powerhouse Museum, after being Senior Curator of Historical Decorative Arts and Design from 1989-1994. He has been appointed foundation Professor of Cultural Heritage Studies at Curtin University and has taken up the chair for the start of the 1995 academic year. In this capacity David is also *ex-officio* director of Curtin University's Centre for Cultural Heritage Studies, the first appointment of its kind in Australia.

His departure is a great loss to the Society and its Committee. The Australiana Society congratulates David on his new position and hopes to hear from him once he settles in the West.

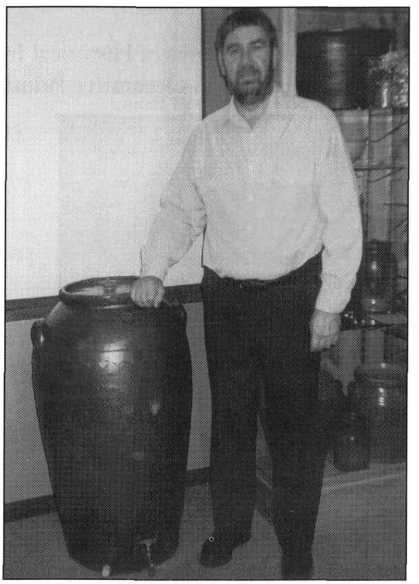
Please note his new address:
Professor D. Dolan
Centre for Cultural Heritage Studies
Curtin University
GPO Box U1987
Perth 6001
Tel (09) 3512 3347

A new Museum for Australia
National Museum of Australian Pottery

Inside the museum

A new Museum for Australia, the NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN POTTERY has been established and was officially opened on the 26th January 1995, by John McPhee, Deputy Director, Australian Collection and Exhibitions Management, National Gallery of Victoria.

The Museum, the first of its kind dedicated to Australia's 19th century potters, has come to fruition after many years of research and collecting throughout Australia, by Geoff and Kerrie Ford, who decided to build a Museum and make their private collection available for viewing by the public.



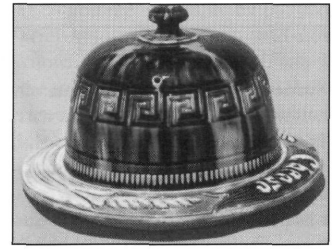
This saltglazed Olive oil container stands 92cm, high. It was made by John Trewenack, in the 1850's, and is impressed with a potter's stamp 'John H. Trewenack Potter and Pipemaker Magill near Adelaide'.

The collection contains over 500 pieces of domestic pottery from 72 companies throughout Australia, many never displayed before. It covers the era from 1819, the convict potter Jonathan Leak, who's wares are the earliest surviving produced in Australia, to 1918, the First World War. Among the wide variety of wares on display can be seen simple preserving jars and containers to elegantly decorated water filters, cheese covers and plates and bread plates, to name just a few. The collection covers the whole spectrum of domestic wares used in and around the family home last century.

Majolica glaze, Flower pot and detachable saucer, attributed to the Phoenix Pottery, Lane Cove, Sydney, made by William Holford. It has the same 'Premier' flower pattern Holford used on the Lithgow Premier Jardiniere.

The Museum is situated on the New South Wales and Victorian border at 66 South Street, Wodonga, and will open on Sundays between 10.00am and 4.00pm or by appointment at a cost of $3.00 per head. Geoff and Kerrie can be contacted by mail at PO Box 928 Wodonga, Victoria, 3689, or by phone on (060) 563 152.

In 1985 Geoff published *19th Century South Australian pottery: Guide for Historians and Collectors* which was the first account of this period of South Australia's domestic potters. Geoff is well into the production of his next book *Australian Pottery: The First 100 Years*, which will cover the whole of Australia, he hopes it will be available by mid 1995.



Majolica glaze, Cheese cover and plate, Key pattern, made at the Bendigo pottery, at Epsom Bendigo. It was produced c. 1882, and is impressed with the small Bendigo 'Anchor' mark.

Exhibition

Fleeting Encounters: Pictures and Chronicles of the First Fleet

An exhibition of works from the Natural History Museum, London and other Collections at the Museum of Sydney, March 11 – May 31, 1995.

When the eleven ships of the First Fleet left Portsmouth in 1787, they carried a number of painters amongst their passengers – painters whose extraordinary work now provides an invaluable and moving account of the expedition and of life in the early colony.

An exhibition exploring the remarkable journey of the First Fleet and later voyages will herald the opening of the new **Museum of Sydney** *on the site of first Government House* in March 1995.

The exhibition comprises 50 watercolours from the early Port Jackson painters – a collection that has not been assembled in Australia since its painters were here with the First Fleet. These works include impressions of the long journey from Portsmouth, the first European depictions of Aboriginal Australians, early renderings of the colony, and the earliest drawing of wildlife and flora.

Many of the works are attributed to the "Port Jackson Painter", whose identity is not known and whose work may in fact be that of a number of painters. There is, then, a wonderful enigma about who painted what among the circle of accomplished recorders of this extraordinary historical experience.

Diaries of the First Fleet, again assembled for the first time in Australia since the early years of the colony, will also be displayed.

Fleeting Encounters will be opened by the Premier of NSW, the Hon. John Fahey MP on Saturday March 11 1995. The Museum of Sydney, Sydney's most exciting new museum, is a $27 million project and a major initiative in the Ministry for the Arts.

For more information, please contact Rebecca Charles on (02) 251 4611.

Contributions Please ...

We require articles urgently for our Australiana journal.

We would appreciate if our members doing research into aspects of *Australiana* "would put pen on paper and let us have the fruits of your labours for publications".

Please forward your submissions to: The Editor, *Australiana*, PO Box 322, Roseville NSW 2069. Fax (02) 416 7143.

John Adam Pearson
Sydney's first portrait sculptor

Jane Lennon

Sydney portrait sculpture is generally believed to have begun in the early 1840s with the arrival of the English sculptor Charles Abraham whose earliest known work was a bust in colonial marble commissioned by the Surveyor General Thomas Mitchell in 1843. However, a profile portrait in marble of William Wardell, the ex-newspaper proprietor who was murdered by convicts on his estate at Petersham in 1834[1], preceded this bust by several years. The portrait is part of a mural monument to Wardell's memory in St James's Church, Sydney. The tablet was executed at Clewett's Colonial and Foreign Marble Works in Pitt Street, Sydney, in 1839[2]. [*Plate 2*].

The tablet bears the insciption 'Clewett' – the signature of George Clewett a stone and monumental mason who had arrived in Sydney with his wife in 1832 and set up a marble working business. Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell was obviously referring to the products of Clewett's Marble Works when he observed a few years later that chimneypieces, tables and the like manufactured in local marble were to be found in most of the better residences in Sydney[3]. Clewett sometimes worked in association with another stone and monumental mason, William Patten. In addition, Clewett and his wife Ann were in partnership with Patten and his wife, also named Ann, in a millinery and dressmaking business[4].

A broken column signed by Clewett in the Devonshire Street Cemetery was said to mark the grave of Wardell until his remains were disinterred in 1839, five years after his

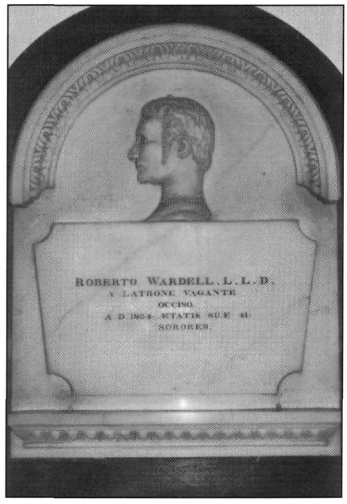
[Plate 1]Death mask of Robert Wardell (probably taken by John Moreton), 1834. Detail of nineteenth century display at the Australian Museum, (photograph Australian Museum).

death, and sent to England for reburial in the family vault[5]. The mural monument, however, cannot be by Clewett for, while it bears his signature, he had died in April 1837, two years before its completion. It is possible that Clewett had begun the work and left it in an unfinished state; however, his usual habit appears to have been to letter imported mural tablets and sign them. No ornate carving by him is known: the output of his marble works seems to have been confined to simple, decorative pieces. While in 1836 Clewett advertised his preparedness to undertake busts of Shakespeare, Milton, Napoleon and Earl Grey[6], these were presumably to be taken from casts. It is uncertain whether any of these were ever executed.

Clewett's obituary in the Sydney Herald 'regret[ed] exceedingly' the death of this 'most excellent mechanic and ... truly respectable tradesman' and noted that '[h]is loss will be felt by those rising into affluence and wealth'[7]. Clewett also left a family presumably even more devastated by his passing than the local middle class. He bequeathed his estate, valued at under 200 pounds, to his widow who survived him with their three children, George, Emma and Felix[8]. Anne Clewett, forced to make a living for herself and her young family, appears to have sold the haberdashery business to the Pattens and took over the running of the Marble Works[9]. Clewett had had eight convicts assigned to him in 1833 so presumably Ann was left with a workforce able to undertake the basic tasks associated with the business; she would also, perhaps, as her husband had done, have called upon Patten for assistance[10].

In August 1838 the fortunes of the business took an upward turn as is evidenced by an advertisement in the **Commercial Journal and Advertiser**:

Mrs Clewett, in renewing her thanks to her Friends and the Public for the kind consideration and patronage evinced since the business devolved upon her, has the satisfaction to announce the arrival from England of an efficient statuary and mason to superintend the marble works so that she now feels warranted in undertaking any orders for Monuments, Tablets, and Ornamental Masonry, &c., that she may be favored with, and invites an inspection of her Show Room, where Monuments, Tablets, Chimneys, &c. may be procured on the most reasonable terms that good workmanship will admit[11].



[Plate 2] John Adam Pearson (attrib.), Monument to Robert Wardell, 1839, marble, St James's Church, Sydney photograph Rosemary Annable.

The 'efficient statuary and mason' was apparently the nineteen year-old John Adam Pearson who was to marry his employer on 27 August 1840[12].

Pearson is almost certainly the author of Wardell's monumental tablet. No details of his background are known beyond the fact that he was a Yorkshireman from Hull. The naive mechanical execution of Wardell's portrait suggests that he had had no formal training but he appears to have had a considerable reserve of native talent.

Wardell's portrait was obviously modelled from his death mask, taken in December 1834 at Moreton's Surry Hills Pottery - probably by the proprietor John Moreton - and now known by a photograph[13]. [*Plate 1*] A comparison between the two shows close similarities; indeed, the extremely deep relief of Pearson's portrait - the dimensions are equivalent to a half-face - suggests that he used a pointing machine to aid the translation of the cast into the marble. The relief portrait is lacking in character, a quality also explained by the close dependence on the cast from which it appears to differ only in the addition of hair and eyebrows and the smoothing of the jowl area. Typical post-mortem features of prominent cheek bones, sunken eye and down-turned mouth are all retained although the most tell-tale evidence of duplication is that, as in the death-mask, the ear is modelled, not naturalistically, but as two concentric folds (ear convolutions are virtually impossible to cast). The profile view with truncated neck derives from heads on antique coins and, despite fashionable extended sideburns, the stylised, tufted head-curls are modelled in the manner of Roman numismatic and bust portraits; the inscription is in Latin.

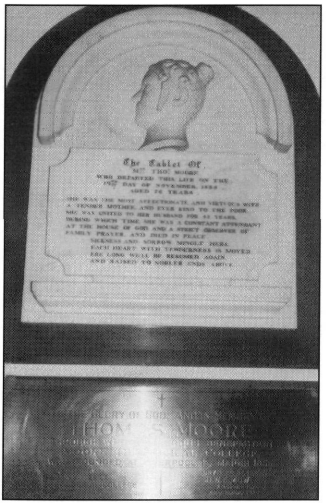
Pearson's severe classicising style was somewhat outdated but nonetheless could be expected to have appealed to the colonial upper middle class who imagined themselves as latter day Romans - a compensation in some it seems for the perceived social deficiencies of a country that had no hereditary aristocracy. While signed works by Pearson are confined to simple marble tombstones and mural tablets, on stylistic evidence he can be attributed with an unsigned portrait tablet in marble in St Luke's Church, Liverpool, to the memory of Rachel Moore (d. 1838), the wife of Thomas Moore, founder of Moore

Theological College. [*Plate 3*] The dimensions of the portrait are again life-size and the truncation of the neck is handled in a similar fashion to the Wardell portrait. While there has been an attempt to represent the ear naturalistically, it is large and clumsily carved. The face is idealised, if lifeless, as in the Wardell, and the subject sports a formalised hairstyle à la Grecque. Moore died aged seventy-six yet is represented as being in her forties so in this instance it appears unlikely that the somewhat literal-minded Pearson would have worked from a death mask; perhaps there was an early portrait. Pearson's work may have been also partially based on the Wardell: there is, for example, no attempt to decrease the breadth of the neck to represent the female anatomy.

In April 1842 the **Herald** observed Pearson was working on a chimney piece in colonial marble for the reception rooms of the new Government House[14]. The following month he sold the Pitt Street business to William Patten[15]. In October Pearson was bankrupted, presumably due to the pressures of the recession[16].

Pearson died a little over two years later on 3 December 1844 at the age of twenty-three from injuries sustained some time since in a carriage accident[17]. Anne Clewett, widow to two of the colony's earliest stone and monumental masons took in lodgers for a living[18]. She died in 1851[19]. Under the proprietorship of William Patten, Clewett's former business - referred to by Patten as the Australian and Italian Marble Works or the Australian Marble Works - prospered and expanded to become one of the largest monumental masonry firms in Australia. The business was subsequently carried on under the name of Patten Brothers by Patten's sons.

Biographical information: Jane Lennon has a PhD in Fine Arts from the University of Sydney and is currently working as an Assistant Curator at the Powerhouse Museum.



[Plate 3] John Adam Pearson (attrib.), Monument to Rachel Moore, (d. 1838), marble, St Luke's Anglican Church, Liverpool.

References

1. Sir T.L. Mitchell to W.R. Davidson, 11 August. 1843, ML MSS A296. A plaster bust of Mitchell by Abraham, formerly in the Pioneers' Club, Sydney, has been stolen. The cast of Mitchell said by William Moore to have been held at the Royal Empire Society, London, (William Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, 2 vols, Sydney 1980 (1934), vol. 1, p. 139) - now the Royal Commonwealth Society - cannot presently be located.
2. **Sydney Herald**, 21 December 1838. **Sydney Gazette**, 4 June 1839, cited Arthur George Foster, 'The Sandhills: an Historic Cemetery', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal* [JRAHS], vol. 5, part 4, Sydney 1919, p. 169.
3. Thomas L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, 2 vols, London 1838, vol. 2, p. 318.
4. *New South Wales Calendar and General Post Office Directory*, 1835 (p. 29), 1836 (p. 25).
5. Arthur George Foster, JRAHS, op. cit., p. 169.
6. *Sydney Gazette*, 20 August 1836, cited Ken Scarlett, *Australian Sculptors*, Melbourne 1980, p. 110.
7. *Sydney Herald*, 20 April 1837, quoted in Barrie Dyster, *Servant and Master: Building and Running the Grand houses of Sydney 1788-1850*, Sydney 1989.
8. Sir William Dixson, Notes on Art and Artists, Dixson Library, WD 53, 160.
9. Mrs Patten advertised her establishment at 100 Pitt Street in SMH, 24 May 1842.
10. Governor's Despatches, vol. 25, August - December 1835, Mitchell Library MSS A1214, 677.
11. *Commercial Journal and Advertiser*, 18 August 1838. I am grateful to Anita Callaway for this reference.
12. I am grateful to Anita Callaway who first pointed out to me that Mrs Pearson and Mrs Clewett were the same person. A John Pearson arrived on the **Westminster** on 26 June 1838.
13. *Australian*, 30 December 1834 (reference Anita Callaway). In 1844 John Moreton advertised that he had permission to take casts of Vigors and Burdett the murderers of Mr Noble. SMH 15 August 1844, cited John McPhee, Australian Folk and Popular Art in the Australian National Gallery, Canberra 1988, p. 14.
14. *SMH*, 25 April 1842.
15. *SMH*, 19 May 1842.
16. Bankruptcy file of John Adam Pearson, 2/8710, Archives Office of New South Wales.
17. *Australian*, 6 December 1844, 963 (reference Anita Callaway).
18. *SMH*, 15 April 1847.
19. *SMH*, 18 October 1851.

I wish to thank Anita Callaway for contributing information which considerably assisted the writing of this paper.

Reflections on a Collection

Majorie Yvonne Graham (b. 28 May 1924, d. 30 May 1994)

John Wade

When Marjorie Graham died last May, we lost one of the pioneer collectors and researchers of historic Australian ceramics, glass and ephemera.

At the funeral, a favourite mug from her collection was placed on her coffin. However, it was removed before the coffin reached the furnace, symbolising perhaps that though she was gone, her collection lived on after her.

Many of the now older curators and ex-curators were deeply saddened by the loss, some so much that they could not bear to go to the auction of her collection held by Lawsons on 16 October 1994. She was held in high regard by a great many of us, principally, I think, because we all regarded her as a teacher who had freely shared some of her special knowledge with us.

Those who started in curatorial work in Sydney's museums dealing with Australian decorative arts in the 1970s came to the subject in a variety of indirect ways. For instance, Anne Bickford, Annette Keenan and I came through archaeology; Margaret Betteridge through geography; James Broadbent through architecture; Patricia MacDonald and Peter Timms through fine arts. Marjorie was the person who freely passed on her knowledge about Australian ceramics, glass and silver to us. Kevin Fahy was equally supportive when it came to his knowledge of furniture, metalwork and historic houses.

Of course, we also learned through hands-on work with collections, through our own research, and through dealers, but no-one had such a systematic grasp of her subject as Marjorie. True, she was eccentric with her carefully conserved appearance, her long phone calls, and elaborate aside commentaries marginally related to the matter at hand. It was all the more remarkable that she was entirely self-taught; her substantial knowledge relied on her own research, and on her extensive collection of documented examples built up in conjunction with her charming husband Don.

The Graham Collection was an old-fashioned typological classification. Like the naturalist Joseph Banks collecting specimens along the Australian coast in 1770 to build up a type collection, Marjorie explored the Australian hinterland of second hand shops and auctions, collecting in many instances the first re-discovered examples of long-forgotten potters, potteries and glassworks. Don drove their green Triumph sedan around country NSW and to Queensland, Victoria and South Australia, to fill out their collection and carry out research. Indeed, this exercise helped track down the geographic source of many unmarked pieces.

As a pioneering collection, it was inevitable that it should contain mistakes, and that it would not consist of the finest examples, which would come later to more affluent collectors who had benefited from Marjorie's researches, published in two definitive books, several publications and over 60 articles principally in the **Australian Antique Collector**. What the Graham collection did contain was a careful selection of examples generally chosen specifically because they were marked, dated or provenanced, in a range of shape and decoration (e.g. glazes) representative of each maker.

That is not to say Marjorie could not distinguish a good from an example of lesser quality. She most certainly could, but saw the value of what she was doing as gathering information and documentation about the total run of production, rather than highlighting only the tasteful interludes. It would be downright wrong to criticise the collection because it does not conform to the current fashion in collecting standards of an art gallery. Though her solid tan leather handbag held many other useful items such as a tape measure and magnifying glass, it did not contain a curatorial taste meter.

During her lifetime, she sold a small number from the collection to the National Gallery of Australia which is, understandably, concerned with connoisseurship - obtaining examples considered by the curators to be of the highest artistic merit, even though parochial.

That still left well over a thousand pieces of Australian ceramics, glass and ephemera, some crammed into display cabinets, others packed away in cardboard boxes under the house or in the garage, for dispersal at auction. It was a collection where you could sense the struggle of local manufacturers to compete against imports, where you could more often smell the perspiration rather than divine the inspiration of Australian potters and glassworkers, and where you could imagine the aspiration of

house-proud Australians to decorate their homes with cherished ornaments and robustly functional objects. As Marjorie might have said, it's not fine art, but it's our history. In her case, it was really the reconstructed domestic history of ordinary folk of her parents' and grandparents' time.

Many people expressed the view that the collection was of such importance that it should go intact into a museum. Marjorie did not share that romantic view, preferring that on her death that it be dispersed.

Since Marjorie began collecting Australiana over 25 years ago, our museums have embraced the notion of "social history". They have gone the opposite way to the rest of the workforce and rejected multiskilling in favour of increasing functional specialisations of curation, registration and conservation; they've gone upmarket in terms of interior design, replacing linoleum with carpet; and their collecting interests have shifted in different ways, principally to become more market-oriented (and less self-indulgent). And there has been much greater turnover of curatorial staff than their used to be.

A collection like Marjorie's may not have as much appeal to the army of neophyte curators, trained in the principles of museum studies but with no specialist field of expertise, as to the old hands with their nostalgic ties to Marjorie. And museums today already have much of this sort of material, thanks partly to her enthusiasm for it.

Several hundred private collectors, dealers and friends of Marjorie's attended the sale, which grossed $177,000. - about the same as the Power House Museum paid for the Sydney Gold Cup, to be displayed in the refurbished Sydney Mint.

Her glass collection was sold first, grouped into 136 lots many of which went quite cheaply. The highlights were as expected: a jug dated 1884 and engraved with fish attributed to Frank Webb ($2422); the amber head of Phar Lap ($1210); and the carnival glass. Most lots went for less than under $100, indicating that this area of collecting remains flat.

Ceramics fared a lot better. Out came the closet collectors, with their special and unpredictable interests. Many must have thought that the Graham Collection cachet added considerable value, or they seemed to ignore benchmark prices charged by dealers for comparable specimens.

The bowerbirds were attracted to the large, signed, bright and colourful pots from Castle Harris ($528), Remued ($330, $506, $682), and Eric Bryce Carter ($286). Women potters sold well: a Marguerite Mahood bowl fetched $935, a Grace Seccombe dish with a possum $1760, a Loma Latour-designed Mashman bowl $572. A globular Newtone vase painted with a landscape by Daisy Victoria Merton made $1650.

Twenty years ago, just about the only Australian pottery everyone knew about was Lithgow, so Lithgow examples were expensive. Lithgow prices held up well, with a round covered cheese plate going for $2640, and an elegant majolica water monkey on stand $2200, while a hefty Brisbane jardiniere on stand of the same period made only $744. Majolica bread plates ranged from $760 to $1980.

The rare, sleek but rather dreary brown vases from the Disabled Soldiers Pottery at Redfern, sold in lots of two, fetched up to $506 a lot. By contrast, a rare Wunderlich terracotta tobacco jar crowned by a waratah went for under $500 to an astute dealer.

Bright, shiny bird figurines flushed out the big spenders. Grace Seccombe's brightly coloured naturalistic birds - kookaburras (3 for $2750 or pairs for $990 and $1320), parrots ($1980) and budgerigars ($1650) led the charge among the figurines. A Castle Harris bowl, decorated in Charles Billich hues of pink, blue and yellow, with an alert lizard curling round the rim brought an astonishing $3465.

Overall, I would have to say that while Marjorie's publications have undoubtedly led to an increased level of appreciation of the value of Australiana, eye-catching colours and prettiness had a lot to do with prices too.

Notably absent from the auction were the institutions. Some may have bid by telephone, or had dealers in the room acting on commission for a few items. Does this mean that this type of material no longer generates (or does not yet generate?) any interest among our museums ?

Not entirely. The National Gallery of Australia had already picked out what it wanted, while the Historic Houses Trust of NSW bought the annotated 1959 Grant's furniture catalogue that Marjorie used to furnish her new West Ryde home. The Power House was interested in retailing and advertising paper-based documentary material. A few other institutions may have made select, anonymous buys.

In the decade and a half since her books came out, curators have been, if not energetic, then busier than previously in building up Australian collections and even busier writing formal acquisition policies. With long shopping lists, and little prospect that the institution will die as all private collectors do, they (or their successors) can wait till the "right" examples pop up.

Since the time when Marjorie was associated actively with the Power House, curators there have been expanded and split between two divisions, Decorative Arts and Social History. In spite of Marjorie's nostalgic links to the Museum, Decora-

tive Arts curators opted out of the collection for several reasons: because it did not have enough highlights; because many of the makers were already represented in the NSW State collection; because it would be expensive to buy, document systematically, conserve and store; because it would probably be consigned to the basement store indefinitely; and because there was little to interest the typical museum visitor.

Collectors, voting with their chequebooks, clearly preferred the major or more decorative pieces of examples. Every lot found a new home. Lawsons made available copies of Marjorie's detailed if idiosyncratic catalogue entries to buyers after the auction.

Marjorie and Don Graham's collection has been physically dispersed, but their life work has not been forgotten. Many pieces have been added to private, and some to public, collections; in her own lifetime, Marjorie used the collection effectively for expanding knowledge through her publications; Lawson's catalogue, ably compiled by Andrew Shapiro, is a summary record of the collection which had wide distribution. Ironically, it was the State Library of NSW which sought to acquire and is now preserving Marjorie's extensive documentation plus Don's photographic record.

In this age of information technology, publisher David Ell tried to interest institutions in an electronically published compendium of the collection, reproducing photographically Marjorie's typewritten catalogue entries , plus a photographic image of the objects. In the timespan, it did not prove feasible, but this is very likely the way of the future, particularly with collections catalogued on computer rather than typewriter or manuscript.

The Graham Collection has, by any standards, already served a useful purpose. Since her day, most of us now have access to word processors and data bases on personal computers. Let's hope that all collectors, public and private, will aspire to maintain as good a record of their collection as she did. Like those nebulous factors such as rarity and artistic quality, proper documentation can only add value, both research and monetary, to any collection, and preserve knowledge (and the collector's name) for posterity.

References

Anne Loxley, "Kitsch and Beyond", *Good Weekend*, 1 October 1994, pp 20-25

James R. Lawson Pty Ltd auction catalogue, *The Graham Collection of Australian Pottery, Glass, Ephemera and English Porcelain*, 16 October 1994

George Wilson, Anne Bickford and John Wade, "Marjorie Graham and the Graham Collection", *Australian Antique Collector* vol 49, January-June 1995, pp 72-74. This publication includes a complete bibliography of Marjorie Graham's books, publications and articles.

John Wade first met Marjorie and Don Graham in 1975 when he became curator of Applied Arts at Sydney's Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, now the Powerhouse Museum. He is now Sponsorship Manager of the National Maritime Museum, Sydney.

Book Review

Kevin Fahy

A. Hall & Company, **The Grandest Display of Household Furniture in the Colony Sydney 1897**, Reprint, 70 pages with introduction by Garry Smith, Wongoolah Publishing, 4 Metz Road, Via Taree NSW 2430, 1994. Available only from the publishers at $15 including packaging and post. (Tel (065) 537 536, Thursday and Friday only).

This modestly priced reprint of a late 19th century Australian illustrated furniture catalogue will be of great interest and use to social historians and Australian furniture collectors in every state of the Commonwealth. It is certainly one of the earliest surviving illustrated record of the actual stock of a late 19th century Australian furniture retailer.

Its value is enhanced by the inclusion of several detailed estimates as to the furnishing of an 'Australian Cottage'. complemented by a large number of testimonials from satisfied customers throughout NSW.

They alone provide a wondrous read and give some indications of the extent of a Sydney business in country NSW just before federation.

A. Hall & Co. were established in Sydney in 1889 as 'Wholesale & Retail Art Furnitures & Importers' of furniture of 'our own manufacture and Registered Design', 'from our London workshop'. Apart from English and European furniture the catalogue provides clear evidence that they were both retailers and manufacturers of locally produced furniture. The firm continued in business until 1962 and was deregistered in 1978.

Several late 19th century illustrated furniture catalogues by Australian furniture retailers/manufacturers exist. Extracts from only a few have been previously reprinted. The publisher of this reprint deserves every commendation. I only hope his enterprise is emulated by others.

It is a must for every Australiana collector's reference library. Get your copy now while it is available. Hesitate, you will be certainly disapointed.

The Barossa Folk:
Germanic Furniture and Craft Traditions in Australia

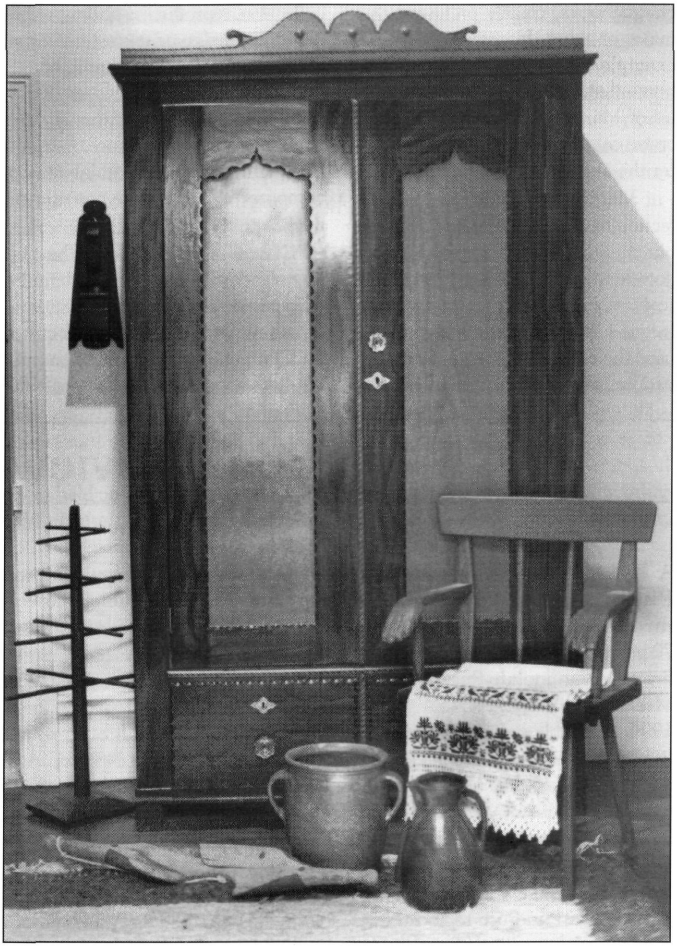
Noris Ioannou

My fascination with the Barossa Valley's folk material culture, its cultural life as embodied in the articles made and used by its inhabitants, began in the mid-1980s with an investigation into the traditions of Germanic potters in Australia, and in the writing of a history of ceramics which resulted in a publication incorporating that research. Following my PhD study of Germanic pottery in the Barossa Valley, completed in 1990, I resolved to work on a comprehensive cultural history of the Barossa, one which documented the gamut of its Germanic applied and decorative arts, especially its furniture traditions.

Although this research was extended into an investigation of Germanic craft traditions throughout Australia, it was the Barossa Valley, and to a lesser extent, the German-settled areas of the Adelaide Hills, which emerged as the heartland of Germanic material culture in Australia: it was in the Barossa region that the conditions conducive to the successful transplantation and prolonged survival of furniture and other craft practices occurred for over five generations, and where distinctive vernacular expressions emerged: hence the title of the completed text, The Barossa Folk, which encompasses Germanic applied arts as made throughout Australia.

However, I was not interested in simply producing a compilation or stylistic guide of Germanic furniture and other folk craft traditions in Australia – although the book certainly documents furniture and other craft traditions, their techniques and cultural characteristics and their ultimate demise in the context of a colonial country maturing into nationhood. These were evaluated from the broader perspective that the material culture of a society embodies its values, beliefs and customs.

Telling the story of Germanic furniture and other craft traditions within the context of community, making and their use was very much uppermost in my objectives. The fol-



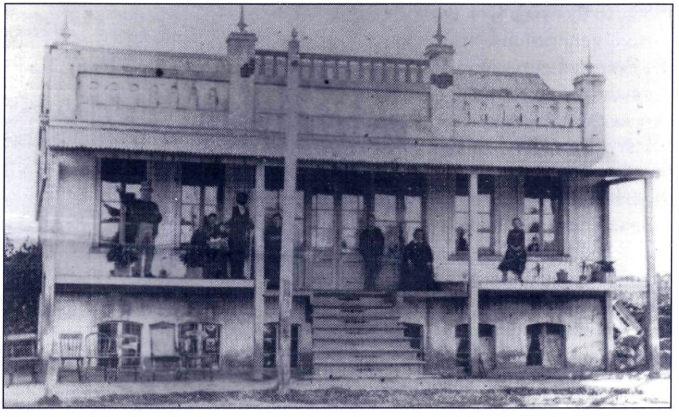
Graetz wardrobe with grained finish and inlaid decoration, c.1890; wall-mounted candleholder, c.1880; red-gum Christmas tree, c.1860; primitive gum slab and stick red-gum child's high-chair, c.1850; Samuel Hoffmann lead-glazed earthenware jar and jug, c.1860; Embroidered mantle runner and carved pine shoulder yoke, c.1860s.

lowing is a condensation of the subject matter and relevant themes covered by the book.

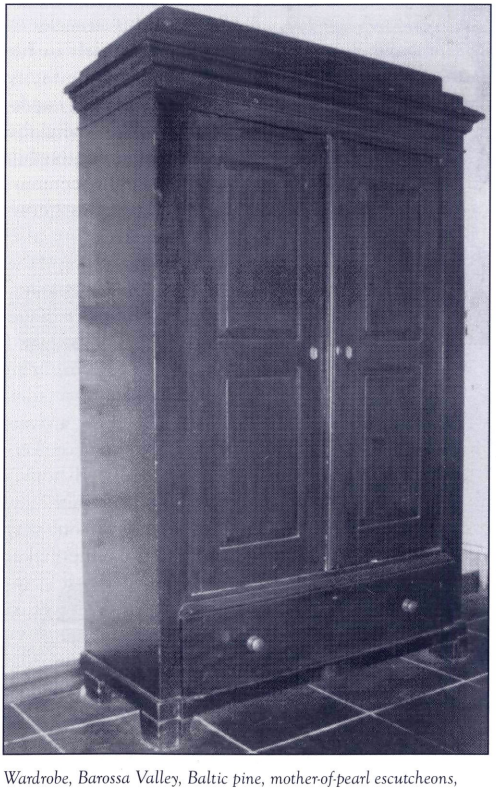
Community and tradition: creating the cultural landscape

The completed book comprises a narrative which unfolds chronologically, beginning with an introduction which covers Germanic migration, and expanding through thirteen chapters on furniture, informal woodcraft, pottery, textile and other craft traditions. Covering a topic as vast as Germanic material culture as it developed in Australia over 150 years, necessitated the division of the text into four main sections.

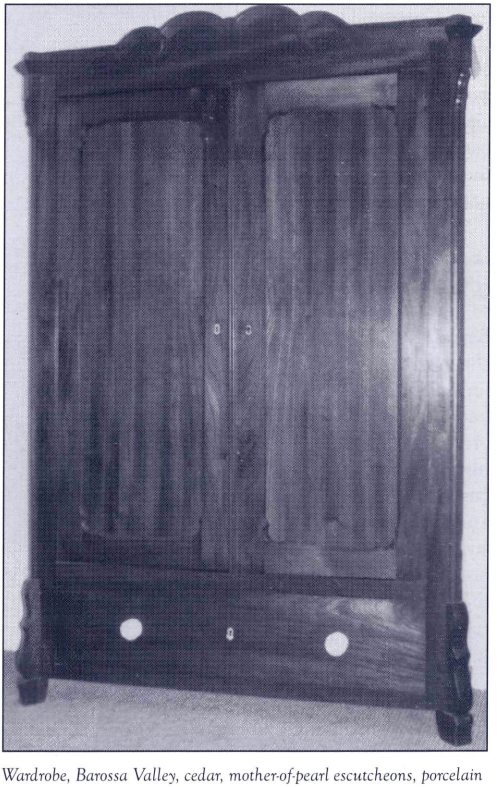
The first section, The Good Work – Woodcraft Traditions, tackles the dominant craft activity of the German settlers. Comprising eight chapters, some two-thirds of the book, it takes the reader from the pioneering years of the Barossa Valley and other German settled areas of Australia, through the 'golden age' of Germanic furniture-making in the 1840s to



The Schaedel family on the front verandah of their home, c.1900. Note the part-basement workshop windows on the lower left with the display of chairs.



Wardrobe, Barossa Valley, Baltic pine, mother-of-pearl escutcheons, stained red. Signed and dated, Karl Launer, 1865.

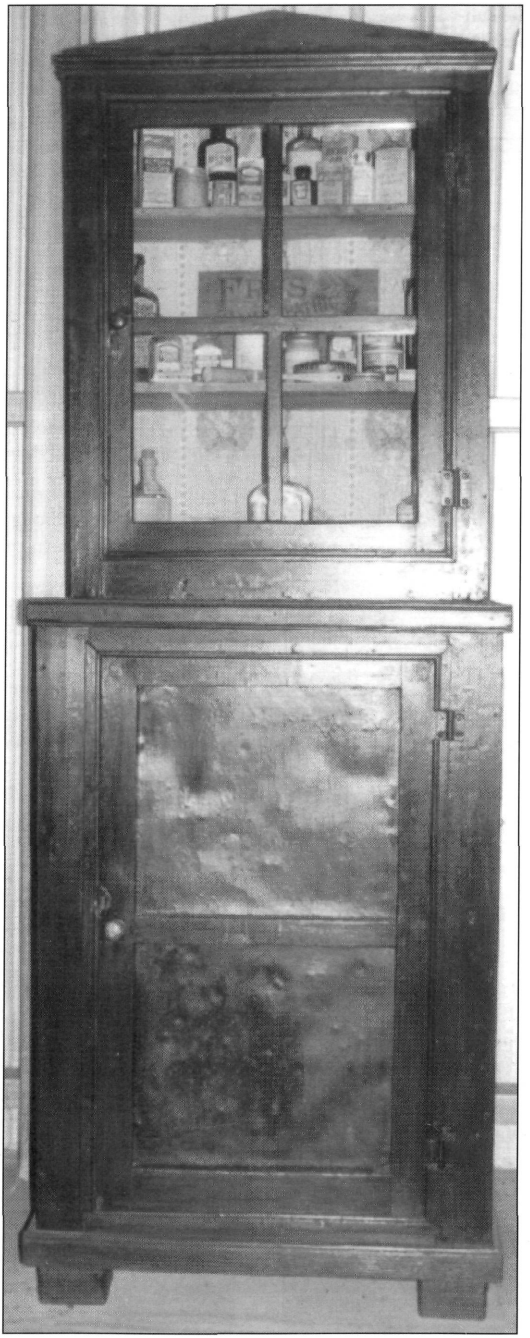


Wardrobe, Barossa Valley, cedar, mother-of-pearl escutcheons, porcelain knobs, Wilhelm Schaedel (attrib), c.1870.

1880s, to the work of successive generations, and the eventual cessation of Germanic woodcraft tradition in the mid-twentieth century. It finishes with a summary and comparative evaluation of traditional styles and vernacular forms. Following an introductory chapter on migration, the next chapter details the pattern of arrival of German cabinetmakers to Australia, and the farmer-craftsmen niche many came to occupy ,whereby specialised craft skills were supplemented by subsistence farming activity: the usual experience of many early wood-craftsman. Chapter Three concentrates on those craftsmen who set up furniture workshops in the emerging German villages, the competition between them and their attempts to utilise the native timbers.

Because large numbers of skilled German immigrant cabinetmakers chose to settle to work in the Barossa Valley throughout the nineteenth-century, formal furniture making became a particularly prominent craft. Barossa furniture traditions were based on both the town and country provincial styles of the cabinetmaker's homeland, and although these seemed to be essentially similar from province to province, variations occurred and were maintained.

In the Barossa Valley tradition of fine cabinetmaking two men stand out as significant masters of the craft: Wilhelm Schaedel and Karl Launer. Both worked with in their own regional and distinctive homeland traditions, and both were active for many years. While Schaedel lived and worked within the township of Nuriootpa, Launer fluctuated between village and farms as either full-time cabinetmaker or as farmer-craftsman.



Cupboard, recycled packing case – Baltic pine, painted red, metal mesh, Barossa Valley, c.1900.

In Chapter Four, the case study of one particular cabinetmaker, the Silesian Karl Launer, is documented for the first time: we follow his arrival and settlement in Light's Pass, and his struggles to establish himself in his calling. His poignant story raises a number of important themes, namely, the craftsman's relationship with his family, community and the Lutheran Church. His story also provides the setting of the dramatic treks of Germans from the Barossa to New South Wales and elsewhere during the 1860s. Not unexpectedly, it was the earlier arrivals of German cabinetmakers who reproduced homeland forms most faithfully: Karl Launer was one very successful cabinetmaker who was the most stringent in preserving Prussian furniture traditions, recreating cupboards, wardrobes, chests of drawers, tables and chairs in an almost 'pure' Biedermeier style (essentially a middle-class neoclassical fashion).

After Launer, the life of the town cabinetmaker, as recounted in Chapter Five through the story of the Schaedel clan in Nuriootpa, will be seen to be untroubled and successful. There was also considerable contrast relationship with the larger households and landowners of the Barossa Valley, including the Seppelt family of wine makers, throws light on the social make-up of the region, especially as it developed in the larger settlements.

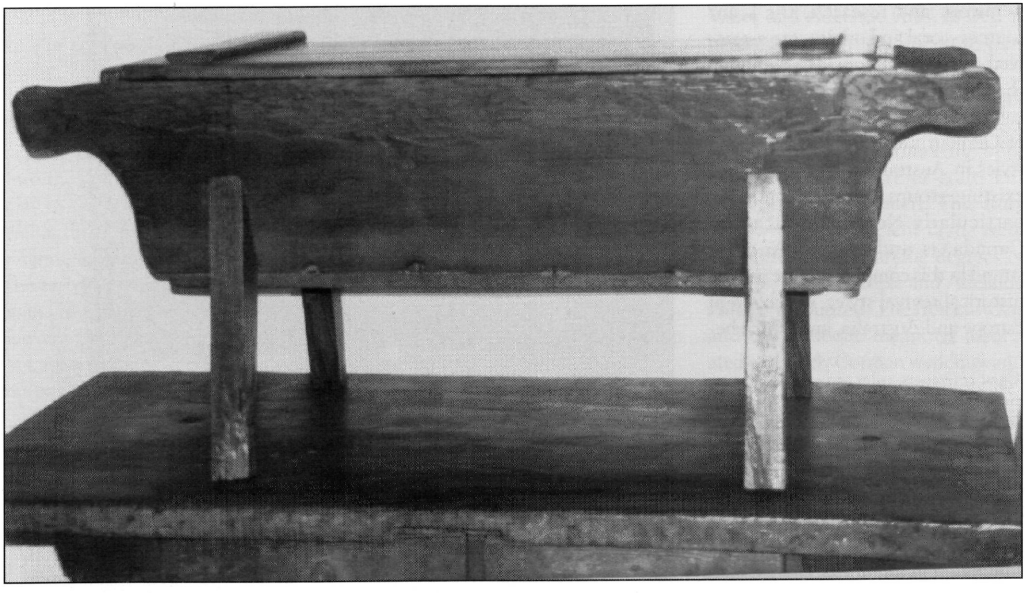
A wattle and daub cottage provided the Schaedel's first home with a similar structure acting as the workshop. By the mid-1870s it was necessary to provide a larger home to accommodate the growing family. Wilhelm Schaedel built a substantial two-storey stone and brick house and workshop, situated on Nuriootpa's main street. An elegant building with an imposing facade, the part-sunken basement was the carpentry and cabinetmaking workshop; Wilhelm regularly displayed furniture pieces along the front of the workshop.

Celebratory needlework motto for green wedding, Barossa Valley, 1944.

Just like Karl Launer, the Schaedels had their own style which immediately identified their work – in their case a scrolled pediment often in combination with scalloped door panels; the scrolled pediment has been compared to French provincial styles.

Chapter Six traces the successive generations of cabinetmakers who arrived in Australia from the 1880s, but more especially those who were born of German parents in Australia and who followed their father's trade. We follow these individuals paths as they moved out from the Barossa Valley to open up new lands, and to establish furniture workshop in far-flung settlements. Through this group we also trace the fate of Germanic furniture traditions into the twentieth century; we see how these traditional craftsmen adapted to the flood of imports of factory-made furniture from the progressively industrialised urban centres of Australia, and the decline of their traditional craft.

Perhaps the most idiosyncratic of the furnituremakers of the Barossa was Carl 'Gluepot' Graetz, who worked at Graetztown near Keynton from the late 1880s to the early 1920s. Born in the Barossa Valley,



Dough bin (pine, originally painted), c.1860s.

Graetz combined traditional Germanic characteristics with individualistic flair to create a distinctively Barossa vernacular furniture style of exceptional liveliness.

The practice of Germanic furniture traditions in Australia, resulted in a diverse but distinctive body of work. Until now, the identification and grouping of key styles, as they characterise Germanic furniture practices in Australia, has been based on only a handful of examples. Chapter Seven redresses this deficiency and evaluates the scope of queries which arise from this survey including: what were the specific furniture traditions which were transplanted, and how closely did they mimic the form of their regional homeland antecedents? And, to what degree did physical and social factors stemming from the new Australian setting change the practice of furniture traditions and their stylistic outcome?

This chapter also examines the cultural origins of key styles such as Biedermeier, and especially its formal and folk roots: through extensive fieldwork and research, the scant sources – oral and other – are assembled to reveal in considerable detail the outstanding work of a number of cabinetmakers; as well, a comparison of German furniture traditions and styles in Australia with those of co-existing groups in other countries, particularly North America and Canada, is undertaken. Another strand in this complex picture are the historical revival styles, which swept Europe and Australia, and which began to influence the Biedermeier and vernacular eastern-folk amalgams which had come to characterise Barossa and other Germanic cabinetmakers' work.

This analysis eventually leads the reader to a full realisation of the distinctive contribution Germanic traditions have made to Australia's furniture heritage.

Not all of the furniture produced by German settlers fits this preceding formal or sophisticated category. Many of the settlers who could not afford to purchase professionally-made furniture made their own. Chapter Eight reveals how resourceful the German frontier farmers were in constructing their own furniture and tools. The outcome, over the period from settlement to the early twentieth century, was that folk bushcraft and 'make do' skills, were an integral part of the material traditions of German-settled regions in Australia. Especially fascinating reading is the story of the Zilm family chairs, a particular type of cottage chair developed it into a unique cultural folk form, blending elements taken from the Australian setting with age-old folk motifs derived from their Silesian homeland.

Chapter Eight also extends to an examination of the ethnically-specific forms of bushcraft furniture which developed in the Barossa Valley. A topology of folk woodcraft

Chest of Drawers, cedar and various inlay timbers, Barossa Valley, 1888, 130 x 109 x 56 cm, signed 'K.L.'. Solid cedar with Baltic pine interior working. Note the inlaid patterns stars, and detailed with further inlay of string circles and diamond edgings. Timbers include silky-oak, sheoak and kauri and other pines. Split bobbin-turnings in darker cedar; glass knobs. Construction details include very fine wedged dovetail joints and moulded rails on the drawers.

Immanuel Lutheran Church and hall, Light's Pass, Barossa Valley.

traditionals is presented and reveals a number of groups, extending from the relatively primitive furniture of the pioneer phase to studio furniture of the contemporary crafts movement.

Section Two, Written in Clay – Tales of the Potters, departs from the area of woodcraft to take the reader into the story of the manipulation of clay by German folk potters in Australia. Prussian folk potters began to migrate to Australia from the time of the arrival of the first group of Germans in 1838, although these were few compared to the large numbers of cabinetmakers, carpenters, weavers and other craftsmen.

The case studies of two potters in particular are traced over two chapters. In Chapter Nine, In the Footsteps of Potter Hoffmann, the rich folklore or oral tradition concerning the Barossa potter, Samuel Hoffmann, is presented. Chapter Ten, The Village Potter in Transition, similarly traces the end of folk tradition, in this case through the life and work of the German folk potter elsewhere in Australia, as well as further afield in North America.

Section Three, Commemorating Family and Community Life, turns the spotlight from the almost exclusive, male-dominated crafts of furniture and pottery, to examine the contribution made by the German housewife. The folk arts as practiced by women were a means to not only produce articles which were useful and attractive in the home and church, but which also symbolised their religious values and beliefs. Chapter Eleven, The Women Arts: For Home and Church, narrates the activities of the needlework arts as well as those of basketmaking, weaving and spinning. Bonds of affection, as well as family and social affiliations, could be expressed through the communal activity of various textile skills, as well as through the presentation and display of the products: feather stripping, called **Federschleissen**, for example, was widely practiced in the Barossa Valley and Adelaide Hills, as well as in some of the other close-knit, German-settled regions of Australia.

Whereas decorative needlework was an activity practiced by women, weaving and basketmaking were among the repertoire of crafts engaged in mainly by men. This story of how the two ancient crafts were established, with varying degrees of success, in the Barossa and Adelaide Hills, is recounted. The rich customs and the symbolic meanings associated with early German weddings and their celebration, are similarly described: these include the unique 'tin-kettling' ritual.

Chapter Twelve, An abundance of Folk Art Craftworks, shifts the focus to the diversity of other craft activities which were also expressive of the customs of Lutheran family and community life. From the 1880s im-

provements in rural conditions gave the German housewife, and her husband, the opportunity to satisfy their creativity, especially in handicraft activity. A plethora of 'new' techniques and approaches to a variety of crafts became introduced in the area of woodcraft, and ranged from chip-carving, whittling, inlay, marquetry, fretwork, woodstaining, spatterwork, and later, from the early 1920s, pokerwork. Although these popular crafts were available throughout the country, their expression in the German-settled regions was distinctive.

Other crafts surveyed in this chapter include the work of numerous migrant German blacksmiths who, on occasion, produced iron-forged articles of decorative, as well as purely utilitarian merit. Such works are still to be seen in the German settlements of the Barossa Valley and in Bethania in south-east Queensland. Less common folk arts and crafts including headstones, foil art, painted interior church decoration and even organ making, a specialist and traditional craft which catered to the musical needs of the religious community, and which was established in the Barossa Valley in its founding decades, are also documented. Finally, the influence of Federation and the British Arts and Crafts Movement on traditional Germanic crafts in Australia, ends this chapter.

Section Four, German Australian Folk Art, concludes the text with a survey of ongoing current craft activities by contemporary crafts people in the Barossa Valley, comparing present-day approaches and their products to those of the past. It was this region, after all, out of all the German-settled areas of Australia, which saw the threads of various Germanic folk craft traditions linger well into the twentieth century; to this day, it has retained its strong sense of community and ethnic character. It then looks at the enigma of folk art and the part innovation, tradition, the individual and community play in its continuity and interpretation. The chapter concludes with a commentary on the symbolic role of folk art and craftwork, and its contribution to cultural continuity, within the setting of the historic and present-day Barossa Valley.

Finally, the book presents an series of maps detailing Germanic homeland regions, together with an extensive series of appendices which list German migrant cabinetmakers and their Australian-born successors, with details of their places of origin, dates of arrival, destinations and years of working life in Australia.

It is hoped that this history will raise awareness of the cultural value and distinctiveness of these German-Australian artefacts, as well as providing a means by which this heritage may be preserved and appreciated by a wider community. But I would especially hope that the human qualities of the Barossa folk are given a voice through the presentation of such a narrative of their crafting activity and lives.

This article is based of a forthcoming book by Dr Noris Ioannou: The Barossa Folk: Germanic Furniture and Craft Traditions in Australia (Craftsman House, to be released in April 1995, approximately 300 pages, with 150 colour and 120 black and white illustrations, appendices, maps, bibliography and index. RRP $125).

First National Seminar on Early Australian Ceramics

to be held at Cleveland Winery Conference Centre – Lancefield Victoria

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Working Papers are Requested for inclusion in the seminar with an emphasis on 19th C. wares.

Key speakers will be Australia's most notable collectors and authors on the subject supported by eminent curators within the field, with additional guest speakers after submission of working papers. Complete discretion to protect copyright and privileged information will be assured to all parties.

Submissions of working papers should be sent to:
The convenor
Early Australian Ceramics Seminar
PO Box 97
Lancefield
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Closing date for submissions March 30th 1995.

Collecting

James Broadbent

A paper on collecting delivered by James Broadbent, Senior Curatorial Adviser, Historic Houses Trust, at the State Conference of Museums Australia (NSW) held on October 14 1994, and developed with Meredith Walker, Heritage Planning Consultant, and Sheridan Bruke, Curatorial Co-ordinator, Historic Houses Trust.

Collecting

I seem to be the odd man out today – for I'm talking about that estranged aspect of museums called objects. Last night many of us went to see the Pompeii exhibition at the Australian Museum. I wonder how many are going this weekend to view the Majorie Graham auction at Lawson's?

"From the sublime of the ridiculous" is a vulgar cliche that Majorie would not have used. From the impressive halls of our public institutions – to 14 Terry Street, Ryde. But which is the sublime and which the ridiculous?

Everyday objects of an ancient town – romanticised, fascinating and largely irrelevant to late 20th century New South Wales and everyday objects of our own recent history, researched and documented – contextualized I believe is the current jargon – in a way that museum curators cannot hope to emulate. One presented with the fanfare of the international exhibition, the other to be dispersed by auction on Sunday. [16th October 1994].

During the last few days, while thinking about collecting, my thoughts have kept going back to Mrs Graham and her collections. Not only because of my great respect for her, and not only because her collections of Australian glass, ceramics and ephemera are being sold this week, but because her collecting begs many questions about public and private museums, about scholarship and the transfer of knowledge, and about taste or connoisseurship. And last, about permancy and the rights of ownership.

If you believe, as I do, in the dual roles of Museums – of collecting and teaching, of conserving and interpreting, then 14 Terry Street, Ryde was an exemplary museum. It was not open to the public but it has given enormous public service: through Majorie's constant search, research and writing, her assistance to others; particularly public museums; and through loan. An exemplary museum that did not cost the state one penny in either acquisitions or administration.

I don't know how one can quantify comparisons of the achievements of public and private museums. All I can offer are perceptions which you may think are very biased; and they are perceptions about the collecting of decorative arts only, not fine arts. The first is that rarely does a public institution break new ground in any field of collecting or research, or take any directive role in the cultivation of that ground. Occasionally, it may reap the harvest, through the benefaction of a private collector, but the natural order of things appears to be that public institutions consolidate what private collectors initiate.

If one looks at the collecting and interpreting of our own culture – and the area in which I am most interested, the 19th century – it is very easy to demonstrate this: in furniture with the collections and research of Kevin Fahy, Clifford Craig, Andrew Simpson and the National Trust, in silver with John Hawkins and John Houstone, in glass with Majorie Graham and Noris Ioannou, in jewellery with Anne Schofield and Kevin Fahy. To which one must add the inclusive collecting of Ruth Simon and the specialised collecting of the Pioneer Women's Hut.

Unfortunately, I have also perceived over many years an undercurrent of resentment on the part of many public institutions – collectively as institutions rather than individual curators – a resentment that the monopoly on objects and interpretation is theirs. I have even come across the notion that a public institution has a greater claim to the ownership of culturally important objects than the individual. This appears to me to be a very "cloth-cappy" attitude.

To proceed from the "who" of collecting to the more important aspect of "what".

Several years ago I began an article on collecting for the *Australian Antique Collector*, in recent years the main vehicle for Majorie Graham's writing. I did not finish it, whether from laziness or from the fear of being sued, I can't remember.

It started when I read, over someone's shoulder in a bus, an article in an afternoon newspaper on a Sydney woman who collected rabbits. She collected anything "rabbit". She crammed shelves, walls and drawers full of'em. Glass, china, metal, wooden, stuffed; plaques, toys, salt and pepper shakers, it didn't matter. She was an ardent member of a popular sporting club called, I gathered, the "Rabbitohs".

Obtaining a seat I opened the latest number of Ros Maguire's *Australian Antique Collector* – to an article on the collection of a Sydney businessman, flush with the self-confidence and cash. (Or was it credit?) of the late 1980s. He was an ardent member, I gathered, of a popular Sydney cultural club called the "nouveaux-riches".

I can't remember their names, so let's call them Cheryl – Leanne and Gabby Goldsmith. Gabby didn't collect rabbits. His was a tasteful, fashionable eclectic collection, beautifully arranged. There was a photographic vignette of the Sydney Nolan. (Or was it an Arthur Boyd or a Tim Storrier) on the wall, flanked by Robert Klippel maquettes, displayed on a mid-Georgian mahogany chest of drawers standing on a semi-antique Anatolian rug. On either side was a New Guinea tribal carving on a travertine pedestal. Each piece was obviously valuable, and each chosen with a "Good Eye".

The contrast between the two collections – Cheryl's rabbits and Gabby's objects d'art and objects de vertu – fascinated me. Was it just my perversity that drew me towards Cheryl and to disdain Gabby? (I got off the bus and bought my first afternoon newspaper).

Recollecting this, I am emboldened to compare Cheryl with Majorie and Gabby with some prestigious public institutions. It is a very complicated tussle between taste, knowledge, money and meaning.

Majorie was a woman of extraordinary style, but in her collecting she had no taste (capital T, Capital G for good). Like Cheryl, Leanne she collected "rabbits" –that is types, categories. Unlike Cheryl she collected with sophistication; she collected with an intellectual aim. She collected with knowledge and information and she collected to acquire knowledge in order to disseminate information. Fashion and good taste were not her criteria. She was interested in the history – and that means design, construction and context – of her objects. And so she collected and researched and collated her important collections of glass and ceramics of Australian origin.

But as far as I know there has been no attempt by any of our public institutions to keep these collections intact or even to record them photographically. So much for that aspect of museums and community. I think we need ask ourselves not only what museums can do for the community – but what the community does for us. We tend to regard ourselves as torch bearers. Perhaps we are, but it is the public that keeps the torch alight.

Conversely, at least two major institutions, State and Commonwealth, have obtained items from Majorie's collection. Such attitudes to collecting interest me very much, for I don't understand them.

The significance of collections such as Majorie's is, I would have thought, their depth and extent – both in two and three dimensional terms – of the information they embody. To select "the best pieces" from them seems based on criteria not of history and information but of connoisseurship, taste, fashion. Like Gabby's collection and perhaps on their value as public entertainment. (The Gee-Whiz factor now seems to be a criterion for assessing exhibitions in my institution).

I have a very cynical view of connoisseurship or Good Taste – as being the contemporary aesthetic prejudices of a self-appointed elite. Tastes change so quickly, taste is so fickle. I also think it's bad history.

What would you think of an historian – using words not objects – who performed in the same way as our connoisseur-curators (exhibiting only the finest or rarest or most expensive or most camp object): lopsided, prejudiced vignettes of history? The Reader's Digest approach, but with immense snobbery. What would one think of a social historian concerned only in presenting tableaux of "Great Moments in Australian History": the opening of the first Federal parliament, the breaking of the miner's strike, the death of Nellie Melba or Paul Keating's purchase of his first French clock? Isn't that just like the "Gabby factor" in our traditional museum collecting and display? But perhaps curators are not historians, collections are not facts, exhibitions not history, museums not libraries. Perhaps they are primarily "entertainment venues" after all, with serious collecting and collections becoming increasingly private, perhaps they are works of art in their own rights as their designers, it seems, would have them.

For me, the most appalling exhibition of 1988 were the Australian Decorative Arts exhibitions at the Australian National Gallery, in particular the display of "Folk and Popular Art": objects wrenched from their contexts, stripped of their social histories, chosen, it appeared to me, for their "sculptural" qualities or their qualities of quaintness, and literally placed on pedestals – like Gabby's New Guinea carvings – but also in the early 20th century tradition of the "objects trouvés – objects robbed of their considerable social value in favour of being turned into works of art by the curator-artist.

Contrast the "Gabby Factor" of this with the "Cheryl Factor" of the Pioneer Women's Hut collections. And contrast, if you will, the public cost of each attitude to collecting and display. Which has achieved more, and at what expense?

I have avoided mentioning the collections of Fine Arts museums. I have not ventured there, but will only observe that there seems to be a widening gap between the study of the history of fine arts and their gallery collection and display. Compare, for example, the continuing criteria of "quality" in the collecting of art in galleries with the deliberately inclusive policy in Joan Kerr's *Dictionary of Australian Artists* of including everyone known to have painted a daub. One seems to me to be scholarship and information – history if you like – the other transient taste and connoisseurship. The rejoinding questions to this are, "would you want a gallery to collect 'second rate art?' and "Shouldn't museums collect the cream of artistic achievement?". Implicit in these are notions of universal canons of taste independent of time, place, race and class. These waters are too deep for me to fathom.

Public collections of decorative arts seem to stand somewhere between the *exclusive* collection of the art gallery and the *inclusive* collections of libraries. I think good taste and connoisseurship have only ever casually strolled into the Mitchell Library, and perhaps that is why its collections are so rich and so diverse (made by boring librarians not by arty curators?). The Mitchell Library has the greatest "Cheryl Factor" of all – collecting all things "history". Is that why its collections have become the envy and would-be mine of many cultural institutions?

It is fitting then, perhaps, that although Majorie Graham's collections will be dispersed on Sunday – and no decorative arts museum it seems can mussel up the $7,000 needed to record them photographically at least – her research papers are to go "to the Mitchell".

That phrase in NSW museum terms seems to be like "gone to Gowings": indicative of good, solid worth. Not an expensive, fashionable designer-museum like the Powerhouse – or even one of our new boutique museums like that arisen on the First Government House site; but a place of value and service; of good collections and solid information.

We are still left with my last questions begging: of the rights of ownership and of the permancy of collections, of whether Mrs Graham's collections or their like should be acquired, and kept, in their entirety.

Firstly, the question of ownership. For most of us – I mean most private collectors – this is not a question. Ethics be damned, we cannot afford to compete with an institution for acquisition of an object. But there are a significant number of private collectors with whom museums cannot afford to compete. Personally, I don't see why a public institution has any rights to acquisition above an individual. In fact I rather incline to the opposite view, but I think it depends greatly on the context in which the object will be placed.

If the thing was important and was being acquired by a rich collectors as a status symbol or for monetary speculation, I would wish it to an institution; but if it was a significant addition to an important private collection I would not wish to see an institution compete for it. Good luck to the private collector.

A trickier face of private ownership and one that is likely to become more prevalent, is that of what is known as "portable cultural heritage", particularly when inherited family collections are involved. In all our proper concern to conserve our heritage the rights of family and inheritance are frequently overlooked, as the long sad recent history of Rouse Hill House has shown. If it had been possible to resume goods and chattels from that family – as the house was resumed – it would have been done, but now, at last, a solution respecting both private ownership and public interest is in hand. We take for granted now the rights of Aborigines to their tribal artefacts, but do we apply the same attitude to the inheritances of established families?

Should all collections be permanent? I think the obvious answer is "no". Collections, I have suggested, are formed in diverse ways, for various reasons. Majorie Graham did not stipulate in her will what should happen to her collections. It seems she probably meant them to be dispersed: to provide, once more, pleasure and stimulation to collectors. Perhaps, through her books and her research note, they had, as far as she was concerned, served their purpose.

It is with considerable reservation however that I say that, for Majorie collections were reference collections and, as such, through their very objectivity, would have had a continuing relevance, for they could be interpreted in constantly changing ways.

It is the dispersal of thematic collections that is less regrettable. Collections assembled in order to demonstrate specific themes or teach specific lessons – whether those lessons are aspects of social history or even the contemporary tastes of Gabby Goldsmiths or of conservation-curators. Lessons change, tastes change, and therefore I cannot see why such collections should be immutable. Perhaps such museum collections should be made with definite time limits on them – "use by dates". But remember, to rephrase John Ruskin, more can be gleaned from Cheryl's rabbits than from the whole of Gabby's Good Taste; or, more crudely, the fertility of Cheryl's rabbits beats that of Gabby's collections any day.

Industrial Design in Australia

Michael Bogle

Modernist furniture, furnishing and architecture is often seen as an evolving style that progressed logically, in a near-Darwinian fashion. But in Australia and elsewhere, the Modernist Movement was aided by organisations that fostered its goals, much as earlier Guilds had done for artisans.

Modern industrial design in Australia and elsewhere emerged as a distinct discipline in the late 1930s and 40s when the industrial designers in the major English-speaking nations began to form professional associations: the Industrial Design Institute (IDI) in the United States in 1938, the Council of Industrial Designers (COID) in Britain in 1944, the American Society of Industrial Designers (ASID) in 1944 and the Society of Designers for Industry (SDI) in Australia in 1948.

The development of industrial design in Australia can be observed by tracing the history of its professional organisations and associations. For example, in 1947-48, a group of design professionals including furniture designer Grant Featherston (b.1922); fabric designer and design retailer Frances Burke (1907-1994); graphic specialist R. Haughton ("Jimmy") James (1906-1985); industrial designer Frederick Ward (1900-1990); industrial designer Charles Furey (b.1915?); graphic designer Max Forbes (1923-90), Selwn Goffey, Scorgie Anderson, I.M. Hutchinson, W. Falconer Green and Ron Rosenfeldt (b.1919) met in Melbourne to form the Society of Designers for Industry (S.D.I.).

Ron Rosenfeldt later said in a 1956 essay that the S.D.I.'s objectives were to first define the role of the professional designer for industry and were to first define the role of the standards and practices[1]. This organisation survived until 1982 when it become the Design Institute of Australia, the D.I.A.

Many of these S.D.I. designers were extremely critical of the standards of Australian design and during the next three decades, many of this original group, led by Grant Featherston and R. Haughton James, lectured and wrote tirelessly on the topic of "Good Design". Their attacks, however, were too often directed against the tastes of the Australian public rather than the more important need to encourage local design and manufacturing.

Richard Haughton James (1906-85), the S.D.I.'s first president, is a little-known figure who occupied a major role, if not a central position in establishing industrial design as a discipline in Australia. He was born in Sussex, England and emigrated in 1939. On arrival in Sydney, he began a design practice called the Design Centre with Geoff and Dahl Collings.

James immediately immersed himself in Australia's art and design world. He worked quickly and in January 1940, he was able to announce a new organisation, The Design and Industries Association with publisher and artist Sydney Ure Smith as president and Haughton James as secretary. The original membership included Arthur Baldwinson, Geoffery Collings, Douglas Annand, Frank Medworth and several others.[2]

Frances Burke. New Design P/L. ***Australian Home Beautiful****. July, 1949.*

In late 1940, many of his group were exhibiting in one of Australia's first "Design" shows sponsored by the Australian Commercial and Industrial Artists Association. The venue was the AWA Building. Included were R. Haughton James, Gordon Andrews, Elaine Haxton, Nell Wilson and Dahl Collings.[3]

After the 1939-45 War, James moved to Melbourne where he worked as a design consultant, eventually founding an advertising agency. He also edited for a time, **The Australian Artist**, (1947-?) for the Victorian Artists Society. In the magazine's first issue, he offered his thoughts on industrial design.

> We note with interest the formation in Melbourne of a provisional committee to promote a Council for Industrial Design. ... The Council, already in touch with similar bodies in America and Britain, means to promote understanding where it is most needed, among manufacturers themselves, by means of a carefully planned series of lectures and discussions. Plans are afoot for a weekly broadcast, directly to housewives ...[4]

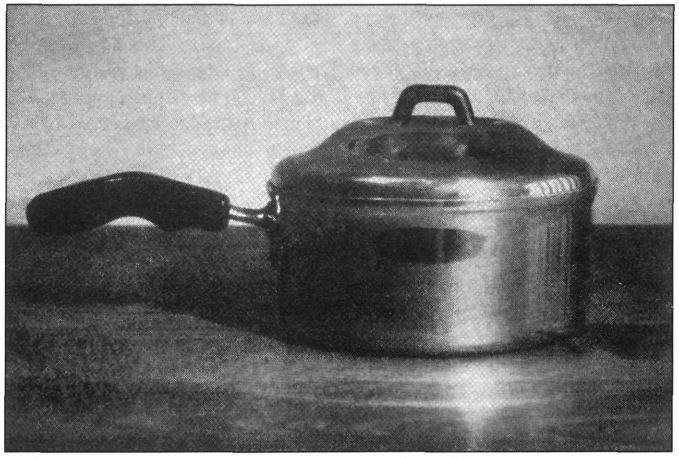
After a decade of pressure by the S.D.I. and its allies, the Commonwealth Government in 1958 established the Industrial Design Council

of Australia (I.D.C.A.) which sought to promote higher design standards nationally and encourage the manufacturing and export of Australian products. The industrialist, Essington Lewis (1881-1961) who had retired from the Chair of BHP in 1952, was the I.D.C.A. inaugural chair. Designer, educator and writer Colin Barrie was the first director.

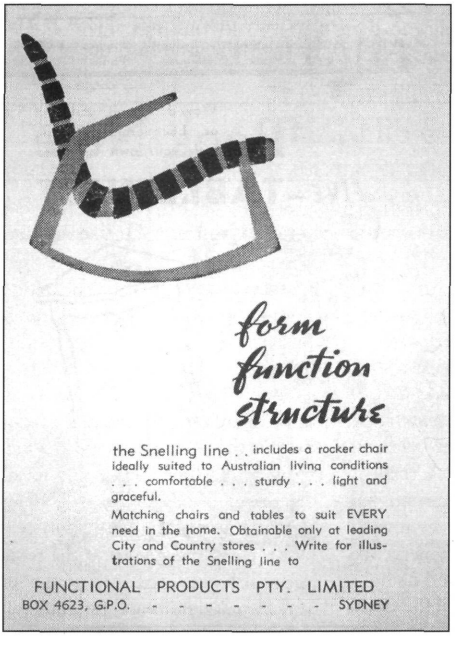
The early members of the Australian Society of Designers for Industry were Australia's first generation of industrial designers. Most of them trained at the nation's technical colleges (now described as TAFEs). Such institutions as the Sydney Technical College, Melbourne Technical College (now Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, RMIT), The Hobart Technical College, Brisbane Technical College, the Perth Technical College and others provided instruction in design as well as technical training. The Sydney Technical College, for example, had introduced in 1884 an *Award of Industrial Expert* that required the student to complete 20-25 theoretical, technical and design courses to qualify for this demanding certificate.

Many noted Australian designers had technical college training: industrial and graphic designer Gordon Andrews (b.1914) (East Sydney Technical College and Sydney Technical College, Ultimo), Frances Burke (b.1907) (Melbourne Technical College); industrial designer Roger McLay (b.1922) (East Sydney Technical College); general designer and film-maker Dahl Collings (1911-88) (East Sydney Technical College); industrial designer Carl Nielsen (b.1930) (Melbourne Technical College) and the industrial designer David Foulkes-Taylor (b.1929) (Perth Technical College).

The birth of some of Australia's earliest museums is associated with design and technical education as they were established to provide these design-based technical school courses with study collections for students. The Swan River Mechanics Institute Collection, Perth (est. 1860), the Technological, Industrial and Sanitary Museum, Sydney (est. 1880) (now the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences) and other smaller collections provided students with working models, plaster casts and replicas of classic designs of machinery, sculpture and art.



Gordon Andrews. Saucepan. Rex Aluminium. 1947–49. ***Art and Design****. 1: 1949.*



Douglas Snelling. Rocking Chair. Functional Products. 1951. ***Australian House and Garden****. January, 1951.*

To encourage the next generation of industrial designers, after 1958, Essington Lewis ensured that generous federal funding was made available to the I.D.C.A. Many of the British Design Council's earlier innovations were adapted to Australian manufactured goods. A "Good Design" swing tag and other labelling innovations were introduced for well-designed local products. By 1964, an I.D.C.A. Design Centre had been opened in Melbourne to provide a showcase gallery for "Good Design". These Centres later appeared in other state capitals. By coincidence, the much-admired British

Design Centre's 1957 interiors in London's Haymarket were designed by two Australians, the brothers Robert and Roger Nicolson. The first British Council of Industrial Design Chair was also an expatriate Australian Sir Walter Worboys, later director of Imperial Chemicals Industry (ICI).

The Industrial Design Council of Australia flourished until 1975 when a reassessment of Commonwealth Government design support began to unravel much of the Council's earlier work. A magazine, **Design Australia** which had begun to document and promote the achievement of the growing design community in 1967 had to cease publication in 1975. In this same year, a prominent member of the British Royal family, Prince Philip, was invited to lend his name and prestige to an annual *Prince Philip Prize for Australian Design*. It survived until 1987 when it was replaced with the *Australian Design Award*.

After the shift in policy in the 1970s, Commonwealth support for the I.D.C.A. and the design community was erratic. This had a terrible effect on long range planning. For example, a new design journal, **Design in Australia**, was began in 1979, only to close in 1984. Then, following another 1987 Government review, the I.D.C.A. was relaunched as the Australian Design Council (A.D.C.) and the organisation was assigned a role in design training. But within three years, even this A.D.C. sponsored training was cancelled and by 1991, the Council and the Australian Design Awards were placed under Standards Australia, an agency responsible for setting Australian technical standards for processes and materials.

Is spite of the turmoil of the 1970s and 1980s, the development of industrial design as a distinct university discipline in Australia was encouraged by the Industrial Design Council of Australia and the national professional organisation the Design Institute of Australia (D.I.A.). The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) was the first to initiate an industrial design course in 1953. Eleven other universities have now followed its lead. In 1994, industry-poor Tasmania was the only state that did not offer university-level industrial design training. In contrast, New South Wales has four degree-granting industrial design courses in the Sydney-Newcastle region.

Reference

1 Rosenfeldt, R. "Industrial Design". **The Arts Festival of the Olympic Games**, Melbourne. 1956. p.31.

2 "New Association formed in Sydney". **Sydney Morning Herald**. 16 January 1940.

3 "Art's Part in Industry". **Sydney Morning Herald**. 12 December 1940.

4 "Council for Industrial Design". **The Australian Artist**. Vol. 1:1. Victorian Artists Society, Melbourne. 1947. p.52.

Thanks to Marisa Sara for generous assistance with reference materials.

Book Note

Australian Studio Glass: The Movement its Makers and their Art by Noris Ioannou is published by Craftman House and available from February 1995

Australian Studio Glass is the first book which documents the contemporary studio glass movement in this country. Drawing on interviews with over 100 glass artists, in addition to extensive documental research, Dr Noris Ioannou presents an authoritative and lively text, of Australian studio glass within an international setting. An historical survey reveals the circumstances of the emergence of the glass movement, and its links to the North American Hot Glass Movement. The current community of glass practitioners is presented through their social organisation Ausglass, presenting an inside glimpse of this group, their forums, concerns and values. A current distinguishing trait of Australian glass, its emphasis on kiln-forming, the reasons for this trend, its chief practitioners, the techniques and the vigorous work which is emerging, forms the theme of one chapter. Another surveys the ongoing development of blown glass, the revival of the team approach and the influence of Venetian design.

Dr Ioannou concludes by drawing together current themes and issues which are of concern to the studio glass movement, both nationally and internationally, as well as to contemporary crafts practice as a whole.

Australian Studio is complemented with over 75 colour illustrations of up-to-date works, as well as biographical listing of glass artists. As well as providing a benchmark for evaluating the ongoing development of studio glass, it will be a valuable resource to glass artists, educators, gallery directors, students, curators, collectors, and anyone interested in Australian culture and creativity in glass.

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