

Australiana

AUGUST 2003 Vol. 25 No. 3



Peter Thomle's jewellery cabinet presented to Jules Joubert
C.H.T. Costantini and his trompe l'oeil paintings • William Holford's pottery
Portrait by Oswald Rose Campbell • John W. Billiatt in South Australia



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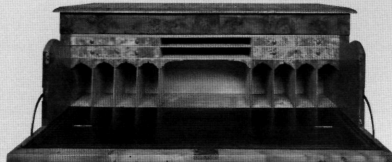
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John Wade
President, Australiana Society
10 Porter St
BONDI JUNCTION NSW 2022

Tel 02 9389 4404 or 0408 212 242
johnwade@iprimus.com.au or info@australiana.org

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CELEBRATING 25 YEARS IN 2003

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COVER: Peter Thomle, jewellery cabinet made in Brisbane and presented to Jules Joubert, c.1876. Private collection, Canada.

EDITORIAL

Members who are on email will be familiar with our frequent communications about our events and other items of potential interest to members. For better or worse, others miss out on these and on our inserts, so occasionally we will use the magazine again to provide some news.

Australiana magazine

Our magazine is our most important endeavour, reaching all our members, deposited in libraries, galleries and museums around the country, and recording the research into Australiana.

In our 25th year, we have expanded our magazine to 40 pages with 24 in colour. This is of course expensive and can be funded only while we have a *large and growing* membership. Every year some members drop out for one reason or another, so we have to be very active and responsive just to keep the members we have. Thank you to those who have re-joined, and welcome to those 50 or so members who have joined so far this year. This issue is our biggest mailout ever, with nearly 400 copies sent out to subscribers—double the number of four years ago.

We hope to attract more new members by giving away the 500 extra copies of the May issue paid for and mailed out by Sotheby's, together with their August decorative arts catalogue, to their Australiana subscribers. Thanks to every one of you who helps distribute our magazines and brochures to prospective members.

Paying subscriptions by credit card

To make payment of subscriptions easier, we can now accept credit card payments by Visa, Mastercard and Bankcard. Soon we will have a new membership brochure printed, with provision to join and pay by credit card. This is already available by downloading a form from our website.

Contributions to Australiana

Members continue to supply us with a range of articles and pictures which are only getting better. My co-editor Kevin Fahy and I do prefer to have a pool of articles, varying in subject and length, suitable to run, so please keep them coming in. In hand we have *the* definitive article on the Tasmanian carver, chairmaker, violinist, entrepreneur etc. George Peck. Kevin Fahy is revising his article on the long case clocks by James Oatley, and there's another furniture contribution on sideboards. But where are your pottery and silver collectors lurking?

We know many of you have ideas for stories and even partly-completed research. Drop us a line and let us know what you have in train, and I'll add it to the vast list (together with my own ideas for stories). We have not forgotten that we promised to suggest ways to help you keep good text and photographic records of your collection.

Writers' Awards

To encourage new writers, we are pleased to announce a new writing award of \$100 for a contribution from an amateur—someone who is not a professional curator, academic, dealer or the like. This award is available this year and next and so far there is not much competition, so it's easy money for someone. Thanks to the anonymous member who thought of the idea and made the donation.

The Peter R. Walker Writing Award of \$250 continues to be

funded by Peter R. Walker Fine Art, and is awarded to the writer of the best article in each volume of *Australiana*.

Australiana index

On our website www.australiana.org you will find a contents list to *Australiana* magazine 1986-2002, prepared by member Paul Gatto. This can be easily accessed from the home page. He also prepared an index which soon will be added to the website. Both will be progressively updated as new issues of *Australiana* appear. These bring the earlier indexes published in the magazine up to date, and will remain available in electronic form. If you can't access the web, we can send them out to you on disc for a small charge.

Dealer list

The website has a new list of dealers who are members of the Society. This can also be accessed from our homepage, and will become a separate page as soon as we can arrange it. Dealers wanting to be listed, or to update your listing, should contact us. And don't forget that advertising in *Australiana* magazine is an excellent way to target all the major Australiana collectors very effectively and regularly.

Events

Our next scheduled event in 2003 is a visit to Sydney book dealers Hordern House Rare Books at 77 Victoria Street, Potts Point on Thursday 4 September at 7pm. Director Anne McCormick will show us some of her treasures, but numbers are limited so book early by telephoning 02 9974 1353 or emailing info@australiana.org.

The event in November will be an excursion but is yet to be confirmed, while on 26 January we will once more celebrate Australia Day at Axi's Restaurant in Hunter's Hill, this time with a dinner.

Help for Baghdad

In our last editorial we drew attention to the need to maintain good collection records, and the sad plight of the antiquities in the Iraq Museum in Baghdad. Fortunately the picture wasn't as bad as first painted. However in mid-May, the Council for Australian-Arab Relations sponsored a visit to Baghdad by Professor Dan Potts from the University of Sydney. Professor Potts presented the Iraq Museum with a laptop computer, software, scanner and digital camera, and trained the museum staff in their use. Australia was the first country to respond with practical, material help to the Museum.

We too need practical help – your articles and your feedback. ■

John Wade
0408 212 242
info@australiana.org



Charles Henry Theodore Costantini

CONVICT, SURGEON, ARTIST & ... FORGER?

ANDREW MORRIS

Victorian collector Andrew Morris combines the study of forged notes, paintings, trial reports, and medical records to tell a convincing tale of Tasmanian convict artist Costantini.

What do an Australian pre-Federation 'Bank of Issue', a convict, a surgeon, an artist and a forger have in common? This paper investigates a potential correlation between all five.

The Commercial Bank of Tasmania Limited was the ninth colonial 'Bank of Issue'—which is a bank that legally issues its own banknotes—to commence business in Australia. To place the

Commercial Bank into historical context, the Bank of New South Wales was Australia's first bank of issue, having opened for business at 10 o'clock in the forenoon on 8th April 1817 in the house of Mrs. Mary Reibey, Macquarie Place Sydney.¹

Originally titled the Commercial Bank² of Van Diemen's Land (1829-1921), it was established in Hobart Town on 29 June 1829 in the Davey Street premises previously occupied by



Plate 1. C.H.T. Costantini, Australia 1803-1860, *Trompe l'œil*, c. 1838, Hobart. Watercolour and pen & ink on paper, 44.5 x 55.5 cm. Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, J.C. Earl Bequest Fund 1991

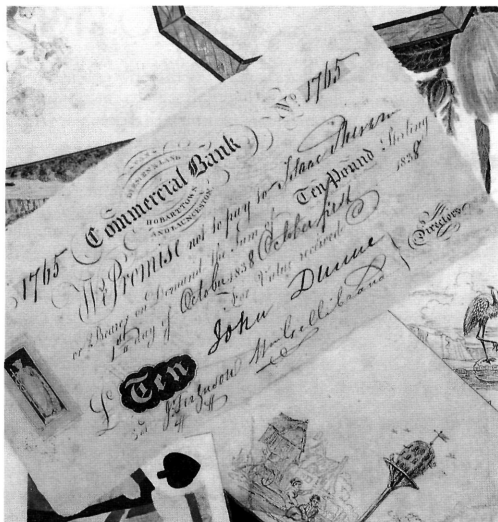


Plate 2. C.H.T. Costantini, Australia 1803-1860, *Trompe l'oeil*, c. 1838, Hobart. Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (detail of plate 1)

the recently departed Tasmanian Bank (1826-1829). In late 1828 John Dunn, a notable Hobart Town shopkeeper, sold his interests in the Derwent Bank (1827-1849) in which he was a founding director, to ultimately form the Commercial Bank.³

John Dunn conducted Commercial Bank business autonomously. However business was brisk as a consequence of interest being paid on deposits, and effective 1 October 1832, conversion to a joint stock company was, it seems, inevitable. The bank then became known as the Commercial Bank of Tasmania. Dunn was managing director, with T.M. Fenton and William Gellibrand as directors. In all there were 200 shareholders, with Dunn holding a majority of shares.⁴

Professor S.J. Butlin notes that banknotes were issued by the Commercial Bank in 1830 shortly after commencement, when £3,371 worth of banknotes were in circulation.⁵ It is conceivable that Thomas Bock, while still a convict, engraved the banknote designs for the printing plates for these initial notes.

During 1824, Bock was the engraver of Tasmania's first banknotes for the Bank of Van Diemen's Land (1823-1891), preceding his conditional pardon on 29 June 1832.⁶ The *Hobart Town Gazette* of 10 December 1824 invited readers to 'investigate and admire the beautiful new Four Dollar Note Plate just now completed for the Bank of Van Diemen's Land by Mr. Bock'⁷ and went on to acclaim his colonial ingenuity. It is known that Bock engraved banknotes for the Commercial Bank, as the original £10 and £20 printing plates dated '185...' survive in the ANZ archives.⁸

The forgery⁹ of a genuine Commercial Bank note (plate 3) is the only extant example from the earliest period of this Bank's history in the 1830s, forgery or otherwise. Given its dodgy start in life, this banknote was tendered as evidence in two court cases against persons accused of attempting to pass it as *bona fide*. Even though an illegitimate example, this note is one of only a handful surviving from all pre-Federation banking institutions during the 1830s to 1860s.

The forged banknote is fully described in a recent Noble's auction catalogue: 'Commercial Bank, one pound, Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land, forgery in Indian Ink, 1 July 1835, No. 1351, forged hand signatures of John Dunn (founder of the bank) and Wm Gellibrand, copied from an original note, black on white, on unwatermarked paper. Hand written on obverse "Exhibited in the Supreme Court in Reg v. *Watkins* this 20th October 1841", and on back in black ink "Produced Police Office Oct 13/41" and additionally "20 Feby 1836 Exhibited in the prosecution of *Eugene McCarthy* this day" and signed by uncertain signature. Missing corner and some edges, minor pin-holes and edge splits, otherwise nearly fine condition, believed to be unique and of great historical interest'.¹⁰

Who was the forger? Quite a lot of information is written on the banknote. Does any of this help identify the perpetrator, 168 years after committing the crime? The two Hobart Town Supreme Court cases notated onto the actual forgery are a worthwhile starting point. There are no surviving detailed court records,¹¹ however as an alternative source, the contemporary newspaper accounts are often enlightening.

The first case, heard in 1836, is more likely to provide a link with our forger. On 19 February 1836 Eugene McCarthy was brought before the Supreme Court because he had been charged with uttering a forged note of the Commercial Bank for £1 to Mr Leuwillan of Liverpool Street. A few days before, he had offered the same note to a man named Parsons, who returned it, saying it was forged. The prisoner received excellent character references, but His Honour regretted it was not in his power to pass a lighter sentence. Eugene McCarthy was 'transported for life',¹² presumably to either Port Arthur or Macquarie Harbour in Van Diemen's Land.

There is no further information about this case, and therefore no clues as to where Eugene McCarthy may have obtained the forgery in question. His case was heard seven months after the hand-written date shown on the banknote (1 July 1835); consequently the forged banknote may have already been expended on numerous occasions, including by those who were essentially illiterate.

However, considerable material exists in newspaper reports about Mr Watkins, the defendant charged in the 1841 court case. It is also worth considering just how the forgery could have been released into general circulation yet again, between 1836 and 1841. It is probable individuals other than McCarthy or Watkins were involved, possibly persons within the court system.

Benjamin Watkins was formerly a Hobart Town district constable of some standing, according to witness statements supporting his innocence. Watkins was brought before the Supreme Court on Tuesday 19 October 1841, after having been released on bail. He appeared in the dock charged with having, on 8 October, uttered a £1 banknote of the Commercial Bank, knowing the same to have been forged.¹³

Perhaps Benjamin Watkins, while he was a member of the constabulary, had access to court evidence when Eugene McCarthy was convicted in 1836. But why wait five years to spend the fake £1 note?

John McGrath, a licensed publican residing in Murray Street, gave evidence that Watkins went to his house to buy a pint of wine, for which Watkins tendered a note which McGrath thought was a forgery because of writing he observed on its back.¹⁴ McGrath was correct because the handwriting on the back was that of E.M. Stephen, then Clerk of Courts during the February 1836 McCarthy case.

Watkins denied McGrath's assertions, but indicated he

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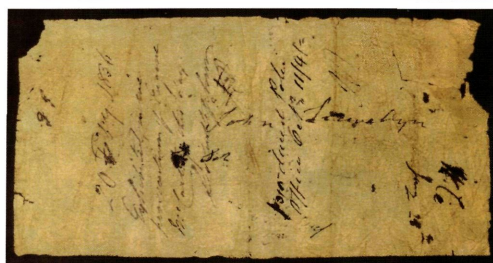


Plate 3. Commercial Bank forgery £1 banknote. Sydney private collection, courtesy John Pettit Rare Banknotes, Sydney



Plate 4. The Derwent Bank forged £20 banknote, courtesy Noble Numismatics, Sydney

would return the banknote to the person from whom he had obtained it. This 'person' is not named in the newspaper accounts, which presumably means the court was not given a name in evidence. The court was told that McGrath had known Watkins for eight or nine years and (perhaps crucial evidence) that Watkins was near-sighted. Reporting of the case suggests Watkins may have been set up in some way. The publican McGrath and his wife were in the habit of spending evenings at the Watkins's, and it seems McGrath had prior knowledge of the whereabouts of the forgery and another £20 note on the Derwent Bank, the latter spuriously altered from its original £1 denomination. Of course, the newspaper report reveals complicity on Watkins's behalf, in attempting to spend the forged banknotes.¹⁵

John Dunn, still manager of the Commercial Bank of Tasmania in 1841, confirmed for the court that the Commercial Bank note produced as evidence against Watkins was a forgery. Captain Charles Swanston, managing director of the Derwent Bank, testified that the Derwent Bank note had been feloniously altered from a £1 to a £20 denomination.¹⁶ This

latter forgery still exists to this day and is illustrated in this article (plate 4).¹⁷

Mr McDowell, representing Watkins, 'affirmed that Watkins had evidently been made the dupe and victim of more designing parties, who were not here to answer for their crime. His Honour in summing up laid particular stress upon the folly of Watkins in passing a note with such an inscription on the back; the whole case resolved itself to this fact—did the prisoner know that the note was forged and did he pass it with intent to defraud John McGrath?'¹⁸ Not surprisingly the civil jury returned a Not Guilty verdict and therefore no link to the original forger can be deduced from the Watkins case.

What other leads can be investigated in attempts to identify a forger likely to be located in Van Diemen's Land in the mid 1830s? Does the forged banknote suggest enough artistic talent to replicate the genuine article well enough to fool the unsuspecting? In my opinion, yes. Even though the end product is simply a copy, it incorporates minute detail and ornate cursive handwriting that would require a steady hand, a keen eye, some degree of skill in using pen and ink, and a great deal of patience, if nothing else.

Given that 90% of original transportees to Australia were convicts, it is not surprising that most of Australia's early artists were convicts and many of them had been transported for forgery.¹⁹ Convicts with a modicum of artistic flair were relatively plentiful in the 1820s to 1830s in Van Diemen's Land, the colony where the forgery is domiciled. There were Thomas Bock (1790-1855, engraver, portrait painter and photographer), William Buelow Gould (1803-1853, still-life) and Charles Henry Theodore Costantini (1803-1860, houses, landscapes, group portraits and lithographs). Bock was transported in 1824, Gould and Costantini in 1827, and all three artists were free by the mid 1830s and set up their own studios.

Bock, convicted during April 1823 to 14 years transportation for administering a drug to Ann Yates with the intention of bringing about an abortion, was transported to Van Diemen's Land in January 1824. He was pardoned in 1832 for his exemplary conduct, six years before his sentence was due to expire.²⁰ His early release persuasively suggests he left his misdemeanours well behind him and more detailed accounts of his life do not reveal forgery as his *modus operandi*.²¹ In fact the opposite may be closer to the truth, as Bock accepted a number of commissions, both before and after his pardon, for engraving banknotes for several banks of issue. Bock's reputation was well and truly established years before his official release in 1832; linking him with a relatively small windfall gain from a forged £1 banknote is dubious.

Gould's genuine surname was Holland, but by mid-1826 he had deserted his wife and child, changed his name and fled to Northampton in England. He had been jailed for three months for a felony charge of stealing painter's 'colours',²² but was arrested again and charged with stealing apparel including a greatcoat to the value of £20. On 8 January 1827 he was sentenced to transportation for seven years and he arrived in Van Diemen's Land on 7 December 1827. Gould's propensity for alcohol and frequent gambling brought him before the authorities in Tasmania and one such incident is relevant. In June 1829 Gould was tried and convicted to three years at Macquarie Harbour for passing a forged note of the Derwent Bank, and subsequently destroyed it to try to avoid detection.²³

It is unclear if Gould created the Derwent Bank forgery he attempted to pass off, and unlikely that he forged the Commercial Bank note in question. Gould received his

Plate 5.
C.H.T. Costantini,
Australia 1803-1860,
Trompe l'oeil, 1857,
ink and watercolour,
46 x 58 cm.
Allport Library and
Museum of Fine Arts,
State Library of
Tasmania, Hobart,
purchased 1997.



Certificate of Freedom on 25 June 1835, only six days before the forgery dated 1 July 1835. Why would he foolishly risk incarceration so soon after securing his independence? Naturally this hypothesis assumes the Commercial Bank forgery was created on or about 1 July 1835, a theory which is debatable. However the date of the McCarthy case in February 1836, only seven months after the forgery's unique hand-written date, lends credence to 1 July 1835 as being the approximate date the forgery was made.

C.H.T. Costantini

Costantini is a different 'kettle of fish' altogether when compared with Bock and Gould, who both had a history of artistic practice prior to their arrival in Van Diemen's Land.²⁴ In contrast, Costantini appears to have had a medical background²⁵ as his surgical talents were utilised in Van Diemen's Land both prior to, and after, his eventual pardon. He himself spelt his surname Costantini, as painted on some of his watercolours and surviving correspondence. His surname is also found spelt Cottatine, Constantine, Constantini and even Costantine; here we have followed the original spellings.

Charles Henry Theodore Costantini was born in Paris c. 1803 and this scallywag is a bit of a mystery. Nearly all primary sources sighted refer to him as 'Theodore', in preference to his first given name 'Charles'. Research to date reaches consensus about documented aspects of his life in the colonies, and there is agreement in relation to a number of uncertainties. In 1857, Costantini painted his last pictures in Van Diemen's Land, and there was no further evidence of his whereabouts—until now.

First tried at the Old Bailey, London on Wednesday 23 October 1822, Costantini was apparently found guilty of larceny in a dwelling house and sent to New South Wales aboard the *Ocean* in 1823 to serve a life of incarceration (the sentence being reduced from death). He was assigned to Thomas Fitzherbert Hawkins of *Blackdown*, Bathurst.²⁶ The general muster list of all New South Wales inhabitants held on microfilm in the Mitchell Library lists a Theophilis [sic] Constantine as sent for seven years, in the employ of Mr Hawkins of Bathurst, so it seems (to Costantini's advantage) the authorities may have mismanaged his criminal record by transcribing a lesser judgement.²⁷

Two years into his first term as a convict, while at the detention farm at Emu Plains, Governor Brisbane pardoned Costantini at the request of visiting French navigator Hyacinthe de Bougainville. De Bougainville later wrote in his journal that he believed Costantini's first crime was forcing his attentions on a woman with 'too impetuous a passion'. During August 1825 Costantini accompanied de Bougainville's expedition as ship's surgeon, surfacing once again back in Europe in 1827.²⁸

Of greater relevance to our assessment of Costantini as a banknote forger, is that he himself subsequently stated in 1827 to the Superintendent of Convicts in Van Diemen's Land (after arriving there as a consequence of his second offence), that he was 'first tried for passing forged notes' and 'sentenced to die'.²⁹ As will be revealed, Costantini unquestionably possessed the skill to produce the £1 forged banknote on the Commercial Bank.

There are therefore three contrary versions of Costantini's initial conviction and transportation to Australia—larceny,

passionate impetuosity directed towards the opposite sex, or more pertinent to this study, passing forged banknotes. But which of these three is the truth?

The original Old Bailey court proceedings record that 'Theodore Constantini' was indicted on 22 September 1822, for stealing at Bond Street, St. George's Parish, Hanover Square, London, one gold watch to the value of five guineas, one gold watch chain to the value of two guineas, and four rings to the value of 20 shillings and a seal with a fish suspended from it, the goods of William Jarrin, from his dwelling house. Jarrin was a confectioner and it seems his manufactory was located in the dwelling house, as was his retail shop at street level. Jarrin gave evidence that the items were on a table in his bedroom the night before, the bedroom being located on the second floor towards the rear of the house.³⁰

The date of indictment (22 September) cannot be correct as Jarrin's evidence places Constantini in his sweet shop five days later on Friday 27 September 1822 with two children for whom he bought cakes. Jarrin knew Constantini (Constantini may have been one of the dwelling house lodgers) and he left the shop for some undisclosed reason and period, leaving Constantini in the shop.³¹

It became obvious to Jarrin on 28 September 1822 that the items were missing, when he heard that Constantini was in custody. Jarrin used the front room, second floor, as his workshop to make his 'confectionery ornaments' and he said in evidence that Constantini was in the habit of coming backwards and forwards, was never in the bedroom, but was in the habit of going to the workshop. Somewhat obscurely Jarrin also stated he allowed Constantini a guinea a week on his father's account (towards rent?), as Constantini was not on good terms with his father.³² All this evidence corroborates the notion that Constantini may have lived within the establishment and would have been familiar with the daily comings and goings.

John Francis, Jarrin's apprentice, confirmed that Constantini came to the shop that Friday and at half-past three in the afternoon he saw Constantini go upstairs for about half an hour. They must have exchanged looks or made contact, as Francis gave evidence that 'he (Constantini) did not say what he was going up for'. When Constantini came down he asked Francis to get him a hackney coach, for which he obliged.³³

John Mawditt, another of Jarrin's employee's, gave evidence he was at the workshop that particular Friday and recalled briefly seeing Constantini in the workshop, but after leaving the workshop Mawditt heard him in his 'master's' bedroom. Mawditt did not disturb him, and thought Constantini was in the bedroom for about five minutes.³⁴ This evidence establishes that the regulars within this building were familiar with Constantini and trusted him.

James Howell, shopman of pawnbroker Mr Bartrum of Prince's Street, Leicester Square, gave evidence that on Friday 27 September 1822 at about five o'clock in the afternoon, Constantini 'pawned a watch, a chain, a seal with a fish suspended from it, and four rings, for 4 guineas using the alias John Smith of No. 42 Soho Square, intimating they were his sister's property'. The stolen property was tendered in evidence. Constantini's altered, but still flimsy defence, was to argue that he himself had paid three guineas for these items after dining with 'a young Frenchman in Leicester Square'. He was found guilty of larceny and sentenced to death aged only 19.³⁵

Howell's evidence most certainly sealed Constantini's fate. The death sentence was later commuted to life, however the records of appeals pre-1849 no longer exist, so the specifics of

his appeal cannot be pursued.³⁶

Constable Hammond Webb gave the most interesting evidence of all, saying he 'took him in custody about twelve o'clock at night, on another charge'. Regrettably the proceedings are silent as to this 'other charge'.³⁷ It is reasonable to speculate that the other charge could relate to Constantini's later claim that he was he 'first tried for passing forged banknotes', banknotes he conceivably forged himself. Even if the other charge were not passing forged banknotes, there remains the possibility that Constantini *was* tried and convicted of other offences, including 'passing forged banknotes'.

Theft of two £5 banknotes from a Captain (?) Mitchell is the reason given for Constantini's second transportation as a convict, this time to Van Diemen's Land for seven years. Relatively soon after his parting from de Bougainville in 1825, Constantini was at it again. He was tried and convicted on 21 March 1827 at the Exeter Assizes, the timing of this conviction suggesting he may have committed theft on the high seas, or at least within a year after returning to Europe.³⁸ He arrived in Hobart Town in October 1827 aboard the Layton, and his conduct aboard ship was eloquently described as 'disposed to be very troublesome'.³⁹

This indignant attitude appears to be par for the course for Constantini. There were many incidents during the remainder of his seven year term, such as acts of insubordination and disrespectful conduct for which severe punishments were handed out. The same month he arrived in V.D.L., he was sentenced to 14 days in the chain gang for being inebriated at muster. Nevertheless he ultimately received his free certificate on 21 March 1834, precisely seven years post-conviction at Exeter.⁴⁰

Constantini's artistic talents were first recognised in Van Diemen's Land. He was transported aboard the *Prince Leopold* to the secondary penal station at Macquarie Harbour only two months after docking at Hobart Town. In a letter written to the Colonial Secretary, dated 12 January 1828, Captain James Butler (the Commandant at Macquarie Harbour) wrote as follows: 'C.H. Theodore Constantini, a French Man, is a Draughtsman of which he has given me some proofs in Sketches taken at the Settlement. I should wish to employ him for some time in this Manner in order to afford his Excellency an idea of this Station and its Localities'. Butler requested that Constantini's boxes in Hobart be sent to Macquarie Harbour as one of them contained 'pencils, brushes and some colours'. He was also employed as a dispenser of medicines at Macquarie Harbour.⁴¹

From December 1831, Constantini worked as assistant surgeon and hospital superintendent in relatively uncivilised conditions at Port Arthur. His work was interrupted by bouts of misconduct, which was punished by solitary confinement and receipt of 50 lashes as punishment for refusing to go to work. He remained at Port Arthur until September 1833, possibly as assistant to the Colonial Assistant Surgeon, Dr Thomas Brownell and his successor Dr John MacBraire. He was then assigned to *Oatlands* as a clerk for the Superintendent of the Spring Hill Road party, William Dawson. After being emancipated in March of 1834, Constantini was employed as a medical assistant to Dr John Maule Hudspeth in the medical department at *Oatlands*, until Hudspeth became mentally ill and was institutionalised. In the following year 1835 (the year of the forgery), after repeated requests for reimbursement for medicines and surgical attendances at *Oatlands*, he was eventually paid five shillings a day for his services.⁴²

The tone of Constantini's correspondence to the Colonial Secretary's Office seeking reparations, while courteous, has a

feeling of desperation. For example, despite his assumed French upbringing, he capably penned '... and beg leave to state I think the proceedings against me, very hard, but as might often prevails over right, I find no alternative, I therefore agree to Mr. Scott's proposal'. He continued '... but having been in unfortunate circumstances [referring to his previous status as a convict], it seems I am not supposed to be entitled to the same remuneration, as a Surgeon that come [sic] free in the colony'. He went on '... I should not have trespassed so much on your valuable time were I not convinced that it is your wish, as well as your station, to redress the wrongs of a poor man that is striven [sic] to get an honest living'. The letter is signed 'I have the honor to be, Sir, your very humble servant. C.H.T. Costantini, Surgeon'.⁴³

Costantini's movements are difficult to trace during the transient years from March 1834 to September 1837. During this period, the Commercial Bank forgery (1 July 1835) was fabricated. Costantini had an affinity with crime, and now, due to his personal situation at that time, had clear motives for obtaining money by illegal means, including forgery. The date of the forgery is consistent with the period following Costantini's release, in which his medical expertise was officially being abused and his repeated requests for fairer remuneration were being ignored.

In September 1837 he published a lithographic portrait of William Buckley for the Launceston *Cornwall Chronicle* and was likely to be living there. Five months later he advertised on 24 February 1838 in the *Cornwall Chronicle* his willingness 'to paint portraits in the most correct style, also views, and sketches, of gentlemen's farms, &c.' and gave his address as George Street, Launceston.⁴⁴

Commentaries about Costantini's art say that he liked to paint "domestic" landscapes dotted with doll-like figures, in which box-like houses are made secure by a protective surround of trees and shrubbery, neat paling fences or prim ordered gardens. These are trustingly naive conceptions of the world in which every detail is painted with great care—often with little consideration for perspective. Tiny brushstrokes record each individual flower and shrub in the gardens ... the compelling appeal of these works arises from their childlike simplicity ... The costumes in his portraits and the plants in his gardens are all executed with an attention to detail which is the delight of modern researchers ... Only a few official letters, as well as his meticulous and idiosyncratic works of art, remain as evidence of his existence ... The naive quality of most of his works indicates a lack of any formal training in the fine arts, although two *trompe l'oeil* watercolours with overlapping playing cards, views and figures are quite technically competent and suggest the possibility of some trade experience ... Works from the 1850s show an increase in sophistication. Not only did Costantini continue to paint with a miniaturist's eye, but he showed an ability to handle subjects on a larger scale.⁴⁵

These critiques sustain the hypothesis that Costantini was proficient enough to have hand-drawn the forged Commercial Bank note. But why bother with a relatively low denomination? Naturally any banknote forger achieves their goal once they have successfully spent the fake. Forging a £1 denomination is less likely to focus attention on the perpetrator than the riskier proposition of a higher denomination, say £20.

DRAWING AND PORTRAIT PAINTING.

I HE Undersigned engages to paint portraits in the most correct style, also, views, and sketches of gentlemen's farms, &c.,

C. H. T. CoNSTANTINI.

George-street, Launceston,
Opposite Messrs. Wickham & Horne's,
24th February, 1838.

Plate 6. Advertisement *Cornwall Chronicle*, 24 February 1838. Department of Education, Archives Office of Tasmania

Plate 7.
'C.H.T. Costantini, Surgeon'
signature, letter to Colonial
Secretary's Office dated
19 February 1835.
Department of Education,
Archives Office of Tasmania

Costantini's *trompe l'oeil* watercolours

Trompe l'oeil is a French term literally meaning to 'trick the eye'. Sometimes called illusionism, it is a style of painting which gives the appearance of three dimensional, intense realism. This quirky style of artistic expression had become popular in 18th century France where Costantini may have been educated.

C.H.T. Costantini is known to have painted at least three *trompe l'oeil* watercolours, all safely housed in public institutions. All three are signed. This unusual genre of colonial art celebrates the ephemera of everyday life. As part of the collage in all three *trompe l'oeils*, Costantini has painted an almost perfect and very passable banknote. Inclusion of banknotes in the *trompe l'oeil* genre was not uncommon.

The earliest Costantini *trompe l'oeil* resides in the Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA), Adelaide, dated 1838 (presumably with reference to the specific date on the banknote of 1st October 1838). The second work is in Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, c. 1848. The third Costantini *trompe l'oeil* in the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, Hobart, is dated 1857.

The banknote so beautifully hand-painted by Costantini as part of the Adelaide *trompe l'oeil* is an issued note on the Commercial Bank of Hobart Town (Plate 2). While the date, serial numbers and payee are different when compared with the forgery, the painted banknote is essentially identical to it. A coincidence? Perhaps not. This specific artistic effort by Costantini lends weight to the argument that he was our Commercial Bank note forger. He could have quite simply produced the forgery c. 1835 and this *trompe l'oeil* three years later. He was skilful enough to have produced both of them. By 1838 we know he was advertising as a free man and the increase in paid commissions is likely to have redirected his efforts to legitimate ways of making a living.

By painting the Commercial Bank note in the Adelaide *trompe l'oeil*, was Costantini alluding to his own claims that he was convicted of 'passing forged banknotes', or to the actual forgery? Conceivably both. Costantini has teasingly written 'We promise Not to pay' on the Commercial Bank £10 banknote within his watercolour and the higher denomination is a tantalising reference to the theft of the two £5 banknotes from William Mitchell eleven years earlier during 1827. The £10 denomination is different to the £1 notes illustrated in his other two *trompe l'oeils*, both on the Union Bank of Australia (1837-1951).



Plate 8. C.H.T. Costantini, Study for Allport *trompe l'oeil* Tsar Alexander II (1818-1881), unsigned but dated lower right '1857'. Watercolour on paper, 7.8 x 5.4 cm, private collection



Plate 9. C.H.T. Costantini, Two girls with garland of flowers, signed lower right C.H.T. Costantini, c. mid-1850s. Watercolour on paper, 22.0 x 19.25 cm, private collection

Dunn and Gellibrand's facsimile signatures appear both on the forgery and the AGSA *trompe l'oeil*. John Ferguson is the payee on the forgery (spelt Fergusson) and his facsimile signature also appears on the *trompe l'oeil* having entered (Ent) the issued banknote into the bank's note register. The 'real-life' Ferguson was likely to be the ledger-keeper for the Commercial Bank. Isaac Sherwin is the payee on the AGSA *trompe l'oeil*. Sherwin was a merchant, landowner and devout Wesleyan, who opened the Launceston branch of the bank in 1838.⁴⁶

Within his extensively researched and superbly illustrated catalogue for the recent 2001 *trompe l'oeil* exhibition shown in Wellington New Zealand, Roger Blackley argues that the irresistible appeal of the drawings derives from a realist technique in combination with the narratives suggested by the depicted artifacts. Medleys of papers and effects evoke a sense of the personal, while they also address wider cultural issues. We construct meanings through our interaction with the drawings, yet they possess a paradoxical tendency to frustrate such narrative readings. ...the *trompe l'oeil* tabletop drawings were a popular form of Australasian art, typically practised by surveyors and draftsmen rather than those with aspirations towards 'high art'. They were not shown in art societies but in shop windows and industrial exhibitions. Now they reach across the centuries to delight us with the immediacy and charm of their collected debris, teasing us with their stories of a lost world.⁴⁷

The W.L. Crowther Library in Hobart holds Costantini's design attempt for an Australian coat of arms, dated 1857, however the Allport Library's *trompe l'oeil* may be the last painting executed by Costantini in Tasmania. Inclusion of a fragment of the *Tasmanian Daily News*—Vol. III No. 679—on the right hand border of this watercolour, enables the newspaper to be precisely dated to 26 March 1857.⁴⁸

Costantini disappears from the recorded pages of Australian

history in 1857. A number of concerted efforts by others to trace his subsequent movements within Van Diemen's Land, or departure from there, have been to no avail. Reference texts and researchers had no further information on the fate of this talented and resourceful individual. The impression is that he just vanished into thin air.

A couple of references to the *Wayn Index* held in the Archives Office of Tasmania, *incorrectly* refer to Costantini still painting in the 1860s. As a result, some catalogues also *incorrectly* refer to his lifespan or activity span as from 1803 until after 1860.

Sadly, no portrait is known of Costantini. However a tantalising, partially obscured, head of a gentleman with a goatee beard is positioned immediately to the left of the banknote in the Allport Library's *trompe l'oeil*, gazing westwards. This could very well be him as he would have been 54 in 1857.

During the 1997 *CHT Costantini - Island Exile* exhibition held at the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts in Hobart, the third Costantini *trompe l'oeil* surfaced (now secure in the Allport collections). Publicity at the time speculated 'Did the island exile signal that he (Costantini) was quitting Tasmania to seek a new life in America?'⁴⁹ Although only just discernible, the 'upside down' sailing ship under full sail overlapping the aforementioned portrait, reveals an American flag.

Blackley narrates that en route to Europe with de Bougainville, Costantini encountered HMS *La Blonde*, under the command of Captain George Anson Byron (a relative of Lord Byron), which was conveying back to Hawaii the bodies of King Kamehameha II and his queen, who had died of measles on an ill-fated visit to England.⁵⁰ Costantini's affinity with this specific rendezvous remained with him, as both the sailing ship *La Blonde* and Lord Byron form part of the collage of artifacts shown in the Art Gallery of South Australia's *trompe l'oeil*.

Was another seed planted in Costantini's sub-conscious, to be the catalyst for his eventual migration from what must have been a

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harsh and unforgiving island exile, to a more forgiving destination? Prior to being referred to Blackley's work and the intrinsic Hawaiian connection established during the HMS *La Blonde* encounter, the author discovered C.H.T. Costantini's ultimate fate.

A new 'Physicians' File Index' has been listed on the website of the Hawaii Medical Library, specifically the Mamiya Medical Heritage Center, instituted in July 1999 by Richard T. Mamiya MD, to house the archives, medical museum and special collections of the Library. The Index contains an alphabetical list of physicians and other health care professionals who practised in Hawaii, plus photographs of some of them. 'Costantini, C.H.T. ?-1860' is included in the Index. Unfortunately the slightly more detailed record attached to the Index does not include an image of Costantini, but it does state 'Dr. Constantini [sic] was a native of Berlin, Germany. He died October 9, 1860 at Waimea, Hawaii, at the age of 57'.⁵¹

This must be our Charles Henry Theodore Costantini. The date of death occurs after his apparent disappearance from Van Diemen's Land c. 1857; official recognition of his medical qualifications is evident as are all three of his initials; his surname is spelt correctly in the main Physicians File Index; and age 57 in 1860 (according to his obituary citation) aligns with his birth year considered to be 1803. To Costantini's credit, despite his harsh treatment in Van Diemen's Land, as some consolation for those ordeals we now know he attained the title of *Doctor*. Seemingly par for the course, the inaccurate spelling of Costantini's surname by the authorities continued.

According to Hawaii State Archives, 'Mr. Constantine' arrived in Honolulu on July 12, 1858 aboard the *Yankee*, out of San Francisco. The Obituary Index contains a reference to Dr C.H.T. Costantini in *The Friend* newspaper dated 1 November 1860. The obituary citation reads 'COSTANTINI - At Waimea, Hawaii, Oct. 9th, of constipation to the bowels, after an illness of six days, Dr. C.H.T. Costantini. The deceased was a native of Berlin, Germany, aged 57 years'.⁵² Intriguingly we now have French, Italian and German references to this man.

This all confirms Costantini quite deliberately left clues in his *trompe l'oeils* as to his intentions to leave V.D.L. and the general location of his ultimate whereabouts. A snippet of the title of the sheet music present in the Allport *trompe l'oeil* says 'Cheerfully'—we can only hope that is how he felt about his impending voyage to San Francisco and onto Hawaii.

We could hypothesise that Costantini may have 'jumped ship' while on the 1825 voyage with de Bougainville and joined Captain Byron aboard *La Blonde*. This would have provided Costantini with an introduction to Hawaii, over 30 years before his departure from V.D.L. c. 1857. He may not therefore have returned so hastily to Europe as scholars have speculated.

Costantini's enchanting oeuvre offers an important and informative snapshot of life and times in Van Diemen's Land in the 1830s-1850s, and a microcosm of our own broader colonial heritage. He does not appear to have made a substantial reputation in Tasmania as a portrait artist, as many of his commissions and subjects were supplied by families with a convict history. Costantini's *trompe l'oeils* are especially revealing, each time they are subjected to scrutiny.

C.H.T. Costantini emerges as more akin to one of his *trompe l'oeils*; a most enigmatic fellow indeed. It can be argued that evidence exists, granted circumstantial, that Charles Henry Theodore Costantini was a colonial banknote forger ■

Andrew Morris is an accountant, Australiana Society member and researcher, writer and collector primarily dedicated towards Australia's pre-Federation banking institutions and more specifically their banknotes.

Notes

- 1 R.F. Holder, *Bank of New South Wales A History* Vol. 1 1817-1893, Vol. II 1894-1970, Angus & Robertson, Sydney 1970, vol 1 pp. 18 & 32. The bank became Westpac in 1982.
- 2 *The Hobart Town Courier* volume II no. 89 Saturday 27 Jun. 1829.
- 3 S.J. Butlin, *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System 1788-1851*, Melbourne University Press, 1953 p. 221.
- 4 Butlin, *op. cit.* p. 222. ANZ holds historical records for the Commercial Bank of Tasmania. Contact with ANZ Archive's representative Ms. Peggy Kennedy, revealed that C.H.T. Costantini was neither a customer nor shareholder of the Commercial Bank. Hobart Town branch records and the 1832 Deed of Settlement were consulted. Costantini's criminal convictions are likely to have prevented this in any case.
- 5 Butlin, *op. cit.* table 22 (a) p. 654.
- 6 Eve Buscombe, *Artists in Early Australia and their Portraits*, Eureka Research, Sydney 1979 p. 126f.
- 7 Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones, *The Convict Artists*, Macmillan, South Melbourne 1977 p. 20.
- 8 Michael P. Vort-Ronald *Banks of Issue in Australia*, self published, 1982 p. 138f. Peggy Kennedy of ANZ archives provided the information that ANZ archives holds a £1 Commercial Bank of V.D.L. printer's proof c. 1830, imprinted 'Bock Sculpt', confirming Bock's earlier commission with this institution.
- 9 Image courtesy John Pettit of John Pettit Rare Banknotes Sydney.
- 10 *Noble Numismatics Sale Catalogue* 71 Lot 2977, Sydney 20-22 November 2002.
- 11 Per correspondence to the author dated 14 January 2003 from the Department of Education Archives Office of Tasmania.
- 12 *Colonial Times* 23 February 1836 p. 71.
- 13 *Colonial Times* 26 October 1841 p. 3 & *Hobart Town Courier* volume XIV No. 829 Tuesday 26 October 1841. The latter reported his Christian name as 'Richard'. The Archives Office of Tasmania subsequently checked the Supreme Court register of cases which names 'Benjamin' Watkins free per the ship *Argo* as the defendant in this case, reference SC41/5.
- 14 *ibid.*
- 15 *ibid.*
- 16 *ibid.*
- 17 Image courtesy Noble Numismatics, Sydney.
- 18 *Colonial Times* 26 October 1841 p. 3.
- 19 Ron Radford and Jane Hylton, *Australian Colonial Art 1800-1900*, Art Gallery Board of South Australia, Adelaide 1995 p. 18.
- 20 Joan Kerr (editor) *The Dictionary of Australian Artists Painters, Sketchers, Photographers and Engravers to 1870*, Oxford UP, Melbourne 1992, p. 79.
- 21 *ibid.* pp. 78-80, Buscombe *op. cit.* pp. 125-137.
- 22 Hackforth-Jones *op. cit.* p. 58.
- 23 Buscombe *op. cit.* p. 143f.
- 24 Kerr *op. cit.* pp. 79 & 314 - Bock with engraving and miniature painting in Birmingham and Gould as a draughtsman in London.

- 25 *ibid.* p. 175. According to Hackforth-Jones *op. cit.* p. 26, the convict indents for the *Layton* noted his occupation as 'surgeon' and it is generally believed Costantini was not a fully trained professional artist.
- 26 *ibid.* p. 174. Per findings of the author's commissioning of a professional researcher, Mr R.W. O'Hara of Kew Richmond Surrey. 'Theodore Constantine' was transported on board the ship *Ocean*, having set sail 22nd April 1823, arriving in New South Wales 27th August 1823, PRO file HO 11/5.
- 27 Buscombe *op. cit.* p. 139.
- 28 Heather Curnow 'C.H.T. Costantini - Island Exile' *Australian Antique Collector* 54th Edition Dec 1997-June 1998 p. 84. Ms. Curnow advised the author that, while born in France, Costantini was likely to be of Italian descent. This suspicion is outlined in the Spring 2002 Exhibition catalogue produced by the Masterpiece Fine Art Gallery Hobart, where Curnow was supplied with information from a Yeoland descendant in relation to lots 4 & 5, portraits of Anne and Caroline Yeoland, a pair, c. 1846. A letter written by Caroline Yeoland survives and it describes Costantini as 'an Italian man', Kerr *op. cit.* p. 174f.
- 29 *Principal Superintendent of Convicts Alphabetical Record Book of Convicts Living in Van Diemen's Land "C" 1812-1830* Reference CON31/6 796. The superintendent's entry refers to him as 'Chas. Hy. Theodore Costantine'
- 30 Original Proceedings Old Bailey Trial 1535 Eight Session 1822 First Middlesex Jury before Mr Justice Park. Photocopy kindly supplied by Dr Louise Henson, Old Bailey Proceedings Project, Humanities Research Institute, University of Sheffield. A guinea was a former British gold coin worth one pound and one shilling, or 21 shillings. This denomination was last coined in 1813 under the reign of King George III, eventually replaced by the sovereign in 1817, the latter containing slightly less gold.
- 31 *ibid.*
- 32 *ibid.*
- 33 *ibid.* A hackney coach was a coach or carriage for hire, drawn by a horse.
- 34 *ibid.*
- 35 *ibid.*
- 36 R.W. O'Hara *loc. cit.* Another collection of Criminal Registers of the Public Records Office for the London and Middlesex Sessions, held in HO 26/28, confirms the 'Larceny in a Dwelling House' death sentence, but names the defendant as 'Theodore Cottantine'. The Returns of Commitments for Trial at the Old Bailey, held in HO 16/2, confirms this sentence, although 'Theodore Constantini's' crime is given as having stolen goods valued at above 40 shillings from a dwelling house. The Newgate Calendars for the period in question, held in HO 77/29, show that 'Theodore Cottantine' was a 'clerk' aged 19, when he was committed for trial by J.E. Conant Esq. for 'Stealing in the dwelling-house of William Jarrin, a gold watch, &c value £8, his property'.
- 37 University of Sheffield *loc. cit.*, R.W. O'Hara *op. cit.* Interestingly a second charge is listed in Public Records Office file HO 77/29 being 'Stealing in the dwelling-house of Jonathon Thorm, three gold brooches, value £3, his property'. Perhaps this latter charge is the one Constable Hammond Webb refers to when he stated to the Court 'I took him in custody about twelve o'clock at night, on another charge'.
- 38 Buscombe *op. cit.* p. 139, R.W. O'Hara *loc. cit.* The Crown Minute Books for Devon for Lent 1827 (PRO file ASSI 21/53) refer to Mitchell's first name as 'William', but do not refer to him using the title 'Captain' as others do. A search of ASSI/23 Gaol Books revealed they cease in 1824, so they were of no use. The parchment Indictment Files for Devon for Lent 1827 (PRO file ASSI 25/20/2) reveal 'Charles Henry Theodore Costantini' was a 'labourer' who came from Topsham in Devon, and these files confirmed he had stolen two £5 notes from William Mitchell. The names of eight witnesses are listed, including Mitchell's.
- 39 *Principal Superintendent of Convicts op. cit.*
- 40 Curnow *op. cit.* p. 85, Kerr *op. cit.* p. 175 and confirmed by sighting Government Notice No. 72 Colonial Secretary's Office by Command of The Lieutenant Governor J. Burnett dated 20 March 1834 in *Hobart Town Gazette* Friday 21 March 1834 page 207. The Notice lists 'Charles Henry Theodore Constantine, 796, Layton, 21st' with 30 other convicts eligible to obtain their Certificates of Freedom on or about 21 March 1834. '796' refers to Costantini's convict record in the *Principal Superintendent of Convicts Alphabetical Record Book* (refer note 29).
- 41 Curnow *op. cit.* p. 85, Heather Curnow (Curator) An exhibition at the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts *C.H.T. Costantini - Island Exile* 1 August - 14 November 1997 Catalogue p. 3, Kerr *op. cit.* p. 175 (Kerr notes in 1992, that two works from this period that are attributed to C.H.T. Costantini are in the Petherick Collection of the National Library of Australia, *Macquarie Harbour* and *View of the Gates and Residence of the Pilot at Macquarie Harbour from the Bar*), Buscombe *op. cit.* p. 140 (footnote 1 therein refers to the location of Butler's surviving letter as in Colonial Secretary's Office Index to Correspondence records 1824-1836 A-H, Archives Office of Tasmania No. 5568).
- 42 Curnow *Australian Antique Collector op. cit.* p. 85.
- 43 Costantini's letter is essentially seeking further redress and is dated 19 February 1835, only five months before the hand-dated forgery. Reference COS1/785/16738.
- 44 Buscombe *op. cit.* p. 141.
- 45 Hackforth-Jones *op. cit.* p. 26, Curnow *Exhibition Catalogue op. cit.* pp. 3 & 5, Kerr *op. cit.* p. 175, Curnow *Australian Antique Collector op. cit.* p. 86.
- 46 Vort-Ronald *op. cit.* p. 138.
- 47 Roger Blackley *Stray Leaves - Colonial trompe l'oeil drawings*, Adam Art Gallery & Victoria University Press, Wellington 2001.
- 48 Curnow *Australian Antique Collector op. cit.* p. 87. Nevin Hurst, proprietor of the Masterpiece Fine Art Gallery Hobart, provided information that a smaller portrait study exists for the larger full-length reproduction of Tsar Alexander II (1818-1881) that is included within the Allport's *trompe l'oeil* (unsigned but hand-dated '1857', 7.8 x 5.4 cm, private collection).
- 49 *Saturday Mercury* 25 October 1997 p. 23.
- 50 Blackley *op. cit.* p. 7 & footnote 15.
- 51 Mamiya Medical Heritage Center <http://hml.org/mmhc>. Laura Gerwitz, Reference Librarian/Archivist for the Center, was unable to locate any new information other than what is on their website, nor does the Hawaiian State Archives possess an image of Costantini.
- 52 Patricia Lai for the Historical Records Branch of the Hawaii State Archives, *The Friend* November 1, 1860 p. 87 col. 3.

REDISCOVERED

The Joubert jewel cabinet

BY PETER THOMLE

DAVID AND HELEN KELLY

Melbourne dealers David and Helen Kelly illustrate a 'lost' 19th century cabinet made by Danish-born Brisbane cabinet maker Peter Thomle, and presented to French-born entrepreneur and exhibition organiser Jules Joubert.



Snedker PETER THOMLE.

Plate 1. Cabinet maker, Peter Thomle

Documenting Australia's cultural heritage involves a continuing process of rediscovery. One of the most important items recently rediscovered is a fine jewel cabinet made by the famous Queensland cabinet maker, Peter Thomle (1848-?).

In 1876, the National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland presented the cabinet to the prominent colonial entrepreneur, Jules Joubert. Late in 2002, a direct descendant of Joubert, Mrs Kay Hendley, told us that the cabinet is now in Canada, owned by another direct descendant, John Hajdu.

The cabinet is a very important work in its own right. But its importance is increased by the fact that it was presented to Jules Joubert, a truly remarkable French-Australian. We hope that it will eventually be acquired by an institution in Queensland or New South Wales, where it would be a significant addition to the public holdings of Thomle's work and a fitting tribute to its first owner.

THE JOUBERT CABINET

This description of the cabinet is based directly on information provided by John Hajdu. The cabinet is 18" (45.5cm) high, 10.5" (26.5cm) wide and 6.25" (16cm) deep. The front view (**cover**) shows three main drawers with moulded edges below a fall-front door. Above the fall-front door is a secret drawer. The front is topped by a flat-topped cornice-dome.

Inside the fall-front door, twin sets of four ivory knobbed drawers at the sides, and a single similar drawer to the top, outline a recessed mirrored display cube (**plates 6 & 7**). When that cube is removed, the suction draws forward three additional drawers (**plates 9 & 10**).¹ All the drawer fronts are attached by miniature dovetail joints. The inside drawers are one inch (25mm) high with six dovetail joints on each side.



Plate 2. Side view unopened

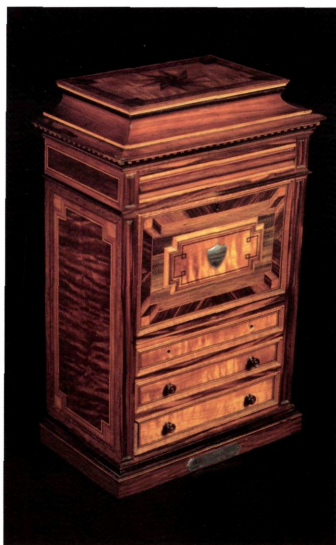


Plate 3. Front view unopened



Plate 4. Top view unopened

Inside the top is a secret compartment lined in purple velvet (**plate 8**) When the top is opened, the secret drawer is released. The cornice-dome top is fastened with brass hinges at the rear and a notched pin in front. When the top is pulled forward slightly the front pin disengages the fastener. As the top pivots open, it allows a small spring-loaded pin, located within one of the brass hinge plates, to rise. As the pin rises, it clears a retaining hook on the back of the secret drawer (which is spring loaded) allowing it to 'pop' forward just enough to provide a grip to pull it out.

There are two inscriptions on the cabinet. The first is on a silver shield in the middle of the panel displaying the maker's name, 'Peter Thomle, Cabinet Maker, Brisbane'.

The second inscription is on the front base of the cabinet. Apparently a dedication, it reads

Jules Joubert
Commissioner for New South Wales
From
The National Agricultural and Industrial Association
Queensland 1876

The cabinet is heavily inlaid. Inlays appear on the front, the sides, and the cornice-dome. Inlays are also used on the inside of the fall-front door and on the lower drawers.

We have not attempted to identify any of the woods used, but they are presumably mainly from Queensland, as in the case of other pieces by Thomle. The cabinet appears to be in generally excellent condition. However, the knobs are missing from one of the front drawers, and an edging is missing from one of the ivory-knobbed drawers in the interior of the cabinet. Some trim is missing in a few places. A painted pine base has been added to the piece at some stage (**plate 5 & 8**). A lead weight was added to the base compartment and hinges were added to the base exterior. The owner believes that the hinges were used to attach a (now lost) protective case for travel.

WHO WAS PETER THOMLE?

Peter Thomle (**plate 1**) has been described as the most significant exhibitor of inlaid furniture in Queensland in the 1870s and 1880s.² We are able to add significantly to the little that is known of his career.

He was born on 4 April 1848, in Holbaek, Denmark, the oldest of seven children. Both his father and his uncle were master cabinet-makers.³ Leaving Denmark when he was 19 years old, he travelled to England via France and Germany. He arrived in England in 1871 where he was employed as a cabinet-maker. He married Eliza Philips, the daughter of John Philips and Mary Tomson, in London on 8 September 1872. After suffering the tragic loss of their first four children,⁴ Thomle and his wife emigrated from England and arrived in Brisbane in 1875.



Plate 5. Fine dovetailing of the drawers



Plate 6. Front view opened



Plate 7. Front view opened



Plate 8. Front view with added pine base

Immediately on arriving in Queensland, Thomle commenced making fine inlaid furniture. He exhibited his work on a number of occasions, both at exhibitions held by the National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland, and at exhibitions in Sydney and Melbourne. He won first prize for a collection of cabinet pieces at the Sydney International Exhibition in 1879-80, and first prize and a silver medal at the Melbourne International Exhibition for a similar collection in 1880.⁵

Thomle's original premises in Brisbane were in Petrie Terrace.⁶ He is then recorded opposite the old Pound in Roma St. In 1880, he moved to Ann St.⁷ From then, at least, Thomle was not only a cabinet-maker and fretworker but also a shop-fitter. In his *Aldine History of Queensland*, W. Morrison wrote that:

Thomle pays special attention to the fitting up of shops and hotels, and many very fine specimens of his work are to be seen in principal business places of the city. As many as twenty men find employment with him when trade is brisk, and he is held in high esteem as a citizen and an employer of labour.⁸

Thomle was well known for making ingenious

mechanical toys.⁹ He exhibited them in Brisbane and Sydney and at the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880.¹⁰ Though naturalised in 1883,¹¹ he maintained his Danish affiliations and was President of the Queensland Scandinavian League for some years.¹² After his retirement, he moved to New South Wales.¹³ We do not know when or where he died.

Glenn Cooke mentions a number of pieces exhibited by Thomle at exhibitions conducted by the Queensland National Agricultural and Industrial Association during the late 19th century:¹⁴

- a cabinet (a model for which was exhibited in 1876) and a jewellery cabinet in 1877¹⁵
- a work box and a jewel cabinet¹⁶ in 1878
- a table in 1879
- a lady's writing table¹⁷ in 1887
- six picture frames in 1893.

In *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*,¹⁸ more items exhibited by Thomle are recorded:

- a 'puzzle box' exhibited in 1876
- a jewel cabinet and an 'automatic boy'¹⁹ in 1879
- five items in 1880, including a writing table with cabinet.²⁰



Plate 9. Front view opened, cube removed



Plate 10. Front., cube removed, lower drawers open

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including Australian Furniture & Decorative Arts



1



2

1. An Australian cedar double height bookcase of narrow proportions, c.1850, h. 245cm, w. 85cm, d. 47cm, Est: \$8,000 - 12,000
2. An Australian cedar ladies Pembroke work table, c.1840, h. 74cm, w. 46cm, d.41cm, Est: \$5,000 - \$7,000

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Plates 11 & 12. Peter Thomle, occasional table, Australiana Fund

Of these items, we know of only one still in existence.²¹ The table exhibited in 1879, now belonging to the Australiana Fund, is pictured in Fahy and Simpson's *Dictionary*²² where it is described as an occasional table (**plate 11&12**). No doubt more of Thomle's pieces are still held privately, in Queensland or elsewhere.

WHO WAS JULES JOUBERT?

Like many of his fellow-colonists, Jules Joubert (**plates 13 & 15**) led a varied and remarkable life. He was a resourceful and resilient entrepreneur who had considerable success in various careers and adventures, who also endured personal and financial hardship. This account of his life adds to the information previously available.

He was born in Angoulême²³ in the Charente district of France, on 31 July 1824.²⁴ He went to school first in Bordeaux,²⁵ then at the Collège Bourbon²⁶ in Paris. At the age of 15, he decided to follow in the footsteps of his brother Didier, who had already emigrated to New South Wales.²⁷ He obtained from the *Ministre de Marine*²⁸ a passage to Australia via New Zealand²⁹ on the corvette *Héroïne*, which left Brest on 1 May 1839 on a round-the-world voyage. After reaching New Zealand, the *Héroïne* received orders to head for China. Joubert left the *Héroïne* at the Bay of Islands and embarked on the *Martha* for Australia, arriving in Sydney in the summer of 1839.

Despite being much impressed with Sydney (the Harbour in particular), he did not stay long. In 1841, he accepted an invitation to act as interpreter for the captain of the French corvette *Aube* sailing to New Zealand.³⁰ On his return to Sydney, Joubert embarked on a diplomatic career at the French Consulate. He became Chancellor in 1841 when the previous incumbent died.



Being a monarchist, he abandoned his diplomatic career upon hearing of the 1848 revolution in France.³¹

He married his first wife, Florence Sarah Imlac, daughter of Robert Owen,³² in the same year. In 1849, they left Sydney³³ and headed for South Australia where copper had recently been discovered. Initially, he made good there, and invested heavily in real property in Adelaide. However, his wife, his daughter and his infant son died within a space of three months in early 1850, his wife and son from typhoid³⁴. Then the discovery of gold in Victoria and NSW led to an exodus from that city, and his investments turned sour. He was imprisoned for debt in Adelaide in 1851.³⁵

Not surprisingly, Joubert did not remain in South Australia. He was lured to Victoria by the discovery of gold, but he found prospecting less than adequately remunerative: 'While gold fetched £3/10/- an ounce, it cost, in many instances, £5 to get it.'³⁶ So he turned to subcontracting, securing the job of building quarters for Government staff on the goldfields between Melbourne and Bendigo. He had more than 250 men working for him, with 40 horse or bullock teams to assist. When the contracts had almost been completed, disaster struck again. The head contractor failed, leaving Joubert with a claim on an insufficient estate. Undeterred, he built the Sawpit Gully General Store near Mt Alexander with the help of former employees, and 'did a roaring trade'³⁷ for more than a year. But he once more craved for travel.

Returning to New South Wales in 1853, he chartered boats and bought supplies to assist Admiral Février Despointes take possession of New Caledonia in the name of France. He made trading voyages to New Caledonia. Then, in 1854, he chartered a vessel to trade between New Guinea and Malaya, and Mauritius. He arrived back in Sydney tired of the sea and determined to settle down.³⁸

Joubert married his second wife Adelaide Levi in North Adelaide in February 1855.³⁹ They went to live in Hunter's Hill NSW, which then had an unenviable reputation for crime and violence,⁴⁰ remaining there for 26 years.⁴¹ Jules and his brother Didier acquired considerable land in the area at low prices. They became heavily involved in developing Hunter's Hill, of which they have been described as the 'founding fathers'.⁴² They built



Plate 13. Jules Joubert as a young man

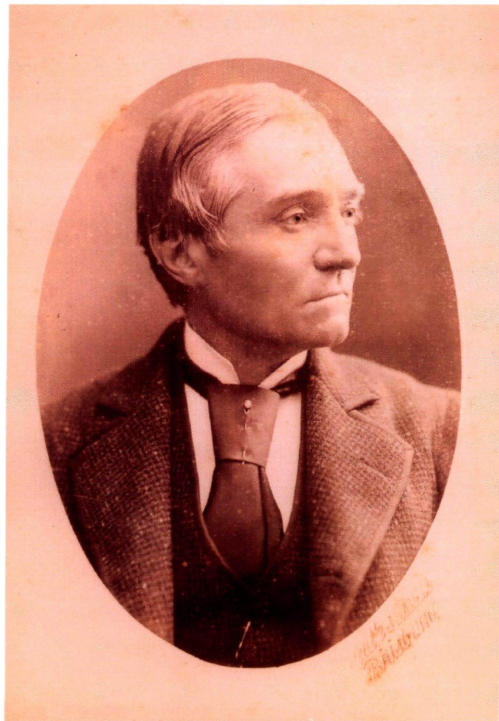


Plate 14.. Jules Joubert in middle age

numerous stone houses, including their own homes, many of them with the assistance of artisans from Lombardy. They were mainly responsible for the French garden character of old Hunter's Hill.⁴³ They also successfully established a rival ferry service, the Parramatta River Navigation Co, to the existing monopoly.⁴⁴

Jules and Didier were significant public figures in Hunter's Hill. They were among the first to support the sale of the Field of Mars Common and the use of the proceeds to build bridges over the Lane Cove and Parramatta Rivers to improve access to Sydney.⁴⁵ Jules was first Chairman of the Council in 1861-2, Didier was first Mayor in 1867-9.⁴⁶ But Jules' finances again went awry. Despite the apparent success of his development ventures, he was declared insolvent in 1866.

Joubert then entered a new phase of his life, that is of direct importance to this article. In 1867, he became Honorary Secretary of the Agricultural Society of NSW. By his own account, he convinced the Society (which was in a very unhealthy financial situation) not to present a petition to be wound up, but to take steps to reform itself, to move from Parramatta to Sydney, and to hold its first 'show' in that city not only of agricultural produce but also of 'implements, machinery and manufactures'. Its 1867 exhibition was a great success financially and in other ways, and Joubert was presented with a silver plate service and a heavy purse of sovereigns for his efforts. It was the origin of similar shows or exhibitions in the other colonies.⁴⁷

For more than a decade, Joubert continued to be involved with the Society of which he soon became paid Secretary. He organised the Sydney Intercolonial Exhibitions in 1869⁴⁸ and 1870. He was the Commissioner of the NSW exhibits at the first exhibition held by the National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland in 1876, and organised that Association's exhibition in 1877.

Then he organised the Australian exhibits for the Paris Exhibition in 1878 and arranged French participation in the Sydney International Exhibition the following year. While in France, he raised a large amount of money in Australia for the relief of French flood victims and was awarded the Légion d'Honneur by the French Government. On his return to Australia, he was accused of shipping back personal goods with the returned exhibits. He was either dismissed or induced to resign.⁴⁹

Embittered by the experience, Joubert again left Sydney. By now famous for his ability to organise exhibitions (he was nicknamed 'Exhibition Joubert'), he was regularly invited to do so. During the last two decades of the 19th century, he organised exhibitions⁵⁰ in Perth (1881), Christchurch (1882), Dunedin (1889-90) (where he published his memoirs), Launceston (1891-2), Hobart (1894-5) and Coolgardie⁵¹ in 1899.

Probably his main achievement during those years was his organisation of the Calcutta Exhibition in 1882-3. He and his family had to live in India for the best part of two years⁵² (plate 16). Because of a delay in settling accounts in relation to the

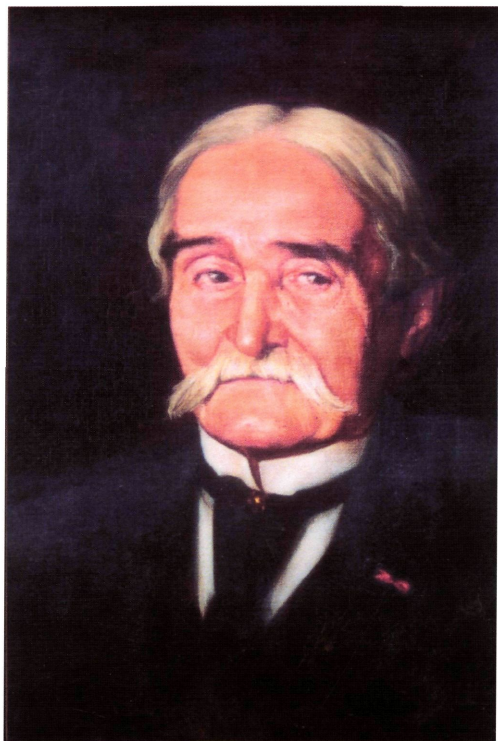


Plate 15. Jules Joubert in later life

Exhibition, a train was placed at his disposal to enable him to travel extensively throughout India. His hosts included the Maharajahs of Benares, Visianagram, Dholpore and Ulwur (plate 17).⁵³

Joubert's interests during his later years were not limited to organising exhibitions. After returning from Calcutta, he invested in real estate in Melbourne, and built the Alexandra Theatre at the corner of Little Bourke St and Exhibition St.⁵⁴ That venture almost brought him undone again,⁵⁵ but a change of management of the theatre led to its eventual success. With his brother Didier, Jules Joubert is also recorded as a winegrower in the 1891 census of South Australian Wine Growers.⁵⁶

Jules Joubert remained active into the new century. The last record we have of his activities was as the main promoter and organiser of the Australian Federal and International Exhibition at the Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne in 1902.⁵⁷ The fact that he was nearly 80 says a great deal about both his vigour and the respect in which his skills were held. He died in Melbourne on 24 August 1907, leaving his second wife, eight sons and two daughters.⁵⁸

PROVENANCE OF THE JOUBERT CABINET

Given the two inscriptions attached to the Joubert jewel cabinet, provenance for the piece hardly seems necessary. John Hajdu remembers his mother having the cabinet when he was a child. She told him that she had inherited it from George Garrick, her grandfather. Family records kept by Joubert descendants⁵⁹

contain the following information, here set out in the form of an abbreviated family tree, showing the direct line of descent from Joubert to John Hajdu:

Jules Francois Joubert (1824-1907) m. 1854
Adelaide Levi (1833-1910)
Madeline Augusta Joubert (1856-1922) m. mid 1870s Alfred Christian
Garrick (1840s-1900s)
George Christian Garrick (1878-1955) m. 1907 Joyce Frances Reid
(1888-1979)
Margaret Madeline Garrick (1913-1995) m. 1934 John Eustace
Garstang (1905-1965)
Philippa Margaret Garstang (1937-) m. 1961 Sandor Gyorgy Hajdu
(1938-1996)
John Sandor Hajdu (1961-)

The cabinet's provenance is reinforced by other evidence of its history. John Hajdu found that the back and the added base were attached with screws. He removed both and found that the cabinet had been signed, inside the added base, by two other cabinet makers after making repairs or modifications:

Edmund Burgess, 37 Wellington St, Collingwood, Victoria, dated 11 May 1885

J.M. Hunt, Dunedin, New Zealand, dated 6 April 1889

In addition, the cabinet contained the card of an English repairer, J.W. Brooks, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey, dated 7 January 1909. These dates and locations are consistent with the known whereabouts of Jules Joubert, and his daughter Madeline who inherited the cabinet from him at the relevant times.

CONCLUSION

At the end of his 1986 article in *Australiana* in which he reviewed a number of examples of late 19th century inlaid furniture exhibited by the National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland, Glenn Cooke asked rhetorically, 'Where are the pieces by Bowden, Soblusky, and last but not least, Peter Thomle?' He pointed out that these pieces had an increased chance of survival because of their fine quality and meticulous workmanship, and might yet be rediscovered.⁶⁰

The Joubert jewel cabinet is clearly of that quality and workmanship. Peter Thomle must have made it in Brisbane in 1875 or 1876. The National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland apparently presented it to Joubert in 1876, surely in recognition of Joubert's services to the Association as Commissioner for the NSW exhibits at that exhibition.

Although the cabinet is clearly of exhibition quality, it is uncertain whether it is one of the pieces exhibited by Thomle in Brisbane and in other colonial capitals. It seems unlikely that it was exhibited in Brisbane in 1876; the exhibition catalogue contains no record of it—unless it is the 'model for a cabinet' exhibited, which seems rather unlikely.⁶¹

It is possible that the Joubert cabinet is the jewel cabinet recorded as having been exhibited by Thomle in the following year. The presentation to Joubert may have been delayed for some time, and the 1877 exhibition—which Joubert organised—would have been an ideal occasion for it. But that theory runs into grave trouble.

In the catalogue for the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition, Thomle is recorded as having exhibited a jewel cabinet 'designed and manufactured by the exhibitor in 1876'.⁶² This cabinet, described as being inlaid with 34 Queensland timbers, was presumably the one also exhibited in 1879 at the Sydney International Exhibition, when it was described as having 'air-tight drawers and secret receptacles', a description that fits the Joubert



Plate 16. Joubert and family in India

cabinet remarkably well.⁶³ The cabinet 'made in 1876' is likely to have been the one exhibited in Brisbane in 1877, and again in 1878.⁶⁴ If so, it is hard to imagine how a cabinet presented to Joubert in 1876 or 1877 could have been offered for sale by Thomle in 1879 and 1880.⁶⁵ Moreover, the photograph reproduced in Glenn Cooke's article of the Queensland Court at the Sydney International Exhibition shows the Thomle jewel cabinet exhibited in 1879.⁶⁶ It is not the one featured in this article.

Perhaps the Joubert cabinet was specially commissioned on the basis of Thomle's known skills, and was never exhibited at all. Whether it was exhibited or not is, of course, a side issue at best. The central point is that the cabinet has been rediscovered. We hope that the attention given to Thomle's work here may contribute to the rediscovery of more works by Thomle and other late 19th century Queensland cabinet makers, who are rightly famed for the exquisite quality and workmanship of their highly decorative inlaid furniture ■

Helen and David Kelly are proprietors of Colonial Hill Antiques in Richmond, Victoria.

Acknowledgements

We express our sincere thanks to Mrs Kay Hendley and Mr Peter Hendley, Balwyn, Victoria, and to Mr John Hajdu, Canada, for supplying the information that enabled us to write this article. We gratefully acknowledge the valuable assistance of Glenn Cooke, Queensland Art Gallery, and Judith Hawkins, Patricia Parr and Dianne Byrne, John Oxley Library, Brisbane.

Notes

- 1 A later work by Thomle used the same device: G Cooke, 'A Masterpiece of Marquetry' *Arts National* vol. 2, 1984, p. 93, quoting from *Notes on the Sydney International Exhibition of 1879*, p. 267.
- 2 G Cooke, 'Inlaid Furniture in Queensland Exhibitions' *Australiana* vol. 8, no. 1, 1986 p. 27 & G. Cooke, 'A Masterpiece of Marquetry' *Arts National* vol. 2, 1984, p. 93.
- 3 Erik Andreas Thomle, *Familien Thomle—genealogiske og personhistoriske oplysninger: Nogle historiske efterretninger om Gaarden Thomle og dens beboere gennem 400 aar*. W.C. Fabritius & Sønner a/s, Kristiania [Oslo], 1913.
- 4 Of their first four children born in London, two died as infants and two were stillborn twins. Four later children born in Brisbane survived.
- 5 W. Morrison, *The Aldine History of Queensland*, 1888, Vol 2, Appendix 'Peter Thomle'. However, the award in Sydney is recorded elsewhere as having been solely for his jewel cabinet: *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture* David Ell Press, Sydney, 1985 p. 90.
- 6 Queensland Intercolonial Exhibition, 1876, *Catalogue*.
- 7 *Fretwork Pediments in Queensland*, Exhibition, University Art Museum 1982.
- 8 W. Morrison, *op.cit.* His shop fitting work has been described flatteringly as 'making fittings and artistic furniture for shops, churches, banks and hotels': *Fretwork Pediments in Queensland*.
- 9 *Fretwork Pediments in Queensland*, Exhibition.
- 10 Dianne Byrne, 'Decorative Arts in Early Brisbane', *Brisbane History Group Papers* No 3, 1985, p. 127.
- 11 *Fretwork Pediments in Queensland*.
- 12 *Ibid*.
- 13 Eric A. Thomle, *op.cit.*
- 14 G.Cooke, 'Inlaid Furniture' *op.cit.*, p. 25.



Plate 17. Maharajah of Dholpore, a host of Joubert in India

- 15 A chessboard was apparently also exhibited.
- 16 Cooke regards this as possibly the same one as exhibited in the previous year: 'Inlaid Furniture' *op.cit.*, p. 26.
- 17 Although the records do not state that this was inlaid, Cooke believes it was, partly on the basis of its high cost of £80.
- 18 *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*, p. 83.
- 19 See n. 7.
- 20 K. Fahy & A. Simpson, *Australian Furniture, Pictorial History and Dictionary 1788-1938* Casuarina Press Sydney, 1998 p. 125 record the other items as a small luo table, 2 chests of drawers, a jewel cabinet, and a bookcase – six items in all.
- 21 This excludes the Joubert cabinet, which may possibly have been exhibited in 1877. See below under 'Conclusion'.
- 22 K. Fahy & A. Simpson, *op.cit.*, p. 451, plate 505.
- 23 J. Joubert, *Shavings and Scrapes from many parts*, Wilkie & Co, Dunedin, 1890, p. 4.
- 24 His grandfather and father owned paper mills in the town, and his father, who appears to have been for a time in the French Navy, was instrumental in land drainage in the Medoc; Joubert, *op.cit.*, p. 3. Joubert claimed to be the nephew of General Joubert who was killed in the battle of Novi.
- 25 According to Joubert himself, he was expelled for purloining food for senior students: Joubert, *op.cit.*, p. 6.
- 26 Where his schoolmates included the sons of King Louis Philippe: Joubert, *op.cit.*, p. 7.
- 27 Where his brother Didier had already gone in 1837, as agent for the Bordeaux firm of wine and spirit merchants, Barton Fils: Hunter's Hill Trust, *The Heritage of Hunter's Hill*, 1969 p. 3; C. Emanuel & P. Thomson, *Sketchbook of Hunter's Hill* 1973, p. 18.
- 28 Amiral Dupere, a friend of his father: Joubert, p. 8.

- 29 One purpose of the voyage was to deliver church ornaments and vestments to the Bishop of New Zealand from Louis Philippe's queen.
- 30 According to Joubert, to take possession of New Zealand (or part of it) for France – an aspiration that was, of course, not realised: Joubert, *op.cit.*, p. 35.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 *ADB Vol. 4*, p. 493.
- 33 Their household furniture from their North Shore residence, *Monte Cristo*, was auctioned in Sydney in 1849. It had been made to order for Joubert 18 months earlier by prominent Sydney cabinet-maker Charles North Hunt. See Kevin Fahy, 'The Hunts – Sydney Cabinetmakers' *Australiana* vol. 10, 1988 p. 49.
- 34 *ADB Vol. 4*, p. 493.
- 35 *Ibid.* The prevailing debt laws in all colonies gave creditors a virtual licence to imprison debtors who did not pay, irrespective of the reason for that non-payment. Traces of that Dickensian law remain in South Australia, in particular, to this day. See D St L Kelly, *Imprisonment for Debt*, AGPS, 1976.
- 36 Joubert, *op.cit.*, p. 39; <http://www.uehl.flinders.edu.au/archeology/~smith/fernave/fernhist.htm>
- 37 Joubert, *op.cit.*, p. 50f.
- 38 Joubert, *op.cit.*, p. 53f.
- 39 *ADB Vol. 4*, p. 493.
- 40 B Sherry, *Hunter's Hill, Australia's Oldest Garden Suburb*, David Ell Press Sydney 1989, p. 34f.
- 41 *Ibid.* p. 40.
- 42 *Ibid.* p. 39.
- 43 Hunter's Hill Trust, *op.cit.*, p. 3; C. Emanuel & P. Thomson, *op.cit.*, p. 14.
- 44 Didier (d. 1881) and then his son, Numa, continued to run the Lane Cove ferries until 1906: Hunter's Hill Trust, *op.cit.*, p. 5; B. Sherry, *op.cit.*, p. 62.
- 45 Joubert, *op.cit.*, p. 75-6. *ADB Vol. 4*, p. 493.
- 46 Hunter's Hill Trust, p. 5.
- 47 Joubert, *op.cit.*, p. 79-81
- 48 In recognition of his services, he was presented with a silver tea service, now (minus the tray) in the possession of another direct descendant in Australia.
- 49 Joubert, *op.cit.*, p. 89-90; cf *ADB Vol. 4*, p. 494
- 50 Family members inform us that he also organised exhibitions in Adelaide during this period.
- 51 The Coolgardie International Mining and Exploration Exhibition.
- 52 Joubert, *op.cit.*, p. 224; *ADB Vol. 4*, p. 494.
- 53 Joubert, *op.cit.*, p. 184f.
- 54 One source refers to him as a 'theatrical agent': Hunter's Hill Trust, *op.cit.*, p. 4.
- 55 According to some sources, he became bankrupt in 1887: Hunter's Hill Trust, *op.cit.*, p. 4; B. Sherry, *op.cit.* p. 43.
- 56 'South Australian Winegrowers', www.users.net/proformat/sawine.html
- 57 www.echoed.com.au/echron/echron02/septoct/national.htm (*The Age*, September-October 1902).
- 58 *ADB Vol. 4*, p. 494.
- 59 Kay Hendley, Balwyn, Victoria, and John Hajdu, Canada.
- 60 G. Cooke, 'Inlaid Furniture', *op.cit.*, p. 27.
- 61 It is clearly a finished product, not a model in the usual sense. However, the model itself must have been an advanced piece as its price was £30!
- 62 *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture* p. 91, quoting from the catalogue.
- 63 *Ibid.*
- 64 G. Cooke, 'Inlaid Furniture' *op.cit.*, p. 26.
- 65 The price was £80.
- 66 G. Cooke, 'Inlaid Furniture', *op.cit.*, p. 27.

Australia's first book on Industrial Design

SIMON JACKSON

Design lecturer Simon Jackson looks at the awakening of interest in Australian design through the first book on industrial design in the 1960s, and its use in schools.

While several early periodicals considered the topic of Australian manufacturing—*Australia Today* with its 'heroic' 1939 cover of a foundry springs to mind—books devoted specifically to the emerging profession of industrial design in Australia have been few.

In the early 1960s, the local publisher Longmans launched a series entitled 'The Arts in Australia' which included about a dozen small publications covering the fine arts and design-related areas. Among the latter were *Architecture*, *New Architecture*, *Commercial Art*, *Pottery and Design*. Their authors were often leading practitioners in their fields: R. Haughton James, Morton Herman and Robin Boyd all contributed titles. Colin Barrie's *Design. The part it plays in our lives*¹ was a brief account of the nature and purpose of the industrial design activity and an important early recognition of its role in society. It was the first book specifically devoted to industrial design in Australia.

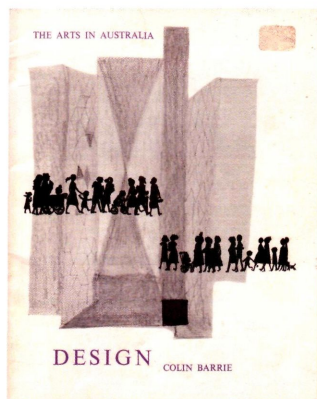
Barrie's pioneering text was recognised by educators. Eight years after publication it was condensed for use in secondary school studies.² 'Senior secondary students' in English and Social Science courses read Colin Barrie's 'Good Design' in H.G. Fowler's *Australia in the seventies*.

Teenage students were asked the following questions:

COMPREHENSION

1. What advantages do we have in belonging to a 'young' country?
2. Express in your own words what the writer means by the 'total quality' of our products.
3. Why does the author attach so much importance to an 'attitude' from us all towards good design?
4. 'Art, science, technology'. Explain the differences between these three activities. (You may be helped by thinking about what you expect from an artist, a scientist, and a technologist.)
5. Set out in tabulated form the requirements expected from a competent industrial designer.
6. Explain the concept of 'human engineering' and its importance in the field of design.
7. 'In good design, the physical factors are combined with the visual factors, so that the article looks well and feels well.'

Show that you understand what the writer means by this statement, by reference to some simple article in the home or schoolroom such as the drawer which he discusses.



Colin Barrie, *Design. The part it plays in our lives*, Longmans, Croydon, Vic. 1962

TALKING IT OVER

1. Select two or three other common articles similar to the ones pictured and described. Discuss their suitability or unsuitability for the purpose for which they were designed.
2. Some years ago a well known architect named Robin Boyd wrote a book called *The Australian Ugliness* in which he was very critical of a general indifference to good planning and good designing. Do you think the title of his book suggests fairly accurately the standards of taste you find in your own neighbourhood?
3. Bring from home an article of crockery or cutlery that you think represents a piece of good design. Compare it with articles brought in by other members of your class.
4. Suggest some improvements in your present classroom. (Colour scheme, lighting, choice and arrangement of furniture, display boards, etc.)
5. Which is your favourite make of motor car? What are the reasons that guide you in that choice?

EXCELLENT QUESTIONS INDEED!

Apart from Barrie, few Australian books dealt with the subject of industrial design until the 1980s. Robin Boyd was among the few to



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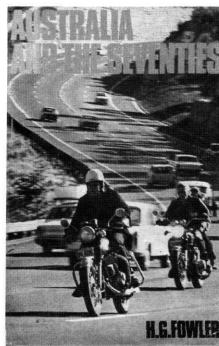
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tackle industrial design issues (albeit broadly) until Tony Fry's important *Design history Australia* was published in 1988 and Michael Bogle's *Design in Australia 1880-1970* in 1998.

Added to these scholarly texts, a flurry of Bicentennial 'celebratory' writings on the subject soon appeared. These arguably distorted the history of industrial design practice in this country. These Bicentennial publications tended to focus on an uncritical celebration of 'Aussie icons' and were a long way from Barrie's careful positioning of industrial design as a serious and important cultural, economic and scientific activity. ■



H.G. Fowler, *Australia and the seventies*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney 1970.

Dr Simon Jackson is a Lecturer in Industrial Design and Interior Design at the National School of Design, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne.

Notes

1 Colin Barrie, *Design. The part it plays in our lives*, Longmans, Croydon, Vic. 1962.

2 H.G. Fowler, *Australia and the seventies*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney 1970.

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The intrepid schoolmaster

JOHN WILLIAM BILLIATT

R.A. PHILLIPS

A South Australian silver yachting trophy and a gold school medal set Dick Phillips hunting for the story of the man behind them – explorer, schoolmaster and yachtsman John William Billiatt.

Although he spent less than thirty years of a long life (1842–1919) in South Australia, John William Billiatt made useful contributions to its exploration, sporting, and academic life. Despite this, he is still largely unrecognised, other than by the naming by John McDouall Stuart of Billiatt Springs in the N.T., near the McKinlay River ‘in token of my approbation of his thoughtful and unselfish conduct throughout the expedition’¹, and of the Billiatt Conservation Park in South Australia.

In 1977, and again in 1999, Billiatt’s life was put into context by the late Shirley Cameron Wilson OAM² in addresses to the John McDouall Stuart Society in Adelaide, sources on which I have drawn for this article, and which I gratefully acknowledge.

Billiatt was born on 1 September 1842 to a farming family in Honington, Lincolnshire, and as an 18-year-old decided to join his uncle Stephen King, a farmer who had come to South Australia in 1839 with his wife and daughter. By the time Billiatt arrived in 1860, King’s family had grown by four more daughters, and a son, also Stephen, born December 1841. King had prospered, and lived on his property *Kingsford*, near Gawler (familiar more recently as the setting for the TV series ‘McLeod’s Daughters’). John Billiatt travelled with his uncle and cousin Stephen through the copper mining areas of mid-north S.A., developing bush skills, forming a strong and lifelong friendship with the Kings, and incidentally taking a shine to young Stephen’s sister Ann Elizabeth.

In late October 1861 John McDouall Stuart was preparing to depart from Adelaide on his sixth exploring expedition, which was to prove a great triumph in the successful crossing of the continent from south to north. Young Stephen King had ‘... done much of the work of breaking in the colts ...’³ and was a member of the party.

It is said that John Billiatt ‘... had conceived the romantic idea that he must look after his sweetheart’s brother ...’⁴. Thus John applied to join the party, but as arrangements had been finalised there were no vacancies. Not put off, he bought his own gear and accompanied the group further and further north, until near Lake Torrens the saddler Jeffries was dismissed for

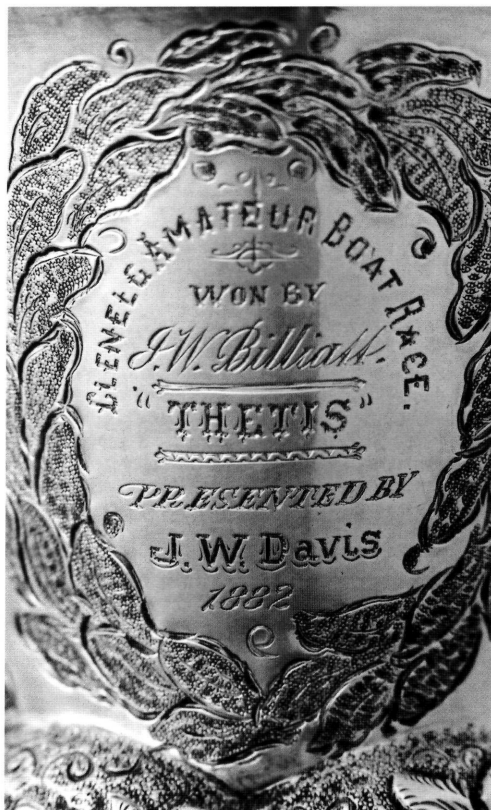


Plate 1. Inscription from trophy cup.



Plates 2 & 3. Trophy Cup – Amateur Open Boat Race, Glenelg Commemoration Day Sports, 28 December 1882. Second Prize, cup of value five pounds. Won by J.W. Billiatt in 'Tthesis'. Stamped on footrim with maker's punch 'J.W.D.' Ht 17.1 cm. Top diam. 8.3 cm. Private collection, S.A.

insubordination and Billiatt took the vacant position.⁵

At the age of 19, with his cousin Stephen, he was off on the adventure of a lifetime. How he acquitted himself is shown in the following quote from McDouall Stuart's pencilled diary:

On his joining me he had been only a few months from England and of course was unacquainted with the work to be done in the bush or with bush habits—but as soon as he got rid of the foolish idea of self-importance which mostly every young gentleman from England comes out with he performed the duties entrusted to his care as well as any of the others—entirely to my satisfaction and approbation.⁶

The successful return of the expeditioners to Adelaide culminated in a triumphal procession through the city in their

'bush kit' on 21 January 1863, Billiatt notable among them wearing his trousers of 39 patches. A civic banquet followed. The material reward for Billiatt was the same as for the other junior members, £100 from the S.A. government. The following September he married the 18-year-old Ann King at Gawler,⁷ and at the end of October the couple set sail for London on the new Orient Line clipper *Coonattoo*.⁸ They soon settled at Welby, close to Honington, where due to the interest shown by the local press in the expedition, John was in considerable demand as a speaker on exploration and life in general in the colony. His talents as raconteur and songster were well exercised.

Despite settling back in England, and now with two small daughters Ann and Pattie, Billiatt had not lost his taste for



Plate 4. Gold Medal, Lancing School, Glenelg, awarded to Ernest Maurice Sabine, (1867-1957), son of Billiatt's friend and fellow sailor Clement Sabine, 1881. Stamped on bottom edge 'H.STEINER', 'ADELAIDE', '18.c', and crown. Diameter 28mm.



Plate 5. Gold Medal, Lancing School, Glenelg, awarded to Ernest Maurice Sabine, (1867-1957), son of Billiatt's friend and fellow sailor Clement Sabine, 1881. Stamped on bottom edge 'H.STEINER', 'ADELAIDE', '18.c', and crown. Diameter 28mm.

adventure. He became involved in the meat trade, at a time when England was having supply difficulties, and was looking towards South America for new opportunities for capital and profitable trade. With Paraguay trying to recover from its ill-starred involvement in the War of the Triple Alliance (1864-70),⁹ the opportunity was seen for the foundation of a colony in Paraguay, under the aegis of the British and Paraguayan governments, to open up grazing land and export meat to Britain.

Thus October of 1872 saw the Billiatt family aboard the *SS Kepler*, bound for Buenos Aires, four among about a thousand settlers on three steamers. Billiatt's role in the organisation of all this is unclear, but appears to have been one of considerable responsibility. After landing at Buenos Aires the colonists still faced almost a week of travel by river boat to reach their destination. The unaccustomed climate, along with disease, rapidly took its toll on the new settlers. Co-ordination between the two governments failed, and communication was sketchy at best. The organisation was disrupted, Billiatt lost the trust of his fellow colonists, and he was forced to return to England leaving his family under Brazilian protection. The scheme collapsed in bitter failure.

By 1875 Billiatt was back in South Australia with his family, living at the seaside township of Glenelg. He rapidly became

involved in local affairs, contributed an article on Aboriginal customs to the Glenelg Institute magazine *The Rising Sun*, and established himself as the headmaster and proprietor of a private school in a converted house in High Street. This he was to name Lancing School after the place where he had gained his own education, the methods of which he adopted.

As well as joining the local Literary Association, he was an adventurous sailor. His open 15-footer *Thetis* became a familiar sight from the far side of the Murray mouth on the south coast to the waters of Gulf St Vincent (or as he called it, rather more romantically, 'Gulf Josephine'). An anonymous article he contributed to the *Adelaide Observer* of 17 January 1880 'The Log of the Thetis' is rich in descriptive flourishes and classical allusions. When describing the entry to Port Gawler he wrote 'In gliding up the still water the beautifully green foliage of the mangroves and the pretty little inlets reminded one of the banks of the Paraguay and Parana.' He also found time to become involved in the rebuilding of St Peter's Church, and as a member of the executive committee of the Commemoration Day Sports, where he acted as a judge.

John Billiatt's school was locked in competition (for students and academic success) with Caterer's Glenelg Grammar School and Mitchell's Glenelg Educational Institution.¹⁰ Patronage was sought and advertised, notably in Billiatt's full-page entry in his

LANCING SCHOOL,

GLENELG.

CONDUCTED BY

MR. J. W. BILLIATT.

REFERENCES

KINDLY PERMITTED TO

HIS HONOR MR. JUSTICE BOUCAUT

S. TOMKINSON, ESQ., J.P., M.P.

B. BOOTHBY, ESQ., C.E.

C. SABINE, ESQ.

SIR JOHN MORPHETT

HON. B. C. GWYNNE

W. S. DOUGLAS, ESQ., J.P.

B. J. FRENCH, ESQ., J.P.

Plate 6. Advertisement from Glenelg Historic Guide and Directory, John Lee, Adelaide 1883. These prominent citizens were involved in politics or law, banking, commerce or engineering. Boucaut and Sabine were fellow sailors

friend John Lee's *Glenelg Historic Guide and Directory* 1883,¹¹ to which he also contributed an article on 'Glenelg as a Yachting Station', where local dignitaries and sportsmen are listed as referees. One such patron was Billiat's fellow sailor Clement Sabine, customs and shipping agent, promoter and director of the Glenelg Railway, Glenelg councillor and agriculturalist. His son, Ernest Maurice, later to be Adelaide's Police Magistrate, was awarded the school's gold medal for 1881.¹²

The Glenelg Commemoration Day Sports, celebrated on 28 December each year, was a major event, drawing crowds from Adelaide as well as most of the local population. In 1882 the aquatic program included swimming, water polo, duck hunts and tilting, as well as sailing races for three classes of boats. John Billiat entered *Thetis* in the Amateur Open Sailing Boat-Race. This was to be '... sailed by bona-fide owners of same, Not exceeding 20 feet keel ... Course, about ten miles. First prize, £10, or cup of same value; second ditto, cup value £5; third ditto, £2. Time allowance, half minute per foot'.¹³

Billiat was up against four other boats in a well contested race, and the boats presented a pretty spectacle as they cleverly manoeuvred round the course. Some of them got mixed up with the competitors in the previous race in the course of the cruise, but the committeeman whose mission it was to 'spot' the winners was too experienced a hand and possessed too keen an eye to get confused.

The race was won by J. Colman's *Ruby*, with *Thetis* taking second place, and with it the £5 cup presented by the Adelaide watchmaker and jeweller J.W. Davis of Rundle Street.¹⁴

The day was a great success, with a crowd of '...between 15,000 and 20,000 in the afternoon.' The Glenelg & Holdfast Bay Railway Co. catered for the crowd as best it could: 'They ran fifty trains on each line, and made an effort to send them down every twenty minutes ...'

For the finale in the evening there was a spectacular fireworks display mounted at the end of the jetty, including a set piece and over 400 rockets. But then 'Directly the fireworks was over a rush was made for the trains, and the fighting for seats was something terrible...'

In 1883 Billiat was active in the formation of the Holdfast Bay Yacht and Boat Club, and was appointed its first Commodore, under the patronage of Josiah Symon QC, MP. He also took on the lease of the 'Government Cottage' in Adelphi Terrace, the original 1839 residence of the first Customs Officer and Harbourmaster at Glenelg, John Anthony. The house had later been extended for use as a vice-regal summer residence, and now became Billiat's home, and site of Lancing School.¹⁵

As Commodore again in 1885, Billiat crossed swords with the local council when it proposed to partially block the entrance to the Patawalonga Creek. The waterway met the sea at Glenelg, and at high tide provided three miles (5 km) of inland sailing for small boats. His letter to the council read that it was 'unnecessary and illegal' and that '... I respectfully request your Corporation will take such steps as are necessary to prevent the threatened illegal infringement otherwise they will be held liable'.¹⁶

By the mid 1880s the agricultural crisis caused by drought in S.A. was having a severe effect on the economy. Billiat, no matter how fine his other qualities, seems not to have been a very successful businessman. Called back to England by the illness and then death of his mother, he left Ann and the two girls at Adelphi Terrace. With the cancellation of the lease in May 1890 the property was then let to Frederick Caterer for his Glenelg Grammar School.¹⁷

Ann and the two daughters rejoined John in England, where Ann Elizabeth was to die in 1905. Billiat later remarried, and lived in Exeter, while the two girls were nearby at Ottery-St. Marys. Belated recognition came to him in 1912, when the South Australian Government decided to mark the 50th anniversary of the raising of the flag by McDouall Stuart on the north Australian shore by presenting the surviving expeditioners each with a gold watch. Billiat's watch was presented to him in Exeter by the then Premier of S.A., the Hon. A. H. Peake.¹⁸

John William Billiat died at Exeter on 6 April 1919. In his will he left his estate to his two daughters, other than a sum of money and some personal items to a close friend, but made no provision for his second wife '... because she is already

otherwise amply provided for ...¹⁹ The daughters were later to return to Adelaide, bringing with them the few relics remaining in the family from the 1862 expedition, and Billiatt's South Australian days ■

Postscript

Shirley Cameron Wilson OAM died in April 2003, while putting the finishing touches to her biography of John William Billiatt. It is hoped that this work, based on her great knowledge of the Billiatt story, and her family records of the Kings, will be published without too great a delay.

The John McDouall Stuart Society newsletter no. 106 of June 2003 carried a front page illustration of another Billiatt sailing trophy. Among items left by the late Mercia King (a granddaughter of Stephen King Jr.), was a large silver plated, two handled trophy cup. Within a reserve bordered by engraved foliate decoration is the inscription: 'H.B.Y.C. / won by / M^{rs} T. W. Billiatt's [sic] / yacht "Thetis" / 16 Feb. 1885'. Surrounding the inscription are engraved three butterflies. The cup is apparently unmarked. It has been presented to the John McDouall Stuart Society Inc. by Mrs Jackie Dakin, and is now part of the Stuart Collection displayed in the Masonic Centre, North Terrace, Adelaide.

Notes

- 1 William Hardman (ed.), *Explorations in Australia – The Journals of John McDouall Stuart*, 2nd ed., London 1865 (S.A. Libraries Board facsimile 1975), p.393.
- 2 Shirley Cameron Wilson OAM (1918–2003) was co-author of *The Bridge Over the Ocean*, a biography of her great grandfather Thomas Wilson, the second mayor of Adelaide (1842). She also wrote *From Shadow into Light: South Australian Women Artists Since Colonisation*. Her paternal grandmother was Matilda Wilson (nee King), sister of Stephen King junior, and hence Billiatt's sister-in-law. Her addresses to the John McDouall Stuart Society were presented on 25 July 1977 and 21 March 1999.
- 3 Mona Stuart Webster, *John McDouall Stuart*, MUP, Melbourne, 1958, p.187.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Hardman, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
- 6 Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
- 7 15 Sept. 1863: S.A. Marriages Index of Registrations 1842–1916, b. 55 p. 77.
- 8 Register of 31 October 1863 (departures), Horner Index, State Library of S.A.
- 9 Website: www.lonelyplanet.com under 'world guide', 'Paraguay', 'history'.
- 10 *Chronicle* 19 April 1919, obituary, p.18.
- 11 *Glenelg Historic Guide and Directory* 1883, John Lee, Adelaide 1883.
- 12 Gold medal, as illustrated, inscribed on the obverse 'Lancing School / Glenelg / 1881' and on the reverse 'Awarded / to / E. M. Sabine'. Marked on the bottom edge with 'H.STEINER', 'ADELAIDE', '18.c', and a crown. Diam. 28mm, original case. Private collection, S.A.
- 13 Register 29 December 1882, p. 6.
- 14 For the business of J.W. Davises (1849–c.1886), see J.B.

Hawkins, *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver*, A.C. C., Woodbridge 1990, pp 73–76, and Cavill, Cocks and Grace, *Australian Jewellers Gold and Silver Smiths, Makers and Marks*, CGC Gold, Roseville NSW 1992, p. 69.

The cup as illustrated, inscribed 'Glenelg Amateur Boat Race / won by / J.W. Billiatt / 'THETIS' / Presented by / J. W. Davis / 1882'. Interior gilt. Marked on the footrim 'J.W.D.' Ht 17.1 cm, top diam. 8.3 cm. Stylistically this cup belongs about three decades before the presentation date, and to the group of cups made in the early 1850s by Firnhaber. It is suggested that the cup was second-hand stock of Davis', and was selected as being of equivalent value for the £5 prize. There appear to be no marks indicating that an earlier inscription or maker's stamp was removed. The cup was with descendants of the King family until the 1990s. Private collection, S.A.

- 15 W.H. Jeanes, *Glenelg: Birthplace of South Australia*, Glenelg Council, Glenelg, 1955, pp. 32–35.
- 16 Correspondence Billiatt to Glenelg Council 24 September 1885, Holdfast Bay Historical Centre (Cor – 7.021212 – 1).
- 17 Jeanes, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
- 18 Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 278 '...a gold watch and chain, the watch engraved with a map of Australia showing the route from south to north.' This watch was later with relatives of Billiatt in S.A., but was stolen.
- 19 The will of 'John William Billiatt of No2 Powderham Crescent in the County of the City of Exeter Esquire...' was dated 7 January 1919, and probate granted 31 May 1919. Will courtesy of Brian Ireland, Evesham.

Peter R Walker Australiana Writing Award

Peter R. Walker Pty Ltd, Dealers in Fine Art, generously continue to sponsor a cash award of \$250 for the best article submitted to *Australiana* this year. All articles appearing in *Australiana* Volume 25 are eligible to receive the 2003 award.

Amateur Writer's Award

Amateur writers—those who are not professional curators, academics, dealers, writers or the like—are eligible for a new writing award of \$100 for the best contribution to *Australiana* by an amateur researcher and writer. This new award is available this year and next. Thanks to the anonymous member who is funding the award.

William Holford's art and influence on Australian Pottery

JOHN WADE

William Holford (1840-1914) was a skilled potter, modeller and mould maker who arrived from England via New Zealand in 1876. Working as a potter in three states, his work and influence is now the subject of a booklet and travelling exhibition.



Cheese cover and plate, cane ware and majolica glazed, decorated with cow handle and a copy of William Holford's 'Premier' pattern, ht 21.7 cm. Marked for Abraham James at his pottery in Coorparoo, Queensland about 1891. National Museum of Australian Pottery, Wodonga.

Geoff and Kerrie Ford from the National Museum of Australian Pottery at Wodonga, Victoria, have developed a touring exhibition and produced a small book on the potter William Holford and the pottery made by him or under his influence.

Geoff is a remarkably devoted and thorough collector, who has been researching Australian pottery for over 25 years. He produced his first book, *Nineteenth Century South Australian Pottery*, in 1985. He and Kerrie opened their National Museum of Australian Pottery in 1995, the same year they published *Australian Pottery: The First 100 Years*. Three years later they published the indispensable marks book, *Encyclopaedia of Australian Potters' Marks*, now in its second edition. Geoff has a full-time job operating the Museum, while Kerrie both helps in the Museum and has a full-time job to support their passion for ceramics.

The Fords realised the importance of their growing collection and decided to make it available to the public. At the time, no public museum was conscientiously presenting the history of the early Australian ceramics industry, so they took it upon themselves to do it. Like Shirley Ball and Caroline Simpson who set up their own historic museums in Sydney's Rocks, Geoff and Kerrie embarked upon the same course. At Wodonga, on the NSW-Victorian border, their officially accredited museum welcomes visitors with a special interest in Australia's heritage.

William Holford is not their first travelling exhibition. *Forefathers of Australian Pottery* has already toured regional galleries, presenting the works of 18 Australian potteries operating between 1821-1910 through displaying about 50 examples, backed up with exhibition graphics and a small illustrated catalogue (still available from the National Museum of Australian Pottery).



Lithgow water monkey (carafe), moulded with fern leaves, ht 32.5 cm and Lithgow jug, moulded with fern leaves, ht 22 cm. Holford worked at Lithgow between 1882-1883. National Museum of Australian Pottery, Wodonga.

William Holford

Trained in Staffordshire, William Holford worked for some years at the famous Minton's Pottery at Stoke on Trent, and arrived in Australia in 1876 after two years in New Zealand. He worked first at a number of potteries in Victoria, then briefly at the Lithgow Pottery in NSW in 1882-83, where he made distinctive moulds for a range of slip-cast domestic earthenwares such as plates, basins, bread plates, pickle jars and jugs.

He set up the Phoenix Pottery in Sydney, then established his own Standard Pottery in what is now Lane Cove, before leaving for Adelaide in 1887. After some time working at Trewenack's Pottery in Magill and at Koster's Pottery in Norwood, in 1890, with his son Thomas and two partners, he set up the first of a series of his own potteries.



Water filter and cover, Rockingham glaze, moulded with pre-Federation Australian coat of arms, rope patterns, fuchsia flowers and ribbons, embossed 'Trewenack's Jubilee Crystal Filter', ht 52 cm. This was made by William Holford for Trewenack's exhibit at the Adelaide Jubilee International Exhibition, 1887. National Museum of Australian Pottery, Wodonga.

His first was the London Pottery Works (1890; 1903-1906), at Maylands S.A., altering the name to the Adelaide Pottery Co (1891-1905), and then the Federal Pottery Co (1906-1909). His own ventures ran into financial trouble, being wound up finally in 1909 when William retired. Thomas went on to make moulds for Koster's, and later Bennett's. His son Jim, born in 1910, worked all his life at Bennett's until his retirement in 1975.

Four years earlier, William had urged the Royal Commission on Customs and Tariffs to increase duty on ceramic imports. He cited the higher costs of both labour and materials in Australia, the dumping of surplus and old stock on the Australian market by foreign makers, and prejudice against the local product by consumers and distributors.

Grace Cochrane, Senior Curator, Australian Decorative Arts and Design at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum, says

For those like Geoff Ford, who know this field of ceramics well, William Holford's work is recognised by its competently made forms and characteristic decoration. One of these is the flower and fern pattern that became known as the 'Premier' design.

The similarity found in the designs from one pottery to another is understandable, because mouldmakers like Holford carried some of their moulds with them in order to start off again in a new place. These sometimes remained in the pottery, or influenced others.

The 50 items in the exhibition are all rare, often sole known survivors, and include a range of domestic wares from bread crocks to water filters. The exhibition follows Holford's career across New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. It shows not only his own work, but how his work influenced others, by including pots designed by fifteen other potters from five states ... It is rare to see collected together so many items that can be identified as associated with one of these often anonymous designers and artisans.

Geoff Ford's book shows how this one potter and his son moved from pottery to pottery, and from state to state, taking their skills, their tools and their moulds with them. They also probably took their favourite glaze recipes, or used the same glaze suppliers. Apprentices and other potters learned from them, and when they in turn moved on, they took some moulds, such as the 'Premier' pattern of leaves, the fern leaf and the ear of wheat. And if one pottery hit on a commercially successful combination, then other small potteries were quick to copy them. Unless their works are marked, is it any wonder that it is hard to tell the products of the different potteries apart?

There is certainly a lot of truth in Holford's claims of unequal foreign competition. But with a limited pool of potters isolated from new ideas and skills producing a style of pottery that was basically unchanged over several generations, they may also have sown the seeds of their demise.

Geoff Ford selected the 51 items in the exhibition to track Holford's career with examples of his work and works by other potters that were influenced by him. The exhibition is supported by documents, photographs, tools and catalogues.

The Book

Geoff Ford, *William Holford's art and design influence on Australian Pottery*, Salt Glaze Press, Wodonga. Price \$37 plus \$3 post from National Museum of Australian Pottery, 66 South St, Wodonga Vic 3690, tel/fax 02 6056 3152.

The spiral-bound A4 size booklet of 26 pages is an excellent

and comprehensive history of William Holford and his son Thomas Henry. Thirteen historic black and white photographs show the potteries, potters and pots, and many are fully captioned identifying the various workers shown. Ninety-seven examples of pottery, mostly wares with applied moulds and majolica glazes, are illustrated individually on ten colour plates. These are reproduced at a good size and deep etched, in colour photocopies of superb quality.

A book on this subject won't have a big market so it has been produced in an economical manner, which in no way diminishes its usefulness to the collector.

The Exhibition

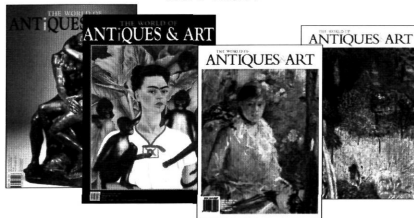
This exhibition *William Holford's art and design influence on Australian Pottery* is on display at the Powerhouse Museum, from 16 August – 9 November 2003. It has already been seen at the Gippsland Art Gallery in Sale and will tour to the regional galleries in Shepparton, Mildura and Wollongong. The exhibition is mounted by the National Museum of Australian Pottery, Wodonga and supported by the Northcote Pottery, Victoria and the Bendigo Pottery, Victoria.

The National Museum of Australian Pottery

The National Museum of Australian Pottery at 66 South St, Wodonga Victoria is open on Sundays and public holidays 10am to 4pm and by appointment, phone/fax 02 6056 3152. Entry is only \$3. ■

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The artist and a sitter

OSWALD ROSE CAMPBELL AND
JOHN DE VILLIERS LAMB

FRED SINFIELD

Oswald Rose Campbell arrived in Melbourne in 1852 and worked in both Sydney and Melbourne, sometimes as a portrait painter, a photographer, cartoonist, illustrator and instructor.

Fred Sinfield reveals his portrait of a young, well-connected Sydney man.

The painter, photographer, illustrator and art instructor Oswald Rose Campbell was born on the Channel Island of Jersey in 1820. At 19, his art training commenced when he entered the Trustees' Academy in Edinburgh, under Sir William Allen, PRSA. Three years later he was in London as a student at the Royal Academy Schools and spent a term at the Liverpool Academy as well as in Dublin where he attended the Royal Hibernian Academy. Eight years on his paintings were hung at London's Royal Academy, *Christ and the two disciples journey to Emmaus* in 1847 and *The Prisoner* the following year. Four years later, in 1852 he arrived in Melbourne with his wife and family.

In 1859 Campbell packed up his new apparatus and moved out of 10 Macquarie Street, Sydney where he had been during the previous year. He set up his studio across town in the Phoenix Chambers, George Street, as he had added photographic pictures to his other skills. His advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 28 November 1859 stated that

'Photography is becoming better understood and more interesting day by day, and there is little doubt that it will ultimately hold an important position in the "world of art" Mr Campbell will, therefore, devote as much as practicable of his knowledge and experience as an artist to the production of Photographic Pictures, and will endeavour in every way to make them deserve that name.'

MR. O. R. CAMPBELL,
ARTIST,

10, MACQUARIE STREET.

As specimens of his Works, he begs to refer the public to his life-size Oil Paintings of the late Governor-General, Sir CHARLES FITZROY, and the present Governor-General, Sir WILLIAM DENISON, the property of the Ritchie Company, and hanging on the walls of the Chamber of Commerce. Also, to the full-length portraits of Sir CHARLES NEWELL, in the ante-room of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. CAMPBELL begs to announce that he has lately added Photography to his profession, and feels confident that, from the numerous studies required in his art, he will be enabled to add to the marvellous fidelity which these pictures exhibit—the charm of artistic composition and colour which they require.

Plate 1. Campbell's advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald, 28 November 1859.

The effects of photography on traditional forms of portraiture led to an article in the same newspaper of 23 November 1866.

'It was thought at one time that photography would

destroy art in portraiture, and it certainly did for a time displace some forms of portrait painting. But photography, which has immensely multiplied the desire for likenesses, is now serving as a basis for artistic productions. The sun, if he dispenses with the pencil, does not dispense with the brush. There is still ample scope for the artist in oils. The popular carte-de-visite has increased the demand for finished miniatures.'

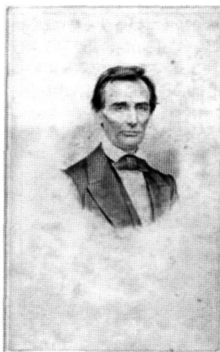


Plate 2. A carte-de-visite photograph of a lithograph of Abraham Lincoln, c. 1865, from one of Campbell's contemporaries 'T. S. Glaister, Photographic Artist, 253 Pitt Street, Sydney.' This reproduction is similar to the work by John H. Burford, lithographer of Paris and published by Gonpil & Co. of New York and M. Knödler of London.

Campbell had been in Sydney on other occasions since settling in Melbourne in 1852. He was in Sydney towards the end of 1854 when he completed a head and shoulders portrait of the 21 year old John de Villiers Lamb. His portraits of *Sir Alfred Stephen*, *A Lady*, *Master Mori* and *Infant with an Hindoo Bearer* were exhibited at the pre-Paris Universal Exhibition held at the Australian Museum in November 1854.

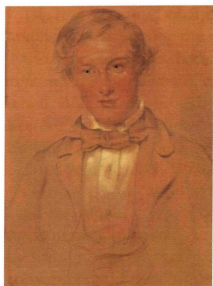


Plate 3. *Oswald Rose Campbell, John de Villiers Lamb, signed and dated 1854, Sydney. Pencil and crayon on paper, 51.5 x 35 cm. Private collection*

One of Campbell's paintings was possibly associated with a Joseph Backler opinion piece published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 January 1861. Backler's protest was the commissioning of a portrait of Sir William Denison by other than a local artist. He proposed a

competition with the winner being the one who produced the 'best and most truthful likeness' and nominated Sydney's leading portrait painters as James Anderson, Oswald Rose Campbell, Richard Noble and Henry Robinson Smith. Campbell's portraits included Sir Charles FitzRoy, Sir Charles Nicholson, John Portus of Morpeth, a pencil drawing as well as an attributed watercolour on ivory miniature of Mary Reiby.¹ The treasurer of Melbourne City Council, John Cosgrave, and his wife had him paint their portraits in 1853/4.

Conrad Martens was President of the Sydney Sketching Club when Campbell accepted the position as Honorary Secretary in 1856. His two life-size portraits in oils were displayed at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts Fine Art Exhibition in 1857 and two years later Campbell added photographic portraiture to his skills, having supplemented his income as an illustrator for *Sydney Punch*.

Campbell left his Mount Street, North Sydney home in 1865 and settled into a house in Punt Road, St Kilda. He was the principal cartoonist of *Melbourne Punch* and for a decade was an illustrator for *The Illustrated Australian News*. The engraver of the cartoons, on woodblocks, was Samuel Calvert (1828-1913) who prepared colonial scenes printed on rice paper that were sold by the newspapers. One scene was Campbell's 1869 *Buckley discovering himself to the early settlers*, a coloured engraving by S. Calvert, printed by Gibbs, Shallard & Co.² Calvert also engraved the dies and prepared electrotypes for Victorian stamps, 6d orange, 2/-, 1/- 'Registered' and 6d 'Too Late' in 1854. He engraved the dies and prepared electrotypes for the 'Emblems' issues from 1857 to 1858. Calvert was dismissed and prosecuted for pawning the stamp woodblocks, as reported in the *Argus*, 1 April and 21 April 1858.



Plate 4. *After Oswald Rose Campbell, Buckley discovering himself to the early settlers, chromolithograph by Samuel Calvert, printed by Gibbs, Shallard & Co.*

The subject of Campbell's 1874 engraving of a ship storm-driven ashore onto King Island with the loss of 79 lives was the inspiration for the Victorian Tapestry Workshop's 1990 weaving *Wreck of the British Admiral* for the National Maritime Museum.

He continued to exhibit, such as at the Melbourne Public Library Exhibition of Ornamental and Decorative Art during the second quarter of 1869. His design was accepted by the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria for its Seal of 1870, depicting four of the Graces or Muses with the legend *Tum Varias Venere Artes*. An engraving of it was published in the 5 December 1870 issue of the *Illustrated Australian News*. That year Campbell accepted the position as the first President of the Victorian Academy of Arts and held the post until 1875 when he retired, but as a life member he continued to exhibit until 1882.

Campbell designed the 48mm prize medal for the 1873 Intercolonial Exhibition Victoria, with the legend *Divissima Terra. O.R. Campbell* designed the 70mm bronze medal, engraved by Julius Hogarth and struck by Stokes and Martin for the Melbourne 1875 - Philadelphia 1876 Exhibition with the legend *Ingens Pateat Tellus Nec Sit Terris Ultima Tbtile*.³



Plate 5. 1873 and 1875/76 medals designed by Campbell. Private collection.

When Thomas Clark left the post as drawing master of the School of Design at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1876, Campbell succeeded him. The new drawing master's strictness, and what some students considered archaic teaching methods, led to friction. Some students organised an extracurricular Saturday afternoon life class; among them were Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin, Charles Richardson and Jane Sutherland. During Campbell's ill health from 1885, his former student Fred McCubbin acted as master and succeeded him upon his death two years later.

The controversial painter, photographer, designer, illustrator and instructor's funeral left his modest residence in Punt Road, just around from High Street. He was laid to rest in the Presbyterian Section, Row C, Plot No. 147 of the St Kilda Cemetery.⁴

DEATHS.

BLOUSTEIN.—On the 2nd August, at the Alfred Hospital, David Bloustein the beloved father of M. J. Bloustein, of this city, and S. Bloustein, Perth, W.A., aged 74, M.H.S.R.I.P. (interred at Ballarat on the 4th). Minyon at Montefiore, Clarendon-road, St. Kilda, at 8 p.m.

BURNS.—On the 21st July, at his residence, 514 Albert-street, East Melbourne (suddenly), Patrick Byrne, native of Dublin, Ireland, brother of Mrs. Charlotte McCarthy, of Talbot, also brother of the late Captain Henry Burns, of Sydney, N.S.W. R.I.P. Home papers please copy.

CAMPBELL.—On the 4th August, at her residence, "Aberleide," Atherton-road, Oakleigh, Eleanor Campbell, widow of the late Col. H. Campbell, M.C., aged 74, M.H.S.R.I.P. (interred at Ballarat on the 4th).

DEATHS.

BREAKWELL.—On the 12th October, at private hospital, St. Kilda, Elizabeth Alice, loved wife of John Breakwell, 63 Tennancy street, St. Kilda, aged 63 years.

BROTHERTON.—On the 11th October, at the Melbourne Hospital, William Nelson, beloved second son of Elizabeth and the late Joseph Brotherton (late of Bendigo), loved brother of Millie, Em. (Mrs. F. Parry, Canterbury), Harry (Canterbury), Jim (Sydney), Hal (Mrs. J. Merton, Canterbury), Fred (South Melbourne), Les (Hartwell).

BROWN.—On the 11th October, at the residence of her son-in-law (Frank Irons), 965 Mt. Alexander road, Emmondson, Elvira, wife of the late Edward Deacock Brown, loving mother of Millie and Maud, dear grandmother of Elvira, Gladys, Mavis, Winifred, and Edward Irons.

BURNSIDE.—On the 9th October, in London, Robert Henry, loved brother of Jean (Mrs. Blair), Florence, Ethelynd (Mrs. Norquay), William,

BURSLEM.—On the 12th October, Henry Benn Burslem, of Wemby Court, South Yarra. (Privately interred on the 12th October.)

CAMPBELL.—On the 9th October, at 11 Athel-

stan road, Camberwell, Mary Millicent, daughter of the late O. R. Campbell, and beloved sister of Colin Robert Campbell, aged 64 years. (Privately interred October 10.)

CARTER.—On the 11th October, at the Melbourne Hospital, John Newby Carter, beloved brother of Charles E., and much-loved uncle of Charles E. and John Newby, of Salisbury street, Yarraville.

CORBETT.—On the 26th August, 1928, at Glenavy, Belfast, Ireland, Joseph Corbett, late of Marton street, South Yarra, a life-long friend of W. J. Patterson, Ormond road, Moonee Ponds, Victoria.

CRANMER (nee Ena Shingles). — On the 7th October, Elva Lorraine, dearly loved only child of

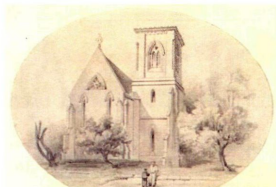


Plate 7. *St Mark's Church Darling Point in 1854, the consecration was not until 1864 with the tower and spire completed in 1871.*

Plate 6. *Campbell family death notices.*

The subject of one of Campbell's 1854 drawings, John de Villiers Lamb, was a son of John Lamb and Emma Trant, nee Robinson.⁵ A retired Royal Navy Commander and Captain in the Honourable East India Company, John Lamb settled in Sydney in 1829 and resided at *Spencer Lodge*, Miller's Point.

John Lamb and Frederick Parbury had formed Lamb, Parbury & Co in 1837; later Walter and John Lamb together with Charles Parbury carried on the business. The suburb of Plumpton was named in recognition of Walter's orchards, cannery and preserving factory in the Blacktown area. John was associated over the years with numerous pastoral interests, the Agricultural Society of NSW, Sydney Church of England Grammar School, other directorships and partnerships in mining and pearling ventures. His other activities included the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, the Australian Jockey Club, and founding member of the Union Club. He and the company, Lamb & Parbury are listed as proprietors of the City Bank of Sydney, 30 June 1864.⁶ Both brothers held commissioned rank in the local militia, Walter in the Sydney Volunteer Rifles and John in the NSW Volunteer Corps.

John and Emma Lamb had fourteen offspring, John de Villiers Lamb being the eighth child and the fifth son born on 15 December 1833. On 22 January 1859, his parents attended their son's wedding to Henrietta Octavia Smith, daughter of Rev. Thomas and Penelope (née Whistler) Smith at St Mark's Church, Darling Point.⁷ The couple had seven children and had an ongoing association with their parish church as they lived at *Glenrock*. In February 1860, their first born, Emma Henrietta Penelope, was baptised in the church and their first son, John Whistler, in December 1861, the year his father was the Parishioner's Warden. Then followed Frances Annie in 1866 and Edwin de Villiers in 1869. Edward Alister [sic] was baptised in 1871 and the two youngest brothers, one of whom was Frank de Villiers Lamb who was born 17 November 1880.⁸

John and Henrietta's son Frank was a student at Sydney Church of England Grammar School from 1892 until 1897, soon after the family had taken up residence in *Marroombah*, Chatswood.⁹ The house was described, in the 1898 *Sands Directory*, as being two storied brick with 14 rooms and stables built in 1892 on 8 acres in Centennial Avenue.¹⁰

Frank held the rank of Major during World War I, was awarded a CBE in 1918 and went on to hold important posts during his lifetime. His father passed away at *Uralta*, 22 Bayswater Road, Kings Cross on 25 March 1900. The portrait by Oswald Rose Campbell passed to Frank and was in his residence at 17 Wallaroy Road, Double Bay until his death in 1962 ■

Fred Sinfield worked in ABC current affairs, and has a lifelong interest in small collectables. Now a freelance historical researcher based in Sydney he has a particular affinity for silver and medals.



Plate 8. Marroombah, built in 1892 on eight acres in Centennial Avenue, Chatswood, was renamed Chislehurst. An undated photograph taken when Edward Carr Hordern owned the property.

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Acknowledgments

Les Carlisle, the State Library of NSW, the State Library of Victoria, Chatswood High School and John Hulskamp of The Friends of St Kilda Cemetery.

Notes

- Campbell is represented in the Dixon Gallery and the Mitchell Library of the State Library of NSW, Art Gallery of NSW, Newcastle Regional Art Gallery, La Trobe Rare Books Collection, State Library of Victoria and Geelong Gallery.
- The 6 foot 5 inches tall convict William Buckley, (1780-1856) a bricklayer and personal servant of Colonel Collins, absconded in 1803 and lived without the European community until returning in 1835. Many considered the laying of the first brick of the chimney for John Batman's residence by his servant, Buckley, to be the foundation date of Melbourne. Buckley's experience was invaluable as the Government later employed him as an intermediary to the indigenous inhabitants. He died in Hobart Town; maybe his life was the origin of the Australasian colloquialism 'Buckley's chance'.
- L. Carlisle, *Australian Commemorative Medals and Medalets from 1788*, medal 1876/1.
- In the unmarked grave are buried Eleanor Campbell, artist, who died 4 August 1902, aged 74 and Mary Millicent Campbell, who died 9 October 1928, aged 64.
- John Lamb was born on 9 January 1791 at Penrith, in the bishopric of Carlisle and died 17 January 1862 at Darlinghurst, NSW. He married Emma in 1823 at Islington, London and six years later the family sailed on the brig *Resource* from London on 6 January 1829 arriving in Sydney on 6 May 1829. His father-in-law was a London merchant and deputy chair of Lloyds of London. Lamb became a wool broker and shipping agent and held various important posts. An interesting legal case was reported in the *Sydney Herald*, 11 June 1835, when the common carrier Goodwin took Lamb and Parbury to the Superior Courts of NSW. John and Emma Lamb were buried in the graveyard of St Jude's Church, Randwick. According to Robin Chalmers, the family is descended from Sir David Lamb of *Seat Hill*, Cumberland, of the English ballad *Chevy Chase* fame.
- The City Bank of Sydney 1863-1913, Jubilee Souvenir*.
- T. Whistler Smith of Smith, Croft & Co, merchants, had offices in George Street, next to the Post Office.
- Memorials in St Mark's are a stained glass window to Henrietta Octavia Lamb and a brass plaque engraved 'John de Villiers Lamb, John Whistler Lamb and Lieut. E. Allaster Lamb. Husband of Henrietta Octavia Lamb, 15.12.1833-25.3.1900; their son 4.11.1861-26.5.31; also their son, born 13th March 1871, killed in action in Boer War 10.5.1901.' Another plaque is in memory of 'Frank de Villiers Lamb, Church Warden, 17.11.1880-17.5.1962.' John Lamb is remembered in Chatswood by de Villiers Avenue near where he lived.
- SCEGS Register 1889-1926, Entry No 173.
- The property was sold in 1900 to K. Weidmann, then to Edward Carr Hordern who renamed it *Chislehurst*. The property was resumed, and the house demolished in 1954 and Chatswood Co-Educational High School was built on the site. A photograph of the house is in the school's possession.

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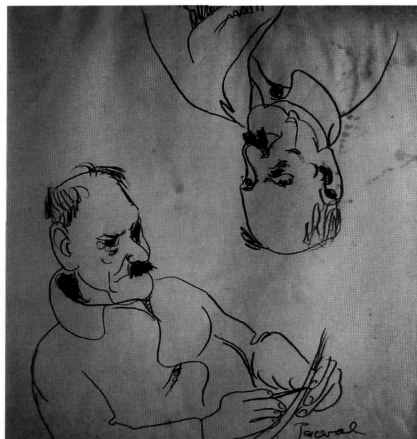
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John de Burgh Perceval (1923-2000) 'Portrait of Merric Boyd'
Signed lower right pencil on paper, 51 x 48 cm \$3,200

William Merric Boyd (1888-1959) began making pottery in 1910 and founded a studio at Murrumbena near Melbourne in 1913. After 1943, his son, the painter Arthur Boyd and John Perceval fired his pottery in their AMB Pottery kiln. Perceval made and decorated pots but is better known as a painter.



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A Lady's Travelling Muff, made from Fairy Penguin feathers, used to keep the hands warm in an open carriage. Made in Tasmania by Jane Tost, nee Ward, (c.1817-1889) Hobart, circa 1865.

This superbly crafted Victorian lady's travelling muff is constructed from the breast skins and feathers of the Australian Fairy Penguin. This penguin is common in Tasmania but is known to live on mainland Australia. The Powerhouse Museum has a feather muff in its box labelled by Tost & Rohu of Hunter Street, Sydney which is either Cockatoo, White Swan or Penguin. A further example is in the Museum at *Narrynna* in Hobart, the feathers from which still remain to be identified.

I have extracted the following information from the catalogue of a superb exhibition held in 1996 at the Macleay Museum, University of Sydney titled 'Most Curious and Peculiar.' Jane Tost was the daughter of Herbert Ward, brother of Henry Ward whose son Rowland Ward was probably the most famous of all Victorian taxidermists. She married Charles Tost, a Prussian cabinetmaker and bird stuffer in London in 1839. They emigrated to Tasmania in 1856 where they worked as taxidermists in Hobart and later in Sydney. Her daughter Ada joined her to form the firm later called Tost & Rohu which operated from 1872 to the 1930s in Sydney. From the 1890s Tost & Rohu advertised as 'Furriers and Island Curio Dealers,' creating a Curiosity Shop with a Museum upstairs which became known as 'The Queerest Shop in Australia.' I suggest that the muff illustrated above and purchased by me in Tasmania was constructed in Hobart by Jane Tost prior to 1872. I have been unable to trace the history of the example at *Narrynna* but believe it also originated in Tasmania. The firm of Tost & Rohu was founded in 1872 as Tost & Coates Fancy Work Depot and Taxidermy Studio. Ada Tost's first husband James Coates was killed in a fire at the Prince of Wales Theatre in 1872 and she remarried Henry Rohu, a naturalist in 1878. The lady's muff in the Powerhouse Museum is in a box labelled Tost & Rohu and therefore must date after 1878.

