

# AUSTRALIANA

FEBRUARY 1999

Print Post Approved PP235870/00011

Vol. 21 No. 1

W. H. ROCKE & CO.,

40 & 42  
W. H. ROCKE & CO.  
CARPETS & FLOOR CLOTHS

UPHOLSTERERS,  
CARPET AND FURNISHING WAREHOUSEMEN,  
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.

FURNITURE WAREHOUSE.

CABINETMAKERS W. H. ROCKE & CO. UPHOLSTERERS

MATTRESSES, PALLIASSES, AND BEDDING,  
BRASS AND IRON BEDSTEADS,  
CARPET AND FLOORCLOTH IMPORTERS.

40 AND 42 COLLINS STREET EAST, MELBOURNE.

## In this Issue

- W. H. Rocke's furniture pattern book
- The Sydney International Exhibition of 1879
- Neoclassical Australian Furniture



# SIMPSON'S ANTIQUES

TEL/FAX (02) 9363 3424  
*FINE AUSTRALIAN FURNITURE*

## IMPORTANT New Publication



*Price \$485 plus \$15 postage and handling from Casuarina Press,  
PO Box 643 Woollahra NSW 2025.*

**40 QUEEN STREET, WOOLLAHRA NSW 2025**  
*Approved Valuers Under the Tax Incentives for the Arts Scheme*

Published by The Australiana Society  
Editors: Kevin Fahy and John Wade

AUSTRALIANA, the journal of The Australiana Society, is published in February, May, August and November.

Subscription rates (1999):

Individual & Household	\$50
Institutions & Overseas	\$55
Life	\$500

---

## ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Advertising, membership subscriptions, requests for back issues and general correspondence can be sent to:

The Hon. Secretary  
The Australiana Society  
Box 1782  
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

## Australiana Contributions

Contributions to *Australiana*, preferably in both hard copy and in Microsoft Word on floppy disc or email, can be sent to:

John Wade  
Co-Editor, *Australiana*  
Australian National Maritime Museum  
Box 5131  
SYDNEY NSW 1042

Tel (02) 9552 7532 (b. h.)  
Fax (02) 9281 3182  
email: johnwade@anmm.gov.au

---

## Committee 1998/99

President	John Morris
Vice-Presidents	Scott Carlin Ian Stephenson
Secretary	Elayne Jay
Treasurer	Caressa Crouch
Editors	Kevin Fahy John Wade
Members	Jim Bertouch Patrice Fletcher Anne Watson

---

## CONTENTS

- 4    Australiana Society Program
- 5    Australia's First Known Furniture Pattern Book, by W. H. Rocke & Co, Melbourne  
     — Caressa Crouch
- 11   The Sydney International Exhibition of 1879. A Look at the Books.  
     — Roslyn Maguire
- 16   Neoclassical Influence in Australian Furniture  
     — R. A. Fredman
- 22   Australiana Exhibition Calendar
- 24   Australiana News
- 25   Our Authors
- 26   Letters
- 26   Obituary: Dr Robert J. L. Martin

## SPONSORS

H.P.M. Industries Pty Ltd  
J. B. Hawkins Antiques  
Price Tiles Pty Ltd  
Simpson's Antiques  
Peter R. Walker Pty Ltd

---

Produced by the GeoGraphics Group (02) 9568 2444.

© Copyright 1999, The Australiana Society and/or individual authors. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society. The Editor reserves the right to edit all articles to conform with the *Australiana* style guide.

Print Post Approved PP235870/00011.

Cover: W. H. Rocke's Furniture Warehouse at 40-42 Collins Street East, Melbourne, c. 1874.

# THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

PO BOX 1782, STRAWBERRY HILLS NSW 2012



## — SOCIETY PROGRAM —

### MEETINGS — 1999

#### Wednesday

10 March 1999

7.30 pm sharp

*Please note the  
change of date*

#### Government House, Sydney

Curators Ann Toy and Robert Griffin will lead guided tours of the public rooms and collections at Government House. We regret that for this very special event, there will be no showcase or drinks before the tours. Parking available in the grounds.

#### Thursday

6 May 1999

7.30 pm

Hyde Park Barracks

Queen's Square

#### Demolished!

Curator Joy Hughes talks about the demolished houses of Sydney from the new exhibition *Demolished! Houses of Sydney* at the Hyde Park Barracks

#### Thursday

1 July 1999

7.30 pm

Annie Wyatt Room

National Trust Centre

#### Flesh + Blood

Ace Bourke, who explored the history of his family in this exhibition at the Museum of Sydney, contrasting it with contemporary social attitudes and reconciliation, will talk about the exhibition and its reception.

#### Thursday

2 September 1999

7.30 pm

Annie Wyatt Room

National Trust Centre

#### 'These are a few of my favourite things'

Collector and former ABC-TV set-dresser Robert Hutchinson will illustrate his talk with slides and objects from his richly decorated High Victorian period house 'Aberdour' and from his mountain retreat.

---

### SOCIETY MEETINGS

Society meetings will be on the first Thursday of every alternate month:

March, May, July, September (A.G.M.), November.

They are held in the Annie Wyatt Room of the National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney.

Ample parking available.

Drinks served 7.30-8.00pm, followed by Australiana showcase  
(bring your Australiana treasures along for general discussion).

The lecture will commence at 8.00pm.



# Australia's First Known Furniture Pattern Book, by W. H. Roche & Co. Melbourne

Caressa Crouch

*Enthusiastic collector Caressa Crouch shares information from a copy the c. 1874-6 pattern book of the Melbourne furniture manufacturer and importer W. H. Roche & Co, and demonstrates that local cabinetmakers used both local and imported timbers in their own manufactured products.*

A rare illustrated furniture pattern book, stamped on the cover *Furniture Pattern Book W. H. Roche & Co. Melbourne*, and published about 1874 to 1876, has survived in good condition along with the extremely rare, if not unique, small booklet entitled *Approximate Price List for W. H. Roche & Co.'s Pattern Book*.

The survival of this pattern book is of great significance for Australian furniture collectors, as it gives a clear indication of what furniture and furniture styles were available to the majority of Australians, compared with the known exhibition pieces available to a very few. The publishing of this pattern book indicates the sophistication in Australian marketing techniques and the business confidence that one Australian firm of cabinetmakers had to produce a catalogue of designs of furniture to sell at both the wholesale and retail levels.

Both the catalogue and price list were formerly owned by 'Sam Smith H(obart) Town', and are now in the author's possession. A copy of both is available for use in the Historic Houses Trust of NSW library at Lyndhurst, Glebe.

Sam Smith may be presumed to have been the Samuel Smith cabinetmaker of Hobart who is listed at Macquarie Street in 1854, then at 77 Liverpool Street in 1867, 74 Liverpool Street from 1870 to 1876, at 12 Elizabeth Street and 25 Campbell Street in 1881, at 23 Campbell Street

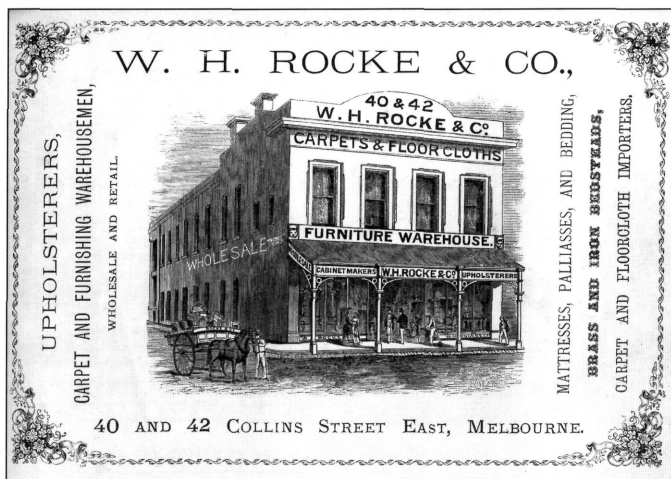
from 1886 to 1898 and 105 Collins Street from 1899 to 1901.

Two of his labels are listed in *Australian Furniture Pictorial History and Dictionary 1788-1938*.<sup>1</sup> The paper label describes 'Samuel Smith's Cabinet, Upholstery, and General Furnishing Warehouse 74 Liverpool Street Hobart Town Opposite the Criterion Hotel'. The pattern book and price list would have been used at this period.

A photograph of an occasional table<sup>2</sup> of Huon pine with a painted top by Miss Bell of Hobart exhibited at the Tasmanian Juvenile and Industrial Exhibition, Hobart 1883, is illustrated in *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*, bearing an impressed mark of 'Samuel Smith Maker Hobart'.

The furniture pattern book consists of more than 350 designs, bearing pattern numbers 503 to 854 plus many half-numbers, spread over 102 pages, and was published by Roche & Co. between 1874 to 1876. This date is based on directory listings<sup>3</sup>, as well as the illustration on the frontispiece, showing the business premises at 40 & 42 Collins Street East in Melbourne, (pl. 1), which as well as showing completed furniture through the showroom windows, even shows their delivery cart overloaded with furniture to be delivered. The *Price List* carries a similar view but with significant differences in proportions, details and window stock.

W. H. Roche & Co. were warehousemen, cabinetmakers and up-



Pl. 1. Frontispiece Furniture Pattern Book W. H. Roche & Co.

holsterers supplying both the retail and wholesale markets. Roche & Co. imported carpets, floorcloths, mattresses, palliasses and bedding as well as furniture from England and America. Brass and iron bedsteads were another specialty which may have been locally made or imported.

W. H. Roche & Co. has been described<sup>4</sup> as the most prominent manufacturing and importing firm in Victoria, and was founded by William Henry Roche (1836-1882) who came to Victoria in 1852 with his father, who was also a furniture warehouseman. The firm of W. H. Roche & Co. was firmly established by 1854. Fuller details of Roche & Co. are given in Fahy and Simpson, *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*.<sup>5</sup>

From 1863 until 1868 William Henry Roche formed a partnership with Horatio Beauchamp, who was an auctioneer, trading as Beauchamp & Roche, with the auction rooms adjoining the premises of 40-42 Collins Street East, at number 38.<sup>6</sup>

An illustration (pl. 2.) and description of these premises appeared in the *Illustrated Australian News*, 1 January 1869:

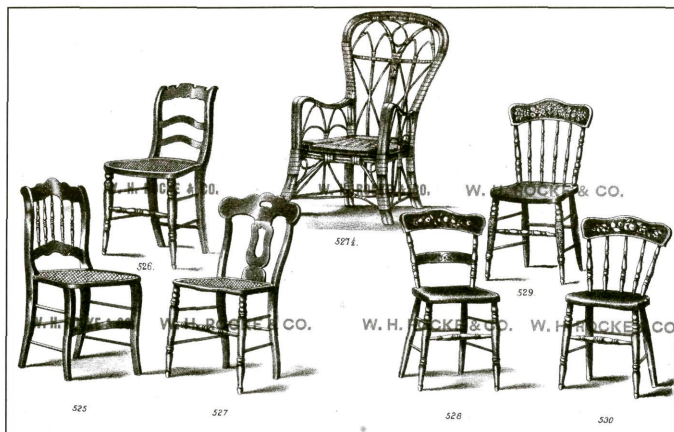
The front portion of the establishment is devoted exclusively to the carpet and upholstery department, behind this, and the auction room of Mr Beauchamp, is the new and spacious showroom, which is about 100 feet in length by 70 feet wide, with a height of nearly 30 feet. Around this room are erected, handsome and spacious galleries 15 feet wide, approached by one grand and two side staircases. Displayed on these galleries are bedsteads of every conceivable pattern, bedding, bedroom furniture, cheval and toilet glasses etc. On the ground floor is arranged, the drawing, dining room and office furniture. The manufactory which is immediately under the showroom and is of the same dimensions, is occupied by a

large number of men, women and boys, employed in the making of upholstery goods, such as dining room and drawing room suites, settees and lounges, sewing carpets, curtains, matting, mattress tickings etc. As a safeguard against fire there are only such goods made in this part of the premises as require constant personal supervision. From New Zealand, Queensland, South and Western Australia, there is a constantly increasing demand for these manufactures and a number of experienced packers are regularly engaged in packing up country and export orders. Although Messrs W. H. Roche & Co. are manufacturers, they are also large importers of English and American furniture. Such an establishment is worthy to take rank with those in the first class towns in England.

These premises had been purchased previous to this date at a cost



MESSRS W. H. ROCHE AND CO.'S NEW FURNITURE AND CARPET SHOW ROOMS AND MANUFACTORY.



Pl. 3. Page 4, *American Chairs* nos. 528, 529 and 530.

of £20,000, and illustrate the size and importance of the business at this time.

Although this is the earliest pattern book yet known to have been produced by an Australian firm, this is clearly not the first for the following three reasons.

Firstly, as indicated in the quote above, by 1 January 1869 the firm was exporting to New Zealand, Queensland, South and Western Australia. To employ a number of full time packers clearly indicates that the goods must have been chosen from illustra-

tions to allow for the volume of this trade, as the date of the pattern book is five years later.

Secondly, it is unlikely that this is the first publication produced, and probable that there are undiscovered or lost pattern books or unbound folios, as the numbering on the designs starts at 503. This seems to indicate there had been 502 designs of furniture produced by the firm before this catalogue, or did the firm record and number all working designs?

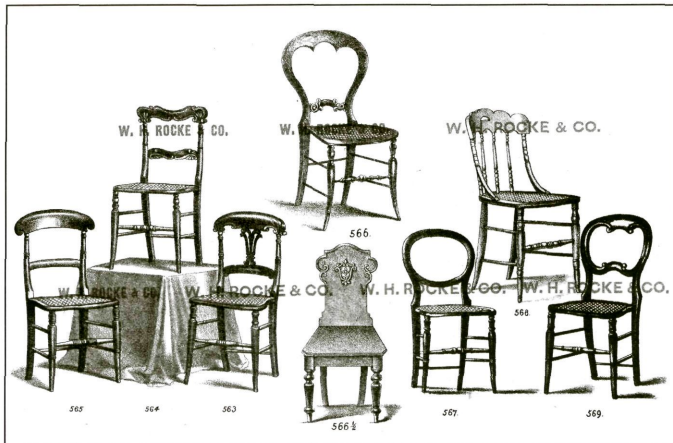
Thirdly, it is evident that other illustrations were published by Rocke

& Co. whether in a pattern book form or folio form, by the remarkable way he identified the designs in the present pattern book. Every illustration has 'W. H. Rocke & Co.' printed in large bold red type across the illustration, clearly to prevent any other cabinetmakers using the Rocke & Co. catalogue in their own business, and not giving credit where credit was due.<sup>7</sup>

It was an established practice of cabinetmakers to use the published design books and pattern books of the time as an aid for clients to choose a style of furniture they wanted made up. Business competition must have been intense at this time in Melbourne and beyond, for the marking of the designs in such a way.

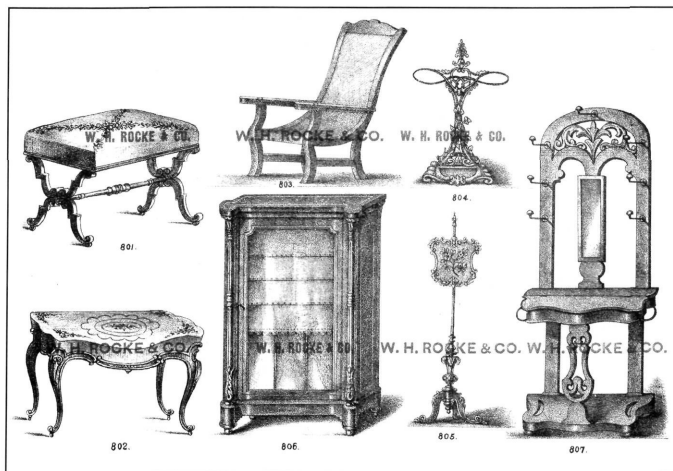
The catalogue contains an extensive list of all the furnishings and upholsterer's trimmings kept in stock and sold by the firm, which gives a clearer understanding of the availability of such goods at one particular period in history. They include

Brussels Carpets. Tapestry Carpets. Kidderminster Carpets. Felt and Dutch Carpets. Stair Carpets. Floor Oilcloths. Passage Oilcloths. Cocoa Fibre Matting. Chinese Matting. Linoleum. Kamptulcan. Door Mats. Skin Mats. Carriage Mats. Hearthrugs. Cornice Poles and Rings. Ormolu Cornices. Lace and Leno Window Curtains. Rep and Silk Damask Window Curtains. Carpet Hassocks. Fenders and Fireirons. Stair Rods. Window Blinds. Venetian Blinds. Fire Screen Stands. Gilt Pier Glasses. Framed Engravings. Framed Chromo-Lithographs. Chimney Ornaments. Flower Stands. Papier-mâché Trays. Bullion Fringes. Blankets. Cotton and Linen Sheets. Counterpanes. Bolster and Pillow Slips. Horse Hair Mattresses. Spring Hair



Pl. 4. Page 9. *Chairs, mostly English, with an American Heywood cane seated chair (568) and an Australian cedar hall chair (566 1/2).*





Pl. 5. Page 64. An Indian cane lounging chair (803), cedar or walnut hall stand (807), walnut ottomans (801-2), canterbury (806) and screen (805).

Mattresses. Fibre and Flock Mattresses. Palliasses. Linen Huckaback Towels. English Bath Towels. Glass and Kitchen Towels. Linen Crumb Cloths. Cloth Table Covers. Linen Table Cloths. Dinner Napkins. Chintz and Holland Furniture Covers. Verandah Blinds. Mosquito and Dimity Bed Curtains. Blind and Picture Cord.

Upholsterer's Trimmings etc.

Horse Hair. Hair Seating. Morocco and Roan Skins. American Leather Cloth. Leather and Haircloth Buttons. Woollen Flock. Cocoa Fibre. Silk and Worsted Gimps, All Colours. Webbing. Hessians, Forfars and Scrims. Twine and Tacks. Gimp Pins. Cotton and Linen Ticks. Socket and Screw Castors. Glue and Sand Paper.

By analysing this list of decorating accessories available, it is possible to gain an understanding of the wide range of goods which were available to the average Australian in an average Australian home.

The list of illustrations in the catalogue includes both imported and

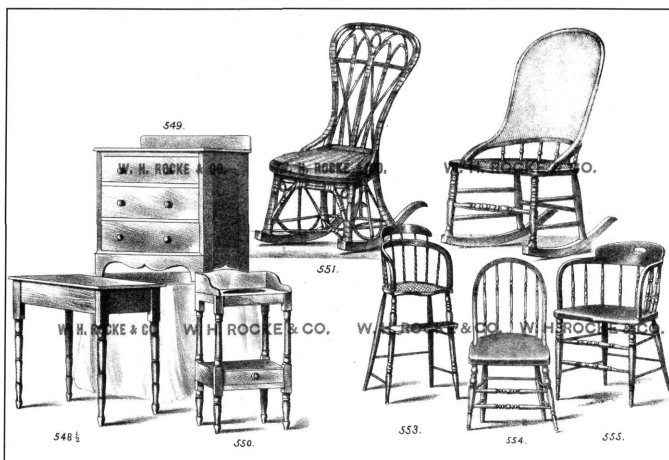
locally made goods. From the Index and Illustrated Catalogue it appears as if the imported goods were labelled as such and were from America, England and India - and possibly France, if a 'French' iron bedstead refers to country of origin rather than delicate style.

American chairs are covered in pages 1 to 8 and included those manufactured by Walter Heywood and Co. and Winchester such on page

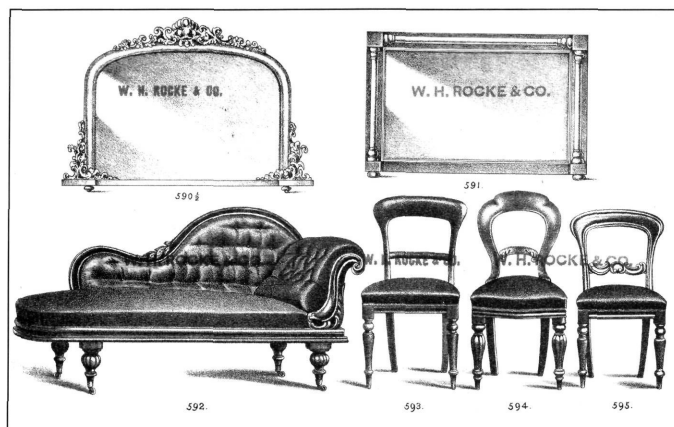
4, no. 528, 'Walter Heywood's Extra Baltimore wood, 12 in case' priced at 45 shillings a dozen and no. 530 'Walter Heywood's Washington wood, 12 in case' priced at 47 shillings 6 pence a dozen, and also no. 529 'Winchester's Washington wood, 12 in case' priced at 46 shillings 6 pence a dozen (pl. 3).

Six examples of imported English-made furniture are seen in the cane-seated chairs on page 9 (pl. 4). Number 563, a 'Carved Back English-made Cane Chair assorted colours' was priced at 5 shillings each and no. 564 'Sweep Splatt Carved Top English-made Cane Chair, assorted colours' was a little cheaper at 4 shillings six pence. 'Pure Balloon English-made Cane Chair assorted colours' no. 567 were priced at 6s 6d, and the more elaborate 'English-made Carved Back cane chair' fetched 8s 6d. The American Heywood chair no 568 was 9s while an Australian-made chair no. 566 ½ 'Superior Carved Back Cedar Hall Chair' does not have its price listed.

Indian-made furniture is illustrated on page 64, such as no. 803, an 'Indian Cane Lounging Chair' priced at 45 shillings (pl. 5).



Pl. 6. Page 7. Imported American furniture.



Pl. 7. Page 13. Pier glasses cedar couch and chairs.

The use of imported timbers is clearly illustrated on the same page 64, which shows nos 801 and 802 being 'Very Handsome Walnut Ottomans - The above Ottomans can be covered with purchaser's own work, if required, and can be made to any size' at a cost of 80 shillings each. No. 806 is an 'Enclosed Pedestal Walnut Music Canterbury, with shelves' at 150 shillings, no. 804 an imported 'Ornamental Iron Stick and Umbrella Stand' at 16 shillings and no. 805 a 'Superior Walnut-frame Banner Screen' at 50 shillings. The hall stand no. 807 was made locally: 'Cedar or Oak Hat and Umbrella Stand, with lift-up drawer in table' priced between 90 and 120 shillings.

A range of presumably American imported furniture is shown on page 7 (pl. 6), bedroom and nursery furniture of earlier styles along with the functional oak spindle chairs: no. 548 1/2 'Painted Deal Table, 12 in case, not in stock'; no. 549 'Painted Deal Drawers, 4 in case' (no price given) and no. 550 'Painted Deal Washstand, 12 in case' (no price given). No. 551 was a 'Willow Rocking Chair, not portable' at 25/- each, and no. 522 'Victoria Cane Back and Seat Oak Nurse Rocker, 6 in case' at 25/- each. No 553 'Child's High Cane Oak, 12

in case' at 7/6 each, and no. 554 'Bent Rim Wood Oak, 12 in case' at 6/6 each and no 555 'Wood Oak Office, 12 in case' at 9/- each.

A presumption made by collectors of Australian made furniture is that only Australian timbers were ever used by Australian cabinetmakers. Therefore much antique furniture is overlooked when it is made of oak, mahogany, walnut, Indian rosewood, etc. even to the extent that when it is labelled it is presumed to have been imported, rather than made, by that firm.

Importation is of course a possibility, but the above timbers are superior cabinetmaking timbers which were in fashion and readily available. It would have been far easier to import fitches of these timbers, than to risk the problems associated with water damage to made-up or partly made furniture caused during sea travel.

Therefore more attention needs to be given to the secondary timbers, which as they are not seen are always cheaper in cost. It can be presumed English Oak would not be used as a secondary timber as it was in England, due to its higher imported cost, whereas imported pines, such as red

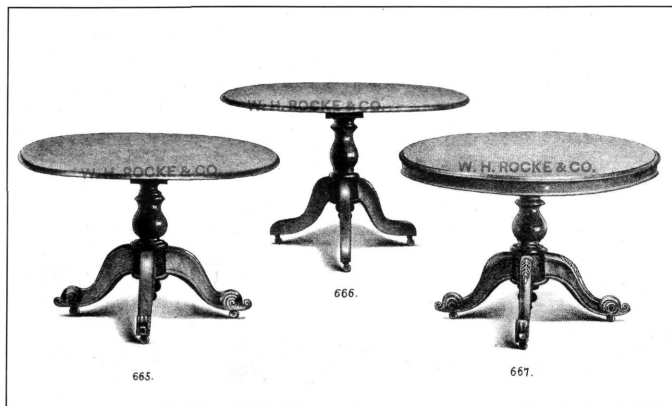
pine, deal and Baltic pine etc. are known to be used particularly in Adelaide, and were imported in large quantities for use in the building trade.

Of interest when looking at the popular styles of furniture advertised in Rogke & Co's pattern book is the crossing over of period styles such as bracket-footed chests and Regency overmantel mirrors still popular in the 1870s. Page 13 (pl. 7) shows this variation in styles. no. 590 1/2 'Carved Gilt-framed Pier Glass, all sizes at 30 x 18, 37/6; 36 x 24, 62/6; 40 x 30, 84/-; 44 x 34, 105/-' and the plainer, rectangular no. 591 'Maple or Rosewood Pier Glass, all sizes at 30 x 18, 30/-; 28 x 16, 25/-; 24 x 14, 20/-; 20 x 12, 15/-'.

The other illustrations on this page are all Australian-made: pattern 592 'Superior Round-end Cedar Haircloth Couch' at 95/-, pattern 593 'Plain Scotch Cedar Haircloth Chair, portable' at 15/-, pattern 594 'Shaped Front Reeded Legs Haircloth Chair, portable' at 24/- and pattern 595 'Scotch Back Haircloth Chair, portable' at 17/6.

Rogke & Co.'s pattern book clearly shows the fashion or popularity of the timbers used in different parts of the house and reflects the furniture timber fashion of England. Walnut is the most popular for parlour or drawing room furniture, with the darker mahogany and cedar being popular in the dining room and library.

How much substitution of local timbers occurred would depend on cost or cheapness of the local timbers. As this pattern book is for the average or 'modest' Australian home, and the design patterns are not complex and could be competently reproduced by the average cabinetmaker, this can explain why such a large body of Australian-made furniture in cedar exists from this period.



Pl. 8. Page 25. Three cedar loo tables.

Local timbers are used in page 25, which shows three round cedar tables (pl. 8). pattern 665 'Cedar Loo Table, without rim, with carved claws', 3ft -, 3ft 6 at 32/6 and 4ft at 37/6. Pattern 666 'Cedar Loo Table, without rim, with plain claws', 3ft -, 3ft 6 at 28/6 and 4ft at 32/6 and pattern 667 'Best [Cedar] Loo Table with rim and carved claws' 3ft - at 60/-, 4ft at 70/- and 4ft 6 at 80/-.

Two popular Australian timbers cedar and huon pine, are shown on page 15, in a variety of period styles (pl. 9). Pattern 608 'American Leather Cedar Couch' at 55/-, no. 609 'Cedar Couch, in haircloth, with bolster' at 65/-, no. 610 the double-ended 'Very Superior Cedar Sofa, in haircloth' at 110/- to 115/- and no. 611 'Superior Huon-Pine Cane Couch, suitable for verandahs or bedrooms' at 60/-.

Depending on the size required, bookcases, tables etc. were made up in a variety of standard sizes and prices. In the case of bookcases they could be either with two drawers and called at the time a 'Chiffonniere' bookcase or with a secretaire drawer. Page 33 (pl. 10) shows two such bookcases. Pattern 707 p'Handsone Cedar Chiffonniere Bookcase, with 2 drawers' 3ft 6 at 130/-, 4ft at 150/-,

4ft 6 at 180/- with one drawer; and 5ft with two drawers; these prices have been written in, or modified, in ink. Pattern 708 'Handsone Cedar Chiffonniere Bookcase with escriptoire', 4ft at 240/-, 4ft 6 at 270/- and 5ft at 290/-, which interestingly are packed in bulk in timber cases and sold as such to be re-assembled presumably by other furniture warehouses throughout Australia.

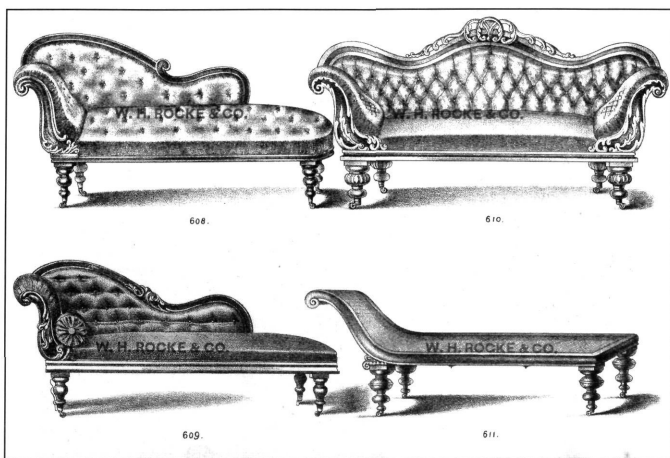
Another known publication of Rocke & Co. is titled *Remarks on Furniture and the Interior Decoration of Houses* and was published c.1874. This book was a further detailed at-

tempt to publicise the firm of Rocke & Co. It was a direct attempt to make Melbournians realise that it was better to rely on Rocke & Co. for the importation of furniture and furnishings from England and the Continent, particularly with their superior understanding of taste and style, than for Melbournians to import directly from England or when travelling back to England, with the potential extra costs and damage to their imported goods from poor packing and shipping.

Again the firm's business acumen can be seen as in this publication's own foreword where it is recorded in their own words

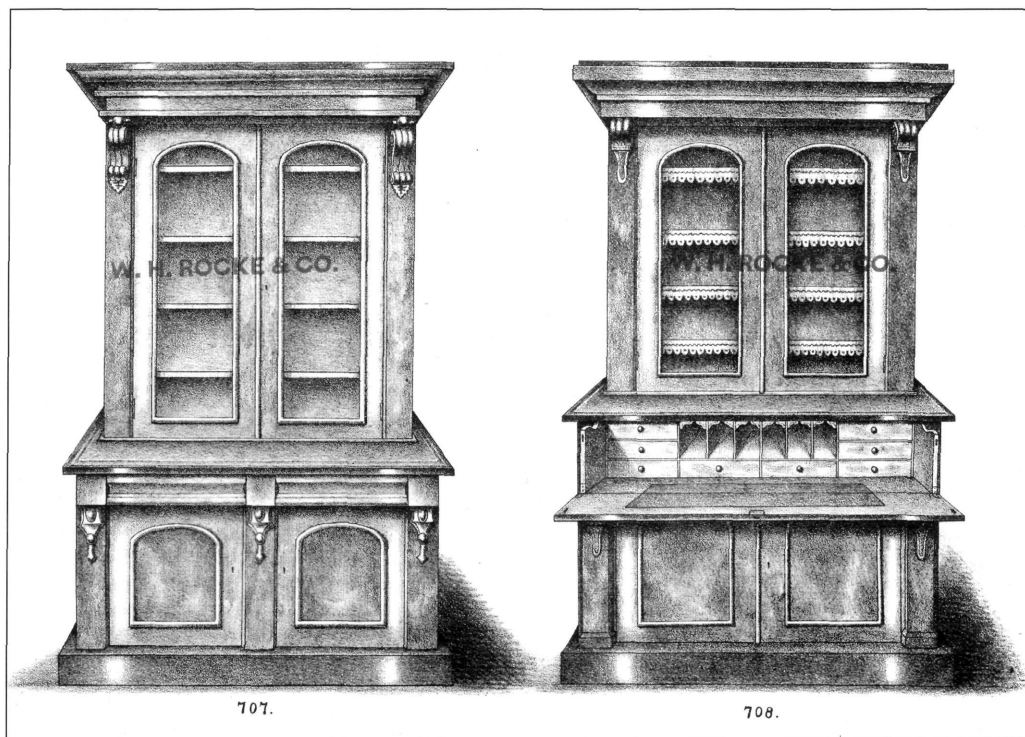
Some years ago we undertook to remodel our business to make it include, beyond the requirements of comparatively plain households (in respect to which our Stock is as complete as ever), the supply of furniture OF THE VERY HIGHEST CLASS as rich and good as money could purchase, art design, or taste decorate.

Along with exhibiting furniture at various colonial and overseas exhibitions such as the 1854 Melbourne



Pl. 9. Page 15. Cedar (608-610) and Huon pine couches (611).





Pl. 10. Page 33. Cedar Chiffoniere Bookcases.

Exhibition, the 1855 Paris Exhibition and the 1866-67 Intercolonial Exhibition of Australasia, the firm endeavoured to manufacture for all tastes and financial limits.

The popularity of the Roche & Co.'s pattern book and their designs can not be determined on the scarce number of surviving pattern books (how many are known to exist?). Very few English and American furniture cabinetmakers' pattern books have even survived due to their heavy usage by cabinetmakers as sources of designs. Some of these are known to have existed only from newspaper advertisements, etc.

The popularity of this pattern book can only be determined by the success and longevity of the Roche & Co. firm and its survival as the major

Victorian cabinetmaking firm for both modest and detailed work. This can be seen in the firm's own words in its *Remarks on Furniture and the Interior Decoration of Houses* where they state

Our aims are completeness, variety, and fashion, in everything relating to our business, and although we have laid stress on our rich styles of furniture, our stock (the merchantable value of which is between £30,000 and £40,000) includes all the possible requirements of the most modest as well as the most sumptuous households.

It is to be hoped that local furniture made using this pattern book can be matched up with the designs of Roche & Co. to further enrich our local knowledge of Australian made furniture.

- 1 Kevin Fahy & Andrew Simpson, *Australian Furniture: Pictorial History and Dictionary 1788-1938*, p. 119.
- 2 Kevin Fahy, Christina Simpson, and Andrew Simpson; *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture* p. 503.
- 3 Ibid. p. 164.
- 4 Ibid. p. 158.
- 5 Ibid, pp 158-164.
- 6 The building illustrated in the *Intercolonial Exhibition 1866 Official Catalogue*, and reproduced in Fahy, Simpson & Simpson fig 77 p 159, is recognisable but different again.
- 7 The same overprinting is found in A. Hall & Co's 1897 Sydney catalogue, reprinted as *The Grandest Display of Household Furniture in the Colony*, Woongoolah Publishing, Taree 1994.

# The Sydney International Exhibition of 1879

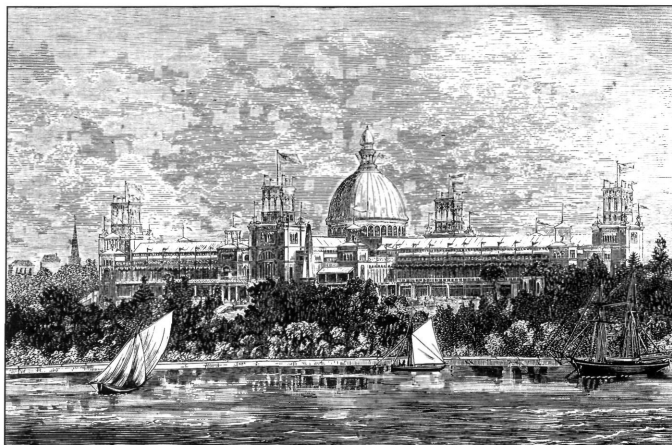
## A Look at the Books

Roslyn Maguire

*With Sydney planning the 2000 Olympics next year to flaunt its talents and beauty to an increasingly sceptical world, Ros Maguire reviews the literature about the vaunted Sydney International Exhibition of 1879, rushed into being to trump Melbourne's similar show of 1880.*

It's likely that the people of 19th century Sydney were never more able to be proud of their place, in terms of realising an international appreciation, than 120 years ago. On 17 September 1879 James Barnet's bold architectural masterpiece, erected in just nine months, opened in a morning ceremony with guests attending in uniform or full evening dress, as stipulated. A 700-voice choir, orchestra and six pianos performed as part of the carefully staged formalities. After two weeks of rain, the weather had cooperatively cleared on the day.

The Garden Palace, as Premier Henry Parkes decided it should be called, housed Australia's, and indeed



Pl. 1 *The Garden Palace. Frontispiece of the Official Record of the Sydney International Exhibition. State Library of NSW.*



Pl. 2 *Dark burgundy and gilt cover of the Official Record of the Sydney International Exhibition, Sydney, Government Printer, 1881. State Library of NSW.*

the Southern Hemisphere's, first International Exhibition. Adjectives like 'gorgeous' were used to describe the building in its elevated position on Macquarie Street - a space now incorporated into the Botanic Gardens. Elaborate sketches based on early plans were produced by artists associated with the *Sydney Mail*, *Town and Country Journal* and *Illustrated Sydney News*, which by February or March had been circulated around the world to countries from which the exhibits and visitors were expected to come. Copies then appeared in *The Graphic*, *Illustrated London News* and other European journals so that by the end of April 1880 when the Exhibition closed, it must have been the most recognisable example of Australian architecture abroad.

*The Official Record of the Sydney International Exhibition*, though not ready for publication until 1881, remains a monumental souvenir, an impressively comprehensive 19th century publication of products, artifacts and items of manufacture from the Australian colonies, its thousand-plus pages recording the broad international scope and context in which the Colonies had to compete. Up to and including the Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876 and Paris Exhibition of 1878, the individual Colonies had felt their identity compromised by being displayed and catalogued as mere colonial adjuncts to Britain's vast exhibit. So it was a fitting commemoration and gesture to the workmanship and expense devoted to the 1879 Exhibition that Commissioner Patrick

**JEYES' PERFECT PURIFIER. MOSS AND COMPANY, Sole Agents,**  
224 PITT STREET. SAMPLES FREE ON APPLICATION.



**"HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR."**

*Mr. Executive Commissioner P. A. Jennings, C.M.G., is introduced into the presence of Her Majesty the Queen, by N.S. Wales, for the purpose of presenting Her Majesty with a model of the "Garden Palace."*

**A. BECHET, Barrack Street, Sydney, N.S.W.**

*Sole Agent for Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, and the Colonies for Herring's Patent Champion Safes, and Steinway and Sons' Pianos.*

Pl. 3 'Honour to whom Honour'. Mr Executive Commissioner P. A. Jennings, C. M. G., is introduced into the presence of Her Majesty the Queen, by N.S. Wales, for the purpose of presenting Her Majesty with a model of the 'Garden Palace'. Sydney Punch, 27 November 1879.

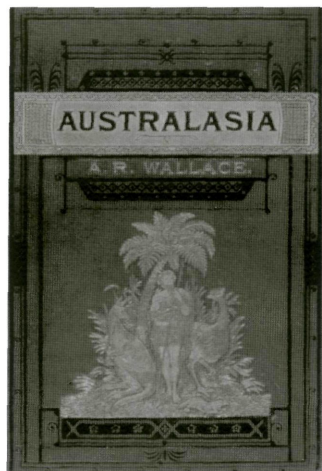
Jennings chose a finely tooled, gilded leather cover featuring native flora, fauna and an Aboriginal figure.

The cover of R. A. Wallace's *Australasia* (published London 1879) also shows a decorative gilt image of a kangaroo, emu and rather more rounded Aboriginal figure, reflecting not only a current artistic preference but a profound interest in ethnographic displays from the Australian Museum,

Queensland, and Western Australia as well as nearby Pacific Islands. According to Museum records, a consignment of Aboriginal skulls went to Germany in exchange for a large fossil collection in 1882.

When Sydney publisher George Robertson advertised in the *Town and Country Journal* in May 1879 his list of new works included Rolf Boldrewood's *Ups and Downs, a Story*

of Australian Life (originally *The Squatter's Dream*), Mrs Lance Lawson's *Cookery Book*, adapted especially for the Australian Colonies, *The Australian Builder's Price Book* by C. H. Mayes as well as *Shooting Stars*,



Pl. 4 Green and gilt cover of R. A. Wallace's *Australasia*, London 1879. State Library of NSW.

a new book of American humour.

With just nine months' notice of the Sydney exhibition, and Melbourne engaged in preparations for theirs, London publishers anticipated an upsurge of interest in Australia and the wider region of the Pacific, and so encouraged reprints like Francis H. Grundy's *Pictures of the Past: Memories of Men I have Met and Places I have Seen*, and brought out James Hingston's *The Australian Abroad*, which included chapters on Sydney and the Blue Mountains. Henry Parkes, by the way, arranged a full day excursion to the Blue Mountains for visiting governors just before the Exhibition opening, travelling on to that object of local engineering pride the Zig-Zag Railway near Lithgow. Most visitors' guides provided sightseeing timetables as well as plans of the city and suburbs.

Official publications included



NSW Agent-General in London William Forster's *Information for Australian Emigrants*, and progress reports and statistical registers. And released in time for the Exhibition was J. H. Heaton's readable reference work, *Australian Dictionary of Dates and Men of the Time; containing the History of Australasia from 1542 to Date*, although a minor hiccup occurred when the Government Printer took it upon himself to remove an entry

on pugilism in Sydney, because it was felt that it would create a poor impression.

As well as large numbers of journal illustrations, an abundance of photographic images document Sydney buildings and surrounds in this period. Thomas Richards the Government Printer, Charles Bayliss and Lawrence Frost produced 'souvenir' photographs for albums, sets or individual sale, usually portraying Sydney

at its most picturesque. Erection of the building too was captured in a series of 'construction images', while the first use of electric light, introduced to allow work to continue through the night, brought crowds out to gather around the Domain and marvel at its eerie effect.

Designers, composers, writers, poets, decorators, all saw opportunities for exposure and fame. Paolo Giorza, who wrote the music for the opening *Cantata* had to scout around for subscribers to have his major work published, but the result was an impressive red leather presentation version with classical gilt detail, dedicated to the Prince of Wales, whose personal copy is in the Royal collection of the British Library. Cheaper cloth-bound copies were also produced.

Henry Kendall's poem for the *Cantata*, which challenges the accepted notion of Australia being a British discovery, appeared with footnotes in his humbly presented *Songs from the Mountains* published by William Maddock of Sydney in collaboration with London publishers Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington in 1880. The poem was held in such high regard Douglas B. W. Sladen introducing the anthology, *A Century of Australian Song*, claimed it "magnificent - we should say, perhaps the finest prize poem written in the English language". Manuscripts of *A Hymn of Praise*, written at Jennings' request for the closing ceremony in April 1880, along with *Australia - Written in Commemoration of the Sydney International Exhibition*, survive in Kendall's notebooks now in the National Library of Australia.

Among books published in Leipzig in German were those by Dr Karl Emil Jung in 1879 and by Richard von Oberlander in 1880. Although Exhibition attendance figures totalled over a million, and clearly people paid numerous visits, it is not known how



Pl. 5 Paolo Giorza, who composed the music for the Cantata also wrote a Sydney International Exhibition March. The Italian music publishers F. Lucca of Milan produced this version.



Pl. 6 Giorza's Exhibition Album, printed in Sydney by C. Troedel & Co Ltd.

many visitors were from overseas, in spite of the Government's wish that a stimulus to immigration might occur.

Much was written too about the educational benefits the Exhibition

might have for the 'artisan classes', their participation being thought essential if the exercise were to prove profitable. It was Parkes who pointed out that although Europeans might be tired of such Fairs, young or skilled Australians who had never been abroad could be offered an ideal opportunity for advancement. Technological firsts, such as installation of an American lift into the Garden Palace's northern tower, or Sydney's first steam trams, also US-built, running from the old railway station at Redfern to the corner of Elizabeth and Hunter Streets, were enjoyed as novel, associated attractions.

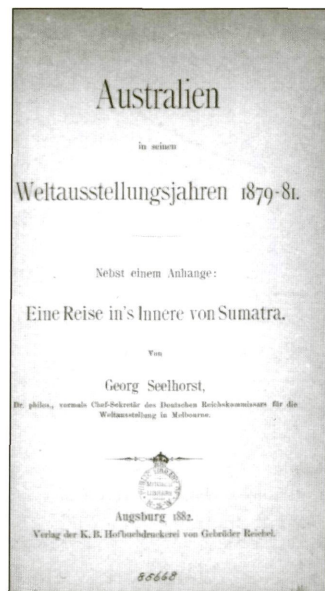
An excellent collection of typical, colourful ephemera preserved in a scrapbook<sup>1</sup> belonging to John Davies MLA includes invitations, dance cards and menus, many verifying the generous hospitality of Captain Mathieu, the gregarious French Commissioner who was captain of the ship *Rhin* which anchored in Farm Cove for most of the six months. It was he who presented Sydney's Lord Mayor C.J. Roberts with a stylish tall Sèvres vase.<sup>2</sup>

Encouraged perhaps by the close

timing of the Sydney and Melbourne Exhibitions, authors continued the tradition of comparing the two cities, Melbourne invariably coming off best in terms of town planning and architecture, while favourable descriptions of Sydney usually refer to the Harbour. In *Our Australian Cousins*, James Inglis indulges in such comparisons, while Nehemiah Bartley of Brisbane attempted to record Sydney social distinctions while observing spectators at a first-class cricket match in 1879 and those attending a Randwick race meeting. In *Opals and Agates; or, Scenes under the Southern Cross and the Magelhans, being Memories of Fifty Years of Australia and Polynesia*,<sup>3</sup> this is what he wrote -

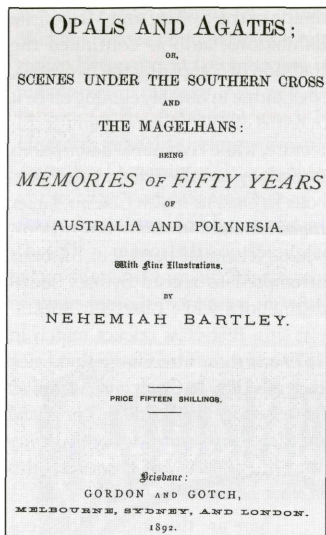
There are the same faultless equipages, the same grand carriage horses, to be seen at both, the ladies dresses are equally costly, but far more 'quiet', and there is an 'evangelical' sort of element in the crowd to be seen on the grand stand, which is wanting at the horse races; while the rough crowd is very much alike at both functions. A lady, in silver grey, thick corded, silk, lit up with 'sultan' colour, and with a broad six ounce gold collarette of intricate and tasteful workmanship, would not be out of place at the cricket, but, she would probably be prima donna, there, as regards costume. Such were my reflections as I saw Lord Harris's team, in January 1879, play against New South Wales.

Male writers with an accurate 'social' eye are rare, and one willing to dwell on individual items among the mass displayed in the Garden Palace deserves to be read again. In a wordy and wandering style, Bartley queried the price asked for Staffordshire and 'a cut-glass jug, with no gold or silver about it', sold for 50 guineas. He warned 'Trust it not to the hands of 'Bridget, of Cork' or 'Mary Hann,



Pl. 7 Georg Seelhorst, *Australien in seinen Weltausstellungsjahren 1879-81*, (Australia in its World Exhibition Years), Augsburg 1882.





Pl. 8 Nehemiah Bartley, *Opals and Agates; or, Scenes under the Southern Cross and the Magelhans: being Memories of Fifty Years of Australia and Polynesia, Brisbane 1892.*

of London' oh! Denizen of the Sunny South and buyer of the precious crystal unless thy bank account be pretty replete with sovereigns!'

Descriptions follow of Florentine tables inlaid with agate, lapis lazuli, malachite and moonstone and a marble statue of Ariadne worth £2000, before noticing that familiar 19th century collectable, the decorated emu egg:

On, now, to the South Australian Court, expecting, of course, to find copper ore and wheat; but, lo! In place of this - well! We never knew what Australian jewellers could do, till we saw these marvellous emu eggs, sawn in two, silver lined, and shutting and opening with a spring, and disclosing, inside, the giant Leichhardt bean, of Queensland, similarly sawn and mounted, and filled with scent, the whole jewel being one such as any lady might be proud to see on her dressing table ..... A magnificent, locally found, yellow diamond completes the list of which I noticed in the Adelaide Court.

Even though the Exhibition Building became recognised as one of the most remarkable buildings of James Barnett's long career, from the outset it was intended to be temporary and one parliamentarian questioned Parkes whether its removal would be immediate, the very day after the Exhibition closed!

Most elusive of all the records are the original plans, said to have finally numbered 400, and not in the spectacular 22 September 1882 fire which totally destroyed the building just three years and a few days after the Exhibition had opened. With towers, lanterns and pennants flying it was

thought just the thing to decorate objects like this unusual building-model-cum-glass paperweight or a miniaturised spy-glass<sup>4</sup> shown at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences - which was founded partly as a result of the Garden Palace exhibition - when John Wade curated a centenary exhibition.<sup>5</sup>

Contemporary coloured images, including a bird's eye view over the Harbour, can be seen in the Hyde Park Barracks exhibition *Unexpected Views - Images of Early Sydney*, until 4 April.

### Note

The Sydney International Exhibition Building is the subject of a special project being conducted by the University of New South Wales's Professor Peter Proudfoot, in response to an initiative taken in Germany where Expo 2000 is being held at Hannover. Universities around the world are taking part, in cities where International Exhibitions or Expos have been held in the past. Papers now being prepared will be translated into German and Russian, and be accessible on Internet. Students and computer experts at the UNSW Faculty of the Built Environment are creating a computer model to be displayed as part of a State Library of New South Wales exhibition in September 1999, which happens to be the 120th commemoration of the Garden Palace. If you would like to look at the project so far, the web address is <http://www.fbe.unsw.edu.au/events>.



Pl. 9 Glass paperweight enveloping a three-dimensional model of 'The Sydney International Exhibition', manufactured for M & S Gablonz. Private collection.

- 1 Now in the National Library of Australia, Canberra.
- 2 Displayed in the Lady Mayoress's Room at the Town Hall. See M. Graham, 'Sevres to Sydney' *Australian Antique Collector*, No. 36 June-Dec 1988 p. 65f and cover.
- 3 Published by Gordon and Gotch, Brisbane, 1892.
- 4 Collection Robert Hutchinson.
- 5 John Wade (ed.), *Sydney International Exhibition 1879*, Sydney, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 1979.



---

# Neoclassical Influence in Australian Furniture

---

R. A. Fredman

*Researcher Bob Fredman discusses Neoclassical motifs in early 19th century Australian furniture, and suggests that prior to 1850 in Sydney it is possible to identify three stylistic groups of woodcarving, which may represent individual woodcarvers.*

A wealthy family living in Sydney 160 years ago needing some formal furniture for their entertaining rooms would have been able to purchase locally made furniture with features reminiscent of the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. Some of these more commonly found features would have included acanthus

leaves, scrolls and tapered columns. The term given to this design movement is 'Neoclassical', and it prevailed in Europe and the English speaking world in varying degrees for a century from the mid seventeen hundreds. Australia, which had a furniture manufacturing industry in the early nineteenth century was witness

therefore to the later stages of the adoption of Neoclassicism to furniture design. The cedar sideboard (pl. 1) and cedar card table (pl. 2) are examples of this style.

Classical style was well regarded by European scholars, architects and designers, who had long recognised the remarkable building achieve-



Pl. 1 Cedar twin pedestal sideboard, c. 1840, private collection. Photograph courtesy Queensland Art Gallery.



Pl. 2 Cedar card table, c. 1840, private collection. Photograph courtesy Queensland Art Gallery.

ments of the Greeks and Romans during the Classical era approximately 2,000 years ago. The Greeks and Romans were credited with producing great aesthetics through careful study of geometry and proportion, and the ruins they left behind have been a model for good design ever since. The interpretation of Classical forms in interior design had been the practice in Europe prior to the era of Neoclassicism, but was pursued with new vigour after new archaeological discoveries such as Pompeii, and the publication of landmark books such as J. J. Winckelmann's *History of Ancient Art* in 1764.

One of the leading exponents of Neoclassicism, Robert Adam, wrote in 1773 of 'that delightful light style of ornament used by the ancient Romans in the decoration of their palaces, baths and villas ... by far the most perfect that has ever appeared for inside decorations ... is capable of inimitable beauties.' The adaption of

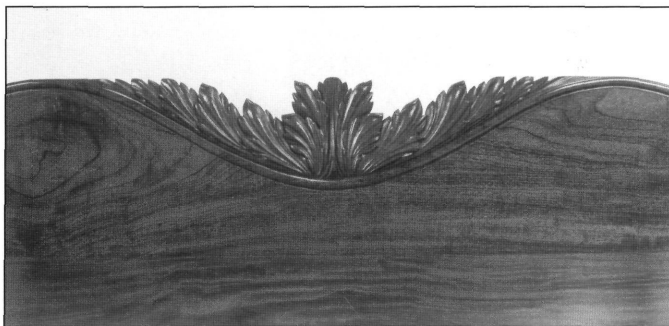
this style to furniture design was particularly strong in England during the Regency (1811 to 1830), and William IV (1830 to 1837) periods, and several pattern books were published during this period that show inlaid and carved Neoclassical motifs used in every conceivable way on pieces of furniture.

Australian furniture extant with Neoclassical design elements gener-

ally falls into the period 1820 to 1860, and with rare exceptions is made from red cedar (*Toona ciliata*, formerly *T. australis*). Woodcarvers working in the earlier part of this period would often have been trained in the British Isles, sometimes sent out to the Colony against their will as convicts. Hence one finds only slight variation from British furniture in earlier examples. There is also evidence that Neoclassical styles lasted longer in Australia than in Britain due to the local popularity of the style and the isolation from the European centres of furniture fashion. The Australian furniture industry subsequently adopted Victorian British styles, and finally found a true Australian identity in the closing stages of the century with the advent of Australian flora motifs such as gum leaves.

Woodcarvers working with Neoclassical styles in Australia have remained largely unidentified, but examples of their work such as the pieces illustrated show a high degree of achievement in design and execution. The designs are original with no known precise pattern book design for either of the pieces illustrated, although the sideboard (pls. 1,3,6 & 7) is similar in concept to a John Taylor design in his 1825 publication *The Upholsterer's and Cabinet Maker's Pocket Assistant*.<sup>1</sup>

Both pieces are robust and prac-



Pl. 3 Cedar twin pedestal sideboard, detail of acanthus carving c. 1840, private collection. Photograph courtesy Queensland Art Gallery.



Pl. 4 *Acanthus* plants, *Acanthus mollis*, growing beside an ancient marble Corinthian capital decorated with acanthus leaves in Athens. Photograph Mrs Robyn Bowman.

tical in the manner of the period. The carving is crisp and complete in fine detail. Australian red cedar, being a weak timber with open pore structure, is not often found carved in this manner.

The card table (pls. 2 & 5), which can be moved on concealed castor wheels bearing on annular plates, opens out to reveal a square-shaped baize playing surface edged with a ribbon cedar crossbanded bor-



Pl. 5 Cedar card table, detail of base c. 1840, private collection. Photograph courtesy Queensland Art Gallery.

der. A storage well is revealed when the top is rotated.

The sideboard (pl. 1) sits on screw-in cedar bun feet (easy to replace), and contains a fitted cellarette for bottles in one pedestal and shelves in the other. It has four drawers across the front, with the centre two opened by reaching up underneath. The top is held in place on the pedestals with round dowels.

The Neoclassical detail in both of these pieces of furniture is interesting and worthy of closer examination. In the centre of the backboard of the sideboard (pl. 3) is a spray of what is commonly known as 'acanthus leaves'. *Acanthus mollis* is a naturally-occurring plant in Greece,<sup>2</sup> and its origin in furniture design derives from its leaf pattern being used as an architectural detail, especially on the capitals of Corinthian columns (pl. 4).

The leaves we see carved on Regency furniture originated from *Acanthus mollis*, but have become a 'fancy' leaf over time, created with some woodcarver's licence and embodying aspects from various leaves. For example, looking at the leaf detail, acanthus leaves do not have ribs radiating from the base, and they are proportionally much wider. The leaf carving on the card table (pl. 5) is on the lower column, where the column forms a flower bud section. This leaf design is close to the original Greek interpretation (pl. 4).

The use of a flower bud originated in the ancient Egyptian portrayal of lotus buds in their art and architecture, and in common Neoclassical practice the 'petals' are now portrayed as acanthus leaves. The application of different plant forms into one imaginary type indicates the complexities in the development of styles over a long period of time. Integral to the understanding of this development must be an acceptance that woodcarvers adopted individual



Pl. 6 Cedar twin pedestal sideboard, detail of carving of antefix c. 1840, private collection. Photograph courtesy Queensland Art Gallery.

styles, and their skill at producing aesthetically pleasing work relied to some extent on their creative ability.

Many early Regency sideboards had an upward, triangular-shaped projection at each end of the backboard known in Classical terminology as an 'antefix'. The subject sideboard is somewhat unique in its adaption of the ubiquitous scroll shape, on a high pitch, for this purpose (pl. 6). Of note on this particular antefix is the shape of a stylised lotus flower in the axil of the scroll. The lotus flower has many derivations in Neoclassical design and this type which represents a bell in cross section is sometimes known as a bell flower.

Gadrooning, a term for an edge formed from a sequence of angled lobes, is common to much early Australian furniture and can be seen on the edge on the bottom of the sideboard door panels (pl. 7). Its origin is not referred to in available texts, but it was widely used by silversmiths on the edges of silverwork and may be derived from the simple continuous patterns of egg-and-dart found in Classical friezes.

As on this example, the lobes normally angle out from the middle of the panel they are embellishing. Author Lewis Hinckley in his book *Hepplewhite Sheraton and Regency Furniture* has identified European examples in which the lobes angle the opposite way as being of Dublin origin. This can sometimes be seen in Australian furniture and an example is on a secretaire chest in the collection of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery.<sup>3</sup> This occurrence is not unexpected given that many early Australian cabinetmakers are known from records to have come from Ireland.

The tapered column on the card table (pls 2 & 5) reflects the Graeco-Roman preoccupation with the design of tapered columns for their buildings. A column made to a tapered shape is just as strong as a straight column with the same diameter at the base. The use of tapered columns as a style element in furniture was well practised during the nineteenth century, and they are often found attached for decorative purposes onto sideboard or chiffonier bases in this period.

The tapered, pylon-shaped door panels on the sideboard pedestals are

an element derived from ancient Egypt. The deep canopy (pl. 7) surmounting each pylon door panel on the sideboard is not known to be a true Classical feature. The origin of canopies may lie in the earlier work of English furniture designer Thomas Chippendale who advocated 'Chinese Taste' designs which included canopies in a pagoda shape. Of note is that the canopies on this sideboard have been carved in significantly finer detail than any other known Australian example.

The manner in which a woodcarver executes detail design such as acanthus leaves and the bellflower is unique to that carver, like a signature, and may enable researchers to identify other works by him in the absence of labels or stamps on the furniture. Another piece which bears the sideboard carver's 'signature' is a large Grecian sofa in the Old Government House collection at Parramatta. In fact, when many of the surviving pre-1850 pieces of Australian furniture incorporating good carving are carefully compared, there appear to be three groups of furniture with unmistakable commonalities in wood carving technique. This leads one to conclude that there were probably only three woodcarvers who did the bulk of the work in the Sydney area at that time.

There is insufficient evidence at this stage to attribute names conclusively to the three leading Sydney woodcarvers. Fahy, Simpson and Simpson<sup>4</sup> have described one piece, a chiffonier, in their 1985 book as being impressed 'Carver J. Fletcher'. John Fletcher is listed as a carver in Sydney between 1844 and 1851. A comparison with other pieces of furniture shows that if John Fletcher was indeed the carver of the nominated piece then he appears to have operated as a journeyman and worked for cabinetmaker Joseph Sly at one stage. While there is no other signed early

carving known to the author, there is believed to have been past occurrences of pieces signed with the initials 'T.S.' using a woodcarver's chisel.

Regrettably, some of the Australian pieces incorporating carving which have appeared on the market over the last decade should be treated with suspicion as to their authenticity. Neoclassical carving on the backboards of chiffoniers for example should always be examined carefully. While the carving may be competent, it may not be the same age or may not match the characteristics of the rest of the piece. Faking does occur in the Australian antique indus-

try, and one cannot rely on vendors not misrepresenting such work.

Original pieces of furniture made from choice red cedar and embellished with Neoclassical features are arguably the most aesthetic of Australia's furniture styles. They are a tribute to the small group of early Australians who participated in their creation. They are also a tribute to the artisans of Greece and Rome two thousand years ago.

*The author would appreciate any information and detailed photographs readers may be able to pass on to assist in recording and identifying the work of individual Australian wood carvers of*

*the period 1800-1860. You can contact Bob Fredman on 0418 708 745.*

## Bibliography

- C. Boyle, *Dictionary of Furniture*, Roundtable Press, New York, USA, 1985
- R. Edwards & L. G. G. Ramsey, *The Connoisseur's Complete Period Guides*, Bonanza Books, New York 1968
- K. Fahy & A. Simpson, *Australian Furniture*, Casuarina Press, Sydney, 1997
- K. Fahy, C. Simpson & A. Simpson, *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*, David Ell Press, Sydney, 1985
- R. Fredman, 'Scrollwork in Australian Furniture', *The Australian Antique Collector* 52nd Edition, November 1996 - April 1997 pp. 160-163
- E. Joy, *Pictorial Dictionary of British 19th Century Furniture Design*, Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1977
- F. Lewis Hinckley, *Hepplewhite Sheraton and Regency Furniture*, Taurus Antiques Press, London 1990
- A. Riegl, *Problems of Style* Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1992
- T.A. Strange, *English Furniture Decoration Woodwork and Applied Arts*, Bracken Books, London, 1995
- E. Wilson, *8000 Years of Ornament*, British Museum Press, London, 1994

- 1 E. Joy, *Pictorial Dictionary* p. 437
- 2 This ancient marble Corinthian capital decorated with acanthus leaves in the Agora at Athens is 1.075m high, and comes from a freestanding column from the Odeion of Agrippa, built during the reign of the Emperor Augustus. The Temple of Hephaistos (449-444 BC) is in the background.
- 3 Illustrated in Graeme Dodd Antiques advertisement, *Carter's Price Guide*, 1997, p. 5.
- 4 Fahy, Simpson & Simpson, *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*, pl. 168, and see p. 61.



Pl. 7 Cedar twin pedestal sideboard, detail of carving of pylon on door c. 1840, private collection. Photograph courtesy Queensland Art Gallery.



# Australiana Exhibition Calendar

We aim here to list current exhibitions of interest to our readers. Please send information on forthcoming exhibitions to the Editors.

## ACT

### Canberra

#### National Gallery of Australia

Parkes Place, Parkes ACT 2600

Tel (02) 6240 6502

[www.nga.gov.au](http://www.nga.gov.au)

10am – 5pm daily

Until 18 April 1999: *Emily Kame Kngwarreye – Alhalkere – Paintings from Utopia*, paintings by Kngwarreye reminding us of her unique vision showing the impact of the seasons and the elements on her land, its desert plants, its animals and its spirits - an extraordinary artistic output from an octogenarian who died in 1996.

27 February to 14 June 1999: *Inside and outside - John Brack*, paintings, drawings and prints by Brack (who died aged 78 on 11 February) mainly from the NGA collection, looking at his work in the domestic sphere, streets, racecourses and dance halls.

#### National Library of Australia

Parkes Place, Parkes ACT 2600

Tel (02) 6262 1279 fax (02) 6273 5483

[www.nla.gov.au](http://www.nla.gov.au)

9am -9pm Mon-Thurs, 9am-5pm Fri-Sun

Opening March 1999: *Birds*.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### Sydney

#### Djumu Gallery

Customs House, Alfred Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Tel (02) 9320 6429

9.30am – 5pm daily

Until 28 March, *Face to Face*, *Images from the Sea*, *Food for Thought* and *Blak Beauty*, four exhibitions on Aboriginal art and ways of life from the collections of the Australian Museum, devised by John Kirkman.

#### Elizabeth Bay House

7 Onslow Ave

Elizabeth Bay NSW 2011

Tel (02) 9356 3022

[www.hht.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hht.nsw.gov.au)

10am-4.30pm Tues-Sun

\$6 adult, \$3 concession, \$15 family

Until 26 April, *A Victorian Childhood from Rouse Hill House*, illustrating the childhood at Rouse Hill House of Nina Rouse (1875-1968), her five sons, and her sister Kathleen Rouse (1878-1932).

#### Hyde Park Barracks

Queen's Square

Sydney NSW 2000

Tel (02) 9223 8922

[www.hht.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hht.nsw.gov.au)

10am - 5pm daily

\$6 adult, \$3 concession, \$15 family

Until 4 April, *Unexpected Views: Images of Early Sydney from the Beat Knoblauch Collection*.

17 April-26 September, *Demolished! Houses of Sydney*. Evocative black and white photographs of grand houses, cottages, streets and suburbs now demolished, including Woollahra House, the Vineyard at Rydalmere tragically destroyed for a Rheem factory carpark, and The Rangers at Mosman. Curator: Joy Hughes

#### Museum of Sydney

Phillip & Bridge Streets

Sydney NSW 2000

Tel (02) 9251 5988

[www.mos.nsw.gov.au](http://www.mos.nsw.gov.au)

10 am-5 pm daily

\$6 adult, \$3 concession, \$15 family

Till 30 May 1999: *Terre Napoléon: Australia through French eyes - the explorations of Captain Baudin 1800-1804*, 46 watercolours and sketches from the Lesueur Collection at Le Havre. Curator: Sue Hunt. Sponsor: Banque National de Paris.

#### S H Ervin Museum

Observatory Hill, Sydney NSW 2000

Tel (02) 9258 0123

[www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au](http://www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au)

11 am - 5 pm Tues-Fri, 12am - 5 pm Sat-Sun

\$5 adult, \$3 concession

Till 14 March: *Artists & Cartoonists in Black & White (The Most Public Art)*. Showcasing drawings and cartoons, in black and white and by black and white artists, many from *The Bulletin* archive, curated by Joan Kerr, Craig Judd and Jo Holder. Catalogue available.

24 April to 14 June: *Politically Incorrect: A Retrospective of Clarice Beckett*. Forgotten for three decades after her death, Victorian tonal impressionist landscape painter Clarice Beckett (1887-1935) is now being resurrected as "the most original painter in Australia". Curated by Rosalind Hollinrake.

#### State Library of NSW

Macquarie St, Sydney NSW 2000

Tel (02) 9273 1414

[www.slnsw.gov.au](http://www.slnsw.gov.au)

9 am - 5 pm Mon-Fri, 11am - 5 pm Sat-Sun

*The Picture Gallery: Australian Paintings pre 1880*, with over 50 major portraits and landscape paintings hung as a 19th century picture gallery.

Till 6 June 1999: *Australians in Black & White (The Most Public Art)*.



A companion exhibition to the S H Ervin exhibition, showcasing prints, cartoons, caricature and commercial illustration on recurring themes in Australian society such as sport, sex, work and women, curated by Joan Kerr, Craig Judd and Jo Holder. Sponsored by OzEmail.

Till June 1999: *Bass's Back*, selected letters of George Bass, his wife Elizabeth, mother and the Waterhouse family, between 1798 and 1803, when he disappeared in command of a speculative voyage on the *Venus*. Thirty letters by Bass and 21 written to him were bought by the Library at Christie's in April 1998 for nearly a million dollars.

#### **Willoughby Historical Society**

58 Johnson St, Chatswood

Tel (02) 9958 4337

1st Sun 1.30 - 4 pm, 2nd & 4th Thurs  
10am - 4 pm

Until August 1999: *Mashman Pottery*.

#### **REGIONAL NSW**

##### **Bathurst Regional Art Gallery**

70 Keppel St, Bathurst NSW 2795

Tel (02) 6331 6066

Till 21 March, *Seeing Cézanne*. An exhibition from the Art Gallery of NSW tracing the influence of Cézanne on Australian painters such as Grace Cossington Smith, Margaret Preston and Fred Williams.

#### **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

##### **Adelaide**

##### **Art Gallery of South Australia**

North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000

Tel (08) 8207 7000 fax 8207 7070

[www.artgallery.sa.gov.au](http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au)

10am-5pm daily

Till 5 April: *Everyday Art: Australian Folk Art* (touring exhibition from the NGA), then Perth (AGWA 17 Apr-30 May), Darwin (MAGNT 18 Jun - 1 Aug) and Hobart (TMAG

19 Aug- 3 Oct). 80 page, full colour catalogue. Curated by the late Jim Logan.

6 August - 19 September: *Politically Incorrect: A Retrospective of Clarice Beckett*. Forgotten for three decades after her death, Victorian tonal impressionist landscape painter Clarice Beckett (1887-1935) is now being resurrected as "the most original painter in Australia". Curated by Rosalind Hollinrake.

20 August - 7 October: *Evening Shadows*, bringing together 50 of the 100 or so known copies of H. J. Johnstone's painting *Evening Shadows, backwater of the Murray, South Australia*, the first acquisition by the Gallery, and a favourite with the public ever since.

#### **TASMANIA**

##### **Hobart**

##### **Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery**

40 Macquarie St, Hobart Tas 7000

10am-5pm daily

Until 28 March: *Howard Florey*, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Florey's Nobel prize for the production of penicillin.

Until 11 April: *Early Views of Tasmania 1820-1860*, featuring 60 watercolour views of Hobart, Port Arthur, Macquarie Harbour and Salt Water River plus portraits by painters Thomas Bock, J S Prout, Duterreau, Costantini, Wainewright, Glover etc.

Until 19 April: *Portrait of a Brewery*, contemporary photographs of work and memorabilia from James Boag's Brewery.

Until 23 May: *A Celebration of Ceramics*, ceramics from the TMAG collection.

#### **VICTORIA**

##### **Melbourne**

Ian Potter Museum of Art

University of Melbourne,

Swanston St, Parkville Vic 3052

Tel (03) 9344 5148

Until 28 March: *Politically Incorrect: A Retrospective of Clarice Beckett*.

#### **Immigration Museum**

Old Customs House,

400 Flinders St, Melbourne Vic 3000

Tel (03) 9927 2700

Permanent exhibition: *The Journey Begins*

Opened in November last year, the Immigration Museum presents the immigration experience from the 19th century to recent times.

#### **Geelong**

##### **National Wool Museum**

26 Moorabool St, Geelong Vic 3220

Tel (03) 5227 0701 fax (03) 5222 1118

[www.mov.vic.gov.au/nwm](http://www.mov.vic.gov.au/nwm)

10am-5pm daily

Until 14 March, *Circus: 150 Years in Australia*.

## **Australiana Writing Awards**

**Sponsored by  
Peter R Walker Pty Ltd  
Dealers in Fine Art**

Peter R Walker Pty Ltd, Dealers in Fine Art, are sponsoring a cash award of \$250 for the best article submitted to *Australiana* for each of the next two years.

Articles appearing in *Australiana* Volume 21, 1999 are eligible to receive the first award, to be presented at the Australia Day Dinner in 2000. Members and non-members, including students, are encouraged to submit entries. The Society Committee is considering the best method of selecting the winner.

---

# Australiana News

---

## National Treasure on CD-ROM

The National Library of Australia and the Australian National Maritime Museum have released the first ever CD-ROM publication of Cook's magnificent *Endeavour* journal, one of the nation's most precious treasures.

Bought at a London auction in 1923 for £5,000, the fragile 231 year old manuscript, held at the National Library in Canberra, is rarely displayed. Now it is available to the world as the CD-ROM *Endeavour: Captain Cook's Journal 1768-71*.

Join James Cook and his crew on their extraordinary voyage of discovery around the world on board *Endeavour*. Go on board and explore the *Endeavour* replica with amazing 3-D virtual reality tours, video clips, sound segments, hundreds of still images, and an encyclopaedic 100,000 word text revealing every facet of the famous voyage that put Australia's east coast on the map.

At the heart of this ground-breaking CD-ROM is a digital facsimile of the full text of Cook's *Endeavour* journal, accompanied by J C Beaglehole's classic 1955 annotated transcript. The journal is in Cook's

own hand, with his corrections, additions and amendments. For the first time, Cook's journal and a transcript have been published together.

*Endeavour: Captain Cook's Journal 1768-71* offers direct access to one of the most vital documents in our history, and is a rollicking good read that students, researchers, maritime and history enthusiasts, and armchair voyagers can enjoy. *Endeavour: Captain Cook's Journal 1768-71* is Windows95 and Macintosh compatible and costs \$89.95.

## New Publication: *Period Style*

Universal Magazines, the publisher of *Australian Country Collections* under the editorship of Rick Rutherford, have recently added a new title to their repertoire, *Period Style: Period Decorating for Australian Homes*. Including both public and private interiors, it will have great appeal to all Australiana collectors as well as general readers.

It clearly defines and well illustrates interior and furnishing styles throughout Australia's history from Early Colonial (pre 1840) to Post War Modern (after 1945). Much of the furnishings shown in this issue are of

Australian origin, a point that will be of particular interest to local collectors. A full products and resources directory appears at the back of the magazine and is an added bonus to its readers.

Hopefully to be published twice yearly, *Period Style* is highly recommended and is available from newsagents and selected bookstores priced at \$6.95.

## 1999 Heritage Festival program available

Every April since 1981, the National Trust NSW has presented Heritage Week, now grown to a nine-day Festival with the theme 'Toward 2000 - the Century in Review'. The Festival, sponsored by energyAustralia, runs from 17 to 25 April. A 32-page program of the events, held by the usual suspects across NSW, is available from the National Trust Centre.

## Caroline Simpson OAM

Society Member and driving force behind the Clyde Bank museum in The Rocks, Caroline Simpson, was awarded an OAM in the Australia Day honours. The award was recognition of Mrs Simpson's efforts in preserving examples of early Australian architecture such as Clyde Bank (c. 1824) and the Joyce Farmhouse at Baulkham Hills, and her scholarship which allows Australian architects to study in Britain.

Clyde Bank, at 43 Lower Fort Street, the Rocks, featuring displays of early Colonial art and decorative arts from Australia and contemporary colonies such as India and the West Indies, is open Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10 am to 6 pm, entry \$8. Tel 02 9241 4776.

## John Brack 1920-1999

Melbourne artist John Brack has died, aged 78, just after his painting of a nude, aubergine-coloured girl in a bathroom set a record for work by a living Australian artist.

Christie's sold the typically flat, strongly coloured, austere painting for \$497,500 last November, where it was bought by the Na-

tional Gallery of Australia. This was 45 years after his first painting to enter a public gallery was bought by the National Gallery of Victoria, where Brack worked briefly in the print Room after the war. Later, he returned to the NGV as head of the Art School. Brack is survived by his wife, the painter Helen Maudsley.

## Mashman Pottery Exhibition at Chatswood

The Willoughby District Historical Society in Sydney has mounted an exhibition of local Mashman Pottery at its headquarters Boronia House, the Willoughby Museum at 58 Johnson Street, Chatswood NSW.

The house was built c. 1912-13 by Mr Richardson in the Federation style for rental purposes. Mrs Sonya Kirkham lived here from 1978 till 1988, when she bequeathed the house to the Society. Its four display rooms show the work and lifestyle of the past.

A new exhibition focusses on the pottery of the Mashman Brothers and other Australian potters. Jean Miller has prepared a new book on the subject, *Pottery: A Willoughby Pioneer Industry: The Mashman Story*. This excellent chronicle features Mashman

family history and illustrations from their early catalogues, accompanied by an extensive bibliography. Illustrations include pieces from the Mashman family collection. The soft cover book of 53 pages has 20 illustrations and is available from the Willoughby Historical Society for \$25 plus \$3.50 postage (enquiries (02) 9958 4337).

## Australia '99 World Stamp Expo in Melbourne

Melbourne is hosting a World Philatelic Expo at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre from 19 to 24 March, sponsored by Australia Post. The theme will be maritime heritage, with booths built and decorated in a maritime theme.

A highlight will be an exhibit from the US National Postal Museum in Washington about the heroic mail

clerks Oscar Scott Woody and John Starr March, who tried to the end to save the mail on RMS (Royal Mail Ship) *Titanic*. Woody's body was recovered several days after the disaster, with his mail bag keys and other items still in his pockets.

## In Coming Issues ...

Paul Hundley

*A Pair of Chinese Export Punch Bowls*

Patricia Miles

*The Steamship Owners Cricket Trophy*

Kevin Fahy

*Australia's first cabinetmaker of note, Laurence Butler*

John Wade

*A Database for your Collection*

## Our Authors

### Caressa Crouch

Caressa Crouch is a Sydney housewife and mother with a strong interest in all forms of Australiana. She has been an energetic and efficient committee member of the Australiana Society for several years, and often writes reports on the meetings for the benefit of members who live out of Sydney. She does not collect silver.

### Ros Maguire

Ros Maguire edited the *Australian Antique Collector* for seven years and is working as a researcher on the International Exhibitions project at the University of NSW, coordinated by Associate Professor Peter Proudfoot. She lives in a Victorian stone house that belonged to the sister of the artist W. C. Piquenit, who built his house next door.

### Bob Fredman

Bob Fredman is a Queensland-based collector and researcher of early Australian furniture. His main interest is in the origin of styles and their adaption to Australian cabinet-making. He is a civil engineer by profession and runs a small cattle property. Bob is assisted in his research by some colleagues with allied interests and by staff at the Queensland Art Gallery and various libraries.

## Contributions

The Editors welcome contributions to the magazine *Australiana* at any time. Contributions should preferably be submitted both in typed hard copy and in Microsoft Word on floppy disc or by email to [johnwade@anmm.gov.au](mailto:johnwade@anmm.gov.au). Use the current issue as a style guide for presentation of text, plates, notes and references. Photographs will reproduce best from black and white prints. Please include a short biography.

The Editors will wherever possible send you the edited text of your article for checking prior to publication. Be sure to include your address and telephone number and keep a copy of your text in case it goes missing.

---

# Letters

---

The Editors, *Australiana*

Dear Sirs

I did enjoy Dr Annette Gero's article on Quilts in the November *Australiana*. I saw and loved the exhibition at Elizabeth Bay House in Sydney.

Some points of interest: you ask how Sarah Wall could afford chintzes and dimities. As I understand, material was never purchased in order to make a quilt in early times. Off-cuts were used or the best remaining fabric from outworn garments. Per-

haps Sarah Wall could have worked for a seamstress. Perhaps she knew an upholsterer. It was the custom for ladies to pass on clothes to their maids - perhaps the servants swapped the fine scraps of such dresses among themselves. However she came by the materials, I do not imagine she 'afforded' or bought any of them.

Also, I have always understood that the Log Cabin design was American in origin. It could be that it was introduced into Australia by the Californian goldminers who rushed to Australia in the 1850s, hence why it

is a later, rather than an earlier design. The early designs seem to be mainstream English in inspiration.

Clever Annette for such pioneering work. I am sure there are more early quilts to be found.

Work also needs to be done on favoured materials. I understand that the early settlers had a preference for densely patterned, dark prints which were more practical in an age when help in the laundry was almost impossible to get.

Diana Morgan

---

## Obituary: Dr Robert J.L. Martin

---

*Professor Ken Cavill writes this tribute to his chemistry colleague, Society member, silversmith, and long term friend with similar professional interests, Bob Martin.*

Bob Martin died on 21 November 1998, a few weeks before his 80th birthday. He was one of the few contemporary craftsmen who have been active members of the *Australiana* Society.

Bob was an outstanding student at school and university. He was awarded the M.Sc. degree from the University of Melbourne in 1941. His career as a scientist and teacher spanned the period 1941 to 1979. During the Second World War he was engaged in chemical investigations with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Melbourne. He undertook advanced research studies at the University of London from 1946 to 1948 and was awarded his Ph.D. degree. On returning to Australia he resumed his research career at the CSIRO

Chemical Laboratories.

Bob and Mary Martin came to Sydney in 1957. Bob's career through the 1960s and 1970s at the University of New South Wales involved him in teaching and fundamental chemical studies. His practical skills were well in evidence and his meticulous publications record his achievements. He retired as Associate Professor in the School of Chemistry in 1979.

Bob had become interested in antique and modern silver over the years, and from 1980 was to enjoy his second career of 18 years as a practising silversmith.

First he learnt the craft of silver-smithing - the traditional methods - from Val Aked. Bob notes she "was so patient and tolerant while many of the established rules were broken". Bob was to develop the known process of deep drawing and re-drawing of silver in the making of hollow ware and to explore methods for the elimination of firestain in the annealing of silver. Use of these techniques can

greatly reduce the time required to make and finish hollow articles. He set-up his own workshop, designing and making much of the equipment he was to use in the production of silver hollow ware: bowls, mugs and beakers, jugs, coasters, boxes. Bob enjoyed the making of individual pieces to meet special requests.

Bob Martin contributed several articles<sup>1</sup> to the Society's Journal, *Australiana*. In 1996, he published a book, *Working with Silver - the Story of a Practical Chemist's Adventures*. This significant work is fully illustrated.

Bob Martin will be remembered as a fine scholar and a creative craftsman, as skilled with his mind as with his hands. He is survived by his wife, Mary, their children David, Sally and their families.

---

1 'An Australian Silversmith's Craft - Aspects of Construction', vol 15 no 3, August 1993, pp 73-78; 'Miniature Tea and Coffee Sets', vol 17 no 3, August 1995, pp 78-81.



INDUSTRIES PTY LTD  
4 HILL STREET  
DARLINGHURST 2010

Tel (02) 9361 9999

Fax: (02) 9332 1294

Australia's leading  
manufacturer of  
Electrical Accessories

*Available throughout Australia  
at all major hardware  
and lighting stores*



33 FLOOD STREET, LEICHHARDT 2040

Phone (02) **9560 6022**

Fax (02) 9569 7246

*Distributors of Australian  
ceramic wall and floor  
tiles, adhesives and  
accessories to merchants  
throughout Sydney and  
New South Wales.*

**WORLD-WIDE IMPORTERS OF CERAMIC TILES**  
from MAJOR overseas manufacturers

## PETER R. WALKER

PTY LTD

ACN 076 031 064

*Dealers in Fine Art*

- Early Australian Artwork and Items of Historical Interest
- Pre 1840 British and European Decorative Paintings



### The 1919 Wimbeldon Doubles Trophy

This Irish Sterling Trophy was won by Pat O'Hara Wood and Ron Thomas, two of the finest stylists in Australian tennis.

Our latest painting catalogue is now available.  
Please contact us for a free copy.

*By appointment*

PO Box 800 Woollahra New South Wales 1350 Australia

Mobile 0418 552 548 Fax (02) 9211 1723



HOUSE  
OFFICE  
FAX  
MOBILE

TELEPHONE  
02 4868 2726  
02 4869 1190  
02 4868 3212  
0419 985 965



WHITLEY  
OLDBURY ROAD  
MOSS VALE 2577  
NEW SOUTH WALES  
AUSTRALIA

## J. B. HAWKINS ANTIQUES



A fine sand cast Gorget. Macquarie and Antill were at Stonequarry Creek in 1820; this is possibly the first gorget awarded by Macquarie as a 'King Plate'. The military insignia of spears, nullah nullah and a boomerang belonged to an aboriginal who had met Barrallier in 1802, as a full grown man. The casting of these gorgets would have taken place in the Government brass foundry established by Macquarie within the Sydney Lumber Yard. The 1828 Census lists the following as working in this Government brass foundry: Thomas Bourke, John Cooke, William Smith and Thomas Wood.