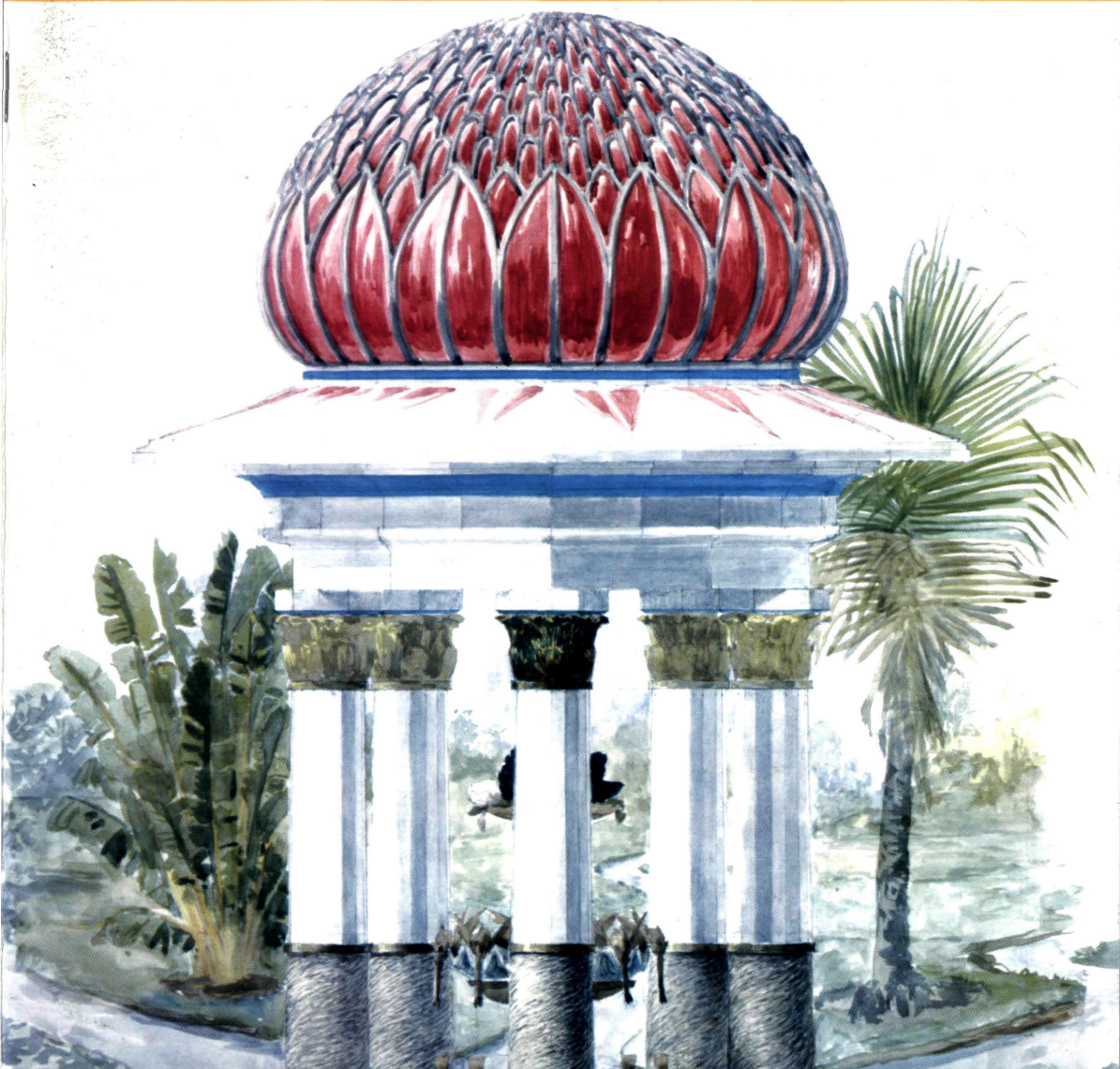


# AUSTRALIANA

MAY 2001

VOL. 23 NO. 2



## In this Issue

- Australia before Federation Opening Address
- Vision of a Republic
- Inside the Picture Framing Business
- Genesis of the Riverview Gold Challenge Cup
- Art and Design in Western Australia – Part 6
- A Guide to Collecting Photographs
- Of Mrs Gray, Nareeb Nareeb, Painted Eggs, Black Swans, Tree Ferns and Queens



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## CONTENTS

### 36

#### Australia before Federation Conference Opening Address

Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir  
AC, Governor of New South Wales



### 37

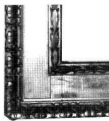
#### Visions of a Republic – the work of Lucien Henry



### 39

#### Inside the picture framing business: the ledgers of John Thallon, 19th century picture framer of Melbourne

*Dr Elizabeth Cant*



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The World of Antiques and Art



### 44

#### Genesis of the Riverview Gold Challenge Cup

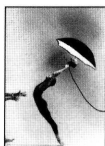
*Professor Ray Stebbins*



### 48

#### A Guide to Collecting Photographs

*Josef Lebovic*



### 52

#### New Books

### 53

#### Art and Design in Western Australia. Part 6: Perth Technical School – Between the Wars

*Dr Dorothy Erickson*



### 58

#### Of Mrs Gray, Nareeb Nareeb, Painted Eggs, Black Swans, Tree Ferns and Queens

*John Hawkins*

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**Cover** Lucien Henry, *Public Park Fountain, Hippocampus and waratab.* Watercolour over pencil, c. 1890, 55.5 by 43.7 cm. Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.

# Australia Before Federation

## CONFERENCE OPENING ADDRESS

Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, Governor of New South Wales

**W**e were gratified that Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, Governor of New South Wales, agreed to open our first conference on 31 March – 1 April 2001 organised in association with the Historic Houses Trust of NSW. Over 100 people enjoyed the magnificent venue at Government House Sydney. Her Excellency's address recognises the work done by the Society and its members, and reminds us that we must instil a love of the past in the next generation.

Mr John Wade, Distinguished Guests and friends.

It is a great pleasure to join with fellow members and friends of the Australiana Society on the occasion of their first Conference, *Australia Before Federation*.

Indeed, it is most fitting that this event should grace the wonderful environment of Government House Sydney and be held in association with the Historic Houses Trust whose meticulous care and restoration of this historic precinct is greatly appreciated. I believe that the use of Government House for events such as this which present and illuminate the details of our history is most fitting. Further, the greater access of the public to see and to contemplate so many aspects of Australia's history which are enshrined in this building, the



portraits, heraldry and great craftsmanship is to be applauded.

The Vice Regal functions, I believe, are in no way displaced by this model, and the Governor holds the right to veto any function even after passing the Historic Houses Trust consideration, if concern is felt regarding its appropriateness.

The Australiana Society is dear to my heart and although I have not been an energetic member in recent times, I nevertheless value my membership greatly and in particular the collective knowledge, dedication and scholarship of so many of its members who have been shining lights – indeed true activists – in the preservation and appreciation of so much of our Australian heritage. The high quality journal of the Society is testimony indeed to the standards to which the society adheres – I have kept every copy since joining several years ago as a valuable reference guide to so many aspects of our creative heritage.

The contributions which have been made by experts such as Kevin Fahy, Joan Kerr, James Broadbent, Clive Lucas, John Hawkins, Andrew Simpson, Graham Cocks, John Wade and so many others, through their great love of the treasury of our past, as well as their generous and unselfish contribution of time to the pursuit and clarification of details in the realms of architecture, cabinet making, silver, pottery and art will ensure a priceless legacy for future generations of Australians.

I cannot recall a time in my life when these aspects of Australia's 18th and 19th Century built environment, the furnishings and decorations were not of immense interest to me, no doubt inspired by my mother. However, the considerable range of elements which today distract the young cause me to ponder how we can adequately engage that generation as future custodians.

The program over the next two days is rich and wide ranging. I am hoping to be able to hear and learn as much as possible.

I am delighted and honoured to have been asked to participate and I wish you all a productive and happy Conference. May it be the first of many such conferences and a continuing celebration of our heritage.



# *Visions of a Republic* the work of Lucien Henry

Powerhouse Museum, Sydney 4 April – 14 October 2001

To commemorate the centenary of Federation, the Powerhouse Museum is presenting a major exhibition on the French-Australian artist *Lucien Henry* (1850-1896). Henry's life and work provide a rich source for tracing some of the international currents that shaped the period prior to Federation.

The work of Lucien Henry displays a utopian strand in Australian culture that was overtaken by more inward-looking concerns after Federation. The exhibition contributes to understanding the international aspirations that continue to shape our culture today.

Lucien Henry was an elusive figure, and unknown in his native France. For the 12 years that he lived in Sydney (1879-1891), Henry was one of the most productive and influential artists, but his legacy is little known today. Only his brilliant stained-glass windows designed for Sydney Town Hall in 1888 have remained permanently on display.

As a poor teenager in 1867, Henry migrated from the south of France to Paris to study art, where he revelled in the political clubs and bohemian culture of the Left Bank. For his leading role defending the Paris Commune in the popular uprising against Emperor Napoleon III in 1871, he was sentenced to death. His sentence was commuted to exile on the French penal colony of New Caledonia, along with 4,000 fellow Communards. Several objects Henry made during his seven



**Plate 1.** Lucien Henry, *Wrought Iron and Enamelled Bronze Gate*. Watercolour over pencil, c. 1889-91, 74.2 by 54.5 cm. Henry's arched gate proposed for the Botanic Gardens sprouts luxuriant waratahs. Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.

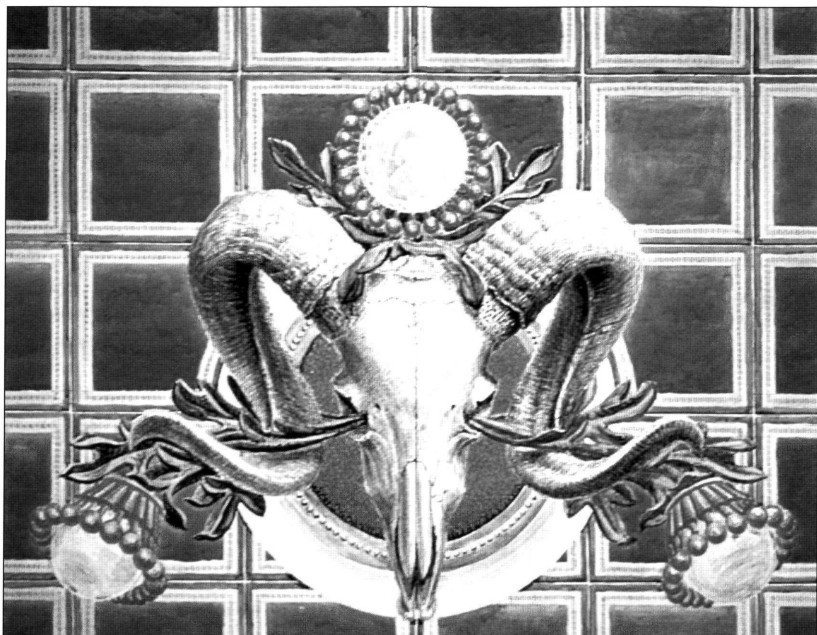
**Plate 2.** Lucien Henry, *Electric Bracket, Ram and Stenocarpus*. Watercolour and bouache over pencil, c. 1889-91, 39.8 x 50cm. Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.

years imprisonment are displayed in the exhibition.

Granted amnesty in 1879 he headed for Sydney. Henry rose rapidly to prominence as an educator and artist, bringing to the colony the rare combination of a *beaux-arts* education and a Communalist's republican ideals, mediated by the cultures of the South Pacific.

His time in Sydney coincided with a decade of prosperous growth marked by such monumental projects as the Sydney International Exhibition of 1879, the General Post Office, the Town Hall and Centennial Park. More than 100 exquisite watercolour designs by Henry form the core of the exhibition. Henry's paintings, sculpture and architectural designs are set alongside his French contemporaries such as Gustave Courbet and Paul Gauguin.

The legacy of Henry's vision was expressed by a subsequent generation of designers and artists making furniture, ceramics, stained glass and jewellery inspired by indigenous flora and fauna. Championed by Richard T. Baker, Curator of Sydney's Technological Museum (forerunner of the Powerhouse Museum) from 1896 to 1921, such work aimed to



promote local economic and cultural resources in Australia.

A comprehensive 240 page book realises Henry's last great project to publish his designs for 'Australian decorative art', dedicated to the

youth of Australasia. Through the exhibition and the book published by the Powerhouse Museum, Henry emerges as one of the earliest artists to imagine a school of Australian architecture and design, applying native flora and fauna.

## CONSTITUTION CHANGES

The constitution of The Australiana Society Inc. was changed at a Special General Meeting attended by 35 Society members on 31 March 2001, by unanimous vote.

The changes will allow us to be listed by the Australian Taxation Office so that gifts to the Society will be tax deductible, and we will be eligible for grants.

The new constitution includes a statement of objects of the Society, adds a non-profit clause so that the Society cannot distribute profits to members or the Committee, and amends the winding-up clause to transfer surplus assets to one or more approved funds, authorities or institutions having similar objects.

Office bearers of the Society will now be elected directly by the Members.

**Dr J. Bertouch**  
Secretary



# Inside the picture framing business

the ledgers of John Thallon, 19<sup>th</sup> century picture framer of Melbourne

Elizabeth Cant

Plate 1. Edward Burne-Jones, *Perseus and Andromeda* c. 1876. Frame-maker unknown. Oil on canvas, Art Gallery of South Australia.

A wealth of material relating to picture framers' activities exists in Britain.<sup>1</sup> In 19th century Australia, however, little remains apart from the fragment of a ledger<sup>2</sup> belonging to John Thallon, a leading Melbourne frame-maker. This is in alphabetical order, foolscap size, in length presumably to fit the 26 letters and covers the period 1888-89 to 1903. It is, however, very significantly incomplete, for example starting only from the letter F.

Who was John Thallon? He was born in Markinch, Fife, Scotland on 11 January 1848, and with his older brother Thomas (1844-1912) was probably apprenticed to their father, a cabinetmaker. They worked as picture frame makers in Edinburgh but left because of an oversupply of framers and emigrated to Melbourne in 1876 together with the Scottish artist John Mather.<sup>3</sup> John Thallon, also wishing to study painting, enrolled at the National Gallery School of Art in the same year.<sup>4</sup> Their picture framing business, J. & T. Thallon, was quickly established although 1878 is the first recorded date. The address was 105A Collins Street East, a most fashionable location. Thomas retired at the end of 1888, the same year as the birth of John's first son, so the ledger is the first for John's solo business.<sup>5</sup>

Despite having significant competition<sup>6</sup>, he was Melbourne's leading frame-maker of the 1890s with a most superior clientele of professional artists.<sup>7</sup> This was partly because of his enrolment at the National Gallery School of Art and contact with art students who would be potential future clients<sup>8</sup>, partly because he then became a co-exhibitor at the Victorian Artists'

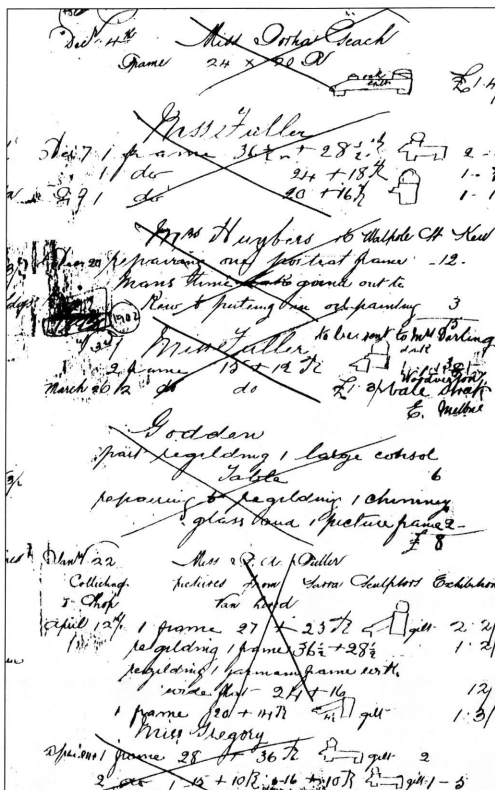
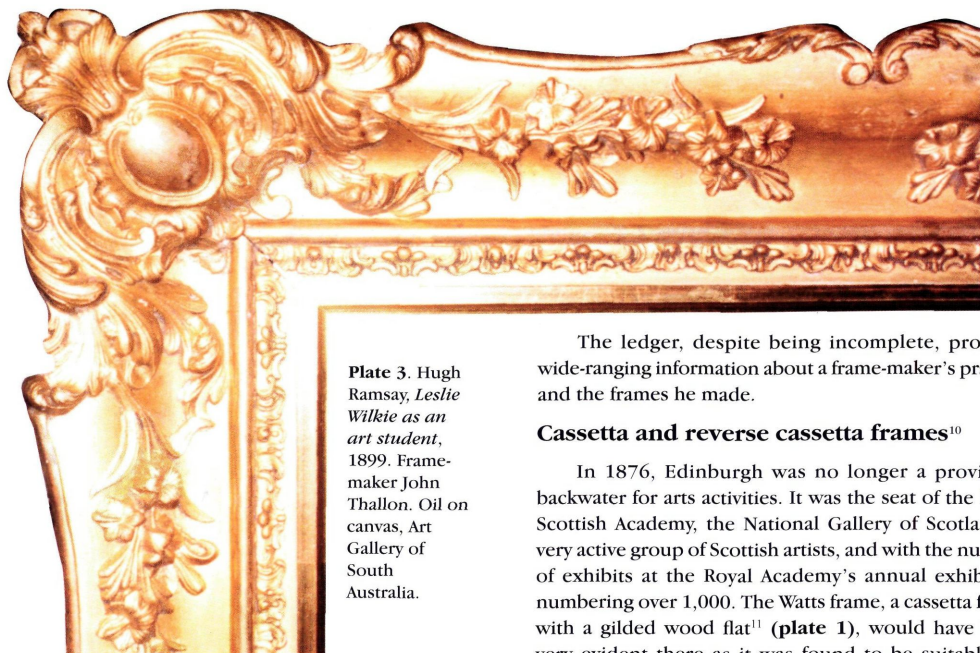


Plate 2. Sample page from ledger.



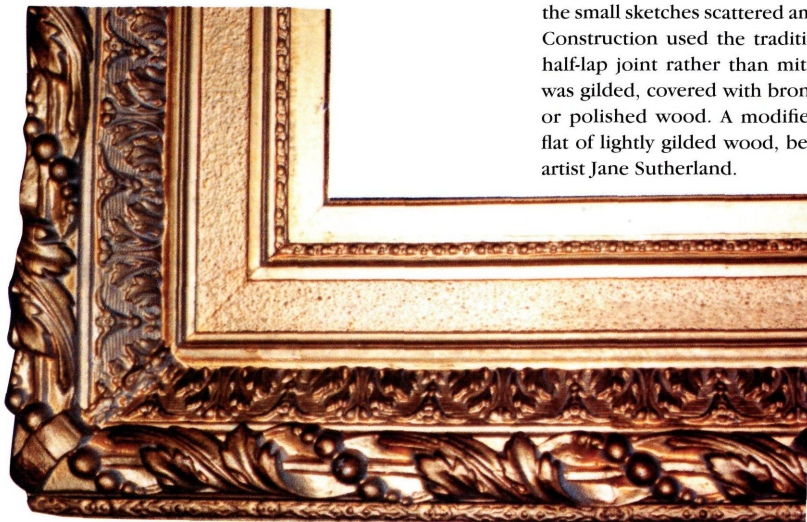
**Plate 3.** Hugh Ramsay, *Leslie Wilkie as an art student*, 1899. Frame-maker John Thallon. Oil on canvas, Art Gallery of South Australia.

The ledger, despite being incomplete, provides wide-ranging information about a frame-maker's practice and the frames he made.

### **Cassetta and reverse cassetta frames<sup>10</sup>**

In 1876, Edinburgh was no longer a provincial backwater for arts activities. It was the seat of the Royal Scottish Academy, the National Gallery of Scotland, a very active group of Scottish artists, and with the number of exhibits at the Royal Academy's annual exhibition numbering over 1,000. The Watts frame, a cassetta frame with a gilded wood flat<sup>11</sup> (**plate 1**), would have been very evident there as it was found to be suitable for all types of painting – genre, landscape and portraits. Thallon used this profile only once in Melbourne in 1878<sup>12</sup> and then not again until the 1890s perhaps because it was too advanced for the taste of the day in conservative Melbourne.

However, the cassetta and reverse cassetta profiles seem to have become the taste of the '90s judging by the small sketches scattered among the orders (**plate 2**). Construction used the traditional 16th century Italian half-lap joint rather than mitre (**plate 5**) and the flat was gilded, covered with bronze coarse sand or seeds<sup>13</sup> or polished wood. A modified cassetta, with a broad flat of lightly gilded wood, became associated with the artist Jane Sutherland.



**Plate 4.** Charles Rolando, *The Watts River* c. 1888. Frame-maker John Thallon 1889-90. Oil on canvas, Geelong Art Gallery.



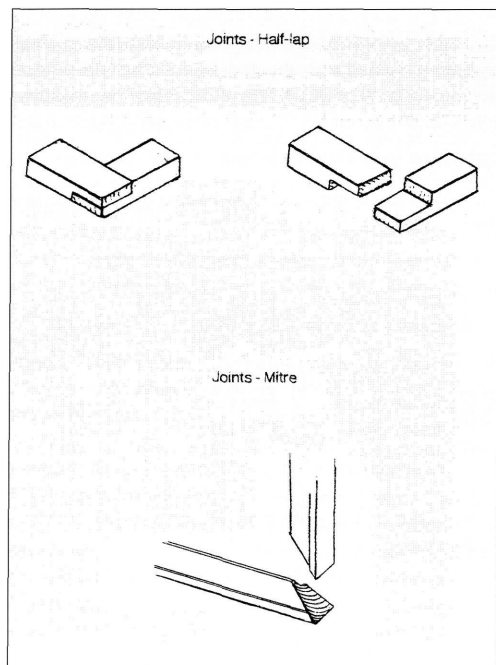


Plate 5. Half-lap vs mitre joint.

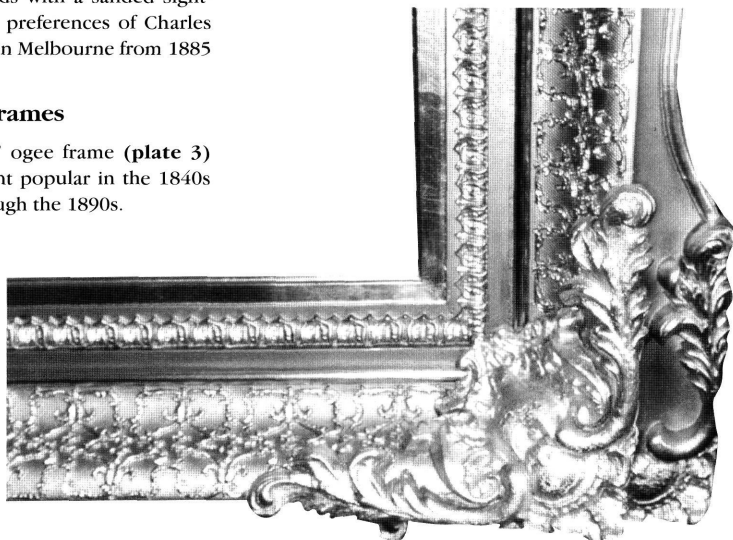
### Neoclassic frames

He continued to make neoclassic profile frames either basic or with added frieze. An example of the latter was the Rolando frame that combined a torus of spiral acanthus leaves and beads with a sanded sight-edge frieze. This was after the preferences of Charles Rolando, an Italian artist living in Melbourne from 1885 to his death in 1893 (plate 4).

### ‘Swept’ or French ogee frames

The revival of the “swept” ogee frame (plate 3) copying the second ogee variant popular in the 1840s and 50s was also his, used through the 1890s.

**Plate 6.** Conway Hart, *Sir Richard Dry* c. 1855. Frame-maker Robin Lloyd Hood. Oil on canvas, Parliament House, Hobart.



### Cost of frames

Prices of frames noted in plate 2 seem absurdly small especially when compared with that of commissioned frames in the 1850s. Then, in Adelaide, David Culley, a picture framer from Wiltshire, was paid 50 guineas for a ‘carved’ and gilded frame around a ‘full length and as large as life’ painting of James Hurtle Fisher by the artist John Crossland<sup>14</sup>; the artist was paid only 20 guineas more. And in Hobart, Robin Lloyd Hood was paid 70 guineas for a massive gilt ogee frame around a nine-foot portrait of Sir Richard Dry by the artist Conway Hart (plate 6).<sup>15</sup>

By contrast the ledger reveals the price of a Watts frame, six feet six inches by four feet nine inches, in 1898 was £9-6-0. Such a very significant difference in price reflects the impact on the frame-making business of machine-made decorated wood mouldings. Frames of the 1850s were hand-made in the framer’s workshop by labour intensive means. Factory production<sup>16</sup> from the 1870s reduced the cost to the point where it was uneconomical for the individual craftsman to make his own.<sup>17</sup> Picture framers catering for a large professional artist clientele would have stocked undecorated factory-made wood mouldings and, at least initially, made and pressed their own composition ornament.<sup>18</sup> With time, however, they would have accepted the fully factory-made decorated wood mouldings.

### ‘Finish’ of the final product

Despite the realities of the above, there is ample visual evidence to indicate the finish of John Thallon’s



Plate 7. John Samson's trade label.

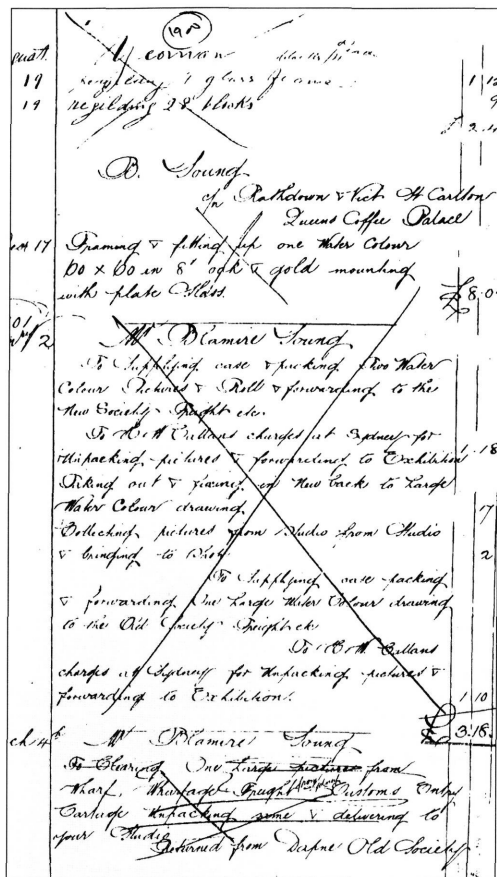


Plate 8. Sample page from ledger, 1900-01.

frames was maintained to 1900. In the 1890s these were invariably associated with a ribbon finish at the corners and often crossed ribbons on the sides. Such decoration was noted in 20 of 26 or 77% of identified or attributed John Thallon frames.

## Gilding

Gilding was mentioned as a separate item on only three occasions.

The first was for Charles Rolando in 1891:

1 frame Rolando	40½ x 27Kt [sic]	£5-12-0
6 frames Rolando	41 x 24Kt	£32-2-0
1 frame new	30 x 18Kt	£3-16-0
and, for Tom Roberts, in 1892:		
1 frame No.11	36 x 12Kt	£4-4-0
1 frame No.6	17 x 13Kt	£3-3-0

One assumes the left-hand figure details the number of books of gold leaf while the right-hand figure details the quality of the gold leaf. By 1899, such specifics had changed:

1 frame 6'4" x 2'10"	28 books	£4-18-0
1 partial 2'5" x 1'10"	11 books	£1-18-6

with no mention of the quality of the gold leaf. It is known he used Dutch leaf<sup>19</sup> before 1900. Whatever the quality, the price of each book of gold leaf in 1891-92 was two shillings and sixpence rising to three shillings and sixpence for books presumably of Dutch leaf in 1899.

## Activities other than picture frame making

The nature of the picture frame making business changed significantly from the 1870s when, quite apart from factory production of decorated wood mouldings, there was also the development of cabinet photographs that could be framed rather than placed in an album; the number of businesses also rapidly increased. This led to increased trade competition and the development of specialities. These ranged from an elite group serving the professional artist to framers producing less academic frames for prints, photographs and needlework. The reduction of price of the final product, despite an increased demand, required activities additional to picture frame making if an adequate cash flow was to be maintained. This was especially pertinent after 1892 when the Depression, resulting from reckless financial borrowing during the booming 1880s, caused many businesses to collapse.

These additional activities might be dealing in art, managing commercial galleries, producing 'on spec' frames for prints and photographs, venetian blind making, undertaking (plate 7), umbrella making,



managing fancy repositories, bookselling and selling tobacco and stationery. There is no evidence, however, that John Thallon indulged in these activities. His ledger reveals that by the 1890s his additional activities were increasingly service-oriented.

Such services involved the delivery of framed paintings to the artist's studio, to and from local exhibition venues and, when that venue was in another colony, for crating, delivery and paying the customs on the coastal boat and organising for another manufacturer in that colony - in Sydney, this was the framer H. W. Callan - to receive, transport and unpack it all at the appropriate venue (plate 8). He provided a reciprocal service when Callan sent paintings to Melbourne. His charges were geared to fit the pockets of artists hit by the Depression.

Other activities in the early 1890s involved organising in 1892 the removal, replacement in fibrous plaster and decoration of a ceiling for the Melbourne Public Library<sup>20</sup> at a cost of £7/10/0; making and restoring cornices and mantelpieces for the importer W. H. Rocke; regilding frames and chimney glasses, supplying overdoors (shell & scroll), regilding pieces of furniture, making gold curtain rods with spear ends and providing books of gold leaf for the interior decorators Paterson Bros and S. W. Mouncey.

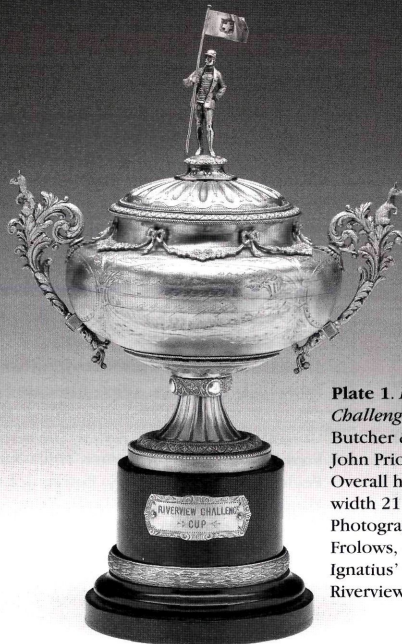
Thallon also provided similar services in the mid 1890s for the importer Robert Jolley & Co and for the entire 1890s for the firm Robertson & Moffatt who had furniture warehouses. He provided stretchers with canvases for several artists including Will Longstaff. In the late 1890s, he cleaned paintings for Parliament House and various commercial galleries<sup>21</sup> and made gilt tablets with captions for paintings in the National Gallery of Victoria. Such diverse activities allowed his business to survive the Depression of the 1890s in Melbourne. He died in 1918.

As a fascinating and informative record of picture framers' activities in the late 19th century in Australia, the ledgers of John Thallon should now be considered a priceless resource. Thankfully some artefacts have survived especially considering their ephemeral nature - yet for how much longer without museum care?

**Dr Elizabeth Cant** is an Adelaide surgeon who undertook a Masters degree pioneering the in-depth study of 19<sup>th</sup> Century picture framers in colonial Australia.

## Notes

- 1 J. Simon, *The art of the picture frame. Artists, patrons and the framing of portraits in Britain*, National Portrait Gallery, London, 1996, pp. 129-147.
- 2 At present in the possession of Jarman, The Picture Framer, 158 Burwood Rd., Hawthorn, Vic 3122.
- 3 Information from Claire Newhouse, Honours student, Department of Fine Arts, University of Melbourne in 1998.
- 4 Claire Newhouse, "John Thallon 1848-1918" *Melbourne Journal of Technical Studies in Art*, 1, 1999, pp. 81-98.
- 5 1889-90: 109-111 Little Collins St.; 1891-92 222 Russell St.; 1893-95 105 Russell St.; 1896 122 Little Collins St; 1897-1900; 122 Little Collins St. and Eastern Arcade, 133 Bourke St.
- 6 Four for part of the '90s: Shatford 1889-1892; Syle 1889-1895, Musschialli 1889-1897, Bernard & Co 1898-1900. Eight for the whole '90s: Campi, Caro, Dimond Bros, Hickey, Stevens, Tiller, Whitehead Jnr.
- 7 Clientele included Florence Fuller, Portia Geach, Ina Gregory, Bernard Hall, Arthur Louriero, John Longstaff, Fred McCubbin, John Mather, Hilda Rix Nicholas, James Peele, Helen Peters, H. S. Power, John Ford Paterson, Hugh Ramsay, Louise Rigall, Tom Roberts, Charles Rolando after whom he named a frame, Jan H. Scheltema, Walter Seehusen, Clara Southern, Arthur Streeton, Jane Sutherland, Violet Teague, May Vale, James C. Waite, P. Fletcher Watson, Walter Withers & Blamire Young.
- 8 Newhouse *op. cit.*, 81. Tom Roberts, Fred McCubbin, Jane Sutherland and Hugh Paterson were also students that year.
- 9 E. Cant, "Does Gideon Saint have the answer? Pattern books and picture framemaking in 19th century Australia", *Australiana*, vol 21 no. 4, 1999 p. 120.
- 10 *ibid.*, p. 118 pl. 2.
- 11 Named after George Watts, a British painter of the second half of the 19th century who used this frame for 95% of his paintings.
- 12 E. Cant, "Gilded sand and the decoration of 19th-century Australian picture frames", *The World of Antiques and Art*, Jan-June 2000, p. 41.
- 13 *ibid.*, p 41.
- 14 *South Australian Register*, Thursday 28 Dec. 1854, p. 2, col. 3.
- 15 Hood File, Archives Office of Tasmania, Murray St., Hobart.
- 16 These were only manual operations. Steam was used briefly in Melbourne in 1880 but not again until 1888 and afterwards, when factories were gas powered. In Sydney steam and gas were used only from 1898/99.
- 17 J. Shields, *Skill retained: Craft work, craft unions and the survival of apprenticeship in NSW, 1860-1914*, Ph D thesis, Dept. of Economic History, University of Sydney, 1990.
- 18 Suggested by Lloyd Reeves, Melbourne framer, on 8 July 1997, as he inspected an Isaac Whitehead Snr frame and indicated the care with which the ornament had been applied.
- 19 An imitation gold leaf made from copper and zinc.
- 20 His trade label at this time: "John Thallon / Carver & Gilder / Carton Pierre & Fibrous Plaster Manufacture / 222 Russell St. / Melbourne".
- 21 One was the McArthur Gallery in 1900 when 77 paintings were cleaned for a total cost of £14.



**Plate 1. Riverview Challenge Cup 1893.** E. Butcher & Co, retailer. John Priora, maker. Overall height 32 cm, width 21 cm. Photograph Andrew Frolows, courtesy Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview.

## The Riverview Gold Challenge Cup

# A Technical and Stylistic Enigma

**Raymond Stebbins**

**P**rofessor Raymond Stebbins investigates the unusual construction methods and stylistic features of the Riverview Gold Challenge Cup, made in the 1890s Depression (see our previous issue), and discusses it against the technical and stylistic development of silversmithing.

Kenneth Cavill's recent investigation concerning the attribution of the Riverview Gold Challenge Cup rowing trophy<sup>1</sup> to John Priora has thrown new light on its origins. Simultaneously it has posed further questions regarding the unusual method of its construction, and the preference for a style that peaked in Britain virtually a century prior to its creation in 1893 in the Colony of NSW.

Although evidence of new interest in the Classical era first emerged in France in the 1750s,<sup>2</sup> the architect-designer Robert Adam, whose name became synonymous

with the style, pioneered a particularly English interpretation of the Neoclassical revival in the 1760s. In the discipline of silversmithing key exponents were Matthew Boulton of Birmingham and Hester Bateman in London.

The movement accelerated with a renewed interest in antiquity after excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum, and was supported by a mounting rejection of the excessively ornate Rococo style in favour of the purity of Greece and Rome. Of greater significance however, was the fact that this new preoccupation with clarity, elegance, lightness and precision of form coincided with the introduction of the Industrial Revolution, and with it came the transition of the silversmith's craft from a studio-based practice to that of mass production manufacture.

"The improvement of manufacturing techniques and the cumulative results of new inventions had important effects on the methods of silversmiths and on their status" claimed Taylor,<sup>3</sup> who was of course referring primarily to English and American silver and practitioners who saw their role as designer-craftsmen being replaced by factory labourers. Australian craftsmen were to remain quarantined from the factory assembly culture for many decades.

Processes utilised to manufacture and purvey silver to the masses included power-driven rolling mills capable of consistently producing very thin gauge silver plate. Stamping and embossing machinery, developed in 1769, enabled decoration such as fluting to become popular on production items, and in 1799 machinery that produced a range of beaded wires was patented.

Combined with the advent of Sheffield Plate (which fused a thin film of silver onto copper), Neoclassical silverware became associated with the introduction of affordable silver for the mass market. It also featured in the cut price wars between the sterling silver produced in London, and the Sheffield Plate of Sheffield and Birmingham that owed much to Matthew Boulton's enterprise.<sup>4</sup> The advantage of machine production became obvious: stamping was a much cheaper process than casting or chasing and could imitate the visual appearance of handcrafted silver with a mere 30% of the material previously required. The pursuit of the appearance of elegant lightness observed in the Greek designs was matched by a lightness of actual weight, for thinner gauges of metal were much employed and even demanded by multiple production techniques.

Taylor went on to identify a range of visual characteristics of Neoclassical silverware which included mechanically embossed shallow fluting and three dimensional relief ornament such as ribbons and bows - created as modular components, and soldered to the surface of the vessel. Gold as a material was seldom used, as the Neoclassical style was geared for cheaper mass-produced items. Gilding was also uncommon, although the interiors of sugar bowls and goblets were by necessity parcel gilt to prevent corrosion. Surface enrichments were enhanced by bright-cut engraving, which superseded conventional engraving.

The Riverview Gold Challenge Cup (plate 1) is certainly typical of the Neoclassical idiom, employing highly recognisable design elements such as fluting, beaded wires,



**Plate 2.** *Riverview Challenge Cup* 1893. detail. Photograph Andrew Frolovs, courtesy Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview.

engraving, applied ribbons, festoons, rosettes, acanthus and formal foliage. It even utilises very thin metal, but certainly not because it involved mechanical manufacture (beyond a basic spinning lathe). It is most probable that the lightness of gauge was an economic decision taken in response to the impact of the economic recession prevailing in the Colony.

The principal curiosity for a silversmith such as myself is why a maker would choose a style and techniques eminently suited to the pressing and stamping processes of a mechanised factory environment when these facilities were unavailable at the time in NSW. He would therefore be faced with the prospect of having to replicate the precision of such machinery by handcraft in a studio context. Technical considerations aside, patronage and perceptions of appropriate fashion no doubt significantly influenced the decision.

Close inspection of the Cup (plate 2) reveals some fascinating examples of innovation and creative problem solving, many of which break with the silversmith's standard repertoire of construction techniques. For example, in Britain six centuries of strict hallmarking regulation had ensured that wherever possible all separate components of an object, including applied ornament, must be soldered together; lids and covers had to carry their own independent marks. Essentially the idea was to protect consumers from fraudulent transposition of lesser quality components after the assay was completed. While this practice was not legally enforced in Australia, most silversmiths nevertheless continued with this age-old convention, but the Riverview Gold Challenge Cup proves an exception.

Thin plate of either silver or gold, as used in the Riverview Cup, would provide a serious challenge



to the silversmith to prevent melting when attaching applied decoration with hot solder. The Adam-style ribbon around the upper level of this cup has in fact been cast in multiple elements and attached to the body without heat by means of very fine gold rivets, thus avoiding the risk. Likewise, the handles and finial are also attached by cleverly concealed cold-fastening devices such as rivets or nuts and bolts fashioned in gold. The nuts that appear on the outside of the vessel are disguised as floral ornaments, while the nut that attaches the finial is a precisely pierced gold wing nut. The fluting, which aims to replicate mechanical embossing, is actually a very fine piece of handwork. The decorative elements, including the beaded wirework, appear to have been cast rather than fabricated. All in all, the employment of a whole series of processes aligned to the workshop of the jeweller and watchmaker, where large-scale soldering equipment and expertise would not be available, provides considerable substantiation for Kenneth Cavill's findings that the Riverview Challenge Gold Cup was made by John Priora, whose jewellery practice at the turn of the century would have been more attuned to the specific processes utilised in its construction.

While John Priora certainly overcame the technical challenges associated with replicating a difficult and unfamiliar style in gold, a metal that Taylor claims was almost never used in the Neoclassical period in Britain<sup>5</sup>, it turns out that he was not the only one to do so in Australia. Of the extremely small number of nineteenth century secular gold vessels remaining in Australia<sup>6</sup> at least three Sydney racing cups were constructed in gold in Neoclassical style by Christian L. Qvist between 1869 -1871. Henry Steiner's 1881

Adelaide Hunt Club Cup is also a fine example, as are the Geelong Cups of 1874 and 1890 designed by Woodhouse and made by Edward Fischer, which were Australian hybrids of the style incorporating classic form decorated with indigenous flora.<sup>7</sup>

One has to speculate what prompted this general approval for the use of the Neoclassical style when commissioning gold trophies associated with horse racing and rowing. The vessels would have been expensive to produce and were no doubt custom-built for wealthy patrons. It is quite feasible that conservative patrons, when faced with the prospect of commissioning rare and expensive items in gold would favour the selection of a conventional style.

Neoclassicism was the ultimate conservative and timeless style. Long before the Riverview Gold Challenge Cup was commissioned in NSW, Charles Tatham, the pioneer of the Regency period, criticised the style in England as early as 1806 for being clinical, austere and lightweight.<sup>8</sup>

The question remains as to why the Riverview Challenge Cup was not fashioned in any of the other eclectic revival styles of the nineteenth century, or in the typical Australiana format favoured by local silversmiths of the time. Visual communication had improved significantly with the advent of the great International Exhibitions. Imagine if Priora's commissioners had provided such a talented designer with the artistic licence to fashion the 1893 Riverview Gold Challenge Cup in the Arts and Crafts style that blossomed from the 1880s, or in the Art Nouveau style of the 1890s. Its already high significance would be further enhanced by its interpretation as a unique example of the genre in gold.

## Ray Stebbins

Trained in the early sixties, Emeritus Professor Ray Stebbins established the Jewellery and Metals program at Melbourne Teachers College in 1969. In 1978, he undertook a Masters Degree at the Royal College of Art in London. He headed the Metalcraft department at Melbourne State College from 1981 to 1984, when he moved to RMIT and headed the Gold and Silversmithing programs at RMIT University until 1997. In 1991 he was appointed Australia's first Professor of Gold and Silversmithing.

Professor Stebbins has lectured extensively and curated more than 30 gold and silversmithing exhibitions around the world. As a practising silversmith he has participated in over 40 exhibitions, has work in public and private collections, and has won four major awards.

## Notes

- 1 Kenneth Cavill, "Genesis of the Riverview Gold Challenge Cup" *Australiana*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2001 pp. 12-14.
- 2 Margaret Holland *Phaidon Guide to Silver*. Phaidon Press, Oxford 1978 p. 34.
- 3 Gerald Taylor, *Silver*. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth 1965 p. 213.
- 4 Margaret Holland *op. cit.* p. 38
- 5 Gerald Taylor, *op. cit.* p. 222
- 6 John Hawkins, "Australian Goldsmiths' Work 1834-1950" *World of Antiques and Art*, no. 60, December 2000, pp. 12-17.
- 7 Eva Czernis-Ryl, *Australian Gold & Silver*. Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney 1995 pp. 26-31; *Gold and Civilisation*, Art Exhibitions Australia and the National Museum of Australia, Sydney 2001.
- 8 Gerald Taylor, *op. cit.* p. 233.

# Australian Colonial Furniture and Pieces of Art

## *Entries Now Invited*

Sydney Auction: Sunday 26 August 2001

Closing date for entries: Wednesday 20 June 2001



**For a confidential  
appraisal of work you  
may wish to consign  
please telephone:**

**Melbourne**

Robert Bradlow or  
Tim Pitcher  
03 9509 2900

**Sydney**

Justin Miller or  
Irene Travers  
02 9362 1000

A presentation table used at the  
signing of Australian Federation 1901.  
Estimate: \$4,000 - 6,000

# SOTHEBY'S

# A Guide to Collecting Photographs

**Plate 1.**  
Anonymous  
photographer,  
*King Billy*, c.  
1880-1900.



**Josef Lebovic**

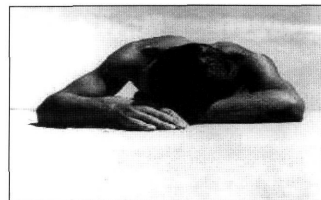
**F**or anyone except the most experienced collector, the prospect of going out and buying a photograph can be quite daunting: you have to know where to go, what to look for, and how to acquire it. This guide has been prepared to further your understanding of collecting photographs and to assist you to enter the vibrant and thriving photography market.

## Why collect photographs?

Photography is a very exciting and popular medium that most people find easy to relate to and understand. It is still widely available and very affordable relative to other forms of art. Internationally, in the last couple of decades, photography has enjoyed a considerable increase in demand, and subsequent escalation in value.

## What is an original photograph?

Like printmakers, photographers produce their images by hand. The principles of making a screenprint or an etching are the same as making a photographic print. The printmaker uses paper, ink and press. The photographer uses photographic paper, chemicals and light. Each print made is unique and individual, and may vary subtly from other prints produced from the same negative.



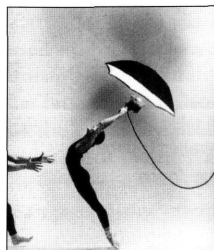
**Plate 2.** Max Dupain, *Sunbaker* (Culburra, NSW) 1937.

## What to buy when you start collecting

Experts suggest the following rules:

1. Always buy what you like. Trust your instinct, follow your heart, know your taste.
2. Do your research first. Look around, see what's available, discover what you like.
3. Be practical. Buy what you love now, for that will probably be what you will enjoy in the future.
4. Start small. Buy one or two works by a particular photographer you like, or of a particular style, subject or period you are drawn to.

*These ten photographs are from Ten Australian Photographs. Folio One – agent Josef*



Greg Barrett, *Vicki Attard Flasdance* 1995



Olive Cotton, *Teacup Ballet* 1935



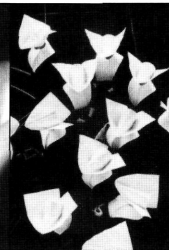
Brett Hilder, *Indian Rug* 1997



David Potts, *The Rabbit Trapper* 1947



Robert McFarlane, *Bea Nude* 1978



David Moore, *Sisters of Charity Washington DC* 1956



## How to buy

1. Cultivate a relationship with a gallery or dealer who is knowledgeable in the field.
2. Know some background about the photograph you are acquiring. Ask for some history about the photographer or the picture. The more information you have, the more you will appreciate the work.
3. Consult an expert in the field for insight into your choices.
4. Go to as many exhibitions as possible to train your eye and learn what you like.
5. Look at books and learn about various photographers.

## What affects the price you pay for a photograph

Prices for photographs can vary dramatically from a few hundred dollars to tens of thousands. Several factors affect the price you will pay.

### Rarity and condition

Key factors influencing the price of a particular photograph are:

1. The importance of the photographer.
2. The importance of the particular image.
3. The rarity of the photograph.
4. The condition of the photographic print.

## Vintage vs later printing

A distinction is made between vintage and modern prints, and this is another factor that will influence prices. Vintage prints are generally defined as those printed within five years of the date of the negative, and consequently fetch a higher price. Photographic prints made more than five years after the negative was exposed are referred to as "later printing", and may have been made by the photographer or by others. Non-vintage work should not, however, be viewed as inferior. Some photographers actually prefer their later prints; they may feel, for instance, that they have developed their technique further, and will often have better equipment.

### Editions

Although each photographic print is unique, an individual hand-produced work, photographers sometimes "edition" their photographs so that buyers know precisely how many prints have been produced from any one negative at any one time. In the same way as etchings are signed and numbered, so some photographers these days number each photograph as one of a total edition of, say, 50. Editioning, however, is a recent practice, and was uncommon prior to the 1970s. Traditionally, photographs were printed only on demand, and many, if not most, photographers still follow this custom today.

## Understanding the market

The majority of collectible photographs are priced below \$10,000, and you can generally enter this market at around \$350. There is a small blue-chip market at the top of important photographs by significant photographers, which may command prices over \$20,000. You may also find that there is a marked difference between prices in the Australian and International markets. Collecting photography in Australia is still in its developmental phase and prices overseas tend to reflect the greater experience of collectors in this field. However, as the popularity of collecting photographs in Australia increases and as Australian photographers gain further recognition overseas, the Australian marketplace will grow ever stronger.

## After you have purchased a photograph

### Conservation

You need to keep in mind, when purchasing a photograph, how you will store and care for your photograph in order to ensure its longevity.

1. Photographs should not be hung in extreme climates with excessive light or humidity.
2. Ensure your photograph is framed professionally in museum

*Lebovic Gallery. Copyright of each image is retained by each individual photographer.*



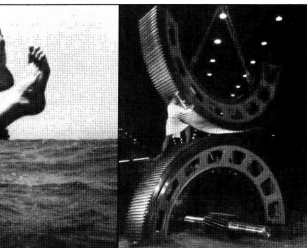
Graham McCarter, *Opal Miner's Wife* 1974



Jon Lewis, *Adagio Dancers Bondi* 1984



Roger Scott, *Queenscliff Sydney* 1975



Wolfgang Sievers, *Gears for Mining Industry* 1967

standard, acid-free boards. No adhesive tape should touch the image; photographic corners or museum tape should be used.

### Copyright

Buying a photograph does not mean you have bought copyright or the negative. Copyright remains with the photographer or copyright holder, and the image cannot be reproduced without their permission.

## The main photographic processes

### Albumen Paper Print

The most common 19th century process. Australian examples date from 1855. The paper is thin and prints may be pasted on card. Most albumen prints are contact prints from wet-plate negatives. The paper is coated with albumen (egg white) emulsion and sensitised prior to exposure by floating on silver nitrate.

The emulsion surface has a natural sheen. Albumen prints usually have a definite gloss but can also be matt or burnished. After 1875 some prints were enamelled to give a high gloss finish. The image is often light brown, but some toned, enamelled albumen paper prints appear new.

### Ambrotypes

The ambrotype, or collodiotype, is a thin collodion negative on glass with a black backing of paper, cloth or paint to make it look like a positive. It usually has a pinchbeck frame, and is enclosed in a velvet-lined leather or imitation leather case. Because of this presentation, ambrotypes are often confused with daguerreotypes, although the fact that they are on glass should be enough to distinguish them from the earlier process. The image is easy to see, dark, and sometimes hand-coloured. Ambrotypes were introduced into Australia in 1854, being most popular 1855-1865.

### Colour dye transfer/ Cibachrome

A direct positive colour print from a transparency, characterised by rich colour and a gloss surface. Produced by a silver dye-bleach process, a complete set of dyes is present in the paper and the image is formed by their selective removal by bleaching. Cibachrome is the brand name.

### Daguerreotype

Uses a metal plate – a highly polished, silver-plated copper sheet. The image is protected by a gilt mat and glass cover, usually in a velvet-lined, leather-covered case or papier-maché frame. After 1853 daguerreotypes often came in American Union cases made of compressed shellac, sawdust and blackening, often covered with exquisite designs. The most important distinguishing feature of the daguerreotype is that the image is mirror-like and sometimes difficult to find, necessitating tilting to see it.

## Timeline for Photographic Processes in Chronological Order

The photographic processes listed reflect the approximate date they were invented and not necessarily when they were in common use. In Australia, some of these processes were not used until much later because they were not as popular or as accessible compared to other countries eg Tintypes were invented c. 1860 but only became popular in the later part of the 19th century in Australia.

Process	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930 to present
Calotype/paper negative											
Daguerreotype											
Albumen paper print											
Stereoscopic photographs											
Collodion wet plate											
Ambrotype											
Carte de visite											
Tintype											
Cabinet picture											
Collodion dry plate											
Platinotype or Platinum Prints											
Gelatin silver print											

### **Mixed media**

When other materials, such as dyes and paint, are added to the print.

### **Platinum print (Platinotype)**

Platinum prints are permanent paper prints produced using platinum salts rather than silver. Perfected by William Wills in the mid-1870s, the process involves paper, coated with potassium chloroplatinate and ferric oxalate, being exposed under the negative by contact printing. The light reduces the ferric salt to a ferrous salt, and the potassium oxalate developer dissolves these ferrous salts which in turn reduce the platinum salt to its metallic state. Dilute hydrochloric acid is used as a fixer to remove the unexposed ferric salt. The resulting print, usually possessing a warm black tone, is very stable owing to the platinum metal being extremely inert. Properly manipulated, the platinum printing process could produce prints of fine, rich graduation.

### **Polaroid**

Brand name of an instant development process formed by internal dye diffusion.

### **Silver gelatin/Gelatin silver photograph**

Standard black and white photographic printing process of the twentieth century, used from the 1880s to today. The paper, which can be glossy or matt, has an emulsion of gelatin containing silver salts (usually silver bromide). It is usually exposed by projection in an enlarger and the image is brought out by chemical development; the silver salts depositing grains of black metallic silver to form an image. Gelatin silver papers, which became fairly general after 1910, are very sensitive by comparison with earlier printing-out papers and usually produce a 'cold' black image.

### **Type C print**

A direct positive colour print from a negative, as opposed to the Cibachrome/colour dye transfer from a transparency.

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***This article is adapted from a booklet originally published by Josef Lebovic Gallery, Nyron Mapp Gallery and Stills gallery.***

## Society Members Honoured

On 1 March, Professor Marie Bashir AC was sworn in as the 37th Governor of New South Wales. In that capacity Her Excellency opened our first conference, which by a happy coincidence had already been planned for Government House Sydney.

As an Affiliated Society of the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, we were asked to nominate

people whose distinguished contributions to the development of the Museum and its areas of interest might entitle them to Life Fellowship of the Powerhouse Museum.

Four new Life Fellows of the Powerhouse Museum were invested at a dinner held on 2 May – Anne Schofield, Kevin Fahy, Trevor Kennedy and Leo Schofield, three of them members of the Australiana Society. Our congratulations to all of those honoured.

Please let the Editors know of other Society Members who receive awards and honours.



# NEW BOOKS

Glenn R. Cooke, *Lady Woodcarvers of Rockhampton*. Rockhampton, Rockhampton Art Gallery, 2000. Soft cover, 30 pp, 37 illustrations. RRP \$10.95 plus p&p from PO Box 243 Rockhampton, Qld 4700.

With Federation celebrations upon us this exhibition with such a euphonious title is certainly one of the first cabs off the rank. Well-researched and presented this exhibition catalogue introduces us to a number of Rockhampton's ladies and their work which espoused their artistic endeavours in the Arts and Crafts tradition of this period, some fostered by a unique Nordic inspiration.

This publication clearly indicates 'there is much to be discovered in an exploration of regional art and craft history and women's contribution to a nascent regional identity'.

Hopefully future furniture and social historians will accept the challenge that Australian capital cities were not the only source of contemporary artistic endeavour.

**Kevin Fahy**

Dorothy Erickson (ed) *Art and Design in Western Australia. Perth Technical College 1900-2000*. Perth, Central Metropolitan College of TAFE, 2000. 320 pages, 285 illustrations.

We have published excerpts from the early part of this 320-page work, but for the rest of the 20th century you'll find a wealth of useful information about the progress of the school, its teachers and students, and its products. The heaviest concentration is on the last third of the century when the School underwent "a new beginning" fed by

a resurgent mining industry. Unlike other publications of this ilk, this aims to be a valuable resource, and in addition to well-researched essays, there are lists of the thousands of teachers and students who attended the college campuses over the century.

**John Wade**

Scott Carlin, *Elizabeth Bay House – A History and Guide*. Sydney, Historic Houses Trust of NSW 2001. 104 pages, 96 illustrations, RRP \$15, p&p \$5.50 in NSW.

Scott Carlin, Curator of Elizabeth Bay House, draws together the research on this 1830s house, most of it done since the house became a Museum in 1977. As well as regal sight-lines down the Harbour, this "elegant and sophisticated" Neo-Classical house had a succession of inhabitants ranging from the Colonial Secretary to scientists and artists. Famous people visited them, or featured in the society pages when it was a wedding reception venue in the 1930s.

This intelligently written, richly illustrated and well designed book presents the entire history of the house and the lives of its owners. Topographical, archaeological and historical research recreates its original magnificent 54-acre setting granted to Macleay in 1826. The text and maps provide a guide to put the house back into its sequence of occupiers and users, with a little help from your imagination.

**John Wade**

Caroline Miley, *The Arts among the Handicrafts: the Arts and Crafts Movement in Victoria*

1889-1929. Banyule, St Lawrence Press 2001, 250 pages. ISBN 0646409883. \$69.95 + \$10 p&p from 6 Anderson St Banyule Vic 3084.

This hardcover book breaks new ground in documentation and analysis of Australian decorative arts theory and history, and in the role of women at this period.

It incorporates a detailed discussion of the theories of the English Arts and Crafts Movement as received in Victoria, and the response of local architects and craftspeople in developing a theoretical framework for local conditions. A full history of the Arts and Crafts Society of Victoria over the relevant period is accompanied by a comprehensive discussion of the First Australian Exhibition of Women's Work, 1907.

Extensive appendices contain biographies of prominent architects and craftspeople, membership and exhibitions of major Victorian Arts and Crafts organisations and breakdowns of activity in various crafts over the period, plus bibliography, notes index.

Patricia Miles, *Lucinda, Little Ship of State*. Sydney, Australian National Maritime Museum 2001. 20 pages, 19 illustrations, RRP \$5.

This timely booklet reveals the role of the Queensland Government steam side-wheel yacht *Lucinda* at Easter 1891, when she was used for the committee drafting the Australian Constitution, and a brief history of the evocative vessel that now lies buried in Moreton Bay. Models, mementoes and furniture from *Lucinda* survive in various public and private collections.



**Plate 1.** William Andrews, box, brass and copper set with gemstone, 1930s. Family collection. Photograph D. Erickson.

As we have seen in earlier articles there was considerable interest in a variety of arts in the first decade of the twentieth century. Art was a fashionable pastime for many people and a number of women made it their career. Dilettante interest in the arts declined during the First World War. Not only were most of the students drawn to "war work" but the Domestic Art Movement had run its course. Numbers at the Tech were down by 192 subject enrolments even if self-supporting classes run in Art, Art Needlework, Dresscutting and Millinery are included in the calculations. However there were more courses which were vocationally oriented. Classes were open to returned servicemen and included Signwriting, Photographic Retouching and Finishing, Cabinet-making, Monumental Masonry,

# Art and Design in Western Australia

*Dorothy Erickson*

## Part 6

Perth Technical School –  
Between  
the Wars

This is the last instalment on artists and designers in Western Australia, celebrating the centenary of the WA School of Art and Design (Perth Technical School).

It is adapted from the book *Art and Design in Western Australia: Perth Technical College's Art and Design Department 1900-2000*, edited by Dr Erickson and published by Central Metropolitan College of TAFE, Perth.

Engraving, Designing, Art Needlework, Architecture and Teaching. There were also full time courses in Dress-cutting and Millinery for the dependants of incapacitated or deceased soldiers. Trades subjects included Carpentry, Blacksmithing, etc and Tailoring. The art classes for retraining the war-wounded centred on Clay Modelling although Art Metalwork was taught as required<sup>1</sup>.

One returned serviceman who made a new profession in this way was **William Andrews** (1878-1959), brother of miniaturist Annie. He

worked with Linton immediately after the War and went on to have a career as a designer for Hecla in Melbourne. Andrews probably assisted with the fabrication of the brass sanctuary light designed by Linton for the Soldier's Chapel at St George's Cathedral. He returned to Perth in 1927 and during the Great Depression made interesting brass and copper caskets for sale (plate 1).

### Commercial Classes

Technical Education provided an alternative route for some students to take their secondary education. Commercial courses that led to entrance into the public service or the University's "Junior Exam" were available. Art was an optional subject in this stream and they sat in with the other students<sup>2</sup>. Full courses of study in Advanced Art at third year level, extending over several years, were arranged to meet the requirements of day and evening students. Commercial class students were a large part of the student body as were the Domestic subjects of Dresscutting and Millinery, so much so that the 1920 Royal Commission into Education in Western Australia considered there was too great an emphasis on this and classes were narrowed to a more technical bias.

A student who took both art and domestic subjects was **Eileen Cook** (Mrs Edward Kohler 1906-1991). As the eldest daughter Eileen was required to look after her delicate mother and younger sisters and could only attend intermittently between 1924 and 1928. She took classes in Dresscutting & Design passing with credit as well as the art classes, Life, Light & Shade (credit) and Landscape. She then earned her living as a commercial artist, primarily as an illustrator drawing advertisements for the jewellers Levinsons and Caris Bros and for Foy & Gibson's department



**Plate 2.** A. B. Webb, Analgesic Mixture, artwork for label, 1915. WA Museum collection. Photograph Douglas Elford, courtesy WA Museum.

store, painting white furniture and wooden objects with wildflowers for the tourist industry and designing and screening curtain fabric. She was later Head of the Art Department at Ajax Plaster Co before marrying the sculptor Edward Kohler. After her marriage she made small clay models and figurines (in collaboration with her husband) as samples for the china and tile manufacturing firm Brisbane and Wunderlich<sup>3</sup>.

Another artist of the period who enrolled in 1920 and later studied at the Maylands School of Art was **Marina Shaw** (Mrs Flynn, b. 1903) daughter of a well known naturalist J. B. Shaw. She became a painter of ceramics and later a sculptor. Marina married an aviation radar operator during the war and returned with him to Victoria where she exhibited in the prestigious George's

department store. Her ceramic designs are held in the National Gallery and in the Art Gallery of WA. The strong floral work often outlined in black and transferred to porcelain is typical of the exercises undertaken in the Technical School at this time.

Other students of note in the 1920s include **Betsey Currie** (b. 1905) who later worked and lived with Linton. **Rae Amelia McPherson** (Mrs Cliff Harris b. 1905), commercial artist and illustrator for a family magazine, later a noted miniaturist, and **Iris Francis** (Mrs Wilkinson, b. 1913) who went on to teach at Perth Technical College. Others were painter-teacher **Brenda Holland** and successful freelance commercial artists **Marie Fimister** and **Winnie Jones**. From 1927-1932 there were also University of WA students in the classes who do not figure in the exam results as theirs were posted at the University. The art critic Leslie Rees was one of these.

An important addition to the teaching staff was **Archibald Bertram Webb** (1887-1944) print-maker and commercial artist who taught from 1921 to 1934. Webb was a graphic designer of considerable ability and contributed to the artistic life of the State. He was born in England to the part-owner/editor of *The Critic* who persuaded his son to work freelance for *Pall Mall* and other magazines while attending St Martin's School of Art in the evening. This probably made Webb sympathetic to the many part-time students he had in Western Australia. After suffering from rheumatic fever in England he was advised to seek a drier climate and like so many in Western Australia's artistic circles emigrated for his health. Webb arrived with his new bride in 1915. He undertook a lot of commercial design such as product packaging





**Plate 3.** A. B. Webb, Skin and complexion lotion, artwork for label, 1915. WA Museum collection. Photograph Douglas Elford, courtesy WA Museum.

design. Fine examples are in the WA Museum collection (**plates 2, 3 & 4**).

He soon established a reputation and replaced assistant Art Master **John Edgar** when the latter left the art school in 1920. Webb succeeded James Linton as head of the Art Department in 1932, exhibiting the following year in the National Gallery of Victoria. Diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease he returned to England in 1934 seeking a cure. Although successful artistically in London the climate aggravated his condition and he returned to Perth where he set up his own art school and held annual exhibitions of his art which was popular and bought for many homes.

Webb was one of the first to make colour woodcuts in Australia

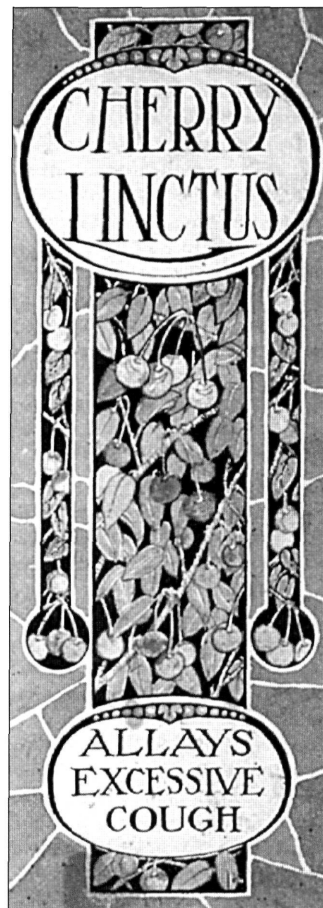
and attracted considerable media attention and success in his lifetime<sup>4</sup>. Articles about his work appeared in *Art in Australia* in 1924 and *The Studio* in 1926. He exhibited in important national and international exhibitions in the 1920s and 1930s. He also undertook large poster commissions for the Empire Marketing Board. These were displayed on railway hoardings in Britain. They were also on display at the Tech Annual Exhibition on 11 October 1925<sup>5</sup>.

From 1921, after Webb's arrival, and in keeping with the spirit of the day, classes at Perth Tech became more commercially oriented, tending towards graphic art. The syllabus was expanded. "Commercial art" reached quite a level of sophistication in Western Australia and the graphic arts became an important art form of the period. Webb himself designed labels and packaging for products as well as stencil patterns for commercially-produced china. Examples are in the WA Museum and AGWA collections. His designs for Scurrlocks Pharmacy c. 1915-1920 include *Skin and Complexion Lotion* featuring a female viewing herself in a mirror, the delightful gouaches *Gaiety* and *Night Scene*, plus labels such as *Snowwhite Dentifrice*, *Curafllu*, an *Analgesic Mixture* which featured Eucalyptus and Agonis leaves and others such as *Cherry Linctus* which is an elegant structured design incorporating stylised cherries (**plate 4**).

### Centenary and Depression

By 1928 however numbers were beginning to decline. The gloss appears to have gone off art as a career or hobby. Printing trades no longer supported the courses. Commercial class students had by now become a major part of the student body as had the "Domestic" subjects. The Great Depression that followed the Wall Street collapse of

1929 occurred in Western Australia's Centenary year. Both had an effect on the art and design produced in the State. The former provoked nostalgia and the latter removed art classes for the dilettanti. The Technical School's name was also changed to the Technical College in 1929 then in 1931, as part of the financial emergency, classes were restricted to vocational purposes only – primarily graphic design courses and other supports for trade. It was not until after WWII that a fine



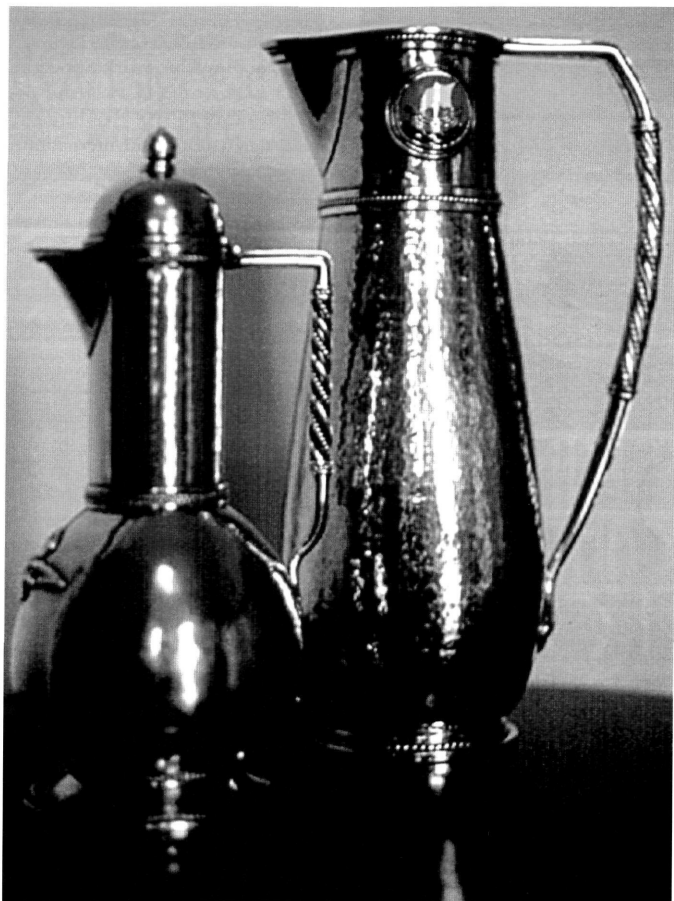
**Plate 4.** A. B. Webb, Scurrlock's Cherry Linctus, artwork for label, 1915. WA Museum collection. Photograph Douglas Elford, courtesy WA Museum.

art stream was again offered at the Technical College.

Modern art was more aligned to the commercial world in the 1930s and the courses were already more oriented in that direction. **Jean Lang** (b. 1912) who was a student at Perth Tech between 1930 and 1935 went on to write and illustrate her own books produced in the war years. She, like many in the depression years, worked at what she could: teaching at Koobeelya Anglican Girls School in Katanning, at Calyx china factory, and drawing advertisements for Art Photo Engravers. Lessons were taken as they could be afforded. The subjects Linton taught in 1931 in his last year of teaching give an indication of the trend. They included Freehand, Model Drawing, Light & Shade, Still Life, Antique, Water Colour, Black & White, Black & White for Reproduction, Wash Drawing, Fashion Drawing, Design, Design for Fabrics, Model Drawing for Architects, Commercial Art (Letter and Poster design) Modelling and Woodcarving.

### Changing social attitudes

Social attitudes to women changed as a result of the Depression. A working woman was seen as taking the food from a male breadwinner's children. Social pressures of this kind deterred a whole generation of women from expecting to earn a living. Perversely many women denied other opportunities of working channelled their energies into art and craftwork. This had to be via private classes or mutual support organisations. For the majority the opportunity of professional training in fine art was no longer possible in Western Australia. This severely limited participation to certain socio-economic groups, or to practising traditional activities that could be passed on through



**Plate 5.** Jamie Linton, Church silver. St Jude's Church, South Australia. Photograph D. Erickson.

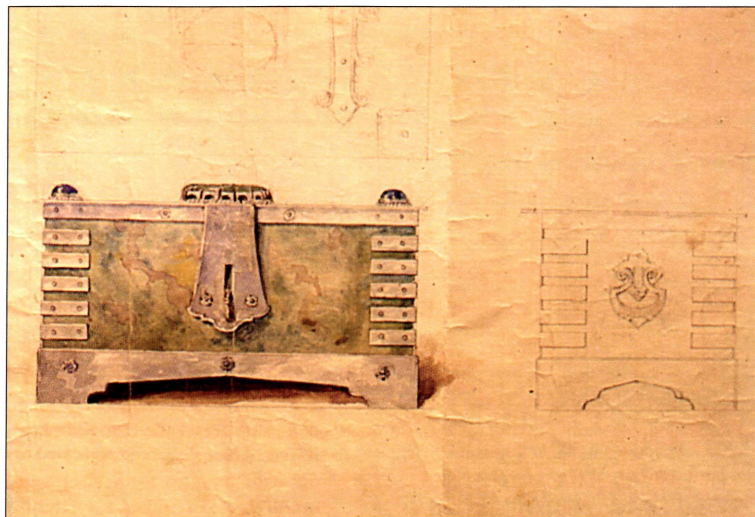
families and organisations such as the Country Women's Association.

### Part-time Students

Between the wars there was an increase in day-release apprentices from the printing trades. Quite a number of Perth Tech's famous ex-students were never full time. They had their living to earn and could only come part-time. One of these was **Hal Missingham** (1906-1994). He was apprenticed to a firm of process engravers, J. Gibbney & Son, and as part of his

apprenticeship was required to attend the course. After studies in Paris and London, Missingham worked as a freelance graphic designer in London and Sydney before serving in the AIF in WWII and becoming Director of the Art Gallery of NSW in 1945 - a position he held until 1971.

His friend **James Alexander Barrow (Jamie) Linton** (1904-1980) did not attend Perth Technical School regularly either. Most of his tuition was from his father in his studio making silver spoons and



**Plate 6.** Jamie Linton, rendering of a box, watercolour, 1920s. Family collection. Photograph D. Erickson.

other craftworks before studying in Paris and London. He intended to become a sculptor but after returning from Paris and London in 1928 he did not obtain enough work in this line to support himself and turned to making a living as a silversmith, becoming Australia's best known smith by the end of WWII (plates 5 & 6).

When Jamie went to London his father had another part-time student, **Harold Englund**, to assist him. Englund had obtained credit passes in Light & Shade and Woodcarving and exhibited silver-work but the latter was possibly undertaken in Linton's studio as an assistant. Englund went on to make much of the furniture coming from the Linton Studio. He was one of the few students who made their living in this way.

**Clem Ambler** (1907-1989) an illustrator at the *West Australian* studied Freehand Drawing and Light & Shade and Pen & Ink Drawing in 1925-27. Ambler successfully went on to take over one section of Stanway Tapp's art department at West Australian Newspapers when the latter retired in the

1930s. Examples of Ambler's striking graphic work can be seen in the *Western Mail*.

**Vlase Zanalis** (1902-1973) another part-time student was born on the island of Castellorizo, Greece as Palassis Zainalis and following his father's death arrived in Western Australia in 1914. He enrolled part time at Perth Technical School as Palas Zorailis from 1921 to 1927 studying at night and obtaining credit passes. Harold Birch, another student at the time, remarked on the amount of attention the young man received from Linton in class. He eked out a living painting murals for Greek orthodox churches, portraits and some art teaching. Larger works were painted such as *The Birth of a Nation* which toured around Australia before finally being destroyed. Zanalis painted a series of paintings of miners in the late 1930s plus a series of the production of the *West Australian* newspaper. These were praised for their heroic realism.

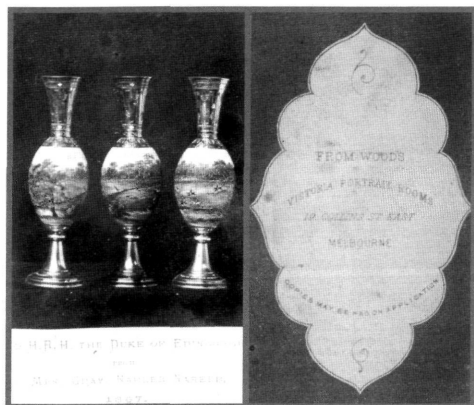
Another from the printing trades was **Percy Ivor Hunt** (1903-1971) who as a gifted student took evening classes at Fremantle Technical School

while studying at Scotch College. He took further evening classes at Perth Technical School in the 1920s and additional classes at Linton's Art School. In 1924 he began to work for J. Gibbney & Son, saving enough by 1929 to go to the Central School of Arts and Crafts and the Regent Street Polytechnic in London. He had a successful career as a graphic designer in London and Singapore before this

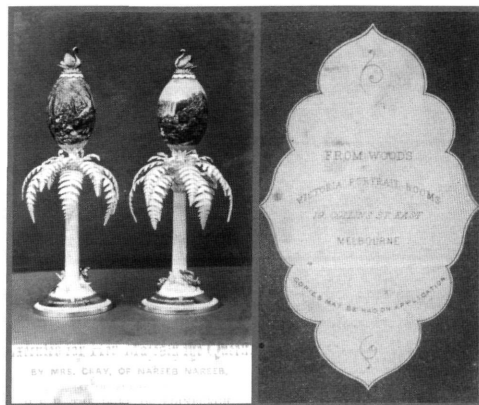
was interrupted by World War II. He became assistant, then Art Instructor and finally Head of Art at Perth Technical College between 1941 and 1964 guiding the institution into the expansive post war period that saw it spawn a variety of other institutions, most notably WAIT now Curtin University – but that is another story.

## Notes

- 1 Linton's method of teaching this changed between 1910 and 1930. Jean Lang who learnt repoussé from Linton in 1931 stated that they did not use pitch boxes. Instead they padded up a board with packing cardboard and hammered the metal into that (Pers. comm. 1990).
- 2 To study art at Technical School at this time a student only had to be 14 and complete an aptitude test.
- 3 Information from Robyn Taylor obtained from Eileen Kohler.
- 4 He owned a collection of Ukiyo-e wood-block prints given to him by the art curator George Pitt Morison.
- 5 Admired British artists Clausen and Brangwyn also designed posters for the railways in Britain at this time. In 1934 Webb designed posters for the Great Western Railway and wall papers for John Line & Co.



**Plate 1.** David Wood, photograph of three mounted swan eggs painted by Mrs Elizabeth Gray of Nareeb Nareeb to be presented to HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, 1867.



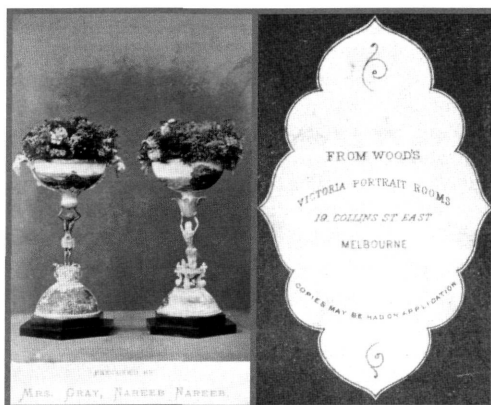
**Plate 2.** David Wood, photograph of two mounted swan eggs painted by Mrs Elizabeth Gray of Nareeb Nareeb presented to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, 1868.

## **Of Mrs Gray, Nareeb Nareeb,**

# Painted Eggs, Black Swans, Tree Ferns and Queens

**John Hawkins**

Since writing the article on the Australian travels of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh in *Australiana*<sup>1</sup> it has been my good fortune to acquire a set of three original photographs of Mrs Elizabeth Gray's Royal gifts (**plates 1, 2 and 3**). In the original article I was able to illustrate only a pair of swan egg vases; even *The Illustrated Melbourne Post* records her gift as being a pair of vases, not a set of three.<sup>2</sup> From these newly discovered photographs it would appear that Mrs Gray intended to give His Royal Highness a suite of three vases, but the right hand vase in plate 1 was lost or broken before presentation.



**Plate 3.** David Wood, photograph of two mounted swan eggs painted by Mrs Elizabeth Gray of Nareeb Nareeb, 1868.



All three photographs were taken by Mr David Wood.<sup>3</sup> This photograph of the Duke of Edinburgh's suite showing his address (plate 1a) was taken when he was at 41 Collins Street West in 1867. The gifts to Queen Victoria (plates 2a & 3a) were photo-graphed nearly a year later, probably in August 1868, at his new address 19 Collins Street East. *The Illustrated Australian News* of 5 August 1868 records that the suite for Queen Victoria was made by Kilpatrick & Co., Wood's next door neighbours at 39 Collins Street West when the first photograph was taken. On this evidence, I suggest that all these gifts were retailed through Kilpatrick's who used William Edwards' workshop as the manufacturer. The design of the gift to Queen Victoria is far removed from the chaste simplicity of the gift to the Duke and I suggest some form of collusion between Chevalier, Mrs Gray and Kilpatrick & Co. over the Queen's gift.

The relationship between the society lady, Mrs Gray, and Kilpatrick & Co. may originate from the decision to entrust Kilpatrick's with the manufacture of a wedding gift in 1863 from the Ladies of Victoria to the Princess of Wales, designed by Nicholas Chevalier and manufactured by William Edwards.<sup>4</sup> This centrepiece incorporated five emu eggs tipped with gold on a large fern tree support (plates 4 & 6).

Nicholas Chevalier was a member of the Prince's suite during his tour of the Western Districts of Victoria and through the artistic world would have been acquainted with Mrs Gray and her grazier husband Charles.<sup>5</sup> The Grays, both husband and wife, exhibited artworks at the 1866 Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition where Chevalier was awarded a medal for introducing the process of

## **THE BRIDAL GIFT OF THE LADIES OF VICTORIA TO H. R. H. THE PRINCESS OF WALES.**

**We have been requested to give publicity to the accompanying reply to the address which was forwarded by Lady Barkly, on behalf of the ladies of Victoria, to H.R.H. the Princess of Wales, requesting H.R.H.'s acceptance of their bridal present:—**

**"Marlborough-house, Nov. 13, 1863.**

**"Madam,—I have it in command to inform you, that your address has been submitted to H.R.H. the Princess of Wales, and that Her Royal Highness has been graciously pleased to express her willingness to accept the very beautiful offering which you and the ladies of Victoria propose to send her**

**"I am directed to express to your ladyship and to the ladies of Victoria, Her Royal Highness's warmest acknowledgements for this magnificent proof of your and their loyalty and kind feeling.**

**"I have the honour to be, madam,**

**"Your ladyship's very obedient servant,**

**"HARRIS.**

**"Lady Barkly, President of the Committee  
of the Ladies of Victoria."**

**Plate 4.** The bridal gift from the Ladies of Victoria to HRH The Princess of Wales, from *The Argus* 27 January 1864 p. 5.

chromolithography to the Colony of Victoria.

Chevalier's use of ferns in decoration may be traced back to a design for a ball dress for Lady Barkly in 1860, the watercolour of which survives in the Nan Kivell Collection at the National Library in Canberra.<sup>6</sup> It is described as a "Fancy Costume Emblematic of Australia or of this Colony: Dress, White Moiré Antique. Front: gold brocade. Sleeves looped up with quartz nuggets. Body trimmings of Lamb's

skin. Fern leaves might be real or artificial or embroidered in green floss silk. Head-dress, coronet of small nuggets, surmounted with the Southern Cross of Diamonds - Clematis; necklet of quondons [sic]; fan of lyre-bird's tail and parrots' fethers [sic]. Designed especially for Lady Barkly by her most humble servant the Artist."<sup>7</sup> The design of such a dress accords well with Royal gifts of Colonial seaweed set in painted swan eggs on fern tree silver stands.



**Plate 5.** Detail of the black swan egg painted by Mrs Elizabeth Gray showing a group of Aborigines at Wannon Falls, mounted on a parcel gilt centrepiece (illustrated on back cover). This may be the egg referred to in the *Bendigo Advertiser*, 23 August 1869.

as “The ferntrees increase in number – from scattered clumps to stand so close together that their broad ferny leaves form a perfect roof so shady that the temperature becomes instantly cooler when you enter it – among their roots runs the coolest, clearest stream you can imagine and on each side an almost impenetrable musk scrub covers the side of the range. It would be almost impossible to give you an idea of the strange effects of light and shade in the gully. The fern trees seem to form a living grotto. Their rough mossy stems are the columns, their arching fronds are the roof ... We ought to have been a thousand miles away from Mel-bourne instead of twenty, so wild and solitary was the scene.”<sup>10</sup>

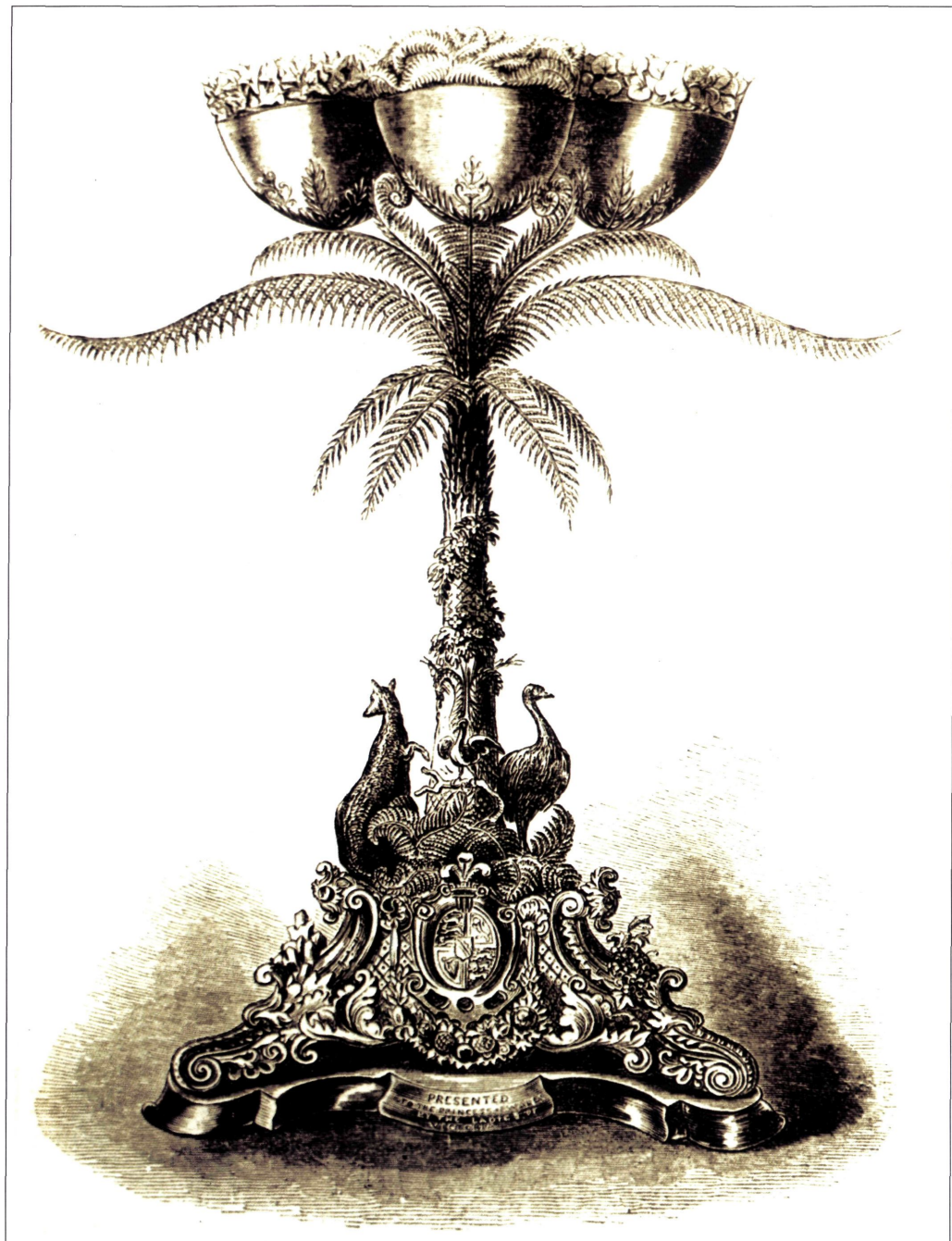
Elizabeth Gray etched a view of Ferntree Gully in ink

Mrs Gray is recorded as decorating at least two more black swan eggs; one of Wannon Falls<sup>3</sup> is noted in the *Bendigo Advertiser*, 23 August 1869 while Elizabeth Gray showed a “Swan Egg, with Colonial Scenery and Sundry Vases, with Drawings” at the Victorian Inter-colonial Exhibition preceding the 1873 London International Exhibition.

The first important image of the fern tree in the Australian fine arts is the superb 1857 oil painting<sup>8</sup> by von Guérard of Ferntree Gully in the Dandenong Ranges, Victoria, described by James Smith a contemporary art critic as “a faithful transcript of some of the most remarkable features of colonial scenery.” Alfred Howitt<sup>9</sup> described this soon to be destroyed spot

on a sheet of opaline glass, which survives in the La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria, and used this as a decorative source to adorn her gift to Queen Victoria (**plate 2, left hand centrepiece**).

The idea of decorating birds eggs with a paint brush seems to be the prerogative of this lady from the Western Districts of Victoria.



**Plate 5.** The bridal gift from the Ladies of Victoria to HRH The Princess of Wales, from *The Argus* 27 January 1864 p. 5.



Cassowary and emu eggs, which at first glance appear more suited due to their large size, can be ruled out by their colour and uneven, freckled surface. The next largest egg of a native bird is that of the Black Swan of Tasmania and Western Australia, whose egg provides the painter with an even, creamy-coloured surface of pleasant shape. The shape of a bird's egg varies according to its nesting habits; for example, seabirds laying on ledges with no deep nest lay eggs with one pointed end that will roll in circles rather than off a ledge.

The mounting of Mrs Gray's painted swan eggs and Chevalier's emu eggs on silver tree ferns is of interest as a purely Australian art form. A further example of a painted swan egg centrepiece has recently passed through my hands. Although unmarked, it was, I am sure, decorated by Mrs Elizabeth Gray, made by William Edwards and retailed by Kilpatricks. The egg decorated with a view of the Wannon Falls<sup>11</sup> has this time been mounted on a parcel gilt tree fern with *Xanthorrhoea* (grass tree) and Australian fauna to the base (plate

## John B. Hawkins

**John Hawkins** was born and educated in England, attending the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, and emigrated to Australia in 1967 to open his well known antique business in Moss Vale. Since he wrote the exhibition catalogue *Australian Silver 1800-1900* in 1973, he has written three further books *Thomas Cole and Victorian Clockmaking* (1975), *The Al Tajir Collection of Silver* (1985) and *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver* (1990), and many articles. He was President of the Australian Antique Dealers Association 1993-2000, and has assembled some of the foremost collections of antiques internationally and in Australia.

### 5 & back cover).

These items have to be designed, and drawings for craftsman to work from must be produced. Mrs Elizabeth Gray may be able to lay claim to such designs through her exhibit of "sundry vases with drawings" but Nicholas Chevalier is known to have designed a silver tree fern supporting emu eggs. I think there are only two possible candidates, but the question still remains unanswered: who designed these silver fern tree centrepieces supporting the painted egg of the Black Swan?

### Notes

- 1 *Australiana* vol. 21 no. 3, August 1999, pp 65-78.
- 2 15 August 1868, p. 128.

- 3 Joan Kerr (ed.), *The Directory of Australian Artists, Painters, Sketchers and Engravers to 1870*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1995, q.v. David Wood.
- 4 Edwards and Chevalier had co-operated before, as in 1860 Chevalier had designed the hilt of the Garibaldi presentation sword, the design for which survives as a pen and ink drawing in the La Trobe Library Melbourne, Edwards being entrusted with its production.
- 5 Joan Kerr, *op. cit.*, q.v. Charles & Elizabeth Gray.
- 6 A. Schofield & K. Fahy, *Australian Jewellery* p. 46; *Gold and Civilisation* p. 81.
- 7 Chevalier may have suggested this subject as he had painted a view of the Wannon Falls in 1866 now in the Art Gallery of Western Australia and a view of Fern Tree Gully in 1862, both subjects utilised by Mrs Gray to decorate the gift to Queen Victoria.
- 8 E.g. Tim Bonyhady, *The Colonial Image* p. 77; Candice Bruce, *Eugene von Guérard*, p. 38; Graeme Sturgeon, Australia *The Painter's Vision* p. 21.
- 9 Howitt together with Von Guérard and Chevalier explored the Dandenong Ranges in 1858; on Chevalier see Heather Curnow "Nicholas Chevalier, 1826-1902" *Art and Australia*, vol 18, no 3, pp. 256-261.
- 10 Letter to his sister in the La Trobe Library, quoted by Tim Bonyhady in "Fern Fever", *The Colonial Earth*, pp. 102-125.
- 11 This may be the same egg noted in the *Bendigo Advertiser* of 23 August 1869.

## Peter R. Walker *Australiana Writing Award*

Peter R. Walker Pty Ltd, Dealers in Fine Art, generously continues to sponsor a cash award of \$250 for the best article submitted to *Australiana* this year. All articles appearing in *Australiana* Volume 23 will be eligible to receive the 2001 award.

At the Australia Day lunch, Kevin Fahy announced the winner of the 2000 Peter R. Walker Award. John Hawkins again took out the Award for his series "Julius Hogarth – Behind the Shopfront", using Hogarth's bankruptcy papers to reveal the mechanics of the jewellery industry in 19th century Australia.





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This idiosyncratic centrepiece incorporates the work of Mrs Elizabeth Gray of Nareeb Nareeb Station in the Western Districts of Victoria. She decorated the egg of a black swan with a view of Wannon Falls, Victoria, later mounted on a silver-gilt tree fern made to her design or that of Nicholas Chevalier by William Edwards and probably retailed by Kilpatrick and Co. of Melbourne. Sold.

