

AUSTRALIANA

NOVEMBER 2000

VOL. 22 NO. 4



In this Issue

- Manning Valley Furniture of the 19th Century
- Sydney's 150th Anniversary Celebrations: The Big Game Angling Contest of 1938
- Art and Design in Western Australia – Part 4
- Exhibition – *State of the Waratah*



SIMPSON'S ANTIQUES

TEL (02) 9363 3424 – FAX (02) 9518 0577

FINE AUSTRALIAN FURNITURE



An Australian plaster plaque incised on reverse, "Tasmania reproduced from the original panel of M. Lucien Henry by his friend and student J. R. Tranthim-Fryer 1892".

Sold prior to publication.

40 QUEEN STREET, WOOLLAHRA NSW 2025

Approved Valuer under the Cultural Gifts Program

www.casuarinapress.com.au

E-mail: simpson@casuarinapress.com.au

AUSTRALIANA

NOVEMBER 2000

Published by The Australiana Society Inc.

ABN 13 402 033 474

Editors: Kevin Fahy and John Wade

Vol. 22 No. 4

November 2000

ISSN 0814-107X

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

Subscription rates (2001) incl. GST:

Individual & Household	\$55
Institutions	\$60
Life	\$550

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Send membership subscriptions, requests for back issues and general correspondence to:

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

AUSTRALIANA CONTRIBUTIONS

Send articles and advertisements, preferably in both hard copy and on floppy disc or e-mail, to

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

Tel (02) 9298 3632

Fax (02) 9298 3688

email: jwade@anmm.gov.au

Committee 2000

President	John Wade
Vice-Presidents	Greg Johansson Megan Martin
Secretary	Dr Jim Bertouch
Treasurer	Caressa Crouch
Editors	Kevin Fahy John Wade
Members	Alan Landis Michael Lech Ian Stephenson Anne Watson

CONTENTS

108

President's Report 1999-2000

John Wade

109

Treasurer's Report 1999 - 2000

Caressa Crouch

SPONSORS

Art Exhibitions Australia
HPM Industries
J. B. Hawkins Antiques
Josef Lebovic Gallery
Price Tiles
Peter R Walker Fine Art
Simpson's Antiques
Sotheby's Australia
The World of Antiques and Art

100

Manning Valley Furniture of the 19th Century

Garry Smith



110

Sydney's 150th Anniversary Celebrations **The Big Game** Angling Contest of 1938

Kenneth Cavill

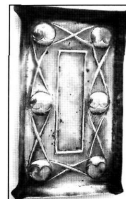


115

Art and Design in Western Australia

Part 4: Perth Tech Graduates

Dorothy Erickson



123

Exhibition **State of the Waratah** *Rosie Nice*

Produced by
GeoGraphics Group (02) 9568 2444
www.geographicsgroup.com

Print Post Approved PP235870/00011

© Copyright 2000, 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.

Cover *James Sowerby (1757-1822), Embothrium speciosissimum [waratah] 1793. Hand coloured engraving 23.5 x 16 cm, from James Edward Smith's A Specimen of the Botany of New Holland. Courtesy Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.*



Plate 1. Cedar chair, made locally c. 1865-70, from Lower Bow Hill, Dingo Creek, Wingham. This was a common style of chair, usually without arms, with a wooden or cane seat.

MANNING VALLEY FURNITURE OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Garry Smith

Local heritage consultant and researcher Garry Smith presents a view of regional furniture-making in the Manning Valley on the Mid-North Coast of NSW. He identifies some local makers and pieces, and discusses the timbers used.

Finding items to show a broad range of furniture for a 1999 exhibition of local furniture held at the Manning Valley Regional Art Gallery in Taree presented problems. Much of the better quality furniture has left the area, either handed down through the family or sold to dealers and collectors. So far, no local signed 19th century furniture has been seen. Whether remaining furniture was of local manufacture is assessed on the basis of construction methods, style and known history, if any.

Australia's 19th century colonies were mobile societies with a common dependency on Britain for cultural leadership, and a strong interflow of people and ideas between them. Similarity rather than difference is the overwhelming feature of furniture design. Despite that, there were differences between the colonies and regional differences within each colony.

This research barely scratches the surface, while

the items illustrated are by no means exhaustive of the range and style of local furniture. It is a beginning for others to build upon.

Furniture making in the Manning Valley – a brief history

Permanent white settlement began in the Manning Valley, 240 km from Sydney as the crow flies, in 1829. Initial population growth was slow but small-scale farming expanded during the 1850s and by 1861 the population had reached about 3,000.¹ By 1870 it increased to about 5,000 and by 1896 was a little over 10,000. Most holdings were small and many were heavily mortgaged. Many people came in search of prosperity only to stay a while and then move on. The timber industry provided the region with

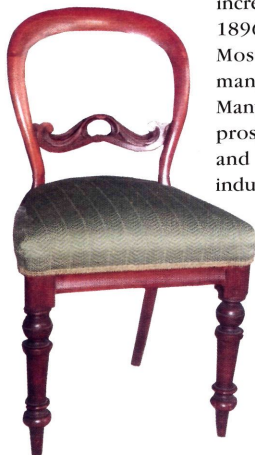


Plate 2. Cedar dining chair, made locally c. 1880, from Lower Bow Hill, Dingo Creek, Wingham, with sprung seat.

a continuing income, first from the cedar cutters and then from the hardwood industry, but hard work rather than wealth was the conspicuous result. The dairy industry began in the 1890s but did not come to fruition until the railway provided fast, reliable transport after 1913. It is against this background of limited prosperity that the area's material comforts in the 19th century have to be considered. The Manning Valley had no grand houses and consequently no grand furniture.

Before 1850, there is little doubt that furniture was not made here commercially. There would have been homemade and carpenter-made items but a limited population would not have supported commercial manufacture. No locally made furniture is known to survive from this period. That position would have changed when the rate of settlement increased after 1850 but there is nothing to show who, if anyone, worked in the area during those years. Local newspapers were published only from 1864 and the various Sydney trade directories and almanacs do not list any cabinetmakers. The absence of listings in trade directories is inconclusive, as many businesses were not listed. It is unclear how these directories were compiled and how complete they were.

Professional furniture making on a commercial basis was under way by the 1860s. John Saxon² was working at Dumaresq Island during 1862-3 but nothing else is known about him. A listing of a John Saxon at 10 Christie Street, Glebe in 1882 may indicate that he left the area.

Alfred R. Hansford of Tinonee was the area's best-known furniture maker of the time. Aged 26, he arrived in Australia on the ship *Stebonbeath* in 1858,³ married



Plate 3. Cedar lady's easy chair, c. 1870, from the Broomfield family, Lower Bow Hill, Dingo Creek, Wingham. Less refined than the best city furniture but of good workmanship.

Julia Frost at Newtown in 1863⁴ and came to the Manning Valley by 1865.⁵ He appears to have returned to Sydney about 1882⁶ where he died aged 84 in 1915.⁷ Though not listed in trade directories, he operated a successful furniture making business. His 1868 advertisement gives an insight into the standard of household furnishing in the area.⁸



Plate 4. Lower Bow Hill, near Wingham, with Robert Broomfield and family in front of their cluster of wooden slab and pit-sawn timber buildings. Photo Manning Valley Historical Society.

"A. R. HANSFORD
CABINET MAKER
TINONEE - Near Pool's Mill.

A. R. H. is the ONLY MAKER OF REALLY GOOD FURNITURE ON THE RIVER and one visit to his Showrooms will prove the fact.

Parties about to furnish are invited to inspect the STOCK ALWAYS ON HAND FOR SALE:- Good Strong Cedar Chairs well made and polished, 7s. each; Common Sofas, turned rails, polished, warranted not to get rickety, 12s. each; Dressing tables, 36in. by 18, turned legs, good wood, polished, 15s; Chests of Five Drawers, three long and two short, of good wood, polished in superior style £4.10s. Every description of household furniture equally cheap, as one trial will prove."

Even allowing for a degree of sales puff, it appears that Hansford operated a well stocked, established business, perhaps the only such business at the time. Hansford's 'good strong cedar chairs' would have been the standard kitchen and dining chairs of the time (*Plates 1 & 2*). His "common sofa" is the type now erroneously called a "miner's couch", the standard household sofa made in large numbers throughout Australia. "Good wood!" describing his dressing tables and chests refers to the use of selected, well-figured timber (*Plate 8*).

The most common dressing table was simply a four-legged table with or without a drawer(s) fitted in the apron, today often referred to as side tables, hall tables or writing tables. Fully fitted dressing tables were made but were generally beyond the reach of the Manning Valley farmer. Absent from the list is any mention of wardrobes, as a well-fitted wardrobe was similarly beyond local means at that time. Chests of drawers and lidded chests provided clothes storage for the average householder.

Hansford trained at least one apprentice, Francis John Dennes, born at Connolly's Creek, Manning River 7 April 1841, and apprenticed to Hansford in 1866. On completing his apprenticeship he left to work with Samuel Lee of Wingham. Lee and Dennes built a residence for William Andrews at *Somerset*, Mount George about 1870⁹ and Dennes is believed to have made the bed (*Plate 7*) for Andrews about that time.¹⁰ Dennes had a long career as a builder, sawmiller, cabinetmaker and undertaker. Undertaking was a profession frequently carried out in conjunction with cabinetmaking, with numerous examples of this dual occupation in the city and country towns. Dennes was an alderman on Wingham's first council following



Plate 5. Cedar food safe, made locally c. 1865-70, from Lower Bow Hill, Dingo Creek, Wingham. A simple piece with classic lines, gauze doors and sides.

incorporation as a municipality in 1889, served on the council for twenty years,¹¹ and died at Wingham aged 100 on 14 July 1941.¹²

Phillip Carle was working at Cundletown between 1881 and 1896.¹³ He worked with Stewart Carle as a builder and also worked as an undertaker.¹⁴ Descendants still hold examples of his work.

Frederick Rye illustrates the shortcomings in trade directories as a research source. Not listed in any directory noted, Rye advertised widely during the 1880s. In 1882 he described himself as a builder, contractor, cabinetmaker and undertaker.¹⁵ In 1886 he advertised that he could execute all description of joinery and cabinet work.¹⁶ In 1888 he advertised that the furniture was made on the premises and invited customers to bring their own cedar to be made to their liking.¹⁷ North Coast landholders would occasionally retain one or more cedar trees for their own use.

Rye also worked as a builder. He advertised for a builder's apprentice in 1882,¹⁸ successfully tendered to build the grandstand at the Wingham Showground in 1888¹⁹ and was working on the Brown's Creek bridge in 1898.²⁰ At the Wingham Show of 1888, Rye won an award for cabinet work, listed in the miscellaneous

section with cordial, bricks, wine, tobacco leaf and horse shoes.²¹

John Rye (his relationship to Frederick Rye is unclear) advertised that he would execute all descriptions of joinery and cabinet work.²² In 1890 the newly constituted Wingham Municipal Council commissioned him to make a table for council use.²³ John Rye also worked as a builder and built the Manning River District Hospital in 1888-1889 (demolished 1955).

Joseph Richardson was born at *Wyoming*, Mount George in 1864. Trained as a carpenter-joiner, he worked as a furniture maker, carpenter, builder, valuer for the Bank of New South Wales, auctioneer and butcher. Mayor of Wingham three times,²⁴ he was listed working at Wingham in 1895-6,²⁵ and died there on 20 April 1939.²⁶

Little is known of the others. John Tonkin was listed at Cundletown in 1875-6 and William L. Tonkin at Taree in 1886-7.²⁷ However, the listing for William L. Tonkin appears to have been redundant as a William L. Tonkin died in the Manning on 19 August 1885, age 57.²⁸ Both J. Tonkin and W. L. Tonkin worked as builders during the 1870s and 1880s.²⁹ August Anderson was listed for Taree in 1891 but almost nothing is known of him. William George Everingham Smith was working at Cundletown in 1891-96.³⁰ He appears to have worked as a builder and to have been active in the local community but references to a William John Smith, builder, and to Smith Bros., builders, all of Cundletown, leave a confusion of detail for the historical researcher.

Competition and the local market

When population reached sufficient numbers to support local manufacture around 1860, a skilled local cabinetmaker could attract that limited market. However, outside suppliers brought several forms of competition. Dealers and speculators brought furniture into the area to be sold at auction. This could have been English furniture in fashionable timbers such as mahogany, walnut and Brazilian rosewood, or could have been of Sydney manufacture.

The Manning Valley Historical Society has a rosewood piano believed purchased in 1850 for Eliza Jane Andrews of *Woodside* and a mahogany case long case clock with eight-day movement believed bought by William Andrews of *Somerset*, Mount George, also about 1850. Both are British. Walnut drawing room furniture from about 1860 to 1880 is the most commonly seen British furniture and a reasonable supply of this was entering the area to satisfy the fashionable end of the market.

Furniture was auctioned on a number of occasions on behalf of Carl Carle, the father of cabinetmaker Phillip Carle of Cundletown. It is not clear if Carle was a furniture dealer or maker. He offered basic items as well as more select items such as sofas, "ornamental" chests of drawers, work tables and a "very handsome" bookcase.³¹

American and European chair manufacturers competed at the lower end of the range. In 1868, A. R. Hansford's "good, strong polished cedar chairs" were 7 shillings each. About the same time, the Cundletown Post Office Store was offering American chairs at "4/7d each by the case".³² American chairs appear to have sold well in the area and a number survive. Austrian bentwood chairs also cut into the local furniture makers' market in increasing numbers after about 1875. Not all furniture sold in the area was new. Sydney dealers such as the Hyde Park Furniture Bazaar regularly advertised second-hand furniture of every description.³³ It is not clear how much came into the area.

Local furniture kept circulating in the area. Folklore today tells how householders would load up the wagon or cart with the household furniture, unbolting items such as beds and wooden sofas, and move on in search of greener pasture. Historical evidence shows that nothing could be further from the truth. Overland



Plate 6. Pine chiffonier food safe with shaped back, made locally c. 1875, from Lower Bow Hill, Dingo Creek, Wingham.



Plate 7. Cedar double bed, c. 1870, made by Francis Dennes for William Andrews at Somerset, Mount George.

transport was prohibitively expensive and only basic essentials could be carried. Newspapers from the 1860s and '70s frequently mention auction sales to clear all household effects because the owners were leaving the area.³⁴ Items listed indicate that very little was taken. Presumably, a reciprocal market at the destination would allow people to repurchase.

While local cabinetmakers initially enjoyed reasonable sales, it was not a prosperous market. The brief profiles of local furniture makers show that making a living meant working in a number of related fields. Builder, carpenter, joiner, undertaker, timber miller and valuer were some of the shared occupations. That situation worsened after about 1880 or 1890.

Great changes occurred to local economies throughout rural Australia from that time. To understand this it is necessary to look well beyond Australia. The second half of the 19th century brought great technological changes and huge increases in production of consumer goods. It was as dynamic as the period of technological change and the growth in consumerism that we are experiencing a century later. These changes affected the flow of goods into and out of every part of Australia, usually to the detriment of local artisans whatever their craft or trade. In Britain, Europe and

America, technological improvements and machine production brought down the price of furniture and associated components. Upholstery fabric prices fell to a fraction of those of early in the century. Significant reductions in maritime shipping times and costs, and a substantial increase in steamship tonnage reaching Australia, accompanied this increased production.³⁵

While these were key factors in the growing dominance of city firms, there were other factors. For the Manning Valley, there was a local factor - the economy of coastal shipping and competition between coastal shipping companies on the North Coast run. Coastal shipping was always more economical than rail for durable bulk goods. This was enhanced by price-cutting wars between shipping companies intermittently up till the late 1890s.

The result was that Sydney furnishing firms could import ready-made furniture and fabrics, as well as the machines to streamline their own furniture production, and then ship individual orders of furniture to country customers cheaper than local makers. In 1867 A.R. Hansford's price for a chest of five drawers was £4.10s. In 1897 A. Hall & Company's price was £2. 2s.³⁶ Quality of construction might not have been quite as sound but features such as more sophisticated fabrics, bevelled mirrors and machine-produced carving gave the country buyer what was felt to be a better product at a lower price. Sydney firms that survived the early 1890s Depression were hungry and keen to expand, and



Plate 8. Cedar chest of drawers, c. 1875, from the Gollan family at Tinonee, possibly made by A.R. Hansford, with high quality quarter-sawn cedar drawer fronts and quarter-sawn feather banding veneers to the small top drawers.

selling by catalogue was the means of tapping into country markets.

Two Sydney firms in particular vied for the rural markets. Annie and Thomas Hall arrived from Liverpool, England, founding A. Hall & Company of George Street, Sydney in 1889.³⁷ Their 1897 catalogue claimed that they furnished "more houses in one week than any other house furnishers do in one month".³⁸ Hall's claimed that Thomas had made furniture for the Prince and Princess of Wales and that they made much of their stock in their own London workshops (a doubtful claim, they probably purchased it from a London supplier). Hall's advertised regularly in Manning Valley newspapers³⁹ and their free catalogue could be obtained at the *Wingham Chronicle* office.⁴⁰

Anthony Hordern & Sons claimed that all their furniture came from their steam cabinet works at Redfern and purchasers were buying from an "AUSTRALIAN factory".⁴¹ Anthony Hordern also advertised in the Manning Valley,⁴² though not as frequently as A. Hall & Company. These seemingly conflicting approaches of London-made and association with British Royalty on the one hand, and Australian-made on the other were compatible in the years leading to Federation and were successful marketing approaches.

Some country firms responded by advertising that they could furnish houses more cheaply than "Sydney prices"⁴³ but these were retail firms also sharing in the increased production. Local cabinetmakers could not compete. Some carried on into the 20th century but catalogue selling and the trend to modern retailing that came with it effectively brought about the demise of the local cabinetmaker as a part of the country way of life.

The Timbers used

Red Cedar (*Toona ciliata*, formerly *Toona australis*)

Apart from some kitchen furniture, local furniture makers worked almost exclusively in red cedar. Cedar was first cut in the Manning in 1829 although regular shipments did not commence until gangs of cedar cutters arrived in late 1833. In 1834 about 230,800 feet of cedar was shipped to Sydney.⁴⁴ The best of the cedar from the high quality riverine rainforest appears to have been cut out by about 1850. However, cedar is a vigorous, fast growing tree and was not confined to the riverine brush. Occasional trees seen today and historical evidence show that it can establish in marginal conditions and that it occurred as a rainforest coloniser in eucalypt forest. This, combined with cedar cut from the less accessible mountain brush meant that it

was reasonably plentiful until about 1870 and was still available for local use until after the turn of the century. Commercial supplies of cedar were still advertised locally into the 1860s and 1870s.⁴⁵ In 1867, George Scott of Dumaresq Island offered a reward of a half crown each for 53 cedar logs lost from a raft.⁴⁶ Sydney timber merchants advertised in local newspapers for cedar to augment Sydney's dwindling supplies well into the 1890s.

Hoop Pine and other Native Softwoods: Hoop Pine (*Araucaria cunninghami*), Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*), South Queensland Kauri (*Agathis robusta*).

These related species produce a clear, smooth textured, pale coloured timber widely used throughout eastern Australia for kitchen furniture, joinery, flooring and general furniture production later in the century when supplies of cedar dwindled. Hoop pine grows north from the Hastings River and provided the major supply of colonial pine to reach the Manning Valley. All of the locally made pine kitchen dressers seen so far appear to have been made from this timber.

These softwoods were often known by their area of cutting so that there was Richmond River pine, Clarence River pine, Maryborough pine, Moreton Bay pine, Wide Bay pine and Dorrigo pine. When cut in NSW the timber was always hoop pine, the only species that occurs naturally, but supplies from south Queensland were a mix of species. For example, in 1865 Charles MacDonnell advertised 30,000 feet of Wide Bay pine to be sold at the Caledonian Hotel, Taree.⁴⁷ Wide Bay pine was usually south Queensland kauri. The quantity of 30,000 feet, to be sold in lots to suit the purchaser, seems to indicate regular use and acceptance of the timber in the area.

All these timbers are very similar. Kauri can be distinguished from hoop and bunya pine by its slightly more obvious growth rings. Bunya pine is indistinguishable from hoop pine and was probably included with it for the general market. They were used in the Manning area mainly for kitchen furniture or secondary uses such as drawer linings. In Queensland they were more widely used, with figured hoop pine and bunya pine sometimes sought for special cabinet work.⁴⁸

White Beech (*Gmelina leichhardtii*)

White beech is a durable, easily worked timber about as heavy or a little heavier than cedar. It was reasonably common in lowland rainforests north from the Shoalhaven River and was widely used in building



Plate 9. Cedar wasbstand, made locally c. 1885, from Lower Bow Hill, Dingo Creek, Wingham.

and joinery, shipbuilding and basic furniture. In the Manning Valley it was light enough to be worked by hand for weatherboards in the days before power saws and planers. Local hardwoods, some of them among the hardest commercial timbers in the world, could not be used for such work until power driven machinery was available.

White beech's plain, off-white to grey colour meant



Plate 10. Cedar wasbstand, made locally c. 1870, with high shaped back.

that it was never acceptable for more formal household furniture but it was frequently used for kitchen tables, benches and other utility furniture because of its durable, stable, easily worked qualities.

Other timbers

The timbers above are the only ones that appear to have been in significant local use during the 19th century. Despite plentiful supplies of colonial rosewood (*Dysoxylum fraserianum*), no furniture made from it has been seen. Several cedar chests of drawers have been seen with drawer knobs made from a contrasting, dark, dense timber as yet unidentified. The fashion of having drawer knobs of a contrasting dark timber originated in Britain during the early years of the 19th century when wooden knobs were becoming popular.

Various eucalypts were common for rudimentary furniture such as stools and benches. These were usually the same species preferred for general work such as fencing and building. However, it is also clear that much basic furniture, even of the most rudimentary kind, was made of the readily available cedar.

Notes

- 1 W. K. Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1834-1900*, Jacaranda, Gladesville, 1987, pp. 98-99, 118, 208.
- 2 K. Fahy, C. Simpson, & A. Simpson, *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*, David Ell, Sydney, 1985, p. 548. The authors say they used all available almanacs and directories in compiling their trade list.
- 3 *Index to Assisted Immigrants Arriving Sydney and Newcastle 1844-59* Volume 2 G-M, Reels 2135, 2458 Shipping Arrivals, Archives Authority of NSW.
- 4 Marriage index no. 1108, 1863.
- 5 Birth of Albion Hansford, Birth index no. 9978 Manning River 1865.
- 6 Report of attempt to destroy his premises by fire in *Manning River Times* 3 March 1880, p.3; son Albion married Jane Talbot index no. 2911, Newtown 1885. No reference to A.R. Hansford has been noted in the Manning area after this time.
- 7 Index no. 9045, 1915.
- 8 *Manning River News* 23 May 1868, p.3.
- 9 "Peeps into the Past" *Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Observer*, 22 July 1941, p. 3.
- 10 Family account given when the bed was given to the Manning Valley Historical Society.
- 11 "Peeps into the Past" *Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Observer*, *op. cit.*
- 12 *ibid.*
- 13 Fahy, Simpson & Simpson, *op. cit.* p. 534.

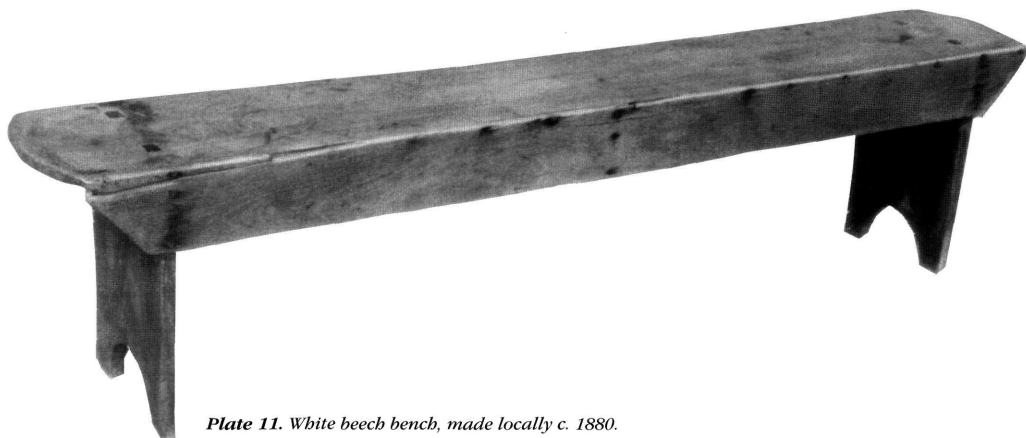


Plate 11. White beech bench, made locally c. 1880.

- 14 Harold Carle, interview 1986.
- 15 *Manning and Hastings Advocate*, 27 October 1882, p. 1 c. 2.
- 16 *Manning River Chronicle*, 13 September 1886, p. 1.
- 17 *Manning River Chronicle*, 9 January 1888, p. 4 c. 3.
- 18 *Manning and Hastings Advocate*, 8 September 1882, p. 5, c. 6.
- 19 *Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Advertiser*, 16 August 1888, p. 2 c. 3.
- 20 *Manning River Times*, 30 March 1898, p. 2, c. 4.
- 21 *Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Advertiser*, 23 April 1888, p. 2, c. 3.
- 22 *Manning River Chronicle*, 13 September 1886, p. 1.
- 23 Wingham Municipal Council Minutes 1890, now at Greater Taree Council, Taree.
- 24 Eric Richardson, interview, 1986.
- 25 Fahy, Simpson & Simpson, *op. cit.* p. 548.
- 26 Pioneer records, Manning Wallamba Family History Society, Taree.
- 27 Fahy, Simpson & Simpson, *op. cit.* p. 551.
- 28 Church of England Burial Records, 1861-1896, partial copies Manning Wallamba Family History Society, Taree.
- 29 *Manning and Hastings Advocate*, 23 December 1881, p. 2, c. 4; 28 July 1882, p. 5, c. 1; *Manning River Times*, 5 March 1898, p. 4, c. 5.
- 30 Fahy, Simpson & Simpson, *op. cit.* pp. 531, 549; *Cumtletown School Centenary Book*, p. 29; *Manning and Hastings Advocate* 3 Feb 1882; 14 July 1882; 21 July 1882; 29 July 1882; *Manning River Chronicle* 12 Mar 1888; 29 Mar 1888; 22 Jan 1898.
- 31 *Manning River Times*, 12 Aug 1871, p. 3. Other examples noted were 26 Jan 1867, p. 3; 12 Apr 1873, p. 3.
- 32 *Manning River News*, 28 May 1863, p. 3.
- 33 E.g. *Manning River News*, 29 June regularly to 31 Aug 1872.
- 34 *Manning River News*, Apr 1865 to Dec 1873, *passim*. Examples are Dean on behalf of Board, 11 Nov 1865, p. 2; Plummer on behalf of Disney, 20 Apr 1867, p. 1; Plummer on behalf of Calvin, 29 Jun 1867, p. 3.
- 35 G. Henning, "Steamships and the 1890 Maritime Strike" *Historical Studies*, vol. 15, no. 60, 1973, p. 566.
- 36 Their untitled 1897 catalogue reprinted as *The Grandest Display of Household Furniture in the Colony*, Wongoolah Press, Taree, 1994, p. 21.
- 37 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 Jan 1889, p. 17.
- 38 *Grandest Display of Household Furniture*, p. 40.
- 39 Typical advertisements are *Manning River Times*, 30 Mar 1898, p. 2, c. 1; *Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Observer*, 1 Nov 1899, p. 2.
- 40 *Wingham Chronicle* (c.1899, not recorded)
- 41 E. g. *Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Observer*, 8 Jan, p. 4.
- 42 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 Jan 1894, p. 1.
- 43 For example, J. Cochrane, Palace Emporium Wingham, *Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Observer*, 7 May 1898.
- 44 Birrell, pp. 67-8.
- 45 E. g., William Wallace, Cedar Party Creek, *Manning River News*, 2 Nov, 1867; Henry Cornish, 18 Nov 1865.
- 46 *Manning River News*, 20 Apr 1867
- 47 *Manning River News*, 23 Sep 1865.
- 48 Baron F. von Mueller, *Select Extra-Tropical Plants*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1881, p. 31 (Manning Valley Historical Society archives); Fahy, Simpson & Simpson, *op. cit.*, pp. 88, 93, 79-98 *passim*.

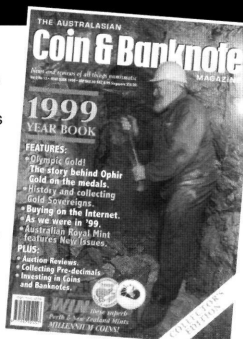
PRESIDENT'S REPORT 1999-2000

Members of the Australiana Society seek and share knowledge about Australiana through regular meetings, occasional excursions and our magazine *Australiana*.

Our meeting program provided a variety of informative talks on many collecting areas. After the AGM, Robert Hutchinson showed us some of his favourite things from his collection. Last November, Mary Reynolds gave a finely tailored talk on historic Mount Wilson. In March, Anne Watson revealed Art Moderne furniture and interiors, then gave us a special preview of the Powerhouse Museum's new exhibition, *Colonial to Contemporary: Australian Decorative Arts & Design*. Richard Neville showed us the "warts and all" colonial portraits of Joseph Backler in May, and Dr Annette Gero spoke enthusiastically about her quilt research in July. Members supported the program enthusiastically, and each lecture drew new guests.

**SUBSCRIBE TODAY
and get this great
68 page - full colour
YEAR BOOK FREE!**

- Australia's top writers bring you news breaking stories from Australia and across the world.
- Special offers from Australia's leading Coin & Banknote dealers.
- Free entry to our exciting competitions.
- Detailed history articles
- The 'must have' magazine for all history and numismatic collectors
- Detailed auction reports.
- 'must have' magazine for Numismatic collectors.



SUBSCRIPTION AUSTRALIA • 1 YEAR - ONLY \$62.70

Send cheque to: Australasian Coin & Banknote Magazine,
P.O. Box 185, Canowindra, NSW 2804 Australia.
Phone : 02 6344 1421 Fax : 02 6344 1635

Name.....
Address:.....
.....P/C:.....Country.....

An auction enlivened our Australia Day lunch at Darling Mills Restaurant. John Hawkins, President of the Antique Dealers Association and author of *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver*, gave us an insider's view on 30 years of dealing and assembling fine collections in Australia and overseas. Then in August, 65 members accepted Sotheby's invitation to a private viewing of their Australiana auction at Paddington Town Hall.

Australiana magazine improved with new layout and better paper. It grew to 32 pages, eight in colour. Our authors continue to break new ground in research and generously provide quality, well-researched articles on a broad range of subjects.

Membership has grown to the highest level since 1991, reversing a long-term slide. An incentive offer of the lavish catalogue *This Other Eden: Paintings from the Yale Center for British Art*, donated by Art Exhibitions Australia, helped achieve this result. Dealers and auctioneers John Hawkins, John Williams, Josef Lebovic Gallery, Lawson's, Peter R Walker Fine Art, Phillips International Auctioneers, Simpson's Antiques and Sotheby's all supported the Society.

We must keep expanding to continue to fulfil our aims and to produce our magazine at a high standard. Members have helped to bring back former members and introduce new ones. We need to appeal to a younger audience. More activities and further changes are needed to keep growing, including gaining tax-deductible status.

The Centenary of Federation next year should highlight interest in *Australiana*, as the Bicentenary did in 1988, and will feature in our program. We promise that our first National Conference in April will be exciting, and will attract new members as well as current members. In the longer term we aim to expand our magazine *Australiana*, hold events in other states, and establish active groups outside Sydney.

The Australiana Society runs on voluntary work by the Committee and Members. I would like to thank all Committee Members, Members, speakers, authors, advertisers and sponsors for their constant contributions, support, advice, encouragement, criticism and suggestions.

John Wade, President

TREASURER'S REPORT

This year has seen a major improvement in our finances due to the increase in new members, due mainly to the efforts of our dynamo President, John Wade; the terrifically successful mailout through Josef Lebovic; the help given by Sotheby's, the efforts of our committee and the support from members.

We have increased our membership from 200 to 269. As a result *Australiana* can continue to be produced in colour, specifically to give members a professional and well-presented publication. Our next goal is to increase the number of pages, to help towards supplying a quality production to those country and interstate members who cannot attend meetings.

On analysing our membership fees compared to other societies and trusts etc. the *Australiana* Society is truly value for money. We do not charge for our lectures compared with others, as our aim is to increase appreciation of Australian Decorative Arts, and particularly our membership, so come to our meetings and bring a friend. *Australiana* is far superior to publications produced by other organisations, and we achieve all this from the voluntary efforts of our Editors and authors, so tell your friends what

good value *Australiana* is.

This year saw the need to register for GST and all the resultant paperwork. This year GST was applicable to only half the year while next year's subscriptions will have 10% GST added. We are also applying for endorsement as a deductible gift recipient.

To further help our budgeting and simplify the accounts we will change the financial period to align with our membership year of 1 January to 31 December. I have found our present financial year of 1 July to 30 June quite confusing, as from our surplus at 30 June, we have to pay for the production and distribution of two issues of *Australiana* before membership rolls around again.

I owe many thanks for the help given in achieving all this to Greg Johansson, a new and valuable member of the committee.

It has been a real privilege to serve as Treasurer over such a buoyant, successful and optimistic period and I look forward to next year's improvements, due to the support given by our members, sponsors and advertisers.

Caressa Crouch, Treasurer

Income & Expenditure Statement Year ended 30 June 2000

AUSTRALIANA PRODUCTION	2000	1999
Australiana Income		
Sales to members 269 @ \$42 (200@ \$40)	11,298.00	8,000.00
Other sales, back copies	1,119.89	397.00
Advertising	3,577.25	2,310.00
Total	15,995.14	10,707.00

Australiana Expenditure		
Production	13,632.61	9,610.00
Postage	856.22	968.94
Stationery	263.45	204.57
Total	14,752.28	10,783.51
Nett Surplus/(Deficit)	1,242.86	(76.51)

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

General Income

Subscriptions less proportion applied to <i>Australiana</i>	2,612.25	2,355.00
Annual dinner including raffle & auction	4,876.00	2,340.00
Interest Received	91.23	130.94
Donations	237.75	160.00
Refund deposit	0	100.00
Total	7,817.23	5,085.94

General Expenditure

Advertising	740.00	0
Corporate Affairs Fee	47.00	0
Subscriptions to R.A.H.S.	80.00	80.00
Stationery & Postage	150.55	541.15
Insurance	265.22	365.00

Annual Dinner expenses	3,122.00	1,384.56
Government taxes & bank charges	50.35	17.80
General meeting expenses	88.80	141.00
GST Uncollected	19.25	0
Peter R. Walker Writing Award payment	250.00	
Total	4,813.17	2,529.51
Nett Surplus/(Deficit)	3,004.06	2,556.43
Total Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	4,246.92	2,479.92
Peter Walker Writers Award	250.00	500.00

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE

Accumulated Funds	2000	1999
Balance brought forward 1 July 1997	15,144.26	12,164.34
Plus Surplus	4,246.92	2,479.92
Peter Walker Writers Award	250.00	500.00
Total	19,641.18	15,144.26
These funds are represented by		
Current Assets		
Cash & Investment Account	19,944.33	15,144.26
Trade Debtors	347.50	0
Current Assets	20,291.83	15,144.26
Less Current Liabilities		
GST payable	650.65	0
Nett Current Assets	19,641.18	15,144.26

The *Australiana* Society Inc. confirmed at its 2000 AGM that the financial year of the Society would change to the calendar year, the same as membership. The Society's accounts will be prepared again at and for the period to 31 December 2000 when the new financial year will commence.

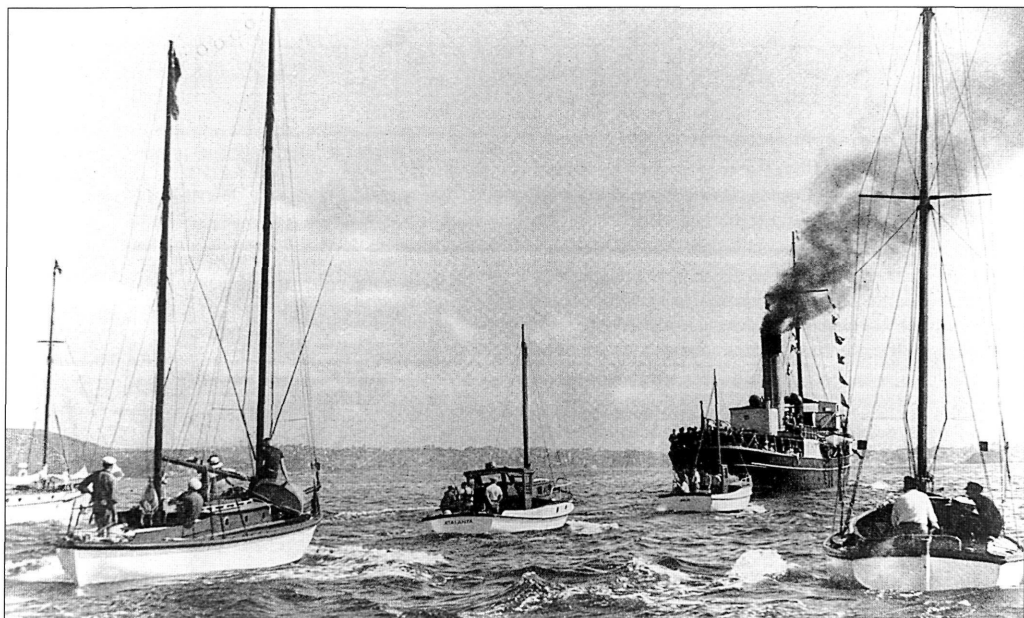


Plate 1. Start of the Big Game Angling Contest (from Australia, 1788-1938).

Sydney's 150th anniversary celebrations

The Big Game Angling Contest of 1938

Kenneth Cavill

In 1938, Sydney celebrated its sesquicentenary with much pageantry, historical re-enactments and numerous sporting events.¹ Some 60 years later Sydney is hosting the Olympic Games of the year 2000, a task immeasurably greater than that accomplished in the 1930s when the premier sporting attraction of the 150th Anniversary Celebrations was the Third British Empire Games. These Games were by far the largest athletic tournament to be contested in Australia. Competitors numbered 466 from 15 Empire countries –

no mean feat when the overseas contingents were to travel by ship.²

The second international event of the celebrations was the Big Game Angling Contest of 1938. This was the largest fishing contest held in Australian waters, with 580 entrants predominantly from Australia. Enthusiastic overseas competitors came from New Zealand, Hawaii, the USA, South Africa and Great Britain. This timely fishing tournament is now viewed in an historical context and an account given of the remarkable

prize trophies that were presented to the successful anglers.

Fishing in its many guises has long been the leading recreational sport in Australia. Even so, the choice of a game fishing contest for the 1938 celebrations followed on worldwide publicity given to the sport at that time by the American novelist and game fisherman, Zane Grey. He had drawn the attention of game fishing enthusiasts to the challenges that lay in the waters of the Pacific from Hawaii to Tahiti, to the Bay of Islands, New Zealand and then to the east coast of Australia.³

In the 1930s Zane Grey established a fishing camp at Bermagui, a small fishing port and tourist resort on the NSW south coast.⁴ While recreational shark fishing was already an established sport in Australian waters, Zane Grey and others were to demonstrate the potential for big game fishing - for swordfish, for black, blue and striped marlin as well as shark species.

Australia's 150th Anniversary Celebrations were centred on Sydney, as was the Big Game Angling Contest. Participants in the Angling Contest were required to be members of clubs affiliated with the Big Game and Rod Fishers Association of Australia.⁵ New South Wales centres for recording the catches were Watson's Bay in Sydney Harbour, Bermagui and Merimbula on the south coast and Port Stephens to the north. The fishing tournament ran from January to April 1938.

The start of the contest at Watson's Bay on New Year's Day 1938 captured the interest of many Sydneysiders who lined vantage points on the headlands. In all, 37 fishing boats led by Sydney's pilot vessel *Captain Cook* headed out to sea for the first day's fishing (*Plate 1*). A detailed account of the contest is found in *Walkabout*, Australia's geographical magazine of the period.⁶

That the Big Game Angling Contest for the heaviest game fish was won against all comers by Mrs A. W. (Jess) Sams of Milton, NSW was considered a remarkable achievement. Her winning catch, a striped marlin weighing 330 lb (150 kg) was landed off Ulladulla on the NSW south coast on 27 February 1938. Mrs Sams' skill was fully acknowledged for she had landed the game fish with far less line on her reel than would have been anticipated when angling for marlin.

Mrs Sams' (*Plate 2*) catch was an Australian record that stood for 38 years.

However, the fact that the Contest was actually won with a *striped* marlin was even more surprising. Big game fish in Australian waters include black marlin and mako shark whose weight is likely to be twice that of a striped marlin.

The NSW Government showed its strong support for the fishing tournament by providing the sum of £925 for the prize trophies. Such an amount - more than \$50,000 in today's currency - is unlikely to be expended on gold and silver trophies in present times.

The gold trophies were valued at £500 for the heaviest game fish landed within 50 miles (80 km) from the coast, £200 for the heaviest shark and £100 for the heaviest striped marlin. The trophies were



Plate 2. The Winning Angler, Mrs Jess Sams in 1938 (from Australia, 1788-1938).



Plate 3. *The Prize Trophy for the Heaviest Gamefish and the Striped Marlin Trophy (far left) at Fairfax and Roberts Ltd (courtesy of John Fairfax & Sons Ltd).*

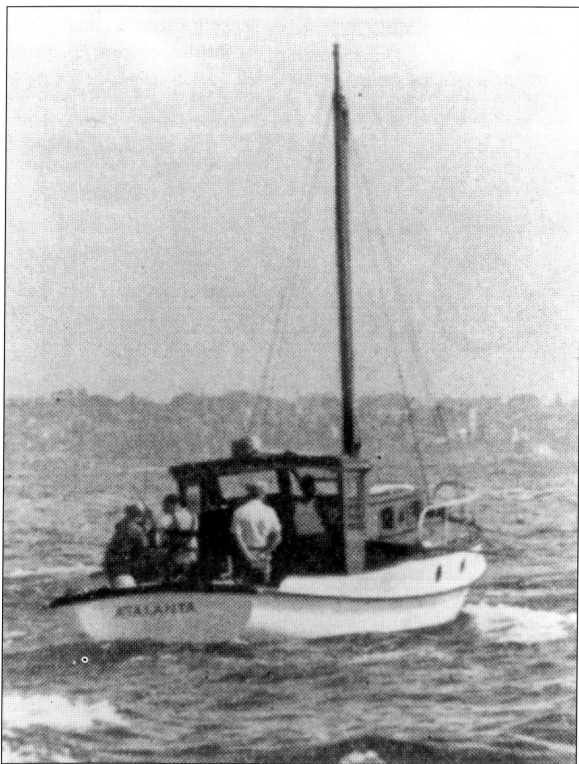


Plate 4. *Game fisherman and crew at the stern of Atalanta (detail).*

commissioned from Fairfax and Roberts Ltd, one of Sydney's long-established jewellery houses, and displayed in the company's showroom prior to the competition.

Plate 3 shows a member of Fairfax and Roberts' staff securing the major trophy to its stand.

There can be little doubt that the trophies, designed and crafted by W. J. Sanders of Sydney, rank among the finest presented at an international fishing tournament.⁷

The major trophy (**Plate 5**) in gold and silver comprises a well-crafted gold replica of the fishing launch *Atalanta* riding the silver ocean swell. Game fishermen and crew are modelled in gold at the stern of the vessel. Note the fishermen and crew at the stern of *Atalanta* in (**Plate 4**).

The tableau is mounted on a shaped pedestal of figured Australian woods. Marlin and shark are modelled in gold at its corners. The wording "International Big Game Angling Contest" is inscribed on each of the gold banners fitted below the tableau. A map of Australia within a laurel wreath is applied to each side of the pedestal.

W. J. Sanders' craftsmanship in gold and silver is complemented by the cabinet work of Sikman and Coates, furniture makers of North Sydney.

The second trophy (**Plate 6**) for the heaviest shark was won by Mr T. A. Bell of Melbourne who landed a tiger shark weighing 1,151 lb (524 kg) off Bermagui on 20 April 1938. This was a world record for a tiger shark and was considered to be the outstanding catch of the contest. It surpassed the previous record held by Zane Grey for a tiger shark caught off Sydney Heads in 1936.

The gold trophy is in the form of a large footed bowl (h 16 cm).

*Plate 5. The Prize
Trophy for the
Heaviest Game Fish.*



Two gold sharks adorn the sides of the bowl and serve as handles. Again, the trophy is mounted on a circular, shaped wooden plinth. The bowl is inscribed

"Australia's 150th Anniversary
Celebrations
International Big Game Angling
Contest

January-April, 1938

Awarded for Heaviest Shark Caught
in
Australian Waters"

As Mrs Sams had already been awarded the major trophy for her striped marlin of 330 lb and no contestant could receive two prizes, the third trophy was presented to Mr C. Stewart of Sydney for his striped marlin of 314 lb. It was landed off Bermagui on 16 February.

The footed trophy-cup with cover is shown in *Plate 3* to the far left. A symbolic gold marlin adorns the cover.

In addition five smaller trophies, each to the value of £25, were presented as awards in special categories including freshwater fly-fishing. Trout were fished in inland rivers, the heaviest rainbow and brown trout being caught in the mountain streams of the Southern Alps. The angling tournament included a wide range of competitors.

Mrs Sams took great pride in her achievement. Through the years she delighted in showing her trophy to visitors keen on fishing. She sought local support for the formation of a fishing museum in

the Ulladulla-Bermagui region. It was her intention to donate the trophy for permanent display and encourage interest in game fishing on the south coast of NSW.⁸

Eventually in 1982, Mrs Jess Sams in her 85th year placed her unique gold trophy in the Australian Fishing Museum then located at Birkenhead Point, Sydney.⁹

The prize trophy won by Mr Bell in 1938 for the heaviest shark caught in Australian waters (*Plate 6*) has since been re-presented as a perpetual trophy. It is an official trophy of the Game Fishing Association of Australia and is awarded annually for the heaviest game fish, excluding shark. A second inscription on the bowl commemorates the late Mr Bell's



Plate 6. The Shark Trophy.

contributions to the sport:

"The Tom Bell Perpetual Trophy
Awarded for the Heaviest Game
Fish
Caught In Australian Waters"

Since 1966, the name of the
annual winner and a record of the
catch has been engraved on a map



Plate 7. The Shark Trophy re-presented
as a Perpetual Trophy.

of Australia plaque added to the
enlarged plinth (Plates 6 & 7).

The substantial trophies of
1938 were won by competitors
angling in the waters south of
Sydney. As the Second World War
soon followed, the potential for big
game fishing in Australia's northern
waters adjacent to the Great Barrier
Reef was not fully realised until the
1950s. Cairns has become a mecca
for big game anglers and seasonal
tournaments are now held along
the entire east coast of Australia
and Tasmania. The late Mrs Sams
remarkable success in 1938 is
commemorated with the holding
of the Jess Sams Tournament at
Ulladulla.¹⁰

Acknowledgements

The assistance of Mr John Sanders,
Mr Peter Goadby, Mr Garry
McDonald and Miss Muriel Kable
has been greatly appreciated.

Author

Kenneth Cavill, an Emeritus
Professor of the University
of New South Wales, has a
broad interest in Australiana. In
retirement he has researched the
histories of notable Australian
silverware and jewellery makers,
publishing many of these studies
in *Australiana*. He is co-author
of *Australian Jewellers, Gold
and Silversmiths – Makers and
Marks* published by CGC Gold
(Box 322, Roseville 2069).

Notes

- 1 *Australia, 1788-1938*, produced by
O. L. Ziegler for Australia's 150th
Anniversary Celebrations Council,
Simmons Ltd, Sydney, 1938.
- 2 *British Empire Games of 1938,
Official Souvenir Programme*,
Empire Games Organizing Council,
Sydney 1938; Cleve Dheenshaw, *The
Commonwealth Games – The First
60 Years, 1930-1990*, ABC Books,
Sydney 1994.
- 3 For a detailed account of game
fishing in the Pacific region see
Peter Goadby, *Big Fish and Blue
Water*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney,
1987.
- 4 *Hotel, Guest House and Tourist
Guide in NSW*, NSW Government
Tourist Bureau, Sydney, 1933.
- 5 The Big Game Angling Committee
under the chairmanship of Mr C.
W. Firth, Foundation President
of the Game Fishing Association
of Australia, was responsible for
organising the Contest.
- 6 T. C. Roughley, 'Big Game Angling
Contest', *Walkabout* June 1938 pp.
43-48; see also *Sydney Morning
Herald* 1 January p. 12; 3 January
pp. 8, 10; 25 April 1938 p. 11.
- 7 Kenneth Cavill, "W. J. Sanders,
Manufacturing Silversmiths,
Goldsmiths & Art Metal Workers",
Australiana 1998 vol 20 no. 2, pp.
33-40.
- 8 Discussion with Mrs Jess Sams at
Ulladulla, 7 September 1984.
- 9 *The Weekend Australian* 1-2 May
1982, p.3.
- 10 *The Official 1999 Australian
Gamefishing Journal*, p. 20.



*Plate 1. Katherine O'Connor.
Tooled leather casket 1903.
Western Australian Museum,
Photograph Douglas Elford.*

Art and Design in Western Australia

Part 4

Perth Tech Graduates

Dorothy Erickson

James W. R. Linton, the Art Master at Perth Technical School strongly believed that:

"It is absolutely necessary that every art student should visit Europe, for however well he may be educated in the colonies his experience is small compared with those who have had the advantage of studying those magnificent examples that

are only to be seen in the big centres."¹

He encouraged as many of his students as possible to go to Europe and a number of the talented ones were able to do so.

The first was **Katherine O'Connor** who went on to live an artist's life in Paris where she painted in an Impressionist manner. While a student in 1903 she had attracted

favourable attention for her entries in the WA Society of Arts exhibitions. These included a charcoal head, a pastel and a leather casket. "Miss O'Connor is responsible for an embossed leather casket, with copper fittings. It is the result of an immense amount of tasteful labour, that cannot be completed without a fair working knowledge of the bookbinder's craft."² This is possibly

the casket in the collection of the WA Museum (*Plate 1*).

Very few of her early paintings have survived. A pastel sketch "Old Pensioner" of 1902 reproduced in the 1903 WA Society of Arts Catalogue attracted the comment "An excellent life study of an old man in his shirt sleeves, well drawn in Pastel, by Miss K. L. O'Connor, attracts favourable attention"³. "For untiring energy, marked by firm characterisation and the power to depict forcibly on canvas, Miss

O'Connor is very prominent and her future promises well. One work may be better than another, but it all bears testimony to close application, conformability with her teacher's order, and a natural aptitude for her vocation."⁴

Patrick Hutching, critic and co-writer of her biography, remarks that the pastel looks forward to the European portraits, and to the poignant but anonymous figures of the Luxembourg Gardens paintings on which her reputation as a painter

rests.⁵ However he does not credit Linton with any influence on her Impressionistic style. Rather he feels that his influence and her respect for him lay in what he taught her of craftwork. He notes that her fabric designs, china painting and other craftworks undertaken in the late 1920s for shops in Australia may owe more to Linton than did the style of painting she adopted.⁶ Her impressionist tendencies may have come more from the artist Florence Fuller who was part of her circle.

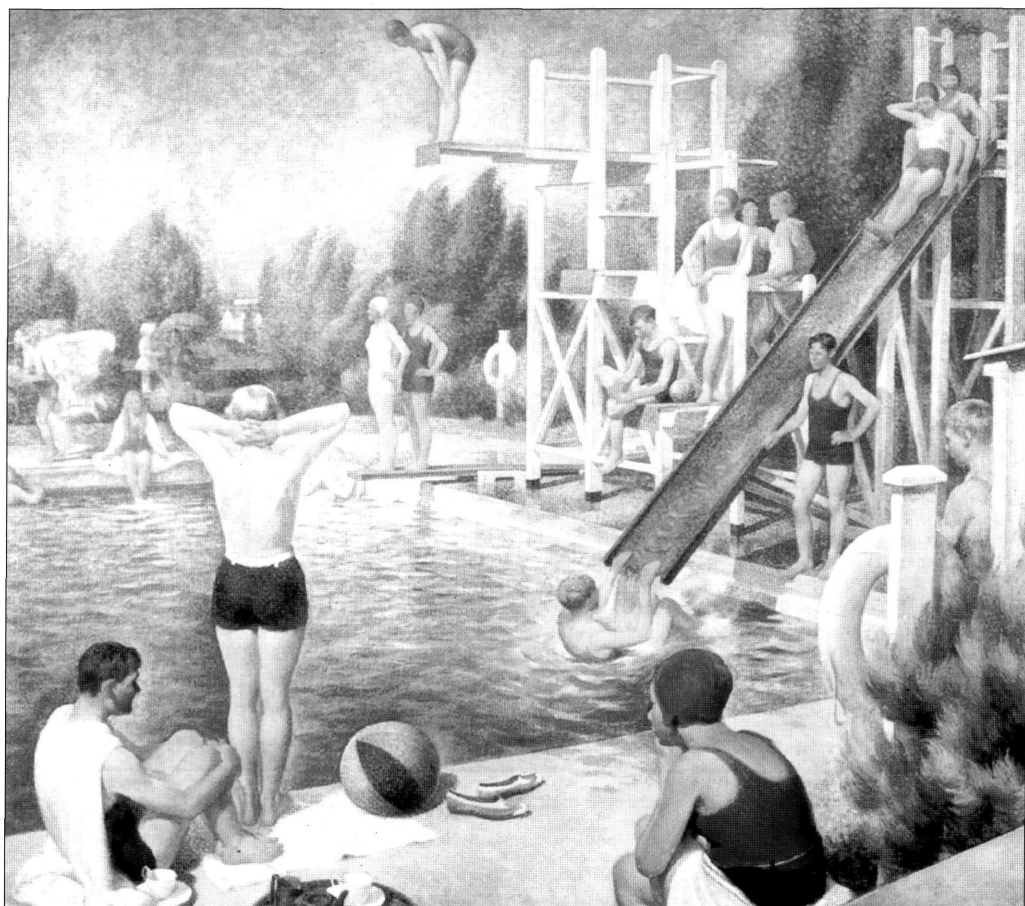


Plate 2. Miguel McKinlay, Summer, oil on canvas, 1933. Collection of Michael Anthony McKinlay, on loan to Busbey Museum Trust.

A student who won acclaim overseas was **Miguel McKinlay** [Mackinlay] (b. 1896 d. Spain 1958) who attended Highgate School in 1909 and studied at Perth Technical School in 1910-12. He won a number of scholarships and was well regarded. In 1912 when he exhibited paintings of Fremantle Harbour and Bazaar Terrace he was described as "this promising young artist shows considerable talent. His drawing is excellent, his colour values are gauged with remarkable judgement and the treatment is broad, daring yet eminently successful."⁷ McKinlay took second prize in the drawing competition but won first and third places in the catalogue cover competition.⁸ Muriel Southern was second.

McKinlay went to Europe just before World War I and served in



Plate 3. Bessie Rischbeith

the Australian Infantry Forces (AIF), one of only two Western Australians artists who served.⁹ McKinlay did

not return to Australia. Instead he studied in London, Paris and Madrid and went on to exhibit in London at the Royal Academy 1922-1953, Glasgow, Liverpool, Paris, Vienna and New York. He made a good living exhibiting, illustrating books, designing posters and advertising work for clients such as Bovril and Nestlé. He moved to Bushey, Hertfordshire in 1928 where he was one of a colony of artists who occupied the famous Meadow Studios. His work is held by the Bushey Museum Trust.¹⁰ McKinlay offered his *The Bath* to the Art Gallery of Western Australia after it was well received in London at the Royal Academy in 1927. However the curator, Pitt Morison, was critical of the work and recommended against purchasing it. *Summer of 1933 (Plate 2)* is in a similar vein.

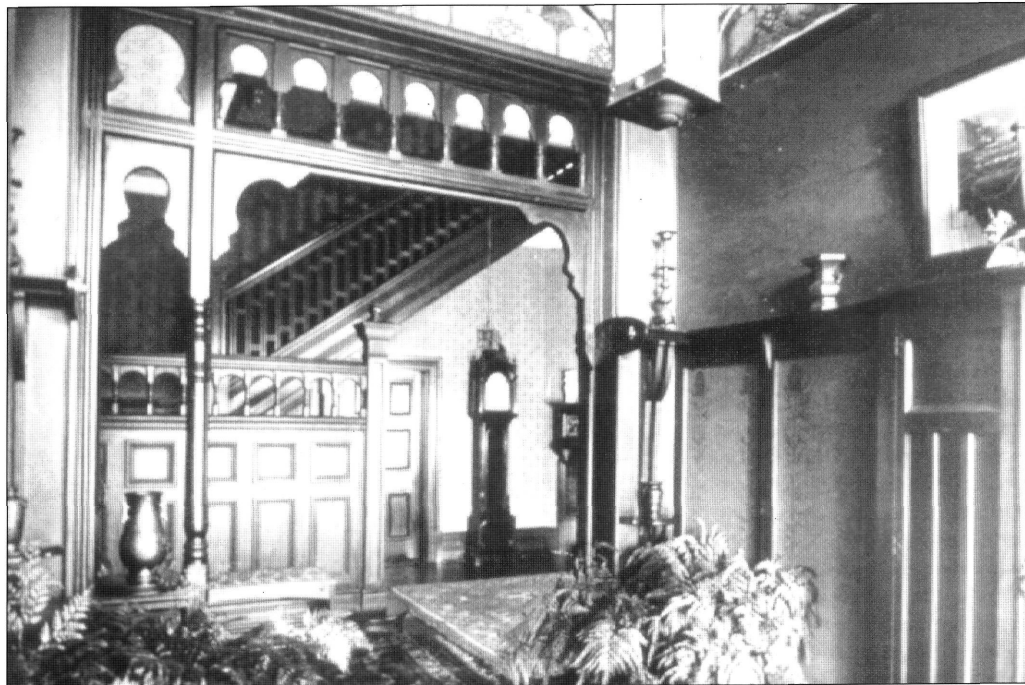


Plate 4. Entrance to Rischbeith home, Unalla, at Peppermint Grove.

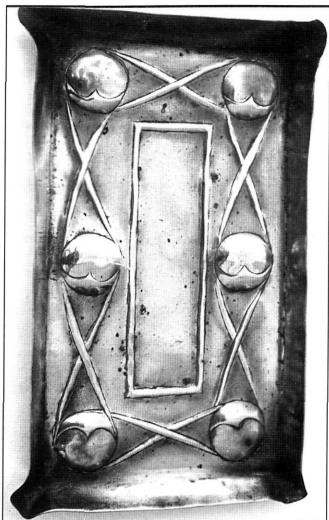


Plate 5. Bessie Rischbeith, card tray in repoussé brass, 24 x 12cm.

Art critic Leslie Rees wrote of his 1930 work:

"His *Tête-à-Tête* was one of the most discussed and most outstanding pictures in the last Academy. Like Cézanne, whose method he follows, he is concerned with expression not surfaces, but of essential structures that is to say he paints not what he sees, or not only what he sees but what he knows to be there. He achieves par excellence the roundness of things that are round".¹¹

Mrs Mattie Furphy (1878 -1948) was another of Linton's students and we can see her metalwork today in Tom Collins House in Swanbourne.¹² She was an outstanding student between 1905 and 1910, winning scholarships that paid for her fees, and was mentioned with Flora Le Cornu in the *Annual Reports* as energetic and persevering students who stimulated the others. In 1905 she took Freehand Drawing, Model Drawing and Cast Drawing,

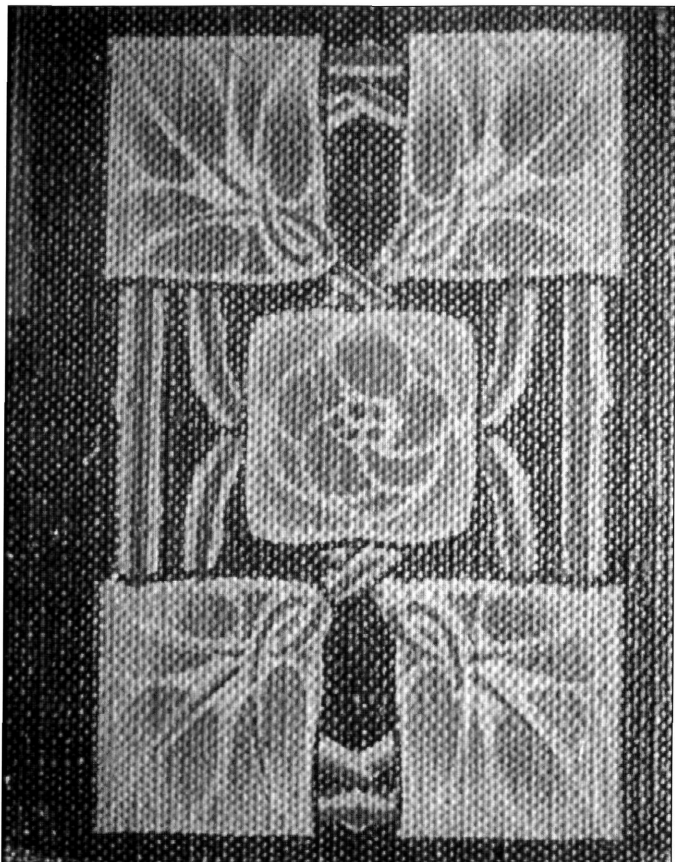


Plate 6. Bessie Rischbeith "Glasgow Rose". Stencilled pattern for the Morning Room. Evans Collection. Photo D. Erickson.



Plate 7. The Rischbeith Morning Room where regular design discussions were held. The stencil is in situ. Photograph courtesy B. & M. Evans.



Plate 8. Flora Landells. *peacock pot, band built, incised and glazed, 1905. Family collection, photograph D. Erickson.*

winning the prize in the latter. Some of the drawings in the Chamber of Manufacturers' exhibition were from her hand. Unfortunately none of her works on paper are known to be extant.

Mattie Furphy, née Sarah Martha McCausland, moved to Western Australia in 1902. Strong-willed Mattie spent most of her time at the Perth Technical Art School. According to her father-in-law, the writer Joseph Furphy, she was there five days a week from 10 am to 10 pm.¹³ Her *forté* was repoussé.

Furphy was engaged in making an overmantel, door panels, fingerplates, mirror and sconces for her house on the corner of Clement and Marmion Streets, Swanbourne. For a tiny, corsetted Edwardian belle this was some considerable physical feat. In one set, she featured the quandong. This fruiting tree was a local development of an international motif. The dictates of Walter Crane, via the medium of Linton, were used to adapt the form to fit the chosen rectilinear shape.¹⁴

One of Furphy's most successful works was a striking pair of candle sconces in brass and copper, juxtaposing smoothly-domed brass hemispheres against repoussé copper back plates. These circular plates have five swirling leaf and berry motifs, chased and repoussé in low relief. The copper sections are given a satisfying deep-red patina which contrasts with the polished yellow of the brass reflectors (*Australiana* Vol 22 no. 3 p. 84). The pieces were transferred to what is now Tom Collins House in 1939. They are fine examples of the work made by Linton's students in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Another student was Kitty Armstrong who made a modest career as an artist and teacher. **Catharine (Kitty/Katie) Armstrong** (1885-1968) was brought up by an uncle and aunt Henry and Zara Armstrong. Her mother, who had been a French governess in South Australia, died when she was barely two. In 1894 the new family arrived in Western Australia to open a pharmacy, WA Apothecaries. She inherited the family home *Moorabin* in Malcolm Street, Perth in 1914. Here Anna Pavlova came to stay and meet others such as the head of the Kindergarten Training College where Armstrong taught.

In 1906 Armstrong enrolled at Perth Technical College under Linton and was one of the students who excelled and whose work was exhibited in Perth, Melbourne and in the Franco-British Exhibition. She later studied Still-Life at Perth Technical School in 1914 and Modelling in 1915 and became a partner with Linton in his craft business. In 1920 she went to Sydney to study with Eirene Mort and later set up a solo studio in Perth

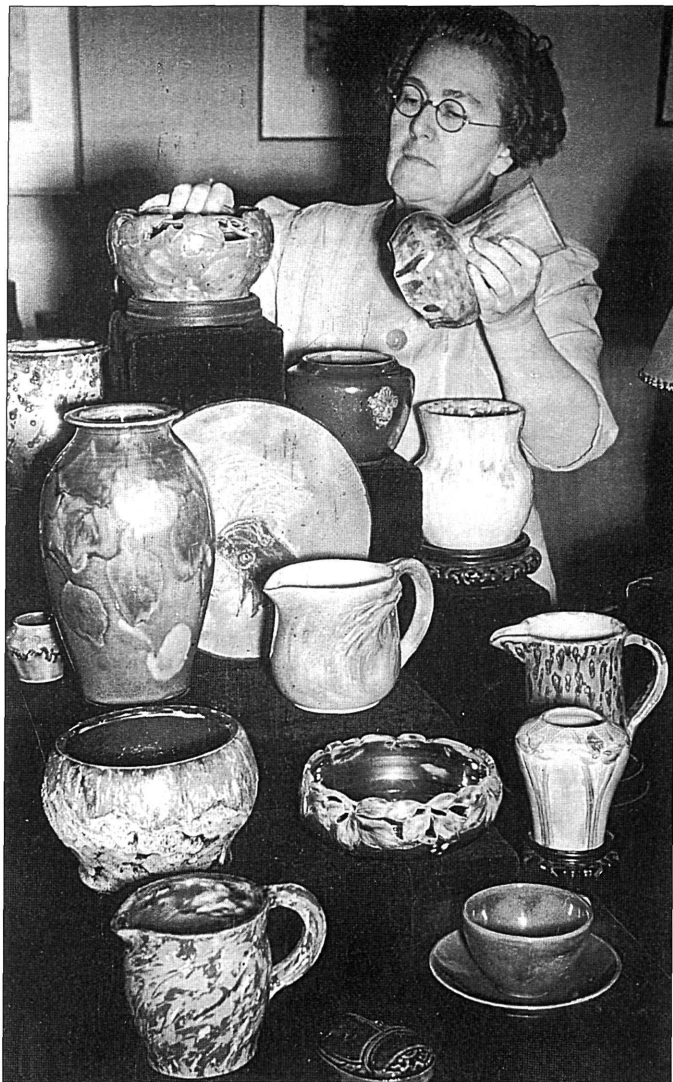


Plate 9. *Flora Landells setting up an exhibition of her paintings and pottery, c. 1947.*

which she maintained until 1930. She painted still-life and portraits in oils and watercolours. She also stained, tooled, cut and embossed leather. Her motifs for the latter included wildflowers on objects such as handbags, writing wallets, table runners, dinner mats, lounge cushions, book carriers, and other

useful articles. Gesso work-boxes in soft colours with neat designs and silver spoons were all part of the studio output. In the 1929 WA Society of Arts retrospective exhibition she exhibited a painting of the Old Mill in South Perth, a leather fire screen made c. 1919 with embossed gumnut design and ten

other pieces including needlework.¹⁵ Oil paintings in family collections include still-lives of fruit and landscapes. Of the work of **Ernestina Levinson**, **Alice Richardson** (later Mrs Bessell-Browne) and other outstanding students, nothing is known.

Better known in other fields was **Bessie Mabel Rischbeith** née Earle, OBE JP (1874-1967) theosophic feminist, who was born in South Australia and at an early age went to Adelaide to live with her wealthy uncle William Rounsevell MP, a supporter of universal franchise. Politically aware from an early age she married Henry Wills Rischbeith and moved to Western Australia in 1903 (**Plate 3**). Bessie Rischbeith was well educated, beautiful, strong-minded and elegant. She and her husband lived in style in their Federation mansion, *Unalla*, built in 1904 in Peppermint Grove (**Plate 4**). Rischbeith joined the WA Society of Arts and exhibited painted furniture, metalwork (**Plate 5**), portieres, piano cloths and other embroidery. She was an expert needlewoman and examiner at the Technical Art School for many years. She travelled widely and the driving forces in her life were social reform and the status of women. She became one of Australia's better-known feminists and was active on the international scene.

In 1905 she enrolled at Perth Technical School under Linton and passed Design. An admirer of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, whose work she had seen in magazines and on her travels, she ordered panelling and furniture in the Mackintosh-influenced Liberty style from London for her Morning Room. She completed the room by designing and stencilling panels of stylised 'Glasgow' roses and making beaten-



Plate 10. Flora Le Cornu (*Landells*), porcelain jug painted with flowers, private collection. Photograph D. Erickson.

copper fingerplates and other fittings. The elegant, stencilled inserts for the panelling were in two shades of pink with turquoise leaves contrasted against a brown ground (**Plate 6**). The fingerplates utilised the inverted heart combined with swirling tendrils.¹⁶ This Morning Room was home to a group of her friends who included Linton, Daisy Rossi, Bridget Lee Steere, Kate O'Connor and Florence Fuller who met there for weekly Design discussion sessions (**Plate 7**). In 1911, the last year she exhibited with the WA Society of Arts, a reviewer wrote "The society should be congratulated on ... bringing home to the people the fact that art is not confined to painted canvas." He thought Bessie's work was "particularly well done".¹⁷

One determined person who

made art her career was **Flora Landells** née Le Cornu, (1888 -1981). Flora Landells was born in Adelaide, daughter of Emma and John Le Cornu. The family arrived in Western Australia in 1896 and lived in Guildford until 1905 when they moved to the country. The determined 17-year-old Flora remained in Guildford to study and earn her living giving art lessons. Thus began a career as an artist and teacher spanning over 60 years. Flora painted in oils, watercolours and on china (**Plates 9 & 11**) and made pottery with clay (**Plate 8**). She was Western Australia's first studio potter. Flora Le Cornu's still life with geraniums, (*Australiana* vol 22 no. 2, p. 57) painted in 1904 when she was 16, shows considerable talent. The sheen on the polished metal is delicately caught.

Flora had commenced at the Perth Technical Art School under Linton in 1903. She quickly showed herself as an outstanding student and enrolled in a five year Associateship in Art. She achieved first-class passes winning scholarships that paid the fees. In 1913 Flora married Reginald Landells, an engineer and industrial chemist. They lived in 10th Avenue, Maylands where in 1925 she set up the Maylands School of Art and later with Reg's help a pottery. **Rolf Harris** and the china painter **Amy Harvey** were two of her students. Flora joined the WA Society of Arts in 1904 and exhibited regularly, winning the Open Competition and the Hackett Prize for Drawing in 1906. She also featured in other exhibitions at various venues in Perth. A painting of the coast at Balcatta in 1920 was described as "admirable in its quiet effectiveness."¹⁸ She held a number of solo exhibitions (**Plate 9**), her



Plate 11. Flora Landells, porcelain vase painted with nasturtiums 1920, family collection.

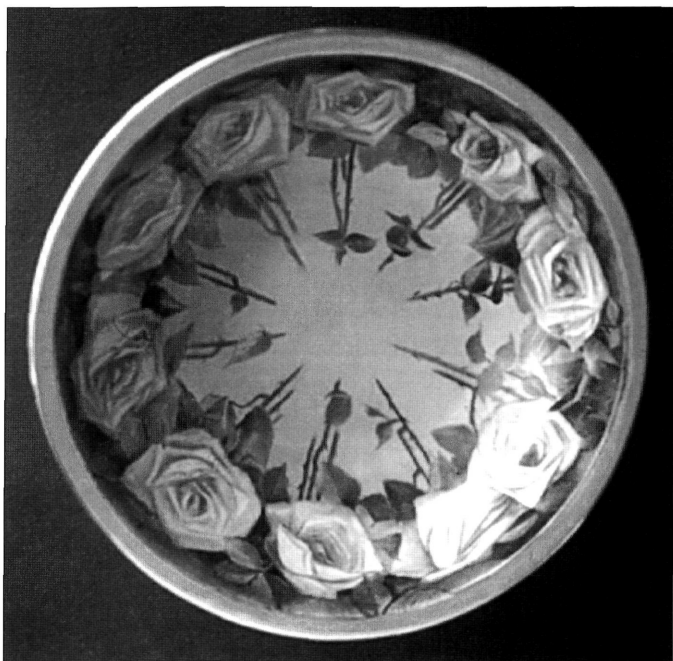


Plate 12. Flora Le Cornu (Landells), *Roses, painted porcelain bowl*, 1913-20, c. 250 mm diameter x 120 mm. Private collection. Photograph D. Erickson.

final one being in 1960 at Pastoral House.

About 1925 they established the Landells Studio Pottery with handbuilt pottery. Flora learnt to throw about two years later from Royal Doulton-trained Frederick Piercy, owner of Westralian Pottery Co. Ltd. Between 1930 and 1960 Flora's pottery ranged from carved and incised pieces in the manner of the French artist potters of the interwar years, through rougher medieval-looking handbuilt pottery for which there was a vogue in the 1930s, to jigger and jolly production work in the war years and subtly-glazed, thrown forms reminiscent of Chinese work in the postwar years. Reg who prepared the clay, developed the glazes and did some throwing, died in 1960 and the pottery was closed. Flora had a final exhibition then continued china-

painting almost up to her death in 1981.

Flora was a role model and in demand as a speaker, teacher and maker. Her work is found in the Art Gallery of WA, the National Gallery Canberra, Methodist Ladies College and numerous private collections. Landells exhibited both painting and pottery. One bowl, thought to be one of the earliest pieces painted by Landells, dates from the early years of her marriage and was intended for private use. It utilises a delicate and feminine colour scheme that is atypical of her work. The misty duck-egg-blue ground, framed with gilt, acts as a foil for the regularly-placed pink "Glasgow Roses" (**Plate 10**). The National Gallery of Australia has a striking teapot, c 1914-20, with Sturt's Desert Pea painted in hemispherical lunettes. This is in a more 'moderne' style. These early

pieces differ markedly from the post WWII work, widely copied by her students, which generally featured realistically painted wildflowers on a broken ground.

Notes

- 1 Letter to the Director 21 Dec, 1907. File BL 1014/3.
- 2 WA 26 Sept, 1903, p. 12.
- 3 WA 26 Sept, 1903, p. 12.
- 4 *Morning Herald* September 21, 1903, quoted in *Kathleen O'Connor Artist in Exile* by P. A. E. Hutchings and Julie Lewis. Fremantle: FACP, 1987.
- 5 Hutchings and Julie Lewis, *op cit.* p. 135.
- 6 *ibid* p. 132
- 7 WA 17 July, 1912, p. 4.
- 8 WA 23 July, 1912, p. 8. First prize at this exhibition went to E. Steitz another Tech. student for figure drawing.
- 9 *Art in Australia* no 6, 1919. He is listed as Michael.
- 10 *Dictionary of Artists in Britain since 1945*. p. 797.
- 11 Rees, Leslie. "Two Australians in London", in *Art in Australia* 15 Feb, 1931, pp. 36-38. *Tête à tête* is illustrated. N. B. He is listed as Michael in the War Records.
- 12 The home of the Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA Branch).
- 13 Quoted in Justina Williams. *Tom Collins and His House*. Perth, Tom Collins Press, 1973, p. 45.
- 14 For further information on any of the metalsmiths refer to Dorothy Erickson, "Aspects of Stylistic and Social Influence on the Practice of Jewellery and Silversmithing in Western Australia." Ph D Thesis held in Batty Library.
- 15 For information on Armstrong I am indebted to her nephew Col. F. H. M. Armstrong of Sydney and relative Rosemary Sadlier.
- 16 Much of the work Bessie undertook in Art-Metalwork and Design at Perth Technical School is still in the family collection.
- 17 WA 1 Nov, 1911, p. 50.
- 18 WA 13 Nov, 1920, p. 9.

exhibition

Rosie Nice

State of the Waratah



Embothrium speciosissimum.

Lucien Henry 1887. Engr. by F. Sowerby. 1887. 1/2 in. 1/2 in. 1/2 in. 1/2 in.

State of the Waratah was held at the National Trust's S. H. Ervin Gallery at Observatory Hill and in The Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, an official Olympic Arts Festival event during September and October 2000.

The exhibition at the S. H. Ervin Gallery began with the Aboriginal dreamtime story and a striking 3-metre high photomural of waratahs growing in the wild. The journey continued with examples of colonial art and floral illustration. The highlight was a watercolour depiction of a waratah in the John Hunter Album, generously lent by the National Library of Australia. This was painted when Captain, later to be Governor, Hunter came to Australia as second in command on the First Fleet, and has been named a national treasure.

Margaret Preston was represented by the largest collection of her works featuring waratahs ever shown in one place! These were lent by the National Gallery of Australia and Art Gallery of NSW, and included an original woodblock, carved on both sides, and tools such as might have been used by Margaret Preston, lent by artist Bruce Goold. Lucien Henry's fine oil painting, *Waratah 1887*, with its unusual 'Moorish tile' background, was displayed alongside a copy of his book *Australian Legend: The Waratah*; a fine drawing lent by the Powerhouse Museum and a waratah-wreathed terracotta bust attributed to the School of Lucien Henry c. 1883, from the collection of Keith Free. These have just whet our appetite for the Lucien Henry exhibition the Powerhouse is staging in 2001.

James Sowerby (1757-1822), Embothrium speciosissimum [waratah] 1793. Hand coloured engraving 23.5 x 16 cm, from James Edward Smith's A Specimen of the Botany of New Holland. Courtesy Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

The decorative arts were illustrated by designs in wood, ceramics, glass and fabric. Museums and art galleries were well represented, especially with some wonderful samples of fabric, but so were private collectors who rallied following a plea for Waratah 'things' in the February issue of *Australiana*. We have taken the opportunity of showing some of these items here – most have never before been exhibited. Thank you for these loans and also to groups such as the Embroiderers' Guild, The Arts and Crafts Society of NSW and the NSW Rugby archive.

The revival of the popularity of the waratah in art during the 1970s and 80s was represented by the work of fashion designers Linda Jackson, who created a field of waratah frocks, and Jenny Kee whose clothing and knitwear was displayed in a re-creation of her well-loved shop, Flamingo Park.



Crown Crystal Glass Co, Carnival glass bowl, c. 1925. Collection Bill Blinco.



Arts and Crafts chest decorated with waratahs, c. 1925. Collection Rosie Nice.



Masbman Brothers (attrib.), vase of Art Deco shape moulded with a waratah, coloured glazes against a mottled ground, 1930s. Collection John Wade.

Griffiths Bros. Tea tin, produced from 1927 to celebrate the opening of Parliament House, Canberra. Collection John Wright.



School of Lucien Henry (1850-1896), plaster bust with terracotta finish, c. 1893. Collection Keith Free.

Waratahs appeared as symbols in advertising, as on the much-loved Griffith tea tins, Waratah petrol signs and travel posters - good examples of early silkscreen printing. A waratah was embroidered in silk on the flag carried from Nowra to Sydney on the Waratah Recruiting March of 1916 and postcards, medals, invitations and other ephemera completed the tally of about 180 loans.

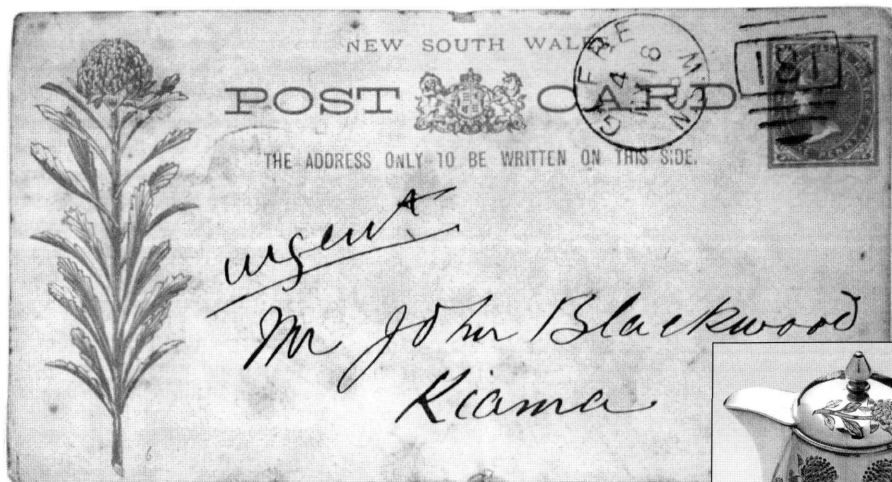
The more contemporary story was represented by the work of Bruce Goold who has produced more than 30 images of the waratah



Coal miner's lunch box, carved silky oak, c. 1940. Collection Keith Free.



Wooden panel carved with waratah, school of L. J. Harvey, c. 1910. Collection Keith Free.



Waratah postcard, c. 1888. Collection Bill Blinco.

since the 1970s and Suzanne Archer's 'Waratah Wedderburn' which won the Wynne prize in 1994, as well as the 1982 photograph 'Waratah and Moon' by Max Dupain.

At the Royal Botanic Gardens, one of the first waratahs sent

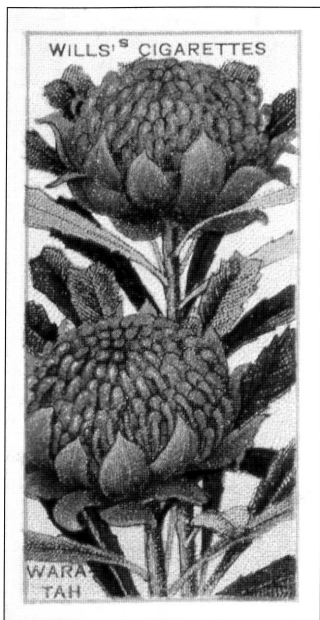
to England by Richard Burton, superintendent of convicts on the First Fleet, was displayed next to James Sowerby's *Embrotbium speciosissimum* (cover.) This is the first known hand-coloured engraving from Smith's *A Specimen of the Botany of New Holland*, published in 1793 and in the collection of the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Displays of fresh waratahs enthralled the public while a variety of work by contemporary Australian artists and craftspeople was for sale alongside a plethora of waratah items: cards, cushions, doormats and tea-shirts, to name but a few. Many of these are now available from the new Gardens shop in the Palm Centre adjacent to The Gardens restaurant.

For those who missed it all there is an excellent illustrated souvenir book *State of the Waratah*: 68 pages; 120 colour illustrations; with short essays from expert writers including Margaret Betteridge and Richard Neville – and lots more. Available now from the RBG bookshop for \$21.95 – and through gallery and specialty shops – a great Chrissie present, especially for gardeners or Australiana collectors.



Electroplated jug with waratah pattern, part of a tea-service. England, c. 1910. Private collection.



Wills' cigarette card with waratahs, c. 1920. Collection Robert Hutchinson.

Australiana Writing Awards

Sponsored by

Peter R Walker Pty Ltd

Dealers in Fine Art

Peter R. Walker Pty Ltd, Dealers in Fine Art, are continuing to sponsor a cash award of \$250 for the best article submitted to *Australiana* this year and next.

Articles appearing in *Australiana* Volume 22 are eligible to receive the 2000 award, which was instituted last year and won by John Hawkins.



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

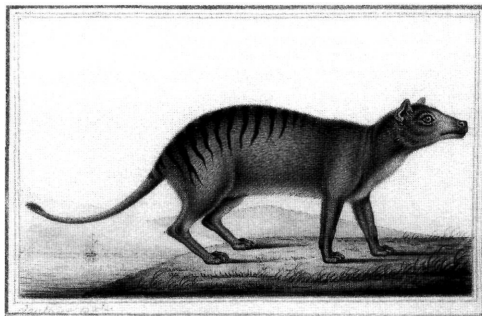
ABN 65 076 031 064

Dealers in Fine Art

Early Australian Artwork and Items of Historical Interest

J. A. Vauthier (1774-1830), an extremely rare early watercolour of a Tasmanian Tiger. This is the preparatory drawing for the engraving in Georges Buffon's series of books on the natural history of the world. Watercolour, pen and ink, c. 1830, 10.5 x 16.5 cm.

Please note our address has changed but we will still regularly be in all capital cities. See a selection of stock available on our website www.peterwalker.com.au



By appointment

Mobile 0418 552 548 • Email: walkerart@bigpond.com



J.B. HAWKINS ANTIQUES

WHITLEY 02 4868 2726
OFFICE 02 4869 1190
FAX 02 4868 3212
MOBILE 0419 985 965
Email jhawkins@acenet.com.au

WHITLEY
OLDBURY ROAD
MOSS VALE 2577
NEW SOUTH WALES
AUSTRALIA



A ROYAL PRESENTATION GOLD

The Kings Cup presented by His Majesty King George VI and raced for at Flemington, 4th March 1939. Manufactured in Sydney by Sanders in 18 carat gold and retailed by Hardy Brothers.

