AUSTRALIANA

CONTENTS

SPONSORS

Art Exhibitions Australia
HPM Industries
J B Hawkins Antiques
Hordern House
Josef Lebovic Gallery
Price Tiles
Peter R Walker Fine Art
Simpson's Antiques
Sotheby's Australia
Stanley & Co Auctioneers
The World of Antiques and Art
Tim McCormick Bookseller
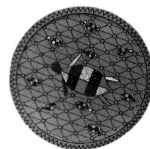
Cover Australian birds and animals by Grace Seccombe. Photos Marvin Hurnall.

An opened trunk, a fantastic discovery!

Lisa Bateman

Augusto Lorenzini: Wall division panels. Oil on canvas. 210 x 40cm. Private collection.

On a Saturday in March 1995, the deceased estate of commercial artist Winn Albury (1896-1994) went under the hammer in a Sydney auction room. Winn had worked as a commercial artist in the 1920s both in Australia and the United States. Her estate included furniture from the Albury family home at Hornsby, watercolours by Winn and her sister Ethel, folios of designs for lampshades, artwork for stores like Bebarfalds, and much else.

Mixed up with her work was a large portfolio of work by another artist, Augusto Lorenzini. Born in Rome in 1852, Lorenzini arrived in Australia in 1883 after working in

Photograph of Augusto Lorenzini (1852-1921). Reproduced with permission of the Keeper of Public Records (Victoria).

Photograph by Charles Bayliss, Ballroom of *Chatsworth*, Potts Point, c. 1886.

London and Paris as a decorative artist. On his arrival he joined a small but influential group of Italian artists including painters Giulio Anivitti and Giuseppe Ferrarini and sculptor Tommaso Sani who carved the reliefs on the Pitt Street façade of the GPO.

Most of the Lorenzini material – large oil panels and some smaller oils and watercolours – was dispersed through this auction, sold to private collectors and dealers, but in 1998 a large bundle of Lorenzini drawings and designs came to light from the depths of a locked trunk bought at that 1995 auction. This bundle included watercolours and cartoons for domestic interiors, churches and restaurants, as well as Sydney Town Hall. Four large sepia photographs showed the

ballroom of the long-demolished Potts Point mansion *Chatsworth*. These photographs by leading Sydney photographer Charles Bayliss identified Lorenzini as the decorator of the ballroom.

Chatsworth was the home of Charles James Roberts, former Mayor of Sydney and politician, who spent a small fortune on the property, even reclaiming part of the Elizabeth Bay foreshore. Lorenzini was responsible for the painted decoration of the main entrance hall, the drawing room and the ballroom. *The Town and Country Journal* described this ballroom as "one of the finest in the Southern Hemisphere" and *The Bulletin* reported it was "decorated in a style hitherto hardly attempted in private architecture in Australia".

The Historic Houses Trust of NSW bought this bundle – more or less on the strength of the *Chatsworth* connection – for its Conservation Resource Centre collection. This collection includes designs for architectural decoration, household furnishings, garden ornaments and related manufacturers' trade catalogues. It aims to provide a record of the history of domestic interiors in NSW.

Sadly most of the decorative schemes painted by Lorenzini have been lost, either through being painted over or demolished. This archive or working drawings and designs is testimony to Augusto Lorenzini's place in Sydney's cultural history.

Augusto Lorenzini, Etude of vegetables, ca. 1885. Oil on board. 67 x 55cm. Private collection.

The Trust's purchase of this Lorenzini material triggered a process of research into the life and work of Augusto Lorenzini and led to further acquisitions. The fruits of this collecting and research are reflected in the exhibition *Augusto Lorenzini, Italian Artist Decorator* running from June till 4 November 2001 at Elizabeth Bay House. A lavishly illustrated catalogue entitled *Augusto Lorenzini: Italian artist decorator in Victorian Sydney* accompanies the exhibition and can be purchased for $29.95.
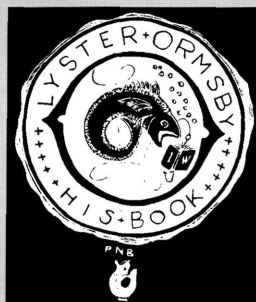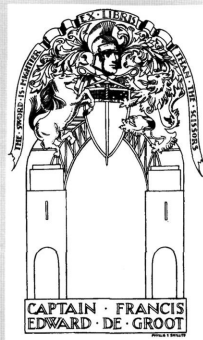

Augusto Lorenzini, design for ceiling decoration. Pencil and watercolour on card. 14 x 26cm.

Plate 1 Bookplate for Charles Grimes.

Plate 2 Bookplate for John Lane Mullins, 77 x 115mm.

Plate 3 Bookplate for Lyster Ormsby, 52 x 65mm.

Plate 4 Bookplate for Francis De Groot, 73 x 118mm.

BOOKPLATES R.I.P.?

Jeff Bidgood

In the period between the wars in Australia when one attained a certain position in society, in Sydney, it was time to move to the North Shore. In Melbourne the move was made to Toorak. Here one started to move in a new circle of people and you would generally have a bookplate designed for your books to keep up with "the Jones's". Those days went with the end of the Second World War (1939-1945) and with it the general use of bookplates in Australia.

But I run ahead, because of the demise of the bookplate, there are now generations in Australia who do not know what constitutes a bookplate. Generally speaking a bookplate is a label designed to be pasted into a book to denote ownership of the book. This originally took the form of the coat of arms of the person in whose book it was to be pasted. However in the early 1800s a form of pictorial bookplate came into vogue and remains so today. Indeed in most European countries, England, America and Japan bookplates are still very much in vogue. Some European countries

support not one but a number of bookplate societies, although one must add that in many countries bookplates are specially produced for collecting and not for use in books.

Bookplates appeared on the scene relatively early in Australia as many of the military and free settlers had them before arriving. The bookplate considered to be the first used in Australia is that of C. Grimes – Charles Grimes, Assistant to the Surveyor General – which was of the crest variety (plate 1). Other early examples are those of visiting American merchant Charles Izard Manigault, engraved by Samuel Clayton, and Governor Sir Richard Bourke.

An early, if not the earliest, Australian pictorial bookplate was that of John Lane Mullins dated 1892 (plate 2) which shows a drawing of his library at *Killountan,* Potts Point. John Lane Mullins was one of the founders of the Australian Ex Libris Society when it was brought to life in 1923. He was the President of the Society and by all accounts bankrolled it to some extent. As a

public relations cum advertising medium, the Society had bookplates designed and executed by Australian artists for presentation to people currently in the public eye. An example is that presented to HRH Edward Prince of Wales (plate 5) on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Society (1933). The bookplate was designed and executed by Adrian Feint (1894-1971), one of Australia's most prolific and respected bookplate artists. Captain Francis De Groot's (plate 4) bookplate designed by Phyllis Shillito is much sought after.

John Lane Mullins together with Percy Neville Barnett were the principal office bearers of the Society. Percy Barnett was an acknowledged world authority on bookplates. In addition to writing and publishing a number of books about bookplates he also designed and executed several bookplates using wood engraving as a medium (plate 3). Shown is the bookplate of Lyster Ormsby who was another of the founding members of the Ex Libris Society. Under the bookplate is a sea animal that was cut as an addition by

Barnett. It is known as a remarque and is placed in the plate by the artist to shown that he considers it one of his better pieces.

Annual Reports of the Society are reasonably rare and are greatly sort after by people in general. The price bears out the latter statement as there are probably fewer than ten active bookplate collectors in Australia. Indeed it would seem that most people who buy bookplates or books about bookplates are doing so for the original works of art that they are.

This list of members of the Society is quite impressive and contains a number of names that are still well known today. The death of John Lane Mullins coincided with the end of the Depression and coming of the Second World War. Having lost one of its principal movers and benefactor, the Society ceased to exist after 1935.

In 1932 a number of Sydney collectors started a second society called the New South Wales Bookplate Club. It had a very short life and never made a second year.

A third society, The Australian Bookplate Society, was started in Melbourne in 1937 but lasted only a short number of years. One of its principal movers was John Gartner **(plate 6)**. The bookplate shows

some of John's other collections, books, coins and stamps. John Gartner was the founder of the Hawthorn Press and a keen collector of bookplates. He published a number of books about bookplates generally authored by members of one or other of the Societies. John's original collection of bookplates and an extensive library were completely destroyed in the Ash Wednesday fires in Victoria in 1983.

Since the end of the 1939-1945 war although there had been discussions about the formation of another society, it was not until 1999 that anything materialised. At that point a small committee was formed and a prospectus issued. But to date little has eventuated.

That is not to say that there has been no movement in and about bookplates since the 1950s. John Gartner rebuilt and added to his original collection and included books about bookplates.

Pat Corrigan amassed a collection of bookplates, books about bookplates and original drawings most of which he donated to either the State Library of Queensland or the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In addition he commissioned a number of bookplates principally from Australian artists.

Edwin Jewell **(plate 7)** is another Australian collector who

has commissioned bookplates from artists both here and overseas. The bookplate illustrated is known as a rebus, the illustration is a play on his name.

Mark Ferson, a collector and bookplate artist in his own right has produced a number of bookplates for friends including **(plate 8)** for my collection of children's illustrated books. In conjunction and separately we have produced a number of books and articles on the subject of bookplates.

It is possible to buy pre-printed bookplates onto which you inscribe your name and these are many and varied. These in the main seem to appear in school exercise, school text books and a few paperbacks.

There are still bookplates being designed for personal use by the true believer but they are few and far between.

While we, in Australia, are among the largest purchasers of books per head of population it seems that very few people are starting their own libraries. If they do not start a library will they require a bookplate? Libraries generally, institutional and otherwise have in the main ceased to use bookplates. It would seem that they are not cost efficient!

Is it to be R.I.P. for bookplates in Australia?

Plate 5 Bookplate for HRH Edward, Prince of Wales 90 x 125mm.

Plate 6 Bookplate for John Gartner, 70 x 111mm.
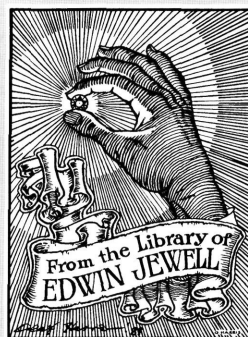
Plate 7 Bookplate for Edwin Jewell, 75 x 112mm.

Plate 8 Bookplate for Jeff Bidgood, 50 x 95mm.

Plate 14. Gold Mayoral Chain 1901. Original chain designed and made by Charles Brown Jnr. Medallion marked CAB. Brisbane City Hall.

CHARLES ALLEN BROWN (1850 -1908)

AUSTRALIAN SILVERSMITH

Sue Air

In 1886 a prominent Brisbane family was celebrating the birth of their daughter Vera. Her father, James Hipwood, was Mayor of Brisbane and to commemorate the occasion, his fellow aldermen, who held him in high esteem, decided to present him with a miniature cradle crafted in sterling silver. Mayor Hipwood was the first mayor in Queensland to be presented with a silver cradle.

This elaborate piece of silversmithing was a bassinette standing on two massive silver rockers with a wide band of silver gilt leaves around the sides. The canopy was supported by two cupids on each side, carrying in their uplifted hands a garland of flowers and ferns. The entire piece was estimated to weigh about 2,490g (80 oz Troy). This presentation cradle intended as a centrepiece was designed and made by Charles Allen Brown, working jeweller and silversmith of 88 Edward Street, Brisbane.[1]

But who was Brown and from where did he come?

Henry and Elizabeth Brown were married in England in 1841 and soon after emigrated to Australia. Charles Allen Brown was born in Sydney on 2 February 1850, the second son of Henry and Elizabeth Brown of York Street. He was baptised in St Andrew's Church on 24 February 1850. He had an older brother Henry b. 1843 and two sisters Eliza b. 1847 and Sarah Ann b. 1855.

By 1863 the marriage had failed. Charles was thirteen, his parents had separated and his mother left Sydney to live in Brisbane with her two daughters.

Charles Brown was apprenticed to the Danish-born silversmith Christian Ludwig Qwist and lived with his family. Elizabeth Brown may have made a 'foster' arrangement with the Qwists before she left her young son in Sydney. Brown had natural talent and learnt his craft well. He had very little formal education and was largely self-educated, a great reader and lover of good books. He also learnt to speak German, the language spoken in the Qwist household.

Qwist had arrived in Australia in 1853 and worked in Bendigo, Victoria as a photographer and goldsmith. He left Bendigo in early 1860 to try his luck in Sydney as there was little work in Victoria. He married Anna Price in 1861 and they had five children. The Qwists lived at Neutral Bay in Shairp's Bay, Careening Cove.[2]

Qwist's business was first at 15 Hunter Street in 1864 and later, from 1870-75 at 11 Hunter Street. C. L. Qwist is noted for fine craftsmanship and imaginative design. The Sydney Gold Cup of 1871, in the collection of the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, is a superb example of his Neoclassical work. Several commissioned silver-mounted emu egg claret jugs and gold cups are held in public and private collections in Sydney, Melbourne and Tamworth.

Brown was one of several apprentices Qwist employed in his workshop. Another was Evan Jones. Jones, born in England in 1846 was four years older than Brown and arrived in Sydney in 1855 with his family.
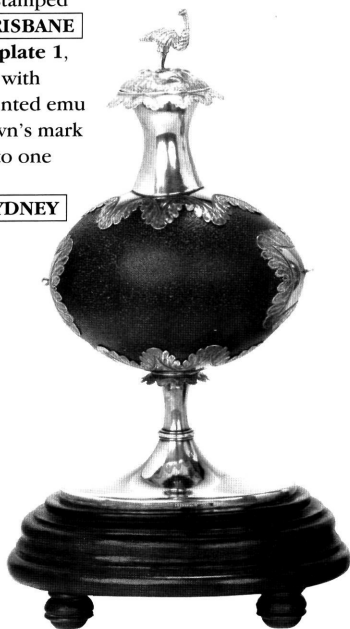
Apprentices were indentured for seven years learning jewellery, watchmaking, silver and goldsmithing. They became either a journeyman employed by a company or set up their own business. Evan Jones remained in Sydney and established his own business in 1873 at 15 Hunter Street, Qwist's earlier address.[3]

Charles Brown left Sydney for Brisbane in 1870 and started his own business at 88 Edward Street. His decision to head north was logical: his mother and sisters were living in Brisbane, and goldfields were being discovered in many parts of Queensland. The population of the whole colony was only 115,000. Brown saw an opportunity to set up a specialised business in a much smaller town with less competition.

There were nine jewellers and watchmakers listed in Brisbane from 1871.[4] The leading company was Flavelle Bros & Roberts of Sydney who had established a Brisbane branch in 1861. They traded as jewellers, opticians and watchmakers.

It is not surprising that some of Brown's early pieces were influenced by Qwist's prior work. The pair of rare silver-mounted emu egg inkwells[5] c. 1877 stamped **C A BROWN** **BRISBANE** that are shown in **plate 1**, may be compared with Qwist's silver-mounted emu egg trophies. Brown's mark also corresponds to one used by Qwist i.e. **C. L. QWIST** **SYDNEY**

Plate 2. Charles Allen Brown aged 21, 1871.

Plate 3. Mrs Louisa Brown (née Coomber) aged 16, 1868.

The characters of both men seem to have been similar and modest in the extreme. Little is known of Qwist apart from his work and only a few major pieces survive today. The same has been said of Charles Brown; little was known of the man and his work is hardly known outside Queensland, only a handful of major pieces have survived.

Charles Brown returned to Sydney in 1871 to marry 19 year-old English girl Louisa Coomber, the eldest daughter of James Coomber, a builder of Raglan Street, Waterloo **(plates 2 & 3)**.

Plate 4. Certificate of Marriage, 16 November 1871.

Plate 1. Silver-mounted emu egg inkwell, one of a pair c. 1878. The other one has a kangaroo finial. Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.
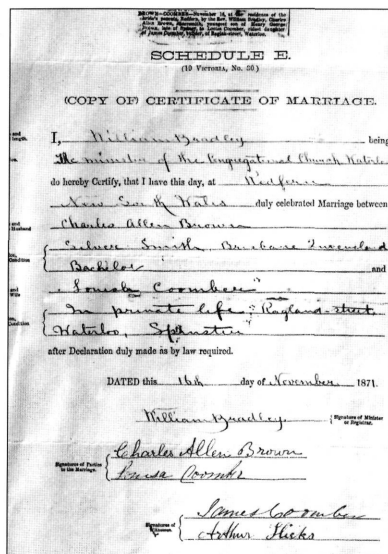
The ceremony took place at Louisa's home on 16 November 1871. The Rev. William Bradley, minister of the Congregational Church, Waterloo, officiated **(plate 4)**.

In Brisbane, Charles and Louisa's home was at Herbert Street, Spring Hill where their daughter, Annie Caterer was born in September 1872, the first of thirteen children. Their first son, also Charles Allen, was born in August 1874. Charles junior was later to prove of great value in the family business.

The Browns moved to a larger house in Maud Street, Newstead Terrace which backed onto the Brisbane River. In the next 22 years they had seven more boys and four girls. "Their mother called the house 'The Ark' because of all their cats, dogs and birds. The children called their father 'Pa' and Louisa was very proud of him being able to speak German so well".[6]

In his youth, Charles Allen Brown Snr was a slight man, fair-haired and not more than about 168 cm tall. In his later years, he was described as "thickset, well dressed, with a short beard stained brown below the mouth with tobacco and the good whisky you could buy in those days" **(plate 5)**.
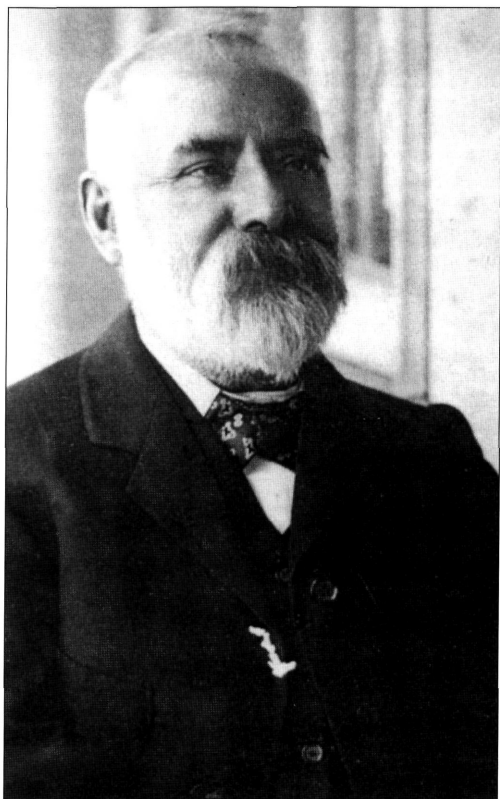
Plate 5. Charles Allen Brown aged about 50, c. 1900.

Charles Brown became a Freemason and was initiated into St Andrew's Lodge on 1 March 1878. Later he joined the Toowong Lodge but resigned on 31 May 1893. His workshop produced Masonic jewellery[7] as well as Agricultural Society medals.

He was a keen gardener and enjoyed growing roses. The Browns were living at Corinda during the great flood of 1893 but soon returned to Newstead, when the house was then raised on stumps.

Brown's reputation was quickly established as his business grew. He became known as a fine jeweller, gold and silversmith. From 1871 to 1892 his workshop was at 88 Edward Street, Brisbane. "The business employed about twenty watchmakers, engravers, jewellers and silversmiths including Brown's four eldest sons, Charles Jnr, Alfred, Henry, Frederick and daughter Florence (Floss). The stock they had for sale was fantastic, sheer beauty in design and workmanship. Uncle Charlie had the reputation of being one of the best engravers in Queensland".[6]

Agricultural and Industrial Exhibitions were being held in the main Australian capital cities throughout the Victorian era and Brisbane was no exception. In 1875 the Queensland Government held an exhibition at which Brown won a silver medal worth £3.[8] None of the reports say what Brown's entry was but he *made* the silver medal he won **(plates 6 & 7)**. Another silver medal by Brown inscribed "1st Prize for Biscuits" is shown[9] **(plate 8)**.

Plate 6. Silver Queensland Exhibition medal made by and awarded to C. A. Brown Brisbane 1875 (diam. 35 mm). Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland, photograph by Bryan Keown.

Plate 7. Silver Queensland Exhibition medal made by and awarded to C. A. Brown Brisbane 1875 (diam. 35 mm, detail). *Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland,* photograph by Bryan Keown.

Plate 8. Silver Queensland Exhibition medal 1875, "1st Prize Biscuits." "Awarded to F. W. Wilson & Co. Brisbane". Photograph courtesy John Chapman.

Brown's punches are similar on all his existing pieces of silver, | C A BROWN | | BRISBANE | . There is one instance where a smaller punch has been noted.

The Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition of 1877 was held in Brisbane. *The Queenslander* reported that "Mr C. A. Brown of Edward Street had a glass case set out with an extremely handsome collection made exclusively of Queensland materials. The central piece was a large inkstand,[10] with a polished wooden bottom, surrounded by a high silver fern tree and shrubbery, together with the figure of a blackfellow, a couple of emus and two swans swimming in a pool made of oxidised silver. The display included a very chaste (sic) collection of jewellery in the manufacture of which trigonia, operculas, nautilus,

and other shells together with pearls from Somerset, are made to show great advantage set in gold and silver. Jewellers from the workshop sat at a nearby table and visitors manifest considerable interest in their delicate handicraft". At the same exhibition Brown won two Bronze medals, one for 'Jewellery' and the other for 'Gold and Silver Jewellery'.[11]

A silver-mounted emu egg clock won first prize for Brown in the Exhibition of 1878. It showed an emu standing on a silver fern-covered knoll decorated with a silver swan and an Aborigine holding aloft a boomerang.[12] The runner up was Evan Jones, who displayed a large silver candelabra standing 4' 6" (137 cm).[13] Jones seems to have been the only southern-based silversmith to challenge Brown's work in Queensland.

Agricultural shows were popular and Brown's workshop was in demand making many cups, trophies and medals for local clubs and societies. The small cup shown in **plate 9** was made c. 1880. Brown's mark is on the foot.[14]

Plate 9. Silver Agricultural Cup on tree fern stem, height 14 cm, weight 130g c. 1880. "G.A.M. and A.P.S. awarded to [blank] for the best Collection of Agricultural Produce". Engraved with a rural scene including an early plough. Photograph courtesy J. B. Hawkins Australian Silver Reference Library.

The Queensland display at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, held in London in 1886, included a fine silver-mounted mother of pearl centrepiece. There is a strong possibility it was the work of Charles Brown.[15]

Gold was discovered in Queensland in 1853 at the Calliope River, then at Canoona on the Fitzroy River in 1858 but these early gold finds petered out. Substantial

discoveries were made at Gympie in 1868, Charters Towers in 1872, the Palmer River in far north Queensland and Mt Morgan in 1873.[16]
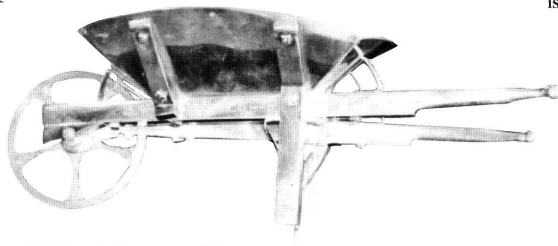
With the discovery of payable gold and an increasing population, the construction of railways grew rapidly along the east coast of Queensland. The custom of the day was to arrange an elaborate ceremony where the Governor, Premier or Minister for Works was invited to 'turn the first sod' for the start of the new line. This created an opportunity for the silversmith to provide a miniature silver spade and wheelbarrow to be presented to the Premier or dignitary who performed the ceremony.

The Brisbane Courier reported on the Fassifern Railway Extension in 1886: "Then followed not the least interesting part of the day's proceedings – the presentation of a solid silver barrow and shovel to the Minister for Works by the employees of Mr. Bashford as a souvenir of the occasion. The handsome trophy, which weighed 30 oz (840 g) was manufactured at the establishment of Mr. C. A. Brown, Edward Street, Brisbane. The barrow is a correct model of a navvy's barrow with ornamental edge and an appropriate inscription in the centre. The wheel is silver gilt and chased and the spade is also silver gilt."[17]

The opening of the Second Section of the Fassifern Railway line in 1888 was similarly described. "The wheel of the barrow is gilt and richly chased, a silver-gilt ornamental edge is saw-pierced by hand. The spade has a chased handle, and the blade is gilt and also richly
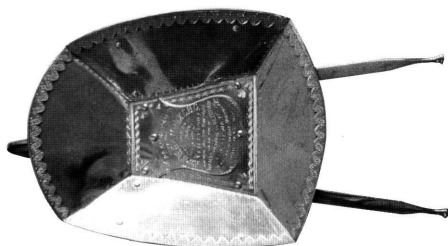
chased". Later the silver spade was presented to the Hon. William Miles, Queensland's Minister for Works.[18]

A third silver wheelbarrow and spade, crafted by Brown, was presented to Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, Premier of Queensland after he turned the first sod of the Maryborough to Gayndah Railway Line in 1887. The silver barrow weighs about 870g (28 oz) and is marked `C A BROWN` `BRISBANE` ten times, three on each side of the shafts and twice each on the front and back of the legs! It is inscribed on the inside base of the barrow **(plate 10)**.[19]

In 1888 the Government of Queensland appointed Charles Brown as Official Jeweller, Watch and Clock Maker. It was reported: "In connection with the Jewellery trade of this city no name is better known than the above, none more representative or more highly respected. The business of course, includes all lines pertaining to the trade, and work is executed in a satisfactory manner at moderate prices. Customers can always depend upon finding the article sold to be as represented, which is a great consideration, as there can be a great deal of deception practised in this business. Mr Brown is an Australian, born in Sydney, New South Wales in 1850 and arrived in this city eighteen years ago. After serving his apprenticeship in his native city he started the business to which we now refer, and which will alone illustrate the progress which has been made, as Mr Brown started in a comparatively small way as have many others".[20]

The Browns were often seen at Brisbane social functions and enjoyed concerts and the theatre. Mrs Brown always wore a piece of jewellery made by her husband[6] **(plate 11)**.

Plate 10. Silver model wheelbarrow 1887. Presented to Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, Premier of Queensland. Start of the Maryborough to Gayndah Railway line. Royal Historical Society of Queensland.

Plate 11. Mrs Louisa Brown, aged about 41, wearing two brooches made by Charles Brown, a gold wishbone shape brooch set with diamonds and a gold bar brooch, c. 1893. Neither is marked.

In 1892 the silversmithing and jewellery business was moved to larger premises at 42 Queen Street (**plate 12**). Although some of the family said it was a "bad move", the workshop received some large commissions in silver and gold between 1892 and 1901.
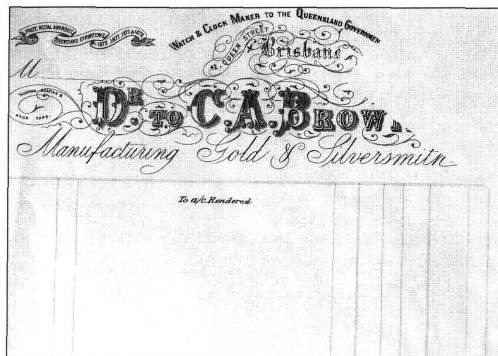
Plate 12. Billhead of Brown's shop at 42 Queen Street, Brisbane, from 1892.

A grandson of Brown's who studied for the priesthood at St Patrick's College, Manly NSW, has recalled: "I came across a very beautiful presentation trowel in the College museum, an ivory handle and silver blade beautifully engraved with a long inscription 'From the Catholics of Queensland to Cardinal Moran ...' I turned it over and there on the back was C A BROWN QUEEN ST BRISBANE . It must have been Uncle Charlie's [Charles Junior] engraving". It is not known which foundation stone was laid.

Due to Brown's poor health, his son Charles (**plate 13**) took over the work of some of the larger pieces. Among the more notable commissions in 1896 was a presentation casket of solid silver in a frosted design highlighting scenes in the career of the retiring Police Commissioner, Mr David T. Seymour.

It weighed about 2,300 g (74 oz). *The Age* reported: "… It is a gratifying instance of the culture and technical skill of local workers because the tout ensemble has been produced by Messrs. C. L. Wuersching and Charles Brown, jnr., both of whom are workers of the firm from their youth upward … it is work of the highest design and most skilful workmanship"[21].

The Trades and Labour Council of Queensland commissioned a solid gold picture frame (h.19.5 cm, w. 13 cm) from Brown's workshop for the first prize in their Eight Hour Anniversary Union Raffle of 1899. It weighe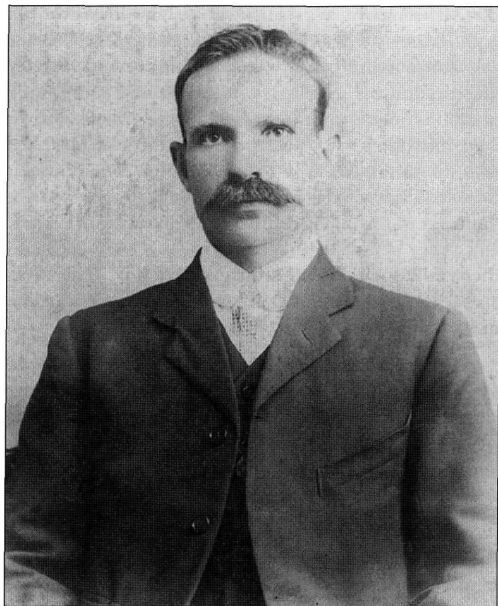d about 575 g (18½ oz). This unusual gold frame was styled on the figure eight which held two photographs. It was decorated with many figures

Plate 13. Charles Allen Brown Jnr, silversmith and engraver, aged about 28. Photograph by P. Mathewson & Sons, Petrie Bight, Brisbane c. 1902.

in prominent trades – builders, carpenters, and stonemasons.[22]

A second silver cradle was commissioned in 1900 by the aldermen of Brisbane Council. It was presented to Mayor James Nicol Robinson on the birth of his first son, Alfred. The cradle designed as a table centrepiece hung from two rockers above a heavily embossed pedestal base decorated with foliage and flowers. It was solid silver, the interior gilt-lined and weighed more than 2,200 g (71 oz).[23]

Charles Brown's health was failing and he died on 5 September 1908 of anaemia, exhaustion and other complications. He was 58. The following notice appeared in the personal column of *The Brisbane Courier*, 7 September 1908:

"The death is announced after a long illness, of Mr. C. A. Brown, jeweller of Queen Street, the sad event having taken place at his private residence, Maud Street, Newstead Terrace, on Saturday evening. The funeral will take place today to [sic] the Toowong Cemetery."

A search of the newspapers has not found an obituary. Eleven of his children survived him, and one of his daughters lived to 95; two sons pre-deceased him. There are many descendants of Charles Brown living in Australia today.

Although he was only six years old when his grandfather died, Alan Brown, grandson of Charles and son of Alfred, had a good memory and in later life recalled his grandparents, the house and family occasions quite clearly. He was told: "After Charles Brown died, his widow was grief-stricken and became obsessed with the desire to get in touch with him. The house at Newstead was filled with spiritualistic mediums, boards, numbers and swinging needles to spell out the messages. Once they persuaded my father to sit at the board and the needle spelt out "Alf Brown is a bad boy". There was a roar of laughter and Dad stamped out of the room in a flaming rage".[6]

Grandma Brown died of pneumonia in 1912 aged 60. She is buried beside her husband in Toowong Cemetery. Alan wrote, "She was the loveliest lady and never spoke a harsh word about anyone".[6]

He also recalled "that the business should have passed to 'Uncle Charlie' but he declined. The next son Alfred (Alan's father) was passed over as Henry, the third son was grandma's favourite and he took over."[6] The family business, Charles A. Brown continued to trade at 117 Queen Street from 1909 to 1912, when Charles Brown's widow died. In the following years, 1913-19, it was listed as Brown and Co.

However Alfred J. Brown had established his own business off 32 Queen Street in 1908. His last listing was in 1913. After Mrs Brown's death, Frederick Brown traded at 143 Queen Street, 1913-1918. Charles Jnr moved to Birkdale where he traded from 1914-1922.[24] He later retired to Bribie Island.

From 1871 until about 1895 Charles Brown Snr created a wide range of finely crafted objects in silver and gold, some ostentatious, and others quite modest pieces. Fortunately one large and important civic piece still exists. This is the gold Mayoral Chain commissioned from Brown's workshop by Brisbane City Council in March 1901 (plates 14 & 15). It was Charles Brown Jnr who created the very handsome gold link chain and pendant. His mark CAB is punched on the reverse of the pendant which bears the arms of the city. The marks C. A. BROWN   15ct   BRISBANE are on some of the links of the original chain.[25]

Two later Brisbane silversmiths continued making medallions for the mayoral chain. First was J. Hendry Grice, (business listing 1908-1920). The second maker was F. R. Somers (1927-).[26]

The gold Mayoral Chain is worn today on ceremonial occasions. It was first worn by the Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Thomas Proe CMG on 20 May 1901 when he welcomed Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, later to become King George V and Queen Mary, when they arrived on the Queensland Government yacht *Lucinda*. Their Royal Highnesses had been attending the first opening of Federal Parliament in Melbourne and were starting a five-day tour of Queensland.
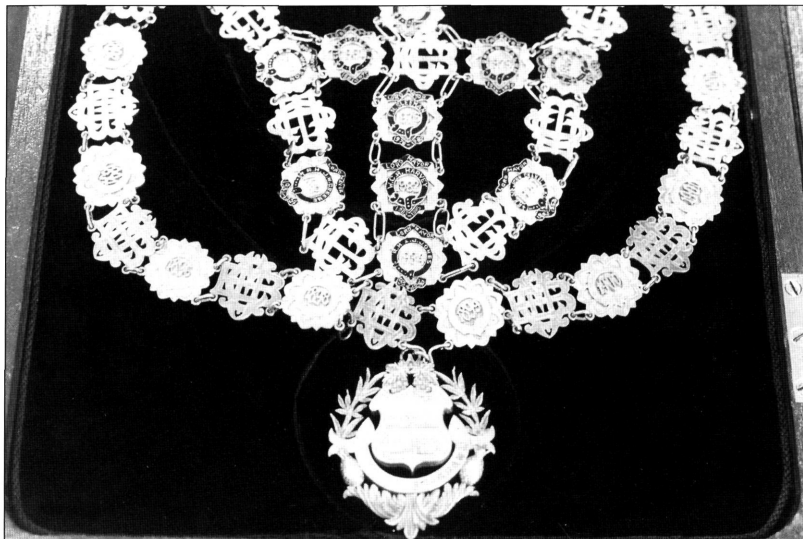
Plate 15. Gold Mayoral Chain detail. Brisbane City Hall.

Charles Brown never sought the limelight but his expertise and knowledge of his craft are evident in the many documented gold and silver pieces he created. The fact that at least nine of his major pieces are lost today is the main reason Charles Allen Brown has gone unrecognised for over a century. Those that remain are proof of the diverse and imaginative work of this fine, nineteenth century Queensland silversmith.

Author

Sue Air was born in Yorkshire and has lived in Sydney for 37 years. Her interests include researching antique silver, genealogy, recording oral history, bush walking and needlework. She is a member of the Silver Society of Australia and The Australiana Society.

Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of descendants of Charles Allen Brown especially the help of Mr Frederick Davis, his last grandson. Generous access to family documents, personal letters and photographs has made the writing of this article possible.

The author also acknowledges the work of Dianne Byrne in her article "Silversmith Brown" published in the *Australian Business Collector's Annual* of 1985.

She thanks Kenneth Cavill for first telling her about Charles Brown and for his invaluable assistance during the writing of this article, Sonia Richards of Toowoomba who put her in touch with Charles Brown's family and Les Carlisle and Gill McPherson for their support.

Notes

1 *The Brisbane Courier* 4 August 1886 p 4; D. Byrne 'Silversmith Brown' *Australian Business Collector's Annual*, 1985 pp. 85-87. Dianne Byrne is an historical researcher with a degree in Fine Arts. She works as a librarian at the John Oxley Library, Brisbane.

2 J. B. Hawkins "Julius Hogarth, Behind the Shopfront part 1" *Australiana* vol. 22 no. 2, May 2000 p. 38f. East St Leonards Council Records 1867 (now North Sydney Council) show Qwist's rented wooden house was on the corner of High and Water Street above Milson Park and the creek joining Careening Cove. Anna Price's name was anglicised from Pries or more likely Preis.

3 J. B. Hawkins *Australian Silver 1800-1900*, 1973 p. 38.

4 *Pugh's Almanac*, Queensland 1860-1900 (Jewellers and Watchmakers), information courtesy Kenneth Cavill.

5 Queensland Art Gallery Collection, Brisbane. The National Gallery of Australia in Canberra has a silver and shell hair ornament by C. A. Brown, accession number 82.1947, exhibited Georges Gallery, Melbourne 1976 no. 13.

6 Quotations from personal letters in the possession of Brown's descendants.

7 The Grand United Lodge of Queensland, information courtesy Ian Maddox.

8 Silver medal courtesy Royal National Agricultural & Industrial Association of Queensland. Photographs by Bryan Keown.

9 Silver medal '1st Prize Biscuits' Queensland Exhibition 1875. Photographs courtesy John Chapman.

10 *The Queenslander* 25 August 1877, whereabouts unknown.

11 Bronze medals collection RNA & I Ass. of Qld, information courtesy Bryan Keown.

12 *The Queenslander* 24 August 1878, p. 665; D. Byrne *op. cit.*, whereabouts unknown.

13 J. B. Hawkins *Australian Silver 1800-1900*. 1973. p. 39.

14 J. B. Hawkins *19th Century Australian Silver*, 1990, Vol 11, plate 477, p.238. The silver cup was displayed at the Kozminsky Bicentennial Exhibition, Melbourne 1988, catalogue p. 43, no. 188.

15 *ibid*. plate 476, p. 236.

16 K. Cavill, G. Cocks & J. Grace *Australian Jewellers, Gold & Silversmiths, Makers & Marks*, 1992, p. 16. Graham Cocks & Jack Grace "Queensland Manufacturing and Working Jewellers 1850-1900" *Australiana* vol. 12 no. 4, November 1990 pp. 89-95.

17 *The Brisbane Courier* 8 January 1886; D. Byrne *op. cit.* 1985, whereabouts of barrow and spade unknown.

18 *The Brisbane Courier*, 19 August 1888; D. Byrne *op. cit.* 1985, whereabouts of barrow and spade unknown.

19 Collection of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland. Inscription reads: "Presented to Sir S. W. Griffith KCMG on the occasion of his turning 'The First Sod' of the first section of the Maryborough to Gayndah Railway By the Contractors Murphy & Co 1887". Author's photograph.

20 *The Queenslander*, 1888.

21 *The Age* 29 February 1896. D. Byrne *op. cit.*, whereabouts unknown.

22 *The Queenslander* 11 March 1899; D. Byrne *op. cit.*, whereabouts unknown.

23 D. Byrne *op.cit.*. The silver cradle is believed to be in a private collection.

24 *Wise's Queensland Post Office Directory* from 1900-1925, information courtesy Kenneth Cavill.

25 Collection of Brisbane City Hall. *Courier-Mail* 10 March 1959. Letter written by the daughter of Charles Brown Jnr. "… It may be of interest that his son, also C. A. Brown (my father), designed and made the mayoral chain of office…" The mark C. A. BROWN is notable for the full stops after the initials, and I believe that this punch was used by Charles Brown Jnr to distinguish his work from that of his father. Author's photograph.

26 K. Cavill, G. Cocks & J. Grace *Australian Jewellers, Gold & Silversmiths, Makers & Marks* 1992 p. 226.

Australian Gothic

The Gothic Revival in Australian Architecture from the 1840s to the 1950s, by Brian Andrews.

Miegunyah Press, Melbourne University Press, 2001.

194 pages, 4 colour, 155 b/w illustrations, $89.95.

Review by Clive Lucas

The architectural historian Brian Andrews has made a name for himself as a considerable scholar of the Gothic revival in this country. He pioneered the study in South Australia with an exhibition in Adelaide in 1984 and then contributed to the Pugin exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 1994. His essay "Pugin in Australia" published in the accompanying catalogue firmly established Pugin's importance to the Australian story and in particular drew attention to the novel idea of Pugin sending models to Tasmania to be copied for producing both churches and fittings of his design.

To some extent the Pugin part of the book remains its best part and indeed the essay from the London exhibition has been published almost verbatim as part of Chapter 4.

One would expect a book with this particular title to include more on domestic and secular buildings in general but these are hardly mentioned. It is as though the publisher had wanted the all-embracing title rather than that which dealt solely with ecclesiastical architecture. There is thus nothing on the Government Houses at Perth, Sydney and Hobart. There is little on W. W. Wardell's St John's College at Sydney University which Girouard thought "more professional than many of the buildings of Pugin" and nothing at all on Ormond or St Paul's. There is little on all those Gothic banks, schools, railway stations, convents, and rectory houses that dot the country.

Clearly churches are Mr Andrew's forte and he draws heavily
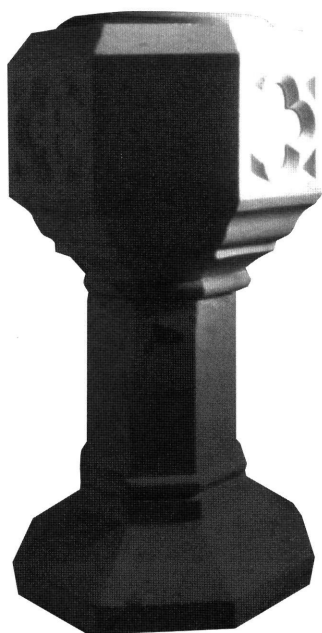
St John's Richmond, Tasmania, font by A. W. N. Pugin brought to Tasmania by Bishop Willson 'to serve as a model for other churches'. Photograph Clive Lucas.

on the writings of others, Maidment, Kerr, Freeland, Herman and so on. There is little on the considerable number of architects who deserve to be treated under this title, such as Gell, Soares, Backhouse, Clamp or Heyward. Even the great Louis William who had the largest ecclesiastical practice in this country during the first half of the 20th century is hardly mentioned at all.

The book does draw attention to numerous gems of church architecture, such as the Chapel at Guildford Grammar, St Francis Xavier's, Berrima, St Matthew's Church, Hamilton in South Australia, St Patrick's at Colebrook and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Mangana in Tasmania, and St Barnabas's, Norfolk Island. A very useful appendix lists work carried out in Australia by English architects. It would have been nice to have had more clarification in the text on the family of Pugins, Hansoms and Scotts as each of these families produced numerous architects of distinction and it does get confusing.

A chapter on the German churches of South Australia is probably the first time they have been treated.

Mr Andrews is clearly a good photographer and it therefore seems a pity not to have had more photos to illustrate the text. For example, I had to go to his essay in the Victoria and Albert catalogue to find illustrations of many of the Pugin things he talks about.

Professor Joan Kerr, on whose research he seems to have drawn, has said that the book is readable, accurate and clearly argued. This is true but with this author, the title and as the first book purporting to embrace the whole Australian story, one expected much more. This book is disappointing.

Clement Meadmore in Australia

Michael Bogle

The New York artist Clement Meadmore (born in Melbourne in 1929) now enjoys international fame for his sculpture but in the mid-20th century, his Australian reputation was centred around his work in furniture.

Meadmore began tertiary study in engineering at the Melbourne Technical College (now the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) in 1946.[1] In 1948, the College became the first in Australia to offer a formal industrial design course to service Victoria's powerful postwar manufacturing base. Meadmore soon began taking courses in this area of study.[2] By 1949, Clement Meadmore was advertising himself as an industrial designer.

Industrial design was not a new discipline or a novel methodology in the 1940s; the term was part of the expression of a modernist vocabulary that defined the commercial visualisation and design of furnishings and fixtures as an integral part of a manufacturing aesthetics for consumer goods.

Modernist design was quick to absorb new technologies and materials for manufacturing and Clement Meadmore was no exception. His design work consciously avoided the ornamental vocabulary of European historicism and he drew heavily on the design repertoire of North America and Europe. He allied himself with contemporary architects, painters and sculptors in Australia and later in New York City. Ultimately he was claimed by the world of sculpture.

Meadmore's First Furniture

By 1952, Meadmore had designed his first success with a corded black steel dining chair wrapped with synthetic fibre cord (available in red, blue, green, yellow, black and white) under the banner of Meadmore Originals, 86 Collins Street, (later at 62 Little Collins Street) Melbourne (plate 1).[3] Collins Street and Little Collins Street in the city had a friendly reputation with designers Fred Ward, Michael O'Connell, Sam Atyeo and the shop "Cynthia Reed Modern Furnishings" selling domestic design in the area beginning in the 1930s.

Plate 1. Meadmore Originals, Corded dining chair 1952, stools c. 1954. *Architecture and Arts*, June 1954.

Meadmore's corded dining chair was celebrated (and remains popular in Australian auction houses), appearing in design features and on magazine covers throughout the 1950s. In 1953, the chair received the Good Design Award from the Good Design Society, Sydney (plate 2).[4] Marion Hall Best's showrooms in Woollahra and Rowe Street, Sydney showed the dining chair (with arms) in saddle leather as well as the coloured cord.[5] A Meadmore corded recliner in the same style appeared in the same year, followed by a dining table with silver ash top in the same style.[6]

good design·

Plate 2. Symbol of the Good Design Society of Sydney awarded to Clement Meadmore's corded dining chair in 1953. *Architecture and Arts*, June 1953.

Despite the well-documented popularity of Meadmore's work, the 1950s in Australia is a period that he has disparaged in published interviews throughout his career. His often-repeated inability to realise an adequate income from his industrial design work can only be blamed on the small-scale Australian market, rather than a lack of public acceptance and critical acclaim. It was certainly a productive era for him:

1954   standard lamp with Le Klint shade[7]
1954   three-legged table lamp with Le Klint shade[8]
1954   corded nesting stools[9]
1955   3-legged moulded plywood chair[10]
1955   upholstered Parfait chairs and table[11]
1956   unidentified light fittings in 1956 Olympic Festival[12]
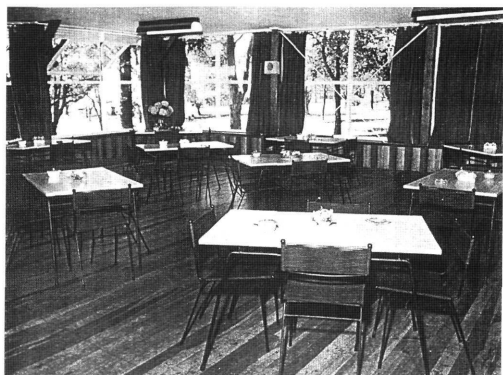
Plate 3. Meadmore Originals, Cafe, Queens Park, Toowoomba, Queensland 1954. *Architecture and Arts*, May 1954.

1957   wire chair (manufactured by Michael Hirst)[13]
1958   black lino-top table (manufactured by Michael Hirst) **(plate 7)**[14]
1959   DC 601 A wire chair (manufactured by Michael Hirst) **(plate 6)**[15]

Plate 4. Meadmore Originals, Stacking plywood chairs 1955. *Architecture, Arts and the MODERN HOME*, 1955.

The Legend Espresso and Milk Bar

During the late 1950s, Meadmore's design methods begin to shift. He formed a short-lived partnership with Max Robinson (Meadmore & Robinson)[16] in 1956, and later in the same year he became involved in a celebrated commission with the painter Leonard French for the "Legend Espresso and Milk Bar" at 239 Bourke Street, Melbourne (demolished 1970).[17] This cafe (previously known as the "Anglo American Milk Bar") was owned by Ion Nicolades who commissioned Meadmore to design a new interior.[18] Meadmore invited Leonard French to paint seven panels for the Milk Bar on the theme of the Legend of Sinbad **(plate 5)**.[19]

The Legend was a deep and narrow interior that Meadmore enhanced by placing mirrors opposite each of French's paintings. A dramatic terrazzo floor, coloured fibreglass-topped stools, diagonally-hung fluorescent lamps and a window display of a Meadmore-designed sculpture drawn from the silhouette of Sinbad's ship (as it appeared in French's painting no. 3) made the Legend one of Melbourne's most visually exciting cafes.

The Legend presented an innovative and playful interior developed within the language of international modernism. But Meadmore's aesthetic during this period permitted a surprising use of colour and pattern, far exceeding any of his later works. The new cafe opened at a time when Melbourne, goaded by architect and newspaper columnist Robin Boyd and his sympathisers, struggled to modernise itself for the anticipated international visitors for the 1956 Olympics.

Victorian industrial designers were rewarded with an inaugural 1956 Melbourne Olympics Arts Festival intended to display the cultural riches of the host nation. It was the first Olympics to incorporate an arts festival rather than art competitions. Major venues were chosen throughout the city to display Australian and Victorian achievements in industrial design, painting, architecture and other media. The Melbourne Technical College (now RMIT) featured graphic and industrial design and included Meadmore's lighting design among designers such as Grant Featherston, Carl Nielsen and Frances Burke.[20] Unfortunately, his work was not illustrated in the catalogue.

Gallery A and Max Hutchinson

By the later 1950s, Meadmore had begun to actively exhibit his sculpture and move within the Melbourne gallery milieu.[21] He also came into contact with the late Max Hutchinson[22], a commercial furniture manufacturer and designer.[23] Hutchinson (1925-99) said in a 1984 interview that Meadmore came to him in 1958 and said

Plate 5. Clement Meadmore and Leonard French, *The Legend Espresso and Milk Bar*, Melbourne 1956. Photograph courtesy Leonard French.

" '[T]hese artists that you like [to use in interior design commissions], they need an exhibition' ... So he ran the Gallery [A] for a couple of years until my accountant said, look, if you go on with this, you'll be broke in another year."[24] The painter Peter Upward (1932-84) is often mentioned as a Gallery A partner during this period.

A historian of the era has written that "The trio (Meadmore, Hutchinson and Upward) frequented Melbourne's jazz clubs, wore sharp Italian suits and moccasins, rode Vespa motor scooters, read the beat writers and *Evergreen Review* (a sophisticated American magazine of the period) and had a passionate interest in European design."[25, 26]

Max Hutchinson went on to found a branch of Gallery A in Sydney before being encouraged by Meadmore to migrate to New York City in 1968. In the year of his arrival, he was one of the first art dealers to open in the SoHo area with the Max Hutchinson Gallery at 127 Greene Street. He closed the Gallery in 1985 and moved to the country in the Kenoza Lake area of New York State where he created a well-known outdoor sculpture gallery.

One of Meadmore's first 1959 shows at Gallery A, Melbourne, featured his own sculpture with a catalogue and essay by Bill Hannan.[27] The designer also sold a line of "Gallery A Contract Furniture"[28] ("Designed to serve the discriminating by Clement Meadmore for the coordinated series by Gallery A contract furniture.") This new work was now fabricated for the commercial furniture market, rather than the domestic consumer.

Sculpture

Although he had been pursuing his sculpture throughout the 1950s, Meadmore vigorously expanded this career in this medium in 1960 and moved to Sydney. He exhibited sculpture at Macquarie Galleries and Clune Galleries, Sydney; a commission was awarded for a sculptured balustrade for the Town House Hotel, Canberra and he briefly taught sculpture at the National Art School, Sydney.[29]

His industrial design work of the 1950s gave way to sculpture. In 1963, a 13-minute documentary film *Clement Meadmore* was directed by a young Bruce Beresford and narrated by John Bell with a jazz soundtrack by Tony Curby Trio + 1. In this film showing Meadmore at work, the narrator explains that "Meadmore trained as a furniture designer" and reflects that "Meadmore has no preconception of final work in his sculpture; he relies on inspiration for final form ... The object is created first and then the [public] taste for it ... This is the nature of artistic innovation ...".

Vogue magazine

Ken Scarlett described Meadmore in *Australian Sculptors 1830-1977* as an Art Director for the fledgling editions of the Australian *Vogue* first published in Sydney in 1959. But a search through their first quarterly editions from 1959-1963 does not show his name on the masthead and more research is needed in this area. It is possible that he did some design and styling work for them as some of his furniture appears in an issue in the Summer 1960 edition and their Christmas 1961 edition suggests some of Meadmore's graphic qualities.

Meadmore and Michael Hirst

Michael Hirst, (b. 1917) ran a factory in Melbourne and remained active in furniture from 1955 to 1983. During this time, Hirst manufactured his own work as well as Meadmore items under the trademark H-Line and H/Flex. He sold through outlets like Georges, Andersons and interior decorators in Melbourne. It is not clear precisely when he began to fabricate Meadmore's furniture. In a telephone interview in 1997, Michael Hirst explained that he too exhibited some of his design work at Gallery A, Melbourne. Some of Hirst's work from the late 1950s has stylistic parallels with Meadmore's work but after he left for Sydney, and later the USA, the influences wane. However, Hirst released a coffee table by Meadmore in 1965, suggesting that their commercial association continued after the designer had moved to the United States.

Meadmore's Philosophy of Furniture

Although he single-mindedly pursued sculpture in the United States, Meadmore continued his interest in furniture design and in 1974, he published *The Modern Chair*, an illustrated survey of contemporary furniture from the Thonet Brothers to Mario Bellini.[30] In his 1974 introduction, Meadmore reveals something of his own aesthetics of furniture. "Each chair ... [in this book] has been selected for qualities that we can assess from our standpoint today, qualities which have less to do with style and period than with a solution of a defined problem. ... [However] Some of the finer adjustments of proportion, left unresolved by the mere solving of functional problems, have often been made with a visual sensitivity which undoubtedly contributes to make a chair a delightful object ...". When the book was reissued in 1997, Meadmore pronounced himself disappointed with the designs of the last quarter of the 20th century. "...[W]hen I considered updating the book I realised that I could not think of a single chair to add. I still believe that a designer who is not solving problems is a stylist, and styling is what we have been looking at for the last quarter of the century."[31]

Conclusion

Clement Meadmore's furniture was produced in an era while he was quietly developing his methodologies for his sculpture in the background. Consequently, there appear to be very few visual connections between the two media. In his furniture, he has proven to be consistently inventive, however, suggesting an artistic playfulness that belies his somewhat dour interviews. Most writers on Meadmore have been drawn to suggest

In 1963, Meadmore moved to New York. Although his sculpture was foremost after he went to the United States, he maintained his Australian design links through Michael Hirst, a furniture designer and manufacturer working in Melbourne.
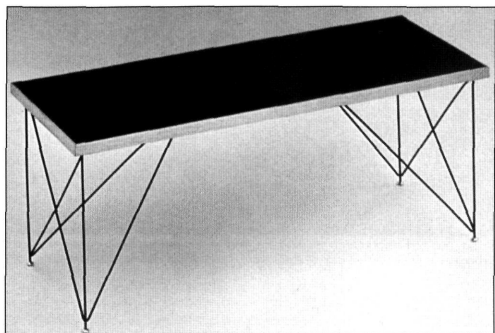
Plate 7. Clement Meadmore, Table with black linoleum top 1958. Manufactured by Michael Hirst. Photograph courtesy Michael Hirst. Hirst produced a similar table in 1963 with a nylon-coated perforated steel top.

affinities with the spontaneity of jazz as Meadmore has been a jazz reviewer, connoisseur and musician. It is a good analogy.

Unlike jazz, however, his furniture work studiously avoided historical references although there were affinities with the 1950s furniture of the sculptor Isamu Noguchi and other mid-century sculptors who enjoyed exploring spatial problems. Meadmore has favoured experimentation in synthetic fibres, plywood, finishes, steel alloys and other metals. It is clear that the designer found the techniques of fabrication interesting only as exercises in problem-solving; craft values had no interest for him. As he states clearly in his book on modern furniture, Meadmore considers that problem-solving is at the centre of good furniture design. His design work in Australia suggests that a very interesting furniture designer was lost to sculpture.

Author

Michael Bogle is a design historian specialising in Australian design. His most recent book is *Design in Australia, 1880-1970*, Craftsman House.

Notes

1 According to Ken Scarlett, Meadmore studied engineering at Melbourne Technical College. Ken Scarlett, *Australian Sculptors 1830-1977*, 1980 p. 429.

2 Meadmore says, however, "... I was bored with the way it was run. I decided I'd learn more from books, which I did." Geoffrey De Groen. "Playing with Blocks. Clement Meadmore" in *Some Other Dream. The Artist, the Art World and the Expatriate*, Hale & Iremonger, 1984 p. 66.

3 Appears in *Architecture and Arts*, vol.2, 1952, then in vol.3. Nov/Dec 1952 listed as Meadmore Originals. 86 Collins Street, Melbourne. By 1954, he had moved into Little Collins Street.

4 *Architecture and Arts*, July 1953 p. 16.

5 *Architecture and Arts*, July 1953 p. 5.

6 "The designs for the chair that was recently awarded the Good Design label and dining table, both by Clement Meadmore are the exclusive property of Meadmore Originals. App. Reg. No. 30201/3." *Architecture and Arts*, April 1954 p. 49.

7 *Architecture and Arts*, April 1954 p. 8.

8 *Architecture and Arts*, January 1954 p. 8.

9 *Architecture and Arts*, June 1954 p. 19.

10 *Architecture and Arts*, June 1955 p. 44.

11 *Architecture and Arts*, September 1955 p. 12.

12 *The Arts Festival of the Olympic Games*. Melbourne. Olympic Organising Committee 1956.

13 Michael Hirst pers. comm. 1997.

14 *ibid*.

15 *ibid*. See also Terry Lane *One Hundred Modern Chairs*, National Gallery of Victoria 1974, chair no. 83.

16 *The Arts Festival of the Olympic Games*, Melbourne Olympic Organising Committee, 1956.

17 See *1956. Melbourne, Modernity and the XVI Olympiad*, Museum of Modern Art at Heide, 1996 p. 21 for other illustrations.

18 Sheila Chamberlain "The History of the Legend of Sinbad Mural" *The Melbournian*, September 1994 p. 30-32.

19 Sasha Grishin, *Leonard French*. Craftsman House, 1995 pp. 22-23.

20 *The Arts Festival of the Olympic Games Melbourne*, Olympic Organising Committee, 1956. Meadmore had begun to explore lighting; see "Home Lighting Today" C. L. Meadmore, *Architecture and Arts* August 1955, pp. 41-43.

21 Feature review of early sculpture work, "wall sculpture" and mobiles by William Hunter, *Architecture and Arts*, June /July 1958 pp. 64-65, 73.

22 Max Hutchinson (1929 - 23 April 1999). Hutchinson was a founding member of the Society of Designers for Industry in Australia, the seminal design organisation in Australia. He and Meadmore established Gallery A in Melbourne in 1959. Gallery A was established in Sydney in 1963 and Hutchinson moved to Sydney. James Mollison (later Director of the National Gallery of Australia) stayed behind to run the Melbourne gallery. Sydney's Gallery A closed in 1982. After moving to New York City, Hutchinson opened the Max Hutchinson Gallery in 1968. (Chronology from an obituary in *Art Monthly Australia* 120: June 1999). A remarkably different obituary appeared in a New York regional newspaper, *The Times-Herald Record* 30 April 1999, describing Hutchinson as an Olympic athlete, national cricketer, designer and gallery owner.

23 See Terry Lane *One Hundred Modern Chairs*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1974 no. 85 for an example of a Max Hutchinson chair in the oiled teak Scandinavian style.

24 Geoffrey De Groen "Max Hutchinson" (interview) *Some Other Dream*, Hale & Iremonger, 1984, pp. 156-157.

25 Christopher Heathcote *A Quiet Revolution. The Rise of Australian Art 1946-1968*, Text Publishing Company, 1995 p. 158-159.

26 Barry Oakley offers a less flattering insight into Meadmore in a column in the *Australian Magazine*, 1-2 October 1994. He bought a Meadmore chair at Andersons, Melbourne in 1958.

27 *Boyd Turner & Clement Meadmore* (catalogue) August 25-11 September 1959, Gallery A, 60-70 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

28 Advertisement appearing in *The Bauhaus. Aspects and Influence* (catalogue) Gallery A, 1961. Curator Janet Dawson.

29 The Town House Hotel sculpture is now in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

30 Clement Meadmore *The Modern Chair*, Van Nostrand Reinhold 1974, re-released by Dover Publications, 1997. pp. 6-8.

31 *ibid*., preface to the Dover Edition, p. 8.

Happy 21st Birthday

The Historic Houses Trust of NSW celebrated its 21st birthday by throwing open free 11 of its 13 properties on the weekend of 30 June-1 July, to the delight of 27,165 visitors.

The HHT has an enviable record in presenting its properties to the public, encouraging conservation and debate in the community, critically examining issues in conservation, restoration and furnishing of houses, creating events and publications. Its program of exhibitions at the *Museum of Sydney*, *Elizabeth Bay House* and the *Justice & Police Museum* complement and expand on these activities.

Each of its properties is presented in different way. This arises from a single philosophical approach. The Trust first analyses the cultural significance of each place, and this in turn enables the curators to determine how each property will be interpreted and presented.

For instance, the *Museum of Sydney* on the site of First Government House explores black and white relations and the exercise of power. *Rouse Hill House* reflects its history as a working estate held in a single family for nearly 200 years. *Elizabeth Farm* not only tells the story of the pioneering Macarthur family, but recognises the Mediterranean background of neighbouring communities with an annual *Festival of the Olive*. Presentations and philosophies are constantly revised as the Trust searches for ways to ensure its work addresses contemporary social issues, and attracts new and younger audiences.

Growing from just two properties in 1980, the HHT now runs 13 properties, with the *Mint*'s industrial buildings to be added (see story below). This year it launched its Millenium Fund to buy properties, conserve them and re-sell them privately rather than take them into permanent public ownership. Yet in spite of the obvious advantages in pooling specialised resources in a outstandingly successful model.

In a typical extension of its role in involving the community and promoting research, earlier this year the HHT made its physical and intellectual assets available to the Australiana Society for us to hold our first conference at Government House.

Sydney's historic Mint complex to be conserved

Industrial buildings behind the Mint in Sydney's Macquarie Street will be transferred to the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales and undergo a $13.8 million conservation program over the next four years.

Most people think of the Mint as a grand Macquarie Street facade. In fact this building was originally built in 1811 as part of the Rum Hospital. It hides the original working buildings of the Royal Mint which sit behind.

Peter Watts, Director of the Historic Houses Trust, noted that these industrial structures are among the most important in the country. They had long been hidden under layers of 19th and 20th century additions. Recent research and investigations have revealed the original cast iron and stone structures imported from Britain

in 1854 to build the first branch of the Royal Mint outside the UK. They used the latest cast iron technology, very similar to that used in Paxton's extraordinary Crystal Palace in London of 1851.

Watts said "The refurbished Mint will provide a much needed space to house the Trust's extensive library and resource collection relating to domestic architecture, interiors and gardens. It will be open to the public." He hopes it will become a model project, marrying conservation needs with those of a contemporary use, resolving the design of new structures on the site with the conservation of the surviving original buildings.

Wanted for *Oceans Apart* – Matthew Flinders

The exhibition *Oceans Apart – the Story of Ann and Matthew Flinders* will focus on the love that these two had for each other despite being separated for nine years by the oceans, and his imprisonment. It will be on show at the National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour from March to November 2002 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Flinders' circumnavigation and charting of the Australian coastline.

Loans include his private letters to his wife from the Manuscripts Collection of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, six watercolours executed by Ann Flinders now held by the Edward King House at Lincoln, and a number of personal artefacts still in the possession of Flinders' descendants.

The Museum is, however, in search of any other Flinders-related

images and artefacts to display. If you can help please contact Senior Curator Mrs Lindsey Shaw on (02) 9298 3777, or e-mail lshaw@anmm.gov.au. In particular, she would like the complete set of his great publication on *Terra Australis*.

Wanted by the National Library

This year the National Library celebrates its centenary. In May, the National Library launched its centenary publication, *Remarkable Occurrences: The National Library of Australia's First 100 Years 1901-2000*, while the main centenary event is an exhibition opening in December showcasing treasures from the world's libraries.

As part of the "Birthday BookSearch", all the collection areas – Books, Serials, Music, Manuscripts, Maps, Pictorial and Oral History – are seeking to fill out collections relating to Australia where they have poor holdings or are not aware of the existence nor extent of material available. This includes areas that are fashionable now but were not in the early days, such as children's books, menus, and multicultural materials.

The Curator of Maps, Moira O'Connor, is seeking particular map titles as well as types of maps such as town plans, river pilot charts and the early portolan charts issued by the likes of the early Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese explorers. Contact the National Library of Australia, Canberra ACT 2600 or booksearch@nla.gov.au for details.

Two of the Library's key documents, Captain Cook's *Endeavour Journal* and the Mabo case Manuscripts, have joined other world-ranking documentary heritage items on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

Sydney by Ferry at the Museum of Sydney, 13 April – 4 August 2002

"The Harbour creeps between the thousand inlets like a series of grand canals, and across them glide the gondolas, the Sydney ferryboats" Kenneth Slessor in *Portrait of Sydney, The Sydney Scene,* p. 343f.

Experiencing Sydney Harbour by ferry is one of the city's most enduring and quintessential experiences. Whether commuting to Circular Quay from the suburban wharves on the North Shore or along the Parramatta River; or day-tripping to Manly and Watsons Bay, Sydneysiders have long enjoyed the pleasures afforded by these water journeys.

As people continue to enjoy the beauty of Harbour journeys, there is today heightened public concern for Sydney's waterways and foreshores. These form one of the most important areas of open space in the city: rich in visual, recreational, cultural and heritage significance. As a port the Harbour has an important industrial heritage, while also retaining sensitive and beautiful natural environments.

The Historic Houses Trust of NSW is developing an exhibition for its Museum of Sydney displaying the unique heritage of the Harbour and foreshores through the journeys and destinations of Sydney's ferries. *Sydney by Ferry* will draw on significant private and public collections as well as important material held within the local council areas bordering Sydney Harbour.

Sydney by Ferry will trace the journeys and the destinations of Sydney's ferries in their heyday from the 1890s to the 1930s. In the days before the Harbour Bridge and the motor-car, commuters took their regular seats on boats such

as *Wallaby* and *Bronzewing*, and swarmed into Circular Quay; reversing the tide at 5pm. School-boys peered curiously into engine rooms, while ladies returning from an afternoon's shopping retired to the ladies' saloon. On weekends, the "great picnic trade" ferried Sydney's multitudes – not just to Manly, but to Sydney's forgotten pleasure resorts such as Correy's Gardens, the Avenue Pleasure Grounds and Fairyland.

Visitors will glide through a visual evocation of Harbour landmarks, past and present. Through beautiful photographs and painting, ferry models and ephemera, *Sydney by Ferry* will tell a wonderful story of the ferries and Harbour journeys that have inspired artists, poets and Sydneysiders alike.

Exhibition curators Caroline Mackaness, Nicola Teffer and Rosie Nice are particularly interested in the many pleasure grounds around Sydney Harbour. Wonderful ferry brochures of the time carry advertisements for these locations, with their tea rooms, dance halls and razzle dazzles. Companies amd Sunday Schools had their annual picnics there. They would like to talk to people who remember these places, and who have photos, ephemera and memorabilia.

Three Queensland Exhibitions

Blighted Paradise: Colonial Visions of Northern Australia is another Centenary of Federation celebration. Drawing on public and private collections in Australia and Europe, this exhibition will give visitors to Rockhampton a comprehensive pictorial history, from 1770 to 1914, of life in northern Australia, a vast region stretching north of the Tropic

of Capricorn across Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland.

On display at the Rockhampton Art Gallery from 12 October to 25 November 2001, the exhibition traces the paths of explorers of the 18th and 19th centuries in northern Australia – from Cook, who in 1770 landed at Endeavour Bay and on Possession Island, to Matthew Flinders (1802), Edmund Kennedy (1848) and A. C. Gregory (1855-56). Coastal profiles, landscapes, sea-scapes, botanical and zoological illustrations as well as pictures of people and events will show other European travellers' and settlers' responses to the new tropical land.

Artists include William Westall, Ferdinand Bauer, Sydney Parkinson, Thomas Baines, Richard Beechey, Oswald Brierly, Isaacs Walter Jenner, Phillip Parker King, Ellis Rowan and Owen Stanley.

Fancy work: Women's Arts in the Federation Era at the Queensland Art Gallery features paintings, embroidery, woodcarving, china painting, pottery and poker work by named Australian women artists, all from the QAG collection. This intimate display reflecting the domestic environment of Australia a century ago is on display at QAG till 28 October.

Northern Journey: Conrad Martens in Early Queensland is a testament to the only major colonial artist to visit Queensland. Arriving in Brisbane 150 years ago on 7 November 1851, Martens recorded the land, flora, fauna and settlements of Moreton Bay and the Darling Downs. This is the largest collection of his Queensland paintings and drawings ever assembled, on show at QAG from 11 August until 14 October.

Two Sculptures acquired for Government Residences

To mark the beginning of the new millennium and Australia's Centenary of Federation, the Australiana Fund has acquired two contemporary sculptures by acclaimed Australian sculptors to be placed in the gardens of The Lodge and Government House, Canberra.
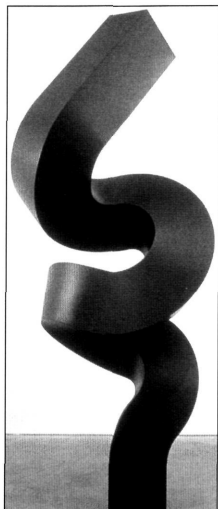
Clement Meadmore, *Up*.

One is a sculpture by Inge King entitled *Moonbird* and the other is by Clement Meadmore entitled *Up*. The lives of these two outstanding Australian sculptors illustrate two aspects of migration. King sought refuge in Australia from strife-torn Europe, contributing greatly to Australian sculpture, while Mead-more made his name in Australia then had the courage to relocate to and succeed in New York.

Clement Meadmore (born 1929) trained and worked in Australia before moving to New York in 1963 and becoming a highly respected sculptor on the international scene. Meadmore's work shows his interest in the expressive qualities of geometric forms. He fuses elements of Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism, aiming to distill the essence of sculpture in his works that have a sense of rhythm and movement. The Clement Meadmore sculpture is entitled *Up* 1997 (266 x 97 x 91.5cm) and is an upright curving sculpture fabricated in aluminium painted black. This sculpture adorns in the gardens of Government House in Canberra.

The Inge King sculpture *Moonbird* 1999 (220 x 130 x 240cm) is cast in bronze and inspired by the notion of a bird and the moon. King's biographer Judith Trimble says "King's geometric abstractions challenge the viewer to explore the formal relations of space in and around her work and to consider the figurative allusions made in her titles." King (born 1918) is a highly respected late career sculptor who represents the post World War II movement of immigrants to Australia, bringing with them important European artistic influences. King had a knowledge and experience of art in Europe, Britain and New York and she brought this knowledge to Australia in 1951, influencing Australian sculpture. This sculpture graces the gardens of The Lodge.
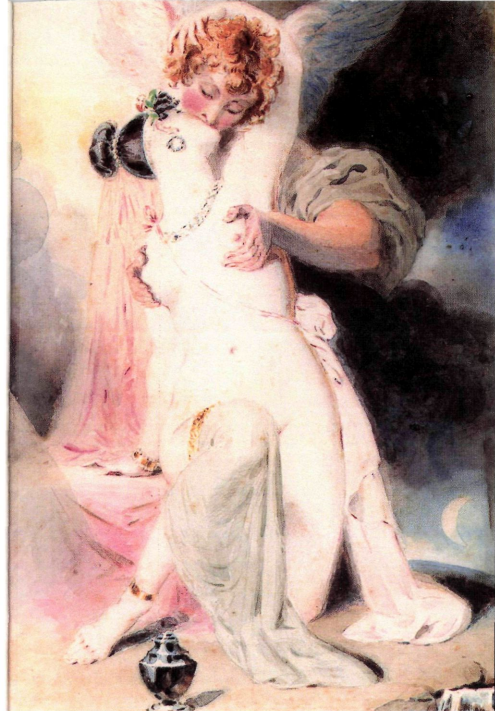
Thomas Griffiths Wainewright's *Reunion of Eros and Psyche* and *Lothaire of Bourgogne*

Peter R. Walker

Thomas Griffiths Wainewright was born in London in 1794 and was provided with an upper-middle class upbringing and education by his grandfather after his parents' death. His grandfather's house was to provide Wainewright with literary and artistic influences which would affect him for the rest of his life. Visitors to the house included such intellectual thinkers as Josiah Wedgwood, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Blake and Henry Fuseli.

Wainewright developed his interests in collecting and art at an early age. He is known to have had an apprenticeship to the portrait painter Thomas Phillips, a member of the Royal Academy, in 1813. John Linnell is also claimed to be one of his teachers. He went on to exhibit at the Royal Academy from 1821-1825 with the influence of Fuseli and the 19th century romantic style evident in his works, such as the *Subject from the Romance of Undine* exhibited in 1821.[1] As a journalist

and social commentator of note, Wainewright wrote literary criticism and exhibition reviews for such journals as the *London Magazine*.

In 1837 Wainewright was tried for forgery and sentenced to transportation, while also being under suspicion after the mysterious deaths of his grandfather, mother-in-law and sister-in-law. These actions resulted in a notoriety for Wainewright that was to be widely scrutinised throughout the years in books and commentaries based on his life by such authors as Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde and the present Poet Laureate Andrew Motion.

Wainewright arrived as convict 2325 on the *Susan* at Van Diemen's Land in 1837. By 1840 he was working at the Colonial Hospital in Hobart Town and it was here that he was befriended by the assistant surgeon Dr Robert Kennedy Nuttall. Dr Nuttall was to see Wainewright everyday for the four years he was

in the colony (1840-1844) and encouraged him in what must have been a very different position to that which Wainewright had held as a dandy and dilettante in early 19th century England and France. Dr Nuttall must also have encouraged Wainewright's painting and was able to form a comprehensive collection of his works.

Wainewright painted water-colour portraits of members of the upper echelons of colonial society, such as Rev. Bedford and the Cutmear twins, as was demanded by the populace of the time. However he continued to paint in the romantic style he had practised in England and successfully exhibited at the Royal Academy. This is how Dr Nuttall obtained the two watercolours *The Reunion of Eros and Psyche* and *Lothaire of Bourgogne Discovers the Amour of His Wife with the High Constable.*[2]

These watercolours are very different to the usual landscape

and portrait paintings done by the colonial artists of the time, and are distinct in their romantic style and the high level of skill with which they were painted. They also confirm that Wainewright's links with Fuseli remained even in the isolation of colonial Hobart Town. The elongated, mannered figures and neo-classical lines are evidence of this while the eroticism of the works is very rare for Australian paintings of this period. *The Reunion of Eros and Psyche* is a subject taken from Apuleius's *Golden Ass* while *Lothaire of Bourgogne Discovers the Amour of His Wife with the High Constable* illustrates a scene in Barrault's *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne*.

Interestingly, Dr Nuttall commented to his son, Professor G. H. F. Nuttall, that he remembered watching Wainewright paint the wife of Lothaire. In the story, related by Curling[3] in his book on Wainewright, when the doctor complained about the unnatural length of her neck

T.G. Wainewright, *Lothaire of Bourgogne Discovers the Amour of His Wife with the High Constable*.

Wainewright put the black band around it with a single deft stroke of his brush. When relating the story Dr Nuttall made a slashing movement as though using a knife to cut a throat, with a fierce expression on his face. Dr Nuttall has inscribed this observation in pen on the back of the watercolour.

The back of each work is inscribed in pencil with its title, and on comparison with Wainewright's handwritten Petition for Release, which was submitted in Hobart, it is evident that the artist has written the words himself.

The *Reunion of Eros and Psyche* and *Lothaire of Bourgogne Discovers the Armour of His Wife with the High Constable* are extremely rare Australian colonial artworks on many levels. Wainewright counted among his friends and acquaintances in England such artists as Sir David Wilkie, Richard Westall, David Flaxman and Sir Thomas Lawrence, to name but a few, and this contact was to provide him with experiences and influences that were unique for Australian society of the period. The artistic lessons obtained from these relationships contribute highly to his present recognition who, at his best, is one of the most skillful of the colonial artists of the period.

The fact that Wainewright was a convict, with the

obvious constraints this entailed, and the small number of works by him known to exist further enhances the significance of these works. Very few romantic genre paintings survive in the whole colonial oeuvre and to be able to provenance any colonial work back to its origin, as we can with these two watercolours, is extremely rare. When the amazing life of Thomas Wainewright is added to this, the unique nature and extreme rarity of these works in the Australian colonial context is clearly evident.

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J. Curling, *Janus Weathercock. The Life of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, London 1938.

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Notes

1 A. Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts. A complete dictionary of contributors and their works from its foundation in 1769 to 1904*. Henry Graves and Co. and George Bell and Sons, London 1906.

2 James R. Lawson auction 23 April 2001 lots 92 and 93.

3 J. Curling, *Janus Weathercock. The Life of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, London 1938 p. 334.
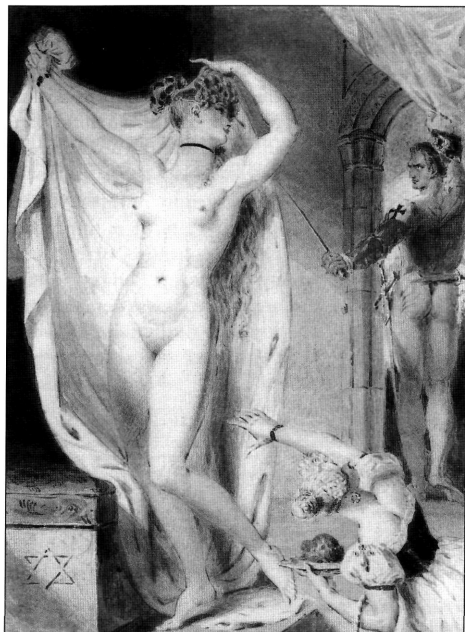
Plate 1. Pair of kookaburra bookends signed Grace Seccombe, H 15 W 13 cm each.

Plate 2. Rare ginger jar inscribed "*Wangal*" Grace Seccombe, H 18 Diam 20 cm.

Grace Seccombe 1880-1956

Marvin Hurnall & Megan Martin

Grace Povey Seccombe (née Capper) was born on 3 September 1880 in Wolstanton in the heart of the "Potteries" district of Staffordshire. Her father, Alfred Capper, was a potter and later a commercial traveller for a pottery and her mother, Hannah Povey, was also a member of a potting family. The Cappers, like many of the protagonists of Arnold Bennett's famous novels of the "Potteries" were Methodists. Povey was the name of one of Bennett's characters.[1]

By her own account, Grace studied at the Wedgwood Institute in Burslem, "learning drawing and underglaze and overglaze painting"[2] and she may have worked in a pottery in Burslem before coming to Sydney with her family around 1903. Early in 1904 Alfred Capper was involved in the resurrection of the old Phoenix Pottery in Longueville Road, Lane Cove, in partnership with a fellow "expert in

the art of pottery from Staffordshire" named Bennett.[3]

The Capper family lived first in Lane Cove and then Chatswood but by 1908 Alfred Capper had moved his family to Arncliffe and soon after moved again to Enfield where he set up the Enfield Art Pottery Works. This venture was short-lived and the family moved to Ashfield, Concord and finally Burwood where Alfred died in January 1914.[4]
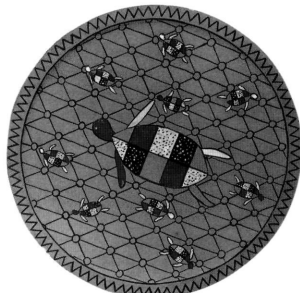
Plate 3. Rare plaque inscribed "*Birikala Turtle*" signed Grace Seccombe, Diam. 27 cm.

In February 1908 Grace Capper married Clarence Percy Seccombe in a Methodist ceremony in the Capper family home at Arncliffe, Grace describing herself as a "pottery artist". Seccombe was an architect, Melbourne-born son of a clergyman. In 1909 the Seccombes moved to the emerging suburb of Eastwood where Clarence Seccombe was involved in building as well as designing houses. Their own house at 1 Campbell Street Eastwood was named *Nantwych*.

For around 20 years after her marriage Grace Seccombe had no involvement in ceramic production (neither was she involved in child rearing). Her interest in pottery was, it seems, renewed by a visit to England with her husband when, on the railway station at Stoke-on-Trent she saw a showcase containing English birds in pottery. The story goes that on the ship returning to Australia Grace decided that she could make birds in pottery just as

well, except that she would make Australian birds.[5]

Grace Seccombe joined the Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW in September 1930 and exhibited annually with the Society from that time until her death.[6] She had a studio equipped with a kiln at her home – the Seccombes' neighbours complained to Ryde Council in early 1931 about the furnace.[7]
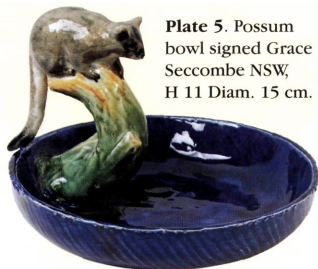
True to her shipboard resolution, her first exhibit with the Society included some modelled Australian birds, but there were also several vases and bowls decorated with moulded wildflowers. Her 1931 exhibit, on the other hand, mostly comprised modelled figures, including Australian fauna as well as kookaburras and lyrebirds. In the succeeding years these modelled figures – often attached to bookends
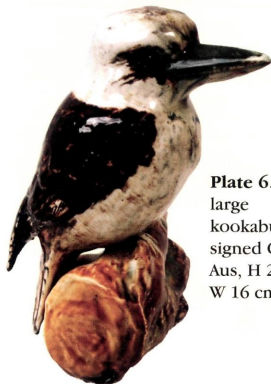

Plate 5. Possum bowl signed Grace Seccombe NSW, H 11 Diam. 15 cm.

Plate 6. Very large kookaburra signed GS Aus, H 20 W 16 cm.

in 1939 her entire exhibit was made from it. A correspondent for *The Clay Products Journal of Australia*, reviewing the exhibition, explained that this Eastwood clay "burns to a black colour" and that "by working white floral designs on the black surface, Mrs Seccombe has produced a number of exquisite specimens – little sugar and cream bowls, dainty tea and coffee sets, and mantelshelf ornaments."[8] The floral designs were native: ferns, ti-tree, flannel flower, boronia, Christmas bush.

Another important venture was her focus in 1936 and 1937 on interpretations of Aboriginal art. Grace Seccombe was, of course, not the only non-Aboriginal craftworker to be captivated by Aboriginal art at this time. In March 1930, the year in which Grace joined the Society of Arts and Crafts, Margaret Preston

Plate 9. Large sulphur-crested cockatoo signed Grace Seccombe Australia, H 19.5 W 23 cm, smaller sulphur-crested cockatoo H 14 W 8 cm.

Plate 4. "Seven Little Australians", seven kookaburras sitting on a hollow log, signed Grace Seccombe, H 11 W 16 cm.

– became the staple of Grace Seccombe's exhibit. These are characterised by bold, brightly-coloured glazes, and variously incised or painted "GS", "GS AUS", "Grace Seccombe Australia" or "Grace Seccombe N.S.W." Early pieces are marked "AuStralia" with a long S.

In addition to modelled figures, Grace Seccombe also made important ventures into other areas. One was experimentation with local Eastwood clay. In 1931 she exhibited a "jet vase" made from this clay and

Plate 7. Very large "Billie Bluegum" koala signed Grace Seccombe NSW Australia, H 21 W 14 cm.

Plate 9. Large sulphur-crested cockatoo signed Grace Seccombe Australia, H 19.5 W 23 cm, smaller sulphur-crested cockatoo H 14 W 8 cm.

Plate 10. Large rosella signed Grace Seccombe Australia, H 19.5 W 13 cm.

Plate 8. Majestic parrot signed Grace Seccombe Australia, H 17 W 22 cm.

Plate 11. Large kingfisher signed Grace Seccombe, H 14 W 16 cm, smaller kingfisher signed GS/Aus, H 7 W 5.5 cm.

Plate 12. Pair of plump kookaburras sitting on a fence, "To you the open slip-rails and a waiting friend" signed Grace Seccombe Australia H 11 W 15 cm.

Plate 13. Early naïve kookaburra incised "S" H 17 W 14 cm, Blue Wren signed Grace Seccombe H 13 W 7 cm.

Plate 14. Pair of early birds, long tail incised "Australia" H 18 W 14 cm, other bird inscribed "auStralia" H 17 W 9 cm.

Plate 15. Large budgerigars signed Grace Seccombe Sydney Australia H 29 D 8 cm; fire-tailed finch inscribed "auStralia" H 17 D 7.5 cm.

Plate 16. Large pair of blue budgerigars signed Grace Seccombe H 18 W 9cm; yellow budgerigar signed Grace Seccombe Australia H 17 W 7.5 cm.

Plate 17. Large green budgerigars signed Grace Seccombe H 22 W 10 cm; single blue budgerigar signed Grace Seccombe Australia H 19 W 8.5 cm.

had published an article on the application of Aboriginal designs in the journal *Art in Australia*, illustrated with several photographs of artefacts from the Australian Museum.[9] At the Society's 1930 exhibition Mrs W. W. Thorpe (wife of William Walford Thorpe, ethnologist at the Museum 1906-1932) gave a lecture on Aboriginal art and the writer Zora Cross performed an "Aboriginal dance". Some members of the Society featured Aboriginal-style motifs in their exhibits.[10]

Grace Seccombe's interest developed in the following years. It was she who proposed, in July 1934, that the Society invite Fred McCarthy of the Australian Museum to lecture the Society on "The arts and crafts of Oceania".[11] Her 1936 exhibit at the Society's annual exhibition

included 29 items with Aboriginal-style designs – lamp bases, jars, bowls, vases and figures. All items were exhibited with Aboriginal names and the *Sydney Morning Herald* was enthusiastic, albeit paternalistic, in its review:

> "rarely has the essential spirit of primitive aboriginal art been captured with such insistent charm. It almost seems, as one admires Mrs Seccombe's work, that to her has been handed the torch of an almost extinct native art. She has reproduced the quaint designs just as they are to be found on war shields and boat paddles in the Australian Museum."[12]

Again in the 1937 exhibition she exhibited a similar number of items in Aboriginal-style and was responsible for arranging a special 'Aboriginal Group' at the exhibition, together with Miss Irene Beetson. It was the turn of the *Daily Telegraph* to wax enthusiastic, declaring that

> "Mrs Seccombe has reproduced the native designs with remarkable fidelity of line and colour ... Every line of these designs has some significance. A jagged line, for instance, is a symbol for water, and is used in conjunction with the primitive representation of some water inhabitant such as a turtle.

She has decided to use the various designs only in their proper associations, so that this graceful and lovely, though decidedly primitive, art will remain essentially aboriginal".[13]

Grace Seccombe's enthusiasm for Aboriginal designs was earnest in its commitment to anthropological context. When she decorated a pot with designs derived from Aboriginal sources she took the time to find Aboriginal names for the designs and, as explained in the *Telegraph*, she made choices about designs based on her understanding of their meaning within Aboriginal society. Margaret Preston, on the other hand, saw Aboriginal art simply as a source of abstract designs. To readers of her 1930 article she offered this warning: "please do not bother about what the carver meant in the way of myths, rites, etc.; this is not the decorator's affair".[14] Although many critics today would accuse Grace Seccombe of cultural appropriation, it is important to acknowledge that she was well-intentioned in her efforts to treat Aboriginal visual culture with respect and to remember that her work acted as a counterbalance to more prevalent racist stereotypes of Aboriginality.

Grace Seccombe's interest in Aboriginal issues also had a social dimension. Former East-wood residents remember that the Seccombes employed young Aboriginal women as domestic servants in the 1930s.[15] Grace and Clarence Seccombe had been foundation members of the first Presbyterian Church in Eastwood and for a time Clarence Seccombe was a lay preacher. It was almost certainly through the church that the Seccombes took on these young women apprenticed as wards under the Aborigines Welfare Board. Today we understand that these young women were members of the "stolen generation."

Her annual exhibits with the Society of Arts and Crafts represent one aspect of Grace Seccombe's ceramic work. Of equal importance were her direct commercial dealings with the Sydney jewellery retailer Prouds. Much of the work sold through Prouds was intended for the tourist market. The Boston-based *Christian Science Monitor* declared in 1951 that visitors to Sydney seldom left without a pottery kookaburra, platypus or koala made by Grace Seccombe. The newspaper claimed that her Australian birds and animals were "much sought after all over the Commonwealth." An Eastwood neighbour later recalled that two of the biggest selling items through Prouds were a fence with seven kookaburras labelled "Seven Little Australians" and a kookaburra perched on a sliprail carrying the message "For you the open sliprail and the waiting friend".[16]

Another item sold through Prouds was a blackbird pie funnel. Grace Seccombe exhibited such items first in the Arts and Crafts Society's annual exhibitions in 1931 and 1932. By 1951, according to the *Christian Science Monitor*, she had made over 20,000 such pie-birds and had "copyrighted the idea all over the world." The pie-birds were produced from moulds, and it is likely that members of her family assisted Grace in their production. An obituary published in the Eastwood Presbyterian Church magazine claimed that Grace and her husband "worked together producing models of our native birds and animals, he making the models and moulds and she doing the artistic painting etc." The obituary writer reported that, following Clarence Seccombe's death in 1946, Grace "carried on the work with the aid of her brother Arthur Capper" and also mentioned that she had taught arts and crafts at Presbyterian Ladies College Croydon.

Grace Seccombe died on 25 February 1956, aged 75. In her lifetime her work, particularly her modelled figures, brought her steady commercial success. Since that time the desirability of Seccombe pieces has hardly lessened and has been growing steadily more collectable for more than twenty years.

Notes

1   Marriage certificate Clarence Percy Seccombe & Grace Povey Capper 1908/2653; 1881 census England: Staffordshire, Wolstanton; Arnold Bennett *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908); *Anna of the Five Towns* (1902); *The Grim Smile of the Five Towns* (1907), all reprinted as Penguin Modern Classics.

1   "Sydney woman captures in clay gaiety of quaint Australian animals: Grace Seccombe's pottery pleases stream of tourists" *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston) 30 October 1951 p. 14.

3   " A new industry in pottery" *North Shore & Manly Times* 5 March 1904 p. 6.

4   Death certificate Alfred Capper 1914/586.

5   *Christian Science Monitor* op cit.

6   ML MSS 3645: Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW membership records; exhibition catalogues.

7   Ryde City Council Minutes 15.5.1931, 17.9.1931.

8   "Arts and crafts exhibition" *Clay Products Journal of Australia* 2 October 1939 p. 19.

9   Margaret Preston "The application of Aboriginal designs" *Art in Australia* no. 31 March 1930.

10 "Arts and crafts: Aboriginal motifs" *The Sun* (Sydney) 21 October 1930 p. 14.

11 ML MSS 3645: Society of Arts & Crafts of NSW Minutes Book 1931-1968.

12 "Sydney women's success as creative artists" *Sydney Morning Herald* Women's supplement 3 November 1936 p. 12.

13 News cutting marked "DT 16.11.1937" in Society of Arts and Crafts, ML MSS 3645.

14 Margaret Preston *op cit*.

15 Personal communication.

16 ML MSS 6210: Marjorie Graham papers. The Powerhouse Museum has one of these.

17 *Life & work (St Andrew's Eastwood Presbyterian Church)* no. 36 March 1956 p. 3.

18 Marjorie Graham "Grace's rare and beautiful birds" *Business Review Weekly* 15 January 1983 pp. 56-57; Marjorie Graham "Aunty Grace" *The Australian Antique Collector* Jan-June 1985 p. 87; K. J. Buchester "The potter's progress" *Australian Business Collector's Annual* 1985 pp. 35-39, 112.

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ARGYLE HOUSE
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NEW SOUTH WALES
AUSTRALIA

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.