

Australiana

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COVER

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *The last laugh*, 1889, (detail) watercolour,
signed 'N. Cayley' and dated 1889. Collection of Dr Mark Cabouret

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Donald Friend's

life in letters

Donald Friend's cultural legacy survives not only in the extensive collection of artworks that he produced, but also through the detailed writings that he penned on a daily basis.

TIMOTHY ROBERTS

Best known of Donald Friend's written works are his diaries, which have been famously and controversially published by the National Library of Australia since 2001. The diaries exhaustively record Friend's daily life, and offer an intimate glimpse into the artist's thoughts and emotions.

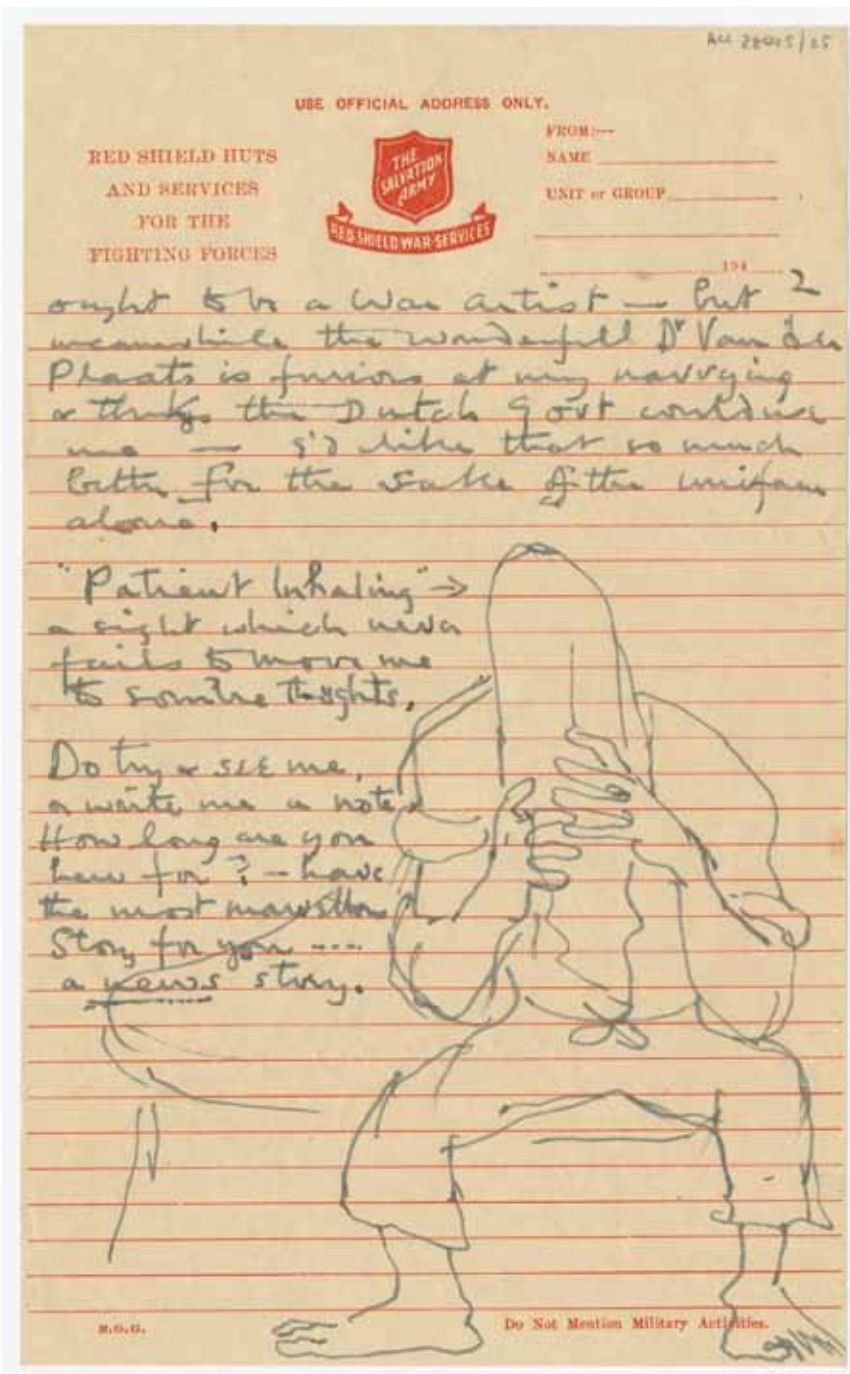
Friend (1915–1989) was an equally enthusiastic correspondent, and penned hundreds of letters over his lifetime. The State Library of Queensland recently acquired an important group of over 40 letters that Friend exchanged with his confidante, author and journalist Patricia Bennet (née Massey-Higgins).

The letters complement the Library's enviable holding of original materials pertaining to Friend's life and work, which include original artworks, deluxe and illustrated books, correspondence with prominent Brisbane art dealer Brian Johnstone, and Friend's earliest surviving diary, which he composed as a teenager in 1929.¹

The correspondence begins in 1941, when Friend composed a 'posterity letter' to artist Wallace Thornton and Patricia Massey-Higgins while travelling by train from Brisbane to Cairns. Friend's witty prose outlines his journey, and

1

Donald Friend (1915–89), (*Patient Inhaling*) 1944. 28025/25, Donald Friend Correspondence, Australian Library of Art, State Library of Queensland. Reproduction courtesy State Library of Queensland © Trustees of the Estate of Late Donald Friend



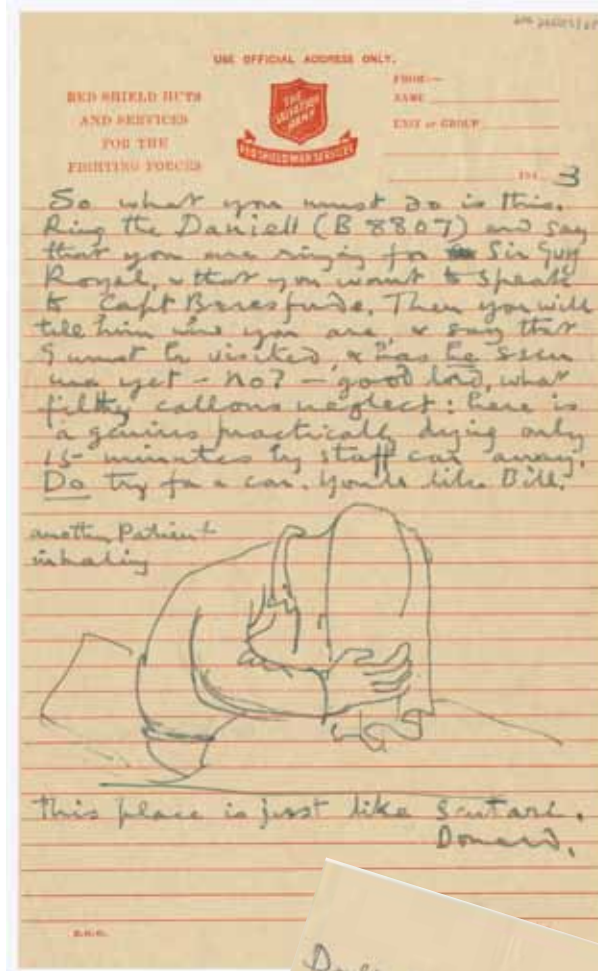
details an unknown historic hotel that was ‘much embellished with gold nuggets in bottles and ancestral photographs tinted by the great Proffessor [sic] Mitzenbaum of Aukland [sic]’, where Friend drank alongside army and navy officers. The letter is the first of several to reveal Friend’s use of the stimulant Benzedrine, intimating he was ‘plonked up...and positively scintillated’.²

Upon his arrival in North Queensland, Friend established himself in Malay Town, a community on the outskirts of Cairns (**plate 4**). This was not his first acquaintance with the region – he had lived in Malay Town in the 1930s when he first moved away from his family property, Glendon, to pursue a career in art. At Malay Town, Friend re-established a friendship with pearling lugger operator Charlie Sailor and his family, who had known Friend since his first residence in the community. Five letters, composed from March to October 1941, evidence this relationship, being sent ‘care of’ Charlie Sailor.³

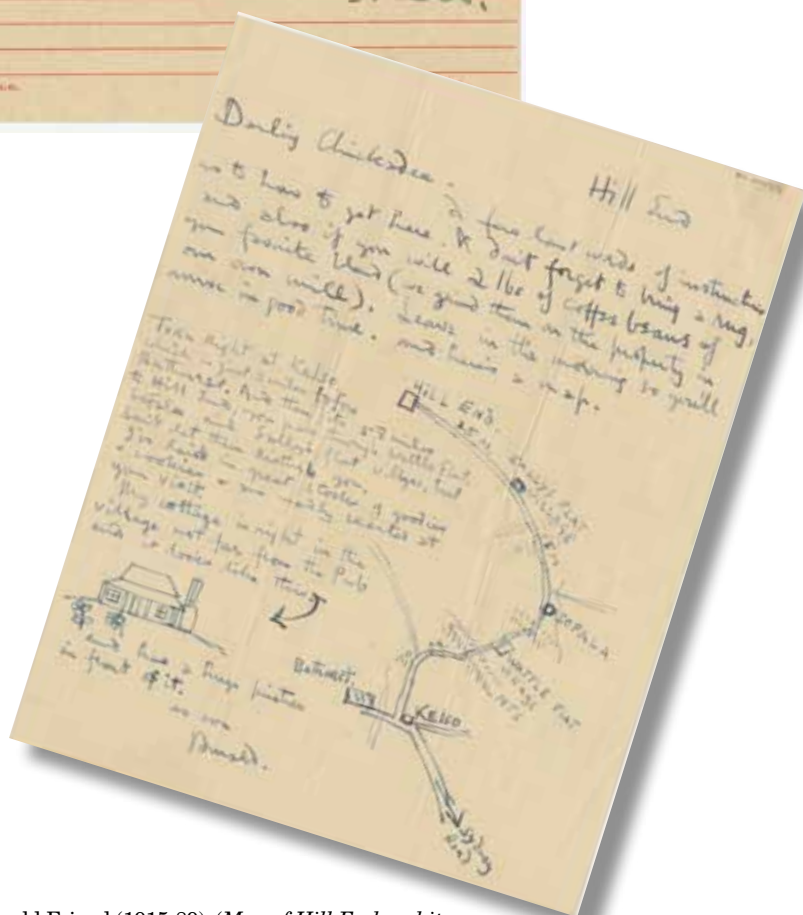
Friend’s North Queensland letters suggest a picturesque lifestyle: talk of ‘fishing for prawns’, ‘learning the ukulele’, and walks through ‘frangipanni-laden boulevards’ [sic] conjure thoughts of a languid existence in the tropics. However, among these idyllic descriptions Friend communicates a more sober reality – describing the trials he experienced while working as a farmhand, his pleasure in the imminent arrival of Filipino immigrants to Malay Town, and his reactions to various publications, criticisms and exhibitions of his artistic work.⁴

In 1942 Friend enlisted in the Australian Army.⁵ Twenty-two letters trace Friend’s footsteps from his early training as a gunner at Hume Camp to his mobilisation at Labuan as war artist. Friend’s criticism of the Army and the war is well documented throughout his diaries, and comments to Bennet such as ‘I am now relieved of the necessity of selling my soul to encourage our drooping democrats in the pursuits of war’ further evidence these sentiments.⁶ The letters also contain valuable discussions concerning the publication of *A Gunner’s Diary*, and his reflections on the ‘secret’ sale of two of his diaries to American architect Edgar J Kaufmann Jr.⁷

Friend’s letters during the war contain an unexpectedly large quantity of foreign language references. As a youth Friend occasionally incorporated foreign words and phrases into his diary entries, however his letters to Bennet include confidently composed paragraphs of French, with occasional flourishes in Spanish. It is evident



2
Donald Friend
(1915-89), (*Another Patient Inhaling*)
1944. 28025/25,
Donald Friend
Correspondence,
Australian Library
of Art, State Library
of Queensland.
Reproduction courtesy
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Queensland. ©
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of Late Donald Friend



3
Donald Friend (1915-89), (*Map of Hill End and its environs and a sketch of Donald Friend's house at Hill End*) 1951. 28025/33, Donald Friend
Correspondence, Australian Library of Art, State Library of Queensland. Reproduction courtesy State Library of Queensland. © Trustees of the Estate of Late Donald Friend



4

Donald Friend (1915-89), *Malaytown (Cairns)* c.1940-41. Pen and ink and ink wash over pencil, 26.9 x 36.4cm. Collection: Queensland Art Gallery, purchased 2001. Queensland Art Gallery Foundation Grant, Acc. 2001.096. © Trustees of the Estate of Late Donald Friend

5

Donald Friend (1915-89), *Flight into Egypt* 1942. Oil on composition board, 37.2 x 46.6cm Collection: Queensland Art Gallery, Gift of Captain Neil McEacharn, Italy 1954, Acc. 1:0614 ©Trustees of the Estate of Late Donald Friend

that Friend's French was limited – grammatical inconsistencies abound in his efforts – however what cannot be ignored is his enthusiasm and appreciation for languages.⁸ One letter introduces two lines of Hindustani and Arabic, evidencing Friend's attempt to learn these scripts.⁹

Other letters within the correspondence outline Friend's experiences in Florence, his trip to Brisbane with Margaret Olley to paint a mural at Lennon's Hotel, and a collection of letters composed during his residence at Hill End.¹⁰ The Hill End correspondence includes Friend's discussion of the festival that commemorated the creation of a group of photographs depicting Hill End in Bernard Otto Holtermann's 3,500-strong collection of photographic negatives. Friend was an enthusiastic participant in the festival, proudly writing that he was making 'bright and vulgar' signage – 'no ART'.¹¹

Friend's letters are a valuable counterpoint to his diary entries, and frequently provide additional details or different perspectives to the reflections in his diaries. A fine comparison is a sex scandal surrounding several residents in Hill End. Friend's diary entries reveal just abstract details on 'the village scandal', not even naming most of the persons involved.¹² On the other hand, Friend's spicy letter to Bennet detailed all the scandalous happenings in succulent prose.¹³ Friend was no doubt aware of his audience when writing to Bennet – the extra anecdotes were no doubt valuable to her profession as a journalist. The same letter identifies a 'scoop' surrounding the conductor Sir Eugene Goossens's scandalous conduct, offering candid information, and closing 'Newspapers are not on to it yet'.¹⁴

A further comparison of the correspondence reveals that just two letters in the collection contain examples of Friend's draughtsmanship, a stark contrast to the profusely illustrated diaries. While convalescing in Brisbane's army hospital at Chermide for a complaint of 'Asthma, bronchitis or what have you',¹⁵ Friend illustrated one letter with two studies of patients inhaling medicinal vapours, soberly commenting, 'this place is just like Scutari (plates 1 - 2)'.¹⁶

In another letter, a primitive map provides visual directions to Friend's residence at Hill End (plate 3). Similar to maps that Friend drew in his diaries while in Nigeria, the map simply outlines the surrounding environs of the township, including towns, roads and geographical features.¹⁷



A charming, childlike sketch of Friend's cottage adorns the page as well.¹⁸

Like Friend's diaries, the correspondence with Bennet offers valuable discussions regarding the provenance of several important works. In his letters, Friend reveals that 'the Hohenzollern baroness' (Mrs Neil McEachern) acquired Friend's *Flight into Egypt* around Christmas 1942.¹⁹ Friend's salutation in this instance, though fanciful, is not far from the truth, as Mrs McEachern was a Prinzessin von Erbach-Schönberg, and was formerly married to Hans Karl Baron von Dornberg. *Flight into Egypt* was later donated to the Queensland Art Gallery by Captain McEachern in 1954 (plate 5).

Another letter dated to February 1954 mentions that Friend was in Sydney to have his Blake Prize entry *Three Shepherds Nativity* framed (plate 6).²⁰ Friend's diaries confirm that after stretching, the artist dramatically altered the painting by repainting large sections of the sky in rusty and charred tones.²¹

Friend wrote the final two letters in this suite of correspondence when he lived on the Brief Estate, outside Bentota, Ceylon. Friend's residence in Ceylon from 1957-1962 coincided with a period of political and social unrest in the country. The two letters present witty dossiers on several prominent figures in Colombo's 'madly

exclusive' high society, as well as reportage on the state-of-affairs in the country, and personal news including a robbery and refurbishments to Friend's property.²² Friend's letters and diaries of this period intimate the extravagances of Ceylonese society, especially highlighting the jewels that were worn by the socialites of Colombo. He employed similar extravagances in his work, liberally accenting some works with gold leaf – a technique he had enjoyed exploring since the mid-1950s.

While in Ceylon, Friend mused, 'An artist should always exaggerate, even when obliged to tell the truth'.²³ While comparing these letters to the artist's diaries, there is little doubt that Friend's glittering discussions are appropriately embellished to the taste of his audience. Despite this, Friend's letters and diaries offer equally candid insights into his life and the times he lived in. These letters are a superb addition to the State Library of Queensland's holdings, where they join an important group of original materials that together will provide new insights into Friend's life for scholars and enthusiasts alike.

Acknowledgment

The author wishes to thank the State Library of Queensland, the Queensland Art Gallery, and the Trustees of the Estate of Late Donald Friend in assisting the development of this article.

6

Donald Friend (1915-89),
Three Shepherds Nativity
1953. Oil on canvas, 106.7
x 193.4cm
Collection: Queensland
Art Gallery, gift of an
anonymous donor 1954,
Acc. 1:0643. ©Trustees of
the Estate of Late
Donald Friend

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Timothy Roberts is a researcher in Australian colonial heritage and decorative arts. As a volunteer with the Australian Library of Art, State Library of Queensland, he was responsible for the transcription and research on this suite of correspondence. Timothy is currently interested in projects with relevance to colonial Queensland.

Notes

- 1 The State Library of Queensland holds a valuable group of correspondence between Donald Friend and art dealer Brian Johnstone, in the Library's Johnstone Gallery Archive RBHARC 7/3/38-39. SLQ also holds Donald Friend's childhood diary 7793, Donald Friend diary, Australian Library of Art, State Library of Queensland, Australia.
- 2 28025/1, Donald Friend Correspondence, Australian Library of Art, State Library of Queensland.
- 3 28025/2-6
- 4 28025/2-6
- 5 Friend, Donald Stuart Leslie, service number NX96987, date of enlistment 29 June 1942.
- 6 28025/21. Friend's comment referred to possible war-related work he may have done had he been approved leave from his regiment. I should have written before – / but I had thought to get down on some special leave to / do some War Propoganda [sic] for the Wicked Capitalists, / however, leave was refused & I am now relieved of / the necessity of selling my soul to encourage our / drooping democrats in the pursuits of war. I had / much rather aid the perfidious [sic] Menzies in his noble / attempts to protect the threatened rights of / oppressed plutocratic minorities from the merciless / persecutors of the Lower Classes.
- 7 28025/14-16, 19-20, 22-24.
- 8 One early letter to Bennet enthusiastically describes Friend's

uniform in French and English, highlighting the artist's grammatical limitations in French. Ces salles [sic] robes, tunis [sic], et / pantalons du couleur des cacouttes [sic] / me degoûtent. But soon I hope to / have some amusing playthings – little / white ropes plaited, brass cannons / in bas-relief, scarlet & purple / tabs, epaulettes [sic] d'or, chevrons / d'argent and a teeny weeny fieldmarshalls [sic] / baton in my back pocket, then cara / muchacha triqueñita, I shall come to / call with a posy of handpicked / country blooms to tell you tous ces / petites histories amusants, et des grosses fables incroyable de ma / vie miliatire. 28025/7.

- 9 28025/9
- 10 28025/32-42
- 11 28025/35
- 12 Paul Hetherington, ed., *The diaries of Donald Friend, vol 3*, National Library of Australia, Canberra 2005, 335, 337-9, 343.
- 13 28025/40
- 14 28025/40. P.S. Goosens [sic] by the way was I'm told a constant / celebration of the Black Masses at Rowie's / Add that up to Thomas Mann's wonderful / book "Dr Faustus" and Goosen's [sic] magnus opus / "Apocalypse" my dear and you know what / some of his naughty imports were. / Newspapers are not on to it yet.
- 15 Hetherington, op cit, vol 2, 2003, 123.
- 16 28025/25
- 17 See Friend's drawings in the 'Nigerian Notebooks' particularly National Library of Australia ms 5959/50/88, 113. Reproduced in Anne Gray, ed., *The diaries of Donald Friend, vol 1*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2001, 73.
- 18 28025/32
- 19 28025/13
- 20 28025/37
- 21 '...I've altered the whole sky, painted it practically black, which peeps up the rest of the picture wonderfully.' Hetherington, op cit, vol 3, 247, 251.
- 22 28025/44-45
- 23 Hetherington, op cit vol 3, 366.

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Neville Henry Cayley

1854-1903

‘the bird artist of Australia’



Mark Cabouret's 30 years' research into the prominent Australian family of bird painters, the Cayleys, has uncovered a wealth of information. Dr Cabouret has found no evidence to support the story that the father, Neville Henry Cayley, was an alcoholic, and aims to restore his reputation as an artist, which he says was damaged by plagiarists who produced inferior works bearing Neville Cayley's 'signature'.

Future articles will deal with his artist son, Neville William Cayley, and his lesser-known artist daughter, Alice R. Cayley, and Jack Castle-Harris.

MARK CABOURET

Two generations delineating the birds of Australia by Neville Cayley senior and junior has been a remarkable dynastic achievement and together they dominated this department of Australian art from 1880 until 1950. Neville Henry Cayley's conspicuous role in 19th-century Australian ornithology, subsequently overlooked as the taste for natural history and sporting subjects waned, has resurged and his work now realises unprecedented prices.

Nothing of substance has been written about Neville Henry Cayley, Neville William Cayley and his sister, Alice. My collection of original artwork and 'Cayleyana' by the three Cayleys is

the most comprehensive ever assembled. Thirty years of research has resulted in three major biographies with over 3,000 references: *Neville Henry Cayley '...A Shepherd I from Arcadie...' or Life on the Clarence River, New South Wales, 12th July 1881–29th December, 1886*; an encyclopedic work entitled *Neville Henry Cayley '...the Bird Artist of Australia...'* and *Neville William Cayley, The Bird Illustrator of Australia, with a chapter devoted to Alice R. Cayley*.

Scant and often misleading information on Cayley senior has been published. William Moore's slight biography in *The Story of Australian Art* in 1934 rearranged, without citation, an article on 'The Cayley Family' from the *Daily Telegraph* on 14 June 1924:

1
Crown Bromide
Enlargement Studios,
Neville Henry Penniston
Edward Stillingfleet Cayley,
photograph, Sydney, 1892,
finished in French crayon by
Amsterdam-born artist, S.P.
Van Kaspelen and signed
lr 'Van Kaspelen '92'. This
image is derived from a
photographic negative of
the original work taken by
Keith A. Hindwood in May
1950. Collection: Australian
Museum Archives
AMS282V12824.



CAYLEY, Neville Henry Penniston (1853-1903), born at Dover, England, son of Captain Nathaniel Cayley; joined the navy, but selling out came to Australia. After Gould, he did more than any other artist to interest Australians in their own birds. Made a good income from his bird pictures which were popular in his day; became known as “the kookaburra painter,” owing to the number of times he painted them. His drawings of nests and eggs illustrate North’s Nests and Eggs of Birds found Breeding in Australia and Tasmania. Awarded a gold medal for his paintings of Australian birds at the Chicago Exhibition in 1892. Represented in the Sydney and Brisbane galleries. Died at Sydney.

Repeatedly, Neville H. Cayley (**plate 1**) has been dismissed as an itinerant artist who travelled the NSW countryside, dashing off variable if not inferior depictions of the Laughing Kookaburra and Australian Magpie in order to pay for a liberal thirst. His son Neville William Cayley’s work has almost universally been more highly regarded.

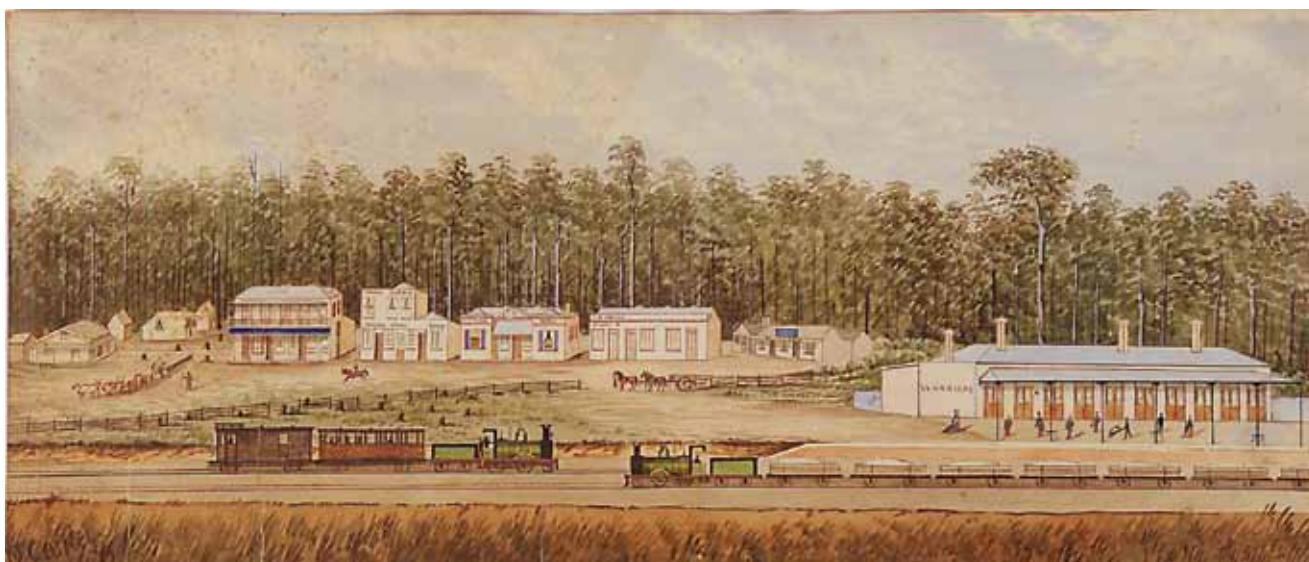
In 1980, *Neville Cayley, his Royal Zoological Society of NSW collection of parrots and cockatoos of Australia* was published. The coffee table book reproduced large and attractive images of one of the two complete sets of watercolour drawings of this ever-popular group of birds commissioned by Sir Edward Hallstrom. Thus Neville William Cayley’s impressive illustrations became accessible.

2

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *We lead, those who can may follow*, c. 1878–79, watercolour, signed ‘N. Cayley’, showing a Cobb & Co coach in heavily forested Gippsland landscape. Collection: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

3

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *The new Railway Station and Township at Warragul, Gippsland, Victoria in 1879*, watercolour, signed ‘N. Cayley 1879’. Author’s collection





4

Neville Henry Cayley
(1854-1903), [*A Pair of
Superb Fairy-wrens in a
Gippsland landscape*],
c. 1879, watercolour,
signed 'N. Cayley'.
Author's collection.

5

Neville Henry Cayley
(1854-1903), [*A Game
Trophy: A Swift Parrot
(Lathamus discolor)*],
1879, watercolour,
signed 'N.S. Cayley 1879'.
Author's collection

J.H. Prince's accompanying biographical essay relied on information from Neville W. Cayley's relict, Phyllis Mary Hopegood. When I interviewed her in 1983, she expressed dismay that she had not been shown, as promised, proofs before publication and was shocked by the distortions.

Neville W. Cayley's father, Neville Henry Pennington Cayley (the First) was born in England in 1853, and died in Sydney in 1903. He became an ornithologist and an artist almost exclusively of birds. We know little about his life as an ornithologist, except that he left one booklet for posterity entitled *Australian Birds*, published in 1903 by an unknown publisher...

Just when Cayley the First and his family came to Australia is not clear, but Neville Cayley the Second was born at Yamba, in New South Wales, in 1887. At that time they appeared to be relatively affluent, but this did not last. The family moved south later, and Mrs Cayley ran a boarding house or guest house in Cronulla...

He was only fifteen years old when his father died, undoubtedly earlier than he should have – he was an enthusiastic worshipper at the shrine of Bacchus and, it is said, the liquor was delivered to their house in a dray; that disposition made young Neville very unhappy because he was inordinately fond of his father.

It seems, too, that whenever Neville the First's thirst bothered him, as the family affluence dwindled, he would dash off a painting, let someone have it for a guinea or so, and so have money for his needs.

There is a story that whenever he stayed in a country pub, he had to end his stay and pay his bill by painting pictures for the landlord.

The Caleys in England

Until now, nothing has been published about Neville H. Cayley's early life in England before his emigration to Australia and his decision to alter the spelling of his surname.

Maria Cayley commenced business as a milliner in Thames Street, Windsor, never

married, moved her business to the more fashionable Castle Street in October 1813, and collaborated with her sister in developing the business. By 1824 'she had set up shop at number 19 High Street with John William Caley, Haberdasher, Silk Mercer and Laceman.'

Nathaniel Henry, the second of twelve children of John William and Mary Anne Caley, was born on 19 January 1824. 'Captain' Nathaniel Cayley never enlisted in the Royal Navy. He was a businessman who had trained as a silk mercer and general draper in the family business which also flourished and enjoyed royal warrants. In 1849, he removed to Norwich where he established a new branch of this family business. On 21 February 1850 he married 19 year old Emily Dunn.

Nathaniel and Emily's son Neville Henry Penniston was born at 15 London Street on 29 May 1854 (not 1853). His father died unexpectedly on 27 January 1867, aged only 43, of 'Albuminuria Uremic convulsions.'¹ It is likely that he died from the same condition which claimed his son, Bright's disease. His estate was valued at nearly £20,000.

Neville Caley grew up in privileged circumstances, educated at the Palace School at Enfield, a private boarding school. In 1871, the 16 year old became assistant draper to John Smith in nearby Ipswich. As the eldest son, he would, if he had shown an aptitude and inclination, have continued his father's business in Norwich. On 29 July 1876, his mother Emily, then aged 46, remarried to John Twinch, a 36 year old wine merchant of the London suburb of St Martin in the Fields.

Victoria 1877–1880

Neville Caley, aged 23, sailed in steerage on the clipper *Sir Walter Raleigh* to Melbourne, arriving in Melbourne on 20 September 1877 with his younger brother William Herbert. They were described in the passenger list as having 'no occupation'.

The first known reference to Neville Henry, having changed his surname to Cayley and being recognised as an artist, appeared in an advertisement in *The Argus* in Melbourne on 5 April, 1879.

CAYLEY, MR. NEVILLE, artist, - please communicate with L. Hyman, Swanston-street, artists' colourman. Important.



Within twelve months, the brothers set out for Gippsland. They chose the new hamlet of Brandy Creek or Buln Buln, the aboriginal name for the Superb Lyrebird, on the old coaching route between Melbourne, Walhalla and Sale.

Six months after their arrival in Melbourne the railway line was brought through Warragul and gave direct access to Gippsland. Neville's paintings of a Cobb & Co. coach (**plate 2**) travelling along a corduroy track through typical Gippsland rainforest and his paintings of the new Warragul Railway Station in 1879 indicate that he was a keen observer and, no doubt, a traveller using both forms of transport (**plate 3**).

6

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), [*Beau*, a fox terrier belonging to G.D. Enfield, Redfern NSW], 1881, watercolour, signed 'N. Cayley 1881'. Author's collection

7

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *Eight year old Bernard Kirton of Bulli, Illawarra, with his pony Little Dick*, watercolour, signed 'Neville:Cayley 1896'. Author's collection.



8

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *Colonial Robin – Wild Begonia Vine*, watercolour, signed 'N Cayley 1882'.

A male Scarlet Robin attending to nestlings.

Author's collection

9

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *Black Satin or Bower Bird (Native Currajong Blk Fellow's name)*, watercolour signed 'N. Cayley 1882'. A male Satin Bowerbird.

Author's collection

BACKGROUND

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), 'Shifting camp on the Clarence River N.S.W From Maclean to Wombah, 1882 by Neville Cayley.' Views in Queensland, N.S.W and Tasmania, 1866-1902 / J.O.B. [James Ogle Burgess], Wash drawing. Collection: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. Photograph by the Author

Gippsland was an area of largely unsettled mountain ranges, seemingly impenetrable temperate rainforest and vast swamps or morasses. Here were the largest trees in the world, the Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus amygdalina regnans*). When the railways coming from the east and west united at Warragul on 7 March 1878, the fate of the wilderness was settled.

The *Land Act* governed how selectors could take up Crown land. A selector of up to 320 acres had to meet the stringent criteria of clearing, improving and stocking the land. Many selectors took out insurance to protect their assets. The local insurance agent was Charles Henry Round. If Neville Cayley had had any training as a draughtsman, he would have been an invaluable assistant to Charles Round in the depiction of the selections to be insured. He signed one of his watercolour drawings of the township of 'Warrigal'² as 'Neville Cayley D.A. (Pinxit)' which probably referred to his functioning as a District Agent in the insurance operations of Charles Round.

Paintings of birds executed in Victoria are rare, the earliest dated ones being from 1879. He appears to have preferred the smaller passerines or perching birds. He attempted to portray as

much of the life history of his subject as possible and they were typically engaged in foraging for insects among native vegetation or nesting.

His close observation of his subjects in the field strongly suggest either training in or exposure to traditional natural history art in Britain. The 'finish' of his early paintings is sound, his brushwork confident, and together they suggest that he had quickly achieved a high level of artistic skill.

Several of his works were derived from published illustrations which he adapted to the Australian scene. In two early but undated works³, probably executed in 1878 and intended as a pair or part of a series, he depicted a pair of Golden Whistlers at nest and an Azure Kingfisher with two young at the entrance to their nesting tunnel. The latter was inspired by a contemporary greeting card. Elsewhere, he adapted published engravings of English waterfowl.³

Perhaps the finest of several early works of the Blue Wren, now the Superb Fairy-wren, was that introducing a pair as they foraged in undergrowth with a detailed landscape background, inspired by the progressive clearing of forest in Gippsland (**plate 4**). The scrub has been forced back by the advance of agriculture and only a ghostly legacy of ring-





barked eucalypts is left. This painting may have been shown in 1881 at the Second Annual Exhibition of the Art Society of NSW as no. 196: 'a pair of Blue Wrens, is an exquisitely finished bit, which proves that this artist's forte lies in the delineation of birds'.

A remarkable painting dated 1879 demonstrated a level of skill which is astonishing given the naïvety of these former studies and the early stage in his artistic career, if indeed he 'commenced his studies in Gippsland' as reported in May 1894. His painting of a Game Trophy of a Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) dated 1879 (**plate 5**) is his only known work depicting this specie and in this instance a recently deceased specimen, suspended by a cord from a nail. It is also the only painting in which he signed his name with a second initial 'S' – presumably to denote his adopted middle name of Stillingfleet.

Sydney 1880–1881

After several court cases demonstrating his inability to pay for goods and lodgings, he left Gippsland under financially distressing circumstances and levanted; ultimately finding his way to Sydney in late 1880 where, *The Bulletin* reported on 8 January, 1881

Mr. Neville Cayley, an artist, who has settled in Sydney, whose forté is animal subjects, has exhibited some capital sketches in water colors. He gives a faithful picture of many well-known and richly-plumaged birds of Australia.

In Sydney, he sought private commissions. His portrait of Beau, the Redfern butcher, G.D. Enfield's fox terrier, was dated 1881 and almost certainly represented a commission (**plate 6**).⁴ Beau stands in front of a stable or outhouse; a yard broom, tethering ring for horse or perhaps a dairy cow, the stone-flagged yard and paling fence add interest to the painting.

Clarence River NSW 1881–1884

He went north to the Clarence River district, arriving in July 1881. While not yet afflicted with symptoms of chronic renal insufficiency, he may have been attracted by the favourable climate in the so-called 'Sanitorium of the North'.

I suggest that his motivation was quite specific and related to his evolution as a professional artist. In Warragul, he may have become acquainted with Alfred J. North, an ornithologist who was still resident in Melbourne and making field excursions into

10
Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), [A female White Goshawk with its prey, a Musk Lorieet in the vicinity of Maclean, the Clarence River], watercolour, signed 'N. Cayley 1883'.
Author's collection

11
Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), A Laughing Kookaburra with captured Bandy Bandy snake, watercolour, signed 'N. Cayley 1884'.
Author's collection



12

Neville Henry Cayley
(1854-1903), No. 132
A Bathing Party,
watercolour, signed
'N. Cayley 1885'.
Striated Pardalotes
drinking at a pool.
Author's collection

the wilds of Gippsland. North was already corresponding with Edward Pierson Ramsay, curator at the Australian Museum in Sydney 1874-1894. Impressed by the artist's work, North may have recommended Cayley to him.

Ramsay was an ornithologist who would have been receptive to the arrival of a talented natural history artist. He had over many years corresponded with John Gould in relation to his *The Birds of Australia*, and understood the need for a competent ornithological draughtsman. From the 1860s, Ramsay had corresponded productively with the naturalist, James Fowler Wilcox who had established a fine residence, Dallinga, in South Grafton.

Grafton was an ideal destination for the artist. The primordial, sub-tropical rainforests included 'The Big Scrub' in the vicinity of the Clarence and Richmond Rivers. When Cayley made his pilgrimage to Grafton, he would have come with introductions to naturalists. Unfortunately, Cayley arrived in Grafton on 12 July, 1881, the day after Wilcox died. His daughter, Edith Bloore, met Cayley in 1898 and reported that

He went on to say that it was one of the greatest regrets of his life that he had not had the pleasure of meeting my Father, as he had come to Australia with a letter of introduction to him, as being one of the foremost authorities on the bird life of Australia. Unfortunately he arrived in Grafton the day my Father was buried.

His arrival in Grafton was noted on 16 July 1881:

ANIMAL PORTRAITURE AND BIRD DRAWING.

Mr Neville Cayley, an artist who is at present on a visit to the district, executing special commissions for the Museum and several illustrated papers, has shown to us specimens of his work in water colours. One of these drawings in colours – a pair of laughing jackasses perched on a dry branch – is lifelike and executed in a manner which shows that Mr Cayley makes a study of his subject. One of the pair is pouring forth his cachinatory feelings, while the other, equally

true to nature, has his eye just rivetted on some object ready for a dart. The plumage is worked out with perfect minuteness. Another painting, also in water colours depicts a blood horse taken from life, and shows that the artist is equally at home in his sketches of quadrupeds. We learn that Mr Cayley will be here about a month, and would execute a few private commissions, either as originals or copies, if favoured with orders. His address is care Mr F.W. Chapman.

As well as gaining for him work through the museum, Ramsay made private commissions in the form of a series which they referred to in their correspondence as 'Unique Birds',⁵ including paintings of the Prince Rudolph's Blue Bird of Paradise. Within the scientific fraternity, Neville Henry Cayley was already identified as potentially a leading scientific illustrator.

Upon his arrival in Grafton, the young artist boarded in the household of Frederick William Chapman, a local auctioneer. Cayley was briefly employed at the Grafton Saw Mill, and as an artist with a surveying team on the Clarence River.

Cayley was soon engaged with painting commissions including Mr T.A. Rudd's buggy mare and a portrait of the racehorse Yately

for Mr W.J. Hawthorne. He continued to paint mammals throughout his career (**plate 7**). No doubt the growing reputation that the district and especially Yamba enjoyed as the 'Sanatorium of the North' contributed to his decision to stay there, an intention which was made known when he returned from Sydney after his marriage in June 1885.

In 1882, he executed one of the few known self-portraits in which he was in the company of the Assistant Surveyor, Gualter Soares, and the rest of the surveying crew in an heavily provisioned whaleboat, the identities of which he included along with the title 'Shifting Camp on the Clarence River, N.S.W. 1882 from Maclean to Wombah.' on the reverse of this wash drawing in grisaille. This drawing represents No. 5 in a collection of 76 similar drawings contained as one collection in the Mitchell Library and entitled *Views in Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania 1866-1902* by J.O.B. 'J.O.B.' was James Ogle Burgess, Licensed Surveyor.

Cayley's work as an artist attached to a surveyor's camp must have provided opportunities for collecting and painting ornithological subjects as well as topographical work. Painted in 1882 were two fine and unusually large watercolour drawings of birds

BACKGROUND

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *A nesting pair of Golden Whistlers*, Gippsland, Victoria. watercolour, undated. [c 1878-79] Author's collection



13

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *A Bone of Contention*, watercolour signed 'Neville:Cayley 1892'. Two Australian Magpies contesting a bone. Author's collection

14

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *A Laughing Kookaburra bringing food to its nestlings in a tree hollow*, watercolour, signed 'N. Cayley 1884', formerly belonging to Miss Florence M. Irby of Narrango, via Casino NSW. Author's collection



15

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *Yamba*, watercolour, signed 'Neville Cayley 1886'. Collection: Maclean District Historical Society Inc.



16

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *A Nocturne*, c 1886, watercolour, unsigned. A view from below Kookaburra Cottage, Yamba, over the Pacific Ocean. Author's collection

which he had encountered, a male Scarlet Robin bringing a caterpillar to its nestlings (**plate 8**) and a male Satin Bowerbird (**plate 9**).

In 1883, emboldened by his success with smaller birds, he completed a fine depiction of an Australian Magpie carolling at dawn³ and a White Goshawk with its prey, a Musk Lorikeet, with the Clarence River as background (**plate 10**). In November that year, it was claimed that 'Mr. Cayley will someday be known as the bird artist of Australia'.⁶

In 1884, he painted some outstanding studies of the Laughing Kookaburra and one, an exceptionally fine study of a bird with captured Bandy-Bandy snake (*Vermicella annulata*), was acquired or commissioned by John Mitchell Purves MLA (**plate 11**). Density of plumage

was achieved by the use of gouache as well as watercolour and the judicious application of gum arabic.

During these years he stayed intermittently with Walter Black and his family at the Woolli Hotel in Yamba. He was there to record the shipwreck of the SS *New England* on the sandbar at the mouth of the Clarence River, shown on the cover of *The Illustrated Sydney News* on 20 January 1883.

Sydney 1884-1885

On the evening of 22 August 1884 he boarded the steamer *City of Grafton* bound for Sydney. He established a studio at the fashionable Wentworth Court building and it was here that he completed on 10 October, 1884 his portrait



of Francis William Hill's venerable Sulphur-crested Cockatoo referred to coincidentally as 'Wentworth's Cockatoo' and who, together, resided at 'Wentworth's cottage' at 102 Phillip Street, Sydney. It was possibly in connection with framing this painting that he met Diedrich Wilhelm Edward Aldenhoven at his Art Gallery at nearby 74 Hunter Street and began a lifelong relationship based on a sound friendship and mutually beneficial commercial arrangement.

At 75 Hunter Street was the fine residence of the surgeon James Charles Cox, a scion in the study of natural history and one, who like Sir Richard Hill at nearby 3 Bent Street would become patrons of the artist and promoters of his work in scientific and social circles. Cox was an accomplished naturalist and active member of the Entomological and Linnean Societies of NSW. He was also a Crown Trustee and had significant influence in appointments of staff and other matters at the Australian Museum and was closely associated with Dr Edward Ramsay and his assistant, Alfred North.

Cayley was re-elected to the Art Society of NSW on 9 October 1884 and on the following day completed his commission for Francis Hill. The Sulphur-crested Cockatoo was probably the oldest captive specimen in Australia and had belonged to D'Arcy Wentworth. Cayley showed this and five other paintings at the 1885 Art Society of NSW annual exhibition.

One of these was No. 132, *A Bathing Party* which was almost certainly that figuring a small group of Striated Pardalotes drinking at a pool

17

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *No 216 A quiet corner; Clarence River*, c 1884-5, watercolour signed 'N. Cayley'. Author's collection

18

Photographer unknown, [*Emma Hannah Annette Pegus – Post and Telegraph Mistress at Yamba (1874-1894)*], photograph on glass coloured in oils by Neville Henry Cayley and signed with a silhouette self-portrait at top left. Photograph possibly by J.W. Lindt or his successor, Josiah Stevenson in Grafton c 1875. Author's collection



(plate 12). No. 192 *Dignity and Impudence* priced at 10 guineas, may have been the prototype for one of his most familiar and characteristic images which portrayed the mutual contemplation between a Laughing Kookaburra and a diminutive Superb Fairy-wren. No. 194 *A Bone of Contention*, priced at 18 guineas, was probably the prototype for another familiar and highly characteristic study, an adult and juvenile Australian Magpie competing over a small bone (plate 13).

No. 270 *Matrimony* was unpriced and was painted during his own courtship of Lois Emmeline Gregory, a daughter of William Gregory and Adelaide Rose Jackson, who was born at Grafton on 31 August 1863.⁷ They married at St John's Church in Darlinghurst on 4 June 1885.

Many of his subjects suited an oval format, such as one of a kookaburra feeding its young (plate 14).

Grafton NSW 1885–1887

Returning to Grafton on 17 August, 1885, the couple leased a new cottage on the brow of the hill to the south of the lighthouse and overlooking the Pacific. He named this place Kookaburra Cottage. They remained there for 18 months during which time he created some of his most original designs and executed some of his finest work.

He kept a menagerie which afforded him the opportunity of developing an intimate knowledge of his more popular subjects. He received ongoing commissions from Walter Black and his paintings of regional landscapes decorated the reception rooms in the Woolli Hotel. On 24 November 1885, he advertised for pupils.

He recorded local activities, from possum shooting by moonlight to his two versions of Yamba township; possibly a composite narrative intended to record both the Yamba Regatta on Easter Monday, 26 April 1886 and the maiden voyage of the *Iolanthe* from Grafton to Yamba on 22 April (plate 15). This painting shows Kookaburra Cottage top right, above the two-story Muirhead's Yamba Hotel.

Two 1886 nocturnes,³ both obtained from descendants of Walter Black, depict the same view from the quarry tramline towards the hotel, the lighthouse on Pilot Hill and the entrance to the Clarence River. A third nocturne depicts the view that he enjoyed from immediately beneath his cottage and looking out over Convent Beach and Lone Rock to the ocean, with a schooner approaching the bar and a steamer of the North Coast Steamship Navigation Company (plate 16).

Shooting expeditions sometimes lasted several days. Kangaroos, ducks and other waterfowl, pigeons and no doubt quail were sought in the Wooloweyah Estuary as well as around Oyster Lake and at Angourie Point. Waterfowl were present in prodigious numbers, as implied in his small landscape study taken from near the river mouth with the view to Mt Double Duke in the distance with the twin peaks of Mt Clarence and Mt Richmond (plate 17). Even today, 255 species of birds may be found in this district. This small painting was undated but almost certainly was painted in 1884–1885 and probably exhibited at The Art Society of NSW Exhibition as No. 216, *A quiet corner, Clarence River*. His painting of game birds completed in 1885–86 reveals the high level of proficiency which he had achieved and provide us with an unparalleled window into a vanished Arcadia.³

Many years later, on 18 January, 1922, his son recalled that 'My old Dad [was] a great quail and snipe shot.'⁸

Arthur Hood Pegus worked as a customs officer, while his wife Emma was post and telegraph mistress from 1874 until her death in 1894. A fine photographic portrait of Emma Pegus was coloured in oils to a very high degree of proficiency by Neville Cayley and signed, not with a signature, but rather by a whimsical silhouette, self-portrait in the top left hand corner (plate 18). In May 1886, Lord Carrington, the Governor of NSW, visited Grafton and Cayley was responsible for the illumination of the Magistrates' Address which was presented to him.

In December 1886, Cayley returned to Sydney with Lois and their son Neville William. Their departure coincided with the sale of 25 paintings through an art union at the School of Arts in Grafton. Due to extensive flooding of the town, this lottery was not drawn until 23 March 1887. Items 21–25 revealed another skill which he developed to a high level of proficiency: Poonah or Theorum painting on fabric, in this case satin and with the use of some stencils as well as original artwork. Only one example, figuring a border of seashells, anemonies and seaweed around a central figure of King Neptune on his chariot, has been located.

Bowral NSW 1887–1890

Residing briefly in Paddington, they proceeded to the Southern Highlands, the 'Sanitorium of the South'. Thus, rather than random wandering, he chose places with a salubrious environment, a presence of patrons, easy access to the metropolis of Sydney and the interface between the natural



19

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), [A Game Pantry. *Australian Gamebirds at Bowral, New South Wales No. IV.*], 1889, signed 'Neville:Cayley-89'. A pair to plate 21. Author's collection

20

Label from 'Cayley's masterpiece', *No 29 Still Life*, from an album of photographs from the Centennial International Exhibition Melbourne. Collection: National Library of Australia

21

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), [A covey of game birds], 1891, watercolour signed 'Neville:Cayley: 1891 - Sdy' [Sydney]. A pair to plate 19. Author's collection





22 :
Neville Henry Cayley
(1854-1903), *Painted
Snipe*, watercolour, signed
'Neville:Cayley: -1895'
and placed en reverse at
'Woonona N.S.W.'
Author's collection

world and settlement. They leased a property named Buena Vista on the slopes of Mount Gibraltar overlooking the township of Bowral. Their daughter Alice Rochfort was born there on 14 September 1889.

In his second stylistic period, commencing in 1887, he concentrated on game subjects and produced some of his largest and most powerful compositions, namely his Game Pantries. His interest in depicting *nature morte* or birds *qui vive* also found expression in his Game Trophies depicting individual birds or pairs or braces of a male and female of one specie or of unrelated species which were in the manner of the French artist Edouard Traviès (1807-1867).

While working on this unprecedented scale, he was preparing for a triumphant return to Victoria when, through William Aldenhoven, he exhibited 78 paintings in the New South Wales Court at the Centennial International Exhibition which opened in Melbourne on 1 August 1888. The list of paintings reveals the large variety of species of birds figured and the herculean effort that must have gone into creating this collection of works.

William Aldenhoven, his sole agent, and purportedly the world copyright owner for all of his original designs, regarded No. 1 'Still-life' (*Dead Birds*) as 'Cayley's masterpiece.' This large painting, 128.2 x 73.8 cm was acquired by the National Gallery of Australia in 1973 (accession no. NGA73.37). The appearance at the 1888 Exhibition of a series of at least three portfolios

measuring 31.7 x 41.7 cm including 40 or more mounted albumen photographs entitled *Australian Birds* made clear the intention of Aldenhoven to publish Cayley's original designs as a book (plate 20).⁹

Birds were not, however, the only subjects which Neville Henry Cayley intended for a new publication. In 1887-88, he had turned his attention to the delineation of Australian Lepidoptera or butterflies and moths. The collection of 142 *Drawings of Australian Lepidoptera* includes 28 watercolour drawings produced by Neville Henry Cayley and dated 1887 or 1888.¹⁰

My research has revealed that these paintings were commissioned by Dr James C. Cox and it is almost certain that he exhibited them at the Centennial International Exhibition where under the 'Art Loan Collection' there appeared

1422. COX, JAMES C., Hunter-street, Sydney.
Collection of Butterflies, in Water-colours.

Sydney 1890-1892

Blasting in the trachyte quarry on Mount Gibraltar possibly contributed to his decision to return to Sydney. Before doing so, he sold a total of 38 paintings, 18 through the auction house of J.G. Morris on 8 February 1890.

A letter from Dr James C. Cox dated 4 July, 1890 identified him as resident in the Sydney suburb of Petersham. He painted a delightful study of a family of Azure Kingfishers which was inscribed in his own manuscript en reverse as being placed at Sydney, dated 1892 and signed uniquely as 'N.H. Cayley'.³

Ballina NSW 1892

In early 1892, he took his family north again to Ballina at the mouth of the Richmond River, perhaps to escape the influenza epidemic raging through Sydney. At Ballina, the family stayed at Mrs Jackson's Royal Hotel and on 22 March, he was welcomed as 'Australia's bird painter.' It was noted that

Mr. Cayley finds his way to Ballina in some degree on account of the cool coast climate, but more particularly on account of the proximity of the Big Scrub, which contains a greater variety of richly plumaged birds than any other part of New South Wales.

At Ballina, he painted a unique subject: an Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*)

'Hard-Hit'. This painting was placed at Ballina, dated 1892 and depicted a non-breeding migrant, far from its nesting place in Eastern Siberia.³ He was fortunate in having as an assistant, a local indigenous man; his son recalled in 1945:

When I was a boy, much of my bird lore was acquired in company with my father and his boon companion in bush rambles, Bullwaddy of the Eagle-eye, a member of a pure-blooded tribe on the north coast of New South Wales. Bullwaddy certainly knew his birds and their habits, and saved us many unsuccessful walkabouts when searching for any particular kind of bird or its nest. Apparently he did not know many of the Bushman's local bird names which, unfortunately, differed greatly in each country district, nor did he volunteer his tribal name.

At Ballina, he described on 5 April 1892 his affinity with the Laughing Kookaburra:

Mr. Neville Cayley, the bird-artist, has great regard for the 'Laughing Jackass'. He says, there is no bird he paints which is so much in demand as 'Kookaburra'. He never shot but one. He has produced over fifteen hundred pictures of it, and sold them for several thousands of pounds.

Casino NSW 1892–1893

Cayley and his family left Ballina at the end of April 1892 and probably proceeded by steamer along the Richmond River to Coraki and thence along the South Arm to Casino where they remained until mid 1893. They stayed with one of Lois' sisters, Ada, and her husband Frederick Crouch, proprietor of the Trade Palace, a lynchpin of the community, being alderman, mayor, magistrate and in 1887, MLA for the Richmond River District.

In Casino, Cayley was preparing paintings for the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. On 2 September 1892 it was reported in Casino that one of Cayley's paintings which depicted a pair of Buff-banded Rails which, only one week earlier was described as being in preparation, had been despatched to Chicago.

He was possibly occupied through September on his next major work which was described in the same newspaper on Friday 7 October:



23

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903), *Golden Duckwing Game Fowl*, 1896, watercolour signed 'Neville:Cayley 1896 Copyright'. Author's collection

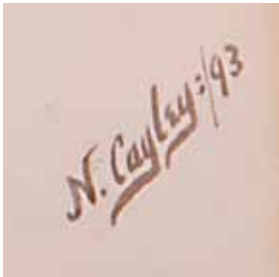
Mr. Cayley has painted yet another remarkable picture in watercolours, viz., a covey of game birds. It can only be described as magnificent, like his former drawings, though of those we have had the pleasure of witnessing his latest is the finest. Every conceivable game bird found in the Australian bush is there to be seen, drawn with an attention to life, colour, and form, which may only be imparted by so remarkable an artist as Mr. Cayley. The picture was witnessed prior to its departure for Sydney by many admirers who showed the greatest amazement.

This painting was probably a facsimile of a prototype, two of which were produced in 1891, intended to accompany his two Game Pantries dated 1889. Two of these remarkable pairs of paintings are known (**plates 19 & 21**). The pair of 'Landrail' and other works intended for the Chicago International Exposition were probably not exhibited. Other Cayley paintings were exhibited under the name of their owner, Mr A. E. Watson of the Paragon Hotel, Circular Quay, and he

received an award for a loan collection of oil paintings by Mr. J.H. Carse (items 64-109) and a series of water-colour drawings of Australian birds by Mr. Neville Cayley.

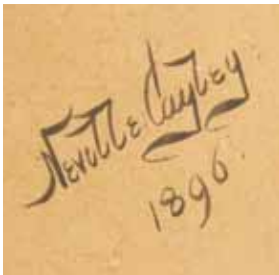
24

Neville Henry Cayley
(1854-1903), *Jack's
Courtship*, 1893,
watercolour, signed
'N. Cayley/93'.
Author's collection



25

Frederick Thomas
(Tom) Flower (attrib.),
Jack's Courtship, 1893,
watercolour, bearing the
signature 'Neville:Cayley:
1896'. Author's collection



In Casino, he also attended to private commissions for Samuel Hordern. Predictably, before leaving he sold 25 paintings by public auction on 18 March 1893.

Sydney 1893-1894

They returned to Sydney in anticipation of the death of Lois' father, William Gregory, on 16 April 1893 and the birth of their third child, Dorothy Lois, at the residence of her grandmother at Denham Street, Glebe on 5 July 1893. Neville Henry Cayley was then 39 years old.

Cayley had reached the pinnacle of his career as a popular and commercially successful natural history artist. His designs gained much wider appreciation at home in Australia when William Dymock reproduced some of them as Christmas cards in 1893. The economic depression that was gripping Australia meant that art was a luxury which many could no longer afford.

He was preparing for publication, with William Aldenhoven, their book *Australian Birds* which would bring him fame as an ornithological illustrator as well as bird artist. When the 130 original watercolour drawings were exhibited in Melbourne at the Federal Coffee Palace in May 1894 and in Sydney at Aldenhoven's Art Gallery in December, he was hailed as

The greatest bird painter in the world... All the latest and most effective pictures by this clever hand photographer are to be found in the establishment [Aldenhoven's gallery] and some of the latest productions of his brush

clearly indicate the work of a well-controlled genius... The artist has displayed to the fullest extent his regard for detail, his brilliant colouring, and unsurpassed faithfulness.

Australian Birds was never published. But in 1941 Lt Col. Richard Owen Wynne presented 100 hand-coloured photographs reproducing Neville Henry Cayley's paintings, and forming the only near complete copy of *Australian Birds*, to the National Library of Australia, Canberra.

Illawarra NSW 1894- 1896

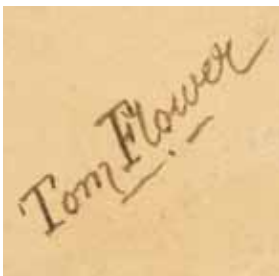
The Depression and the failure to publish *Australian Birds* probably determined Cayley to leave Sydney for a healthier climate. In December 1894 they were living at Woonona, a seaside coal-mining pit hamlet 70 km south of Sydney.

At Woonona, he leased a small farm which he named Yamba Farm and remained there until at least October 1896 when he indicated his intention to visit Melbourne. His time in the Illawarra proved to be a mixed success. It coincided with what may be termed his third stylistic period, characterised by a sudden and marked deterioration in the quality of his work which, with few exceptions, seldom recovered. His earlier challenging subject matter became simpler, seldom reaching the same technical and scientific excellence.

While he continued to paint and teach as he had done in Grafton and at Bowral, he also devoted his energies to developing a new business, a poultry farm, which must not have been the

26

Frederick Thomas (Tom)
Flower (1857-1936), *Jack's
Courtship*, watercolour,
signed 'Tom Flower.'
Author's collection.





success he had hoped for. His fine study of two Australian Painted Snipe (*Rostratula australis*) was dated 1895 and placed on reverse at Woonona (**plate 22**). Always mindful of the scientific importance of some of his discoveries in the field, he forwarded to the Australian Museum on 7 June 1895 a specimen of the Sooty Owl (*Tyto tenebriosa*) which had been taken in this locality.

On 1 October 1895, Alfred North wrote to Professor Baldwin Spencer of his intention to visit Yamba Farm, where he and Cayley would develop the original paintings which would illustrate the section on birds in the *Report on the work of the Horn Scientific Expedition to Central Australia*. North commented that 'so far as the drawing is concerned no-one can touch Cayley.'

Three examples of his watercolour drawings of prize Fancy Poultry, all executed in 1896, were possibly intended as part of a larger series to be published as a book (**plate 23**). For many years, he had kept and painted poultry and worked with judges and fanciers in the development of the 'type' for the local Australian Game Fowl which was published in *The Sydney Mail* on 14 September 1889 as well as producing an elaborate pictorial record of the 'Prize-Takers at the New South Wales Poultry, Canary, and Dog Society's Exhibition', published in the same newspaper on 3 August 1889.

In September, 1896, he decided to leave the Illawarra:

A splendid opportunity of securing artistic gems presents itself in connection with the sale of

Mr. Neville Cayley's property at Yamba Farm, Woonona, on Saturday next. Mr. Cayley, who has no equal in the colony as a bird-painter, intends disposing of all his pictures, which include many of considerable value. Mr. Cayley is leaving for Melbourne shortly.

... Lovers of art should not fail to attend the sale of Mr. Neville Cayley's pictures at Yamba Farm, Woonona, to-day. As a bird painter Mr. Cayley stands unrivalled in Australia, and the pictures to be offered for sale form a collection such as we seldom have the chance of seeing in this district. The household furniture, poultry, &c., will also be offered.

His 20 paintings were sold for only £2/2/- to £3 and it was observed that 'As Mr. Cayley is unrivalled in Australia as a bird painter, these gentlemen certainly secured real bargains.'

The years 1894–97 probably proved difficult for Cayley and witnessed a more or less relentless deterioration in the quality of his work. His absence from Sydney gave plagiarists an opportunity to reproduce his popular images which were sold in large volume and signed with Neville Cayley's name. While hypothetically some commercial arrangement may have benefited Neville Henry Cayley as well as his principal plagiarist Tom Flower, the inferiority of the copies and damage that they would do to his professional reputation made this unlikely if not impossible.

Neville Cayley and this plagiarist probably met in Maclean on the Clarence River c. 1882–83 and possibly painted together. The earliest copy known is dated 1887 and together these findings suggest a longstanding 'association' between the two artists (**plates 24–26**).

The proliferation of plagiarised copies in the mid to late 1890s led to Cayley and Aldenhoven protesting in the introductory pages of their intended publication *Australian Birds*. Aldenhoven had himself, and together with the artist, published notices in Sydney newspapers which prohibited the reproduction of any of his original designs, Aldenhoven claiming that he owned the copyright.

Waverley NSW 1896–1903

Before 1897, Neville Cayley returned to Sydney, living at 46 Wiley Street, Waverley in a house which he named Woonona. He was very productive in 1897–98 and he was working in a studio that he had established at 89½ King Street, Sydney early in 1897.

Neville Henry Cayley (1854-1903),
The Close Season,
 photograph of the
 original watercolour
 published in *The
 Sydney Mail*,
 24 December,
 1898. Reproduced
 from a copy in
 Neville H. Cayley's
 scrap album.
 Author's collection



While most of his late work represented the simplification of earlier designs, a minority represented new designs which could be innovative and some were executed on an heroic scale, not yet attempted. His painting of a Brown Falcon (*Falco berigora*) 'cackling' out over a swamp while perched upon its kill, a Grey Teal (*Anas gracilis*) was an innovative design which demonstrated a willingness to portray dynamic and powerful interactions.³

The *Sydney Mail* on 19 November 1898 reported

Mr. Cayley lately executed to Mr. Samuel Hordern's order a large picture of an Australian swamp, depicting nearly all of the aquatic birds, some hundreds being represented.

The *Sydney Mail* published a photograph of this remarkable painting on 24 December 1898. The original painting, *The Close Season* dated 1898, assembled subject matter from many earlier works (plate 27). The number of individual birds approaches 140 and the overall effect is one of natural abundance, with great rafts of water fowl having collected at fertile swamps or marshes

Cayley's return to Sydney in 1897 after such a nomadic life was probably prompted by many considerations. Deteriorating health may have created the need to be closer to medical help. He continued, however, to enjoy a close working association with the Australian Museum and he was soon illustrating Alfred J. North's *Special*

catalogue, no. I. Nests and eggs of birds found breeding in Australia and Tasmania... (1901-14).

His ability to work was compromised by ill health and only 11-13 coloured sets were completed when Neville Henry Penniston Edward Stillingfleet Cayley died, at 6 am on Thursday, 7 May 1903, three weeks short of his 50th birthday, in Sydney Hospital. His body was taken to his residence, Woonona, and interred in an unmarked grave in the Church of England section of Waverley Cemetery.

He did not die in consequence of alcoholism but from Bright's disease or chronic glomerulonephritis, an acute and fatal exacerbation of long-standing renal disease. His death was noticed widely in the press and in an unpublished panegyric by his friend and fellow Waverley resident, Nicholas Head.³

Neville Henry Cayley's major contribution to Australians appreciating their own native birds was not derived from the 130 or so hand-coloured, photographic images which were to be published as *Australian Birds*, but rather by his original works of art, almost exclusively watercolours, with a small number of oil paintings and together almost certainly exceeding 4,000 works. In a 25 year period, he became the pre-eminent resident ornithological draughtsman in Australia. He accomplished more than any other single artist and, arguably, more than John Gould himself, to familiarise and enhance an appreciation of our own avifauna.

Dame Mary Gilmore expressed a fine tribute to the Cayleys in an unpublished poem and a

letter which she wrote to Neville William Cayley on 29 and 30 January, 1937 respectively.¹¹

For Neville Cayley
always I hear them,
The little birds - ,
The Neville Cayley birds - ,
His art their fowler + their friend!
Though the Spring go and Winter come,
Though death blot out the frail
and [b]light some things that are so gay,
Yet on his faithful canvas they are still alive,
and in our ears we hear them sing.
They loved the birds - the Cayley men,
Father to son, son again;
and in the bird they loved the land
and served Australia in their love.
The land abides through men like these.
Mary Gilmore
Kings Cross
29.1.37

2 Claremont.
99 D'hurst Road
Kings Cross
30.1.37

Dear Neville,
when I think of the work you have done for this country I nearly break my heart with feeling. Science knew Australian birds through Gould, but Australia as a people only learned them, learned that a bird's feather was beautiful through your father. He put the birds on the walls of houses; and after all it is in houses that minds dwell + tongues well + talk the things the minds think + the eyes see. No one has yet written what this country owes your father in this. and now come you, half Gould, half your father. The birds sing because of you even as we heard their dying cry through your father. Of course I know that people say your father was conventional. His day was conventional, but in spite of that he made people see the living by + through the conventional. What your father's pictures did to arouse a feeling for the bird, the pity of its death + the need of its preservation, will never be known now, + certainly never adequately told. But, be self pity in the hearts of people who did not know a kite from a harrow - + I mean there a stringed kite + a toothed harrow, not a bird kite + a harrier, for they had never even heard of these. Not by name! and where he evoked pity, you give beauty + by the very faithfulness of form, colour + group, the birds sing. You people build Australia + you, A

+ R. + all the rest, - + give her what no masonry ever gave her: permanency of life. I love the very names of those who do this and here I had better end.
affectionately
Mary Gilmore

Dr Mark Cabouret is a Melbourne medical practitioner who has spent almost 30 years researching the Cayleys.

This article gives a glimpse into the detailed research into Neville Henry Cayley that Dr Cabouret has compiled. His forthcoming books will have many more illustrations, full references and more detail, in particular about his relationships with William Aldenhoven and others. Dr Cabouret would like to hear from others with Cayley art works and you can contact him at 2 Collins Street Melbourne VIC 3000 or markcabouret@melbsecretarial.com.au

Notes

1. Certified Copy of An Entry of Death 'Registration District Norwich Deaths in the Sub-district of Mancroft in the City and in the County of the City of Norwich' for 1867. No. 430. H.C. 752850.
2. The Warragul and District Historical Society, Warragul, Victoria.
3. Author's collection.
4. This painting was acquired by the author from the estate of Mrs Caroline Simpson (née Fairfax), Sydney and the author wishes to acknowledge his gratitude to the Trustees of her estate.
5. The Ramsay Papers, vols 5, 6 and 7, (ML MSS1589/5-7 (CY2695&2696)) Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, Sydney, compiled by Mr. J.S.P. Ramsay, 1968
6. *The Echo*, Sydney 11 Nov, 1883
7. Christ Church Cathedral, Grafton. Church of England Baptismal record. Baptism 20 September, 1863.
8. Letter from Neville W. Cayley to his friend, Frederick S. Morse of *Coocalla*, Garah, NSW, Mitchell Library
9. The National Library of Australia, Canberra. Ferguson Collection. Call No. NF8034.
10. The Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, Sydney. Reference No. A2558-9-60.
11. Author's collection.

Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge my wife Heather and sons, Tiercel and Paris, who have given unfailing support during many years of research. To my secretary, Marilyn Crowe, I acknowledge her remarkable effort in typing these articles and my books. I thank Christine E. Jackson, Withersfield, Suffolk, England, ornithological art historian and doyen of the history of ornithological illustration and art, for her friendship and guidance after reading my draft. I would like to thank my friend N. Wayne Longmore, Ornithologist and Collections Manager at Museum Victoria, Melbourne and Frank Mack, President of the Clarence River Historical Society in Grafton for their prompt assistance to my enquiries over many years and Mr Neville David Cayley of Bundaberg, Queensland, great-grandson of Neville Henry Cayley. I would also like to thank my sister, Miranda McConchie, for her helpful comments on the draft. Photography by Dominic Romeo unless otherwise stated.

The Ipswich *Odd Fellows* *medal* of 1850

1.

Joel John Cohen (1799-1853), *Ipswich Odd Fellows Medallion*, 1850.
Silver, 15 x 10.5 cm.
John Oxley Library
Collection, State Library
of Queensland,
Acc. 27170

In 2009, the 150th anniversary of Queensland's establishment as a separate colony, the State Library of Queensland acquired an important reminder of pre-separation Queensland, a magnificent solid silver medal produced in 1850 as a gift for presentation by the members of the Ipswich Lodge of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows.

DIANNE BYRNE

This unique silver medal was created for an event which took place nine years before Queensland became a colony. It is the oldest known piece of Australian silver with an established Queensland connection. It also has a claim to prominence as a significant addition to the catalogue of works by Sydney silversmith Joel John Cohen (1799-1853).

The medal, which is as large as a man's hand, is composed of a double-sided engraved disc surrounded by a frame of twisted and carved silver, spelling out the call to 'Advance Australia' in capital letters (**plate 1**).¹ The words are divided by chased cornucopias and the whole is surmounted by the figures of an emu and kangaroo, the popular emblems of antipodean heraldry. Both animals are in the heraldic attitude known as *regardant* (**plate 2**). The kangaroo closely resembles (in reverse) George Stubbs' famous image of 'The Kongouro from New Holland'.

The reverse is engraved with an Odd Fellows motto and a scene full of symbolism (**plate 3**). Two draped female figures flank a tree supporting a shield. One figure is recognisable as Justice – she is blindfolded and carries a



sword and a pair of scales. Her companion holds a mirror (a traditional attribute of Prudence) and a staff entwined with a serpent, perhaps signifying the healing power of Asclepius, or making reference to the evangelical injunction to 'Be wise as serpents'.²

The central inscription on the obverse reveals an important part of its story:

Presented to P.N.F. Alexander McLeod
By the Officers & Brothers of the Loyal
Ipswich Lodge No 981 of the Grand
United Order of Odd Fellows As a Small
Mark of their Friendship & Esteem for his
Unwearied Exertions as the Founder &
Friend of their Lodge Ipswich Moreton Bay
Augst 20th 1850.

As the acknowledged founder of the Odd Fellows in Ipswich, Alexander McLeod made a landmark contribution to local life, yet no other information about him has been uncovered. He may not have been a local resident, but rather, in the spirit of Odd Fellows' friendship and mutual assistance, a member of another branch, possibly the Sydney District Lodge.

The Grand United Order of Odd Fellows was a friendly society, dedicated to providing for individuals and their families in times of sickness and adversity. The word 'Odd' originally meant 'noted', 'remarkable' or 'out of the common', while the word 'Fellow' referred to a member of a Society or Fraternity who joined together with others for a common good or common interest. The organisation

traced its beginnings back to Roman times, but really became established in England in the late 18th century.

The first Lodge in New South Wales – the Traveller's Lodge no. 731, at 574 Lower George Street – was opened in May 1846 and was quickly followed by half a dozen others in Sydney and 'Port Phillip'.³

The Ipswich Lodge was an offshoot of the Sydney District Grand United Order of Odd Fellows and had its first meeting on 20 August 1849 at Michael Burns' Prince of Wales Hotel in East Street. Five members were admitted on the first night, all meeting the requirement for 'men of really good character', anxious to improve the moral condition of their town.⁴

In August 1850, the Lodge celebrated its first birthday with a gala dinner and award ceremony reported in the *Moreton Bay Courier*:

The Anniversary Dinner of the "Loyal Ipswich Lodge" was given at Host Lovell's, Prince of Wales Inn, on last Tuesday evening. The Odd Fellows walked in

2.

Medal detail showing the emu & kangaroo supporting the attached pendant loop

3.

Reverse of the Odd Fellows medal





4.
Reverse of the medal
with detail of J.J. Cohen's
maker's mark

procession through the town, which was gaily decorated for the occasion. About sixty sat down to dinner, at which Dr. Glisson presided in such a manner as greatly tended to promote the harmony of the evening. The usual loyal toasts and those peculiar to the occasion were drunk with enthusiasm, and, after dinner, Brother P.G. McLeod was presented with a handsome silver medal, as a token of appreciation of his exertions in establishing the lodge. This handsome present was delivered by Brother Carrick, who addressed some appropriate remarks to Brother McLeod ... A ball succeeded the dinner, and was kept up with much animation until the witching hour of night had given place to morning; and all present seemed highly satisfied with the entertainment.⁵

A week later, another account, with a description of the medal, appeared in the same newspaper, along with the observation that it reflected great credit on its maker, 'Mr J.J. Cohen of Sydney'.⁶

The medal lacks the complete signature 'J.J. Cohen Maker' or the later 'J.J. Cohen & Son Makers', which he added to his more important works, but it carries his maker's mark on the reverse. The full mark consists of a queen's head,

leopard head crowned and lion passant with the letters 'CN' stamped twice (**plate 4**).⁷

Why did the Odd Fellows go so far afield for this commission?

Ipswich was just eight years old in 1850, but already it was a commercial centre, with a prosperous future as an important port on the Bremer River, a tributary of the Brisbane River. Local merchants were laying the foundations for their fortunes, opening shops and buying up building allotments, and a steam mill, boiling-down works and sawmill were in the process of construction.

However, the Moreton Bay District lacked one important asset, a local silversmith or jewellery establishment capable of creating a luxurious testimonial keepsake. Queensland's first working silversmith was probably Augustus John Kosvitz who arrived in Brisbane in 1859 and produced a variety of gold and silver testimonial pieces for Queensland patrons in the 1860s.⁸

Joel John Cohen would have been an obvious choice to create such an item. He was a sought-after craftsman who, in the years following his arrival in Sydney in 1838, had established a reputation as one of the city's most prominent makers and retailers of presentation silver.⁹

Cohen's life and career are well documented. He learned his trade as a jeweller and silversmith in Manchester from his father Simeon Cohen and travelled to Australia as a free settler in 1839. Soon after, he set up shop in George Street, Sydney, and around 1845, his son Francis joined the business, which became known as 'J.J. Cohen & Son'. Cohen was a prominent member of Sydney's Jewish community and served on the first Municipal Council of Sydney. He fathered a total of seven children and died a wealthy man in 1853.

Among his major surviving pieces are a circular salver presented to Sir James Dowling, Chief Justice of New South Wales in 1844 and an embossed wine goblet presented to the Sydney Synagogue by merchant and landowner Abraham Moses in 1845. He ordered the engraving of the salver presented to John Pascoe Fawkner in 1845 by the Officers of the Corporation of Melbourne, and he created the beautiful and extravagant silver boxing belt commemorating the 'Championship of New Holland' c 1847 (**plate 5**).¹⁰

The Odd Fellows medal is as accomplished as these other items. It is an audacious piece which

shows off the capabilities of Cohen's workshop and showcases the expertise of the craftsman who executed the engraving of the inscriptions and images.¹¹

The medal also may have the distinction of being one of the last pieces made by Cohen. As John Houstone has pointed out,¹² the firm ceased appearing in Post Office Directories in 1851, and Cohen died in 1853.

Dianne Byrne is Curator of Original Materials in the John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. She is the author of *A Travelling Photographer in Colonial Queensland: the work of William Boag* and has published articles on Queensland colonial painting and the decorative arts.

Notes

1 Professor Major-General John Pearn AO, a noted Queensland numismatist, brought the medal's existence to the attention of the State Library. I acknowledge the assistance rendered by Professor Pearn in the acquisition of the medal and the observations made in his paper 'Queensland in bronze: enduring heritage in sculptural and medallion art', *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, vol 20 no 7, 2008, pp 279-295.

2 *Matthew: 10:16*. The Mitchell Library (SLNSW) holds an Odd Fellows silk apron, circa 1849, printed with a similar image and the Odd Fellows motto: *Amicitia Amor et Veritas*, ('Friendship Love and Truth'.)

3 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 Sept 1848, p 1.

4 *Moreton Bay Courier*, 8 Sept 1849, p 2.

5 *Moreton Bay Courier*, 24 Aug 1850, p 2.

6 *Moreton Bay Courier*, 31 Aug 1850, p 2.

7 For discussion of Cohen's mark, see J. M. Houstone, 'A pugilistic antique: researching a rare piece of Australian silver', *Australian Antique Collector*, vol 19, 1979, pp 86-89; also J. B. Hawkins, *19th Century Australian Silver*, Woodbridge, Antique Collectors' Club, 1990, vol 1, pp 92-93.

8 See Timothy Roberts, 'An early jeweller in Queensland: the life and career of Augustus Kosvitz', *Australiana*, vol 31 no 3, August 2009, pp 4-8.

9 J. B. Hawkins, *op cit* p 91; Morris Zion Forbes, 'The saga of the Cohens and their times, 1830-1883', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, vol 10, part 3, 1988, pp 180-192.

10 Houstone, *op cit* p 89; see also Noni E.F. Guthrie, 'Joel John Cohen (1799-1853)', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, vol 10, part 3, 1988, pp 170-179;

11 Houstone, *op cit* p 86. John Black Carmichael (1803-1857) engraved the boxing belt for J.J. Cohen and may have been the engraver of the Odd Fellows medal. On Carmichael, see Breda Carty, 'John Carmichael: Australian deaf pioneer' in *Deaf Studies, Sydney, 1998: selected papers from the Australasian Deaf Studies Research Symposium... 1998*, edited by Adam Schembri [et al], North Rocks Press, 2000, pp 9-19.

12 Houstone, *op cit* p 86.

5. Joel John Cohen (1799-1853), silver boxing belt c. 1847, weight 24 oz. The engraving is by J. Carmichael, but the original inscription was erased, and the current wording substituted in 1886. Private collection



Move over James Oatley



John Houstone discusses the earliest watch and clockmakers working in Australia. He says that English clocks and watches made by the convict Henry Lane demonstrate that Lane was the earliest significant watch and clockmaker to come to Australia, with the capacity to make sophisticated instruments. Lane arrived in 1802 and was active until his death in 1815 – just three months after the better known James Oatley arrived.

JOHN HOUSTONE

James Oatley is the best known of the early Australian clockmakers. He had been convicted of stealing household goods in 1814 and sentenced to death at the Hampshire Assizes. The sentence was later commuted to transportation for life and he arrived in Sydney on 27 January 1815.

By 1816 he was carrying on his own business in Sydney. He was a highly competent clockmaker and about 20 of his clocks made in Sydney survive. These well made clocks seem to date between 1818 and 1830.

In June 1819 Oatley was paid £75 for installing a turret clock manufactured by Vulliamy, the well known firm of London

clockmakers, in the gable of the new Hyde Park Barracks in Macquarie Street, Sydney.

Partly by reason of their being the earliest known surviving Australian-made clocks, James Oatley's clocks have escalated in value in recent years and now fetch more than \$300,000 per clock on the rare occasions they come on the market. The late Kevin Fahy, assisted by Oatley expert and horologist Dennis Eccles and the late Bill Bradshaw, published an informative article on James Oatley and his clocks in 2004.¹

Oatley was however by no means the earliest clockmaker working in Australia. The first qualified watch and clockmaker would seem to be John Austin, but his primary skill was as a seal engraver. He was convicted of forgery of bank notes in Dublin in 1798 and sentenced to transportation for life, arriving in Sydney on 11 January 1800.

In 1803 Austin was described in the *Sydney Gazette* as a 'watchmaker and engraver',² and in 1811 as a 'Goldsmith, Jeweller, and Watch-Maker' who 'intends shortly to quit the Colony',³ although he appears to have stayed both in the colony and at his profession, as he was keeper of the town clock 1815–19. No watch or clock made by Austin has been identified to date.

1

Henry Lane, long case clock made in Bristol c. 1780, H 2375 mm. Collection: Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, 97/262/1, purchased 1993, photograph by Sotha Bourn

Rather different considerations apply to Henry Lane, another early convict arrival. He was a Bristol watch and clockmaker, born about 1750, who had opened a shop on Bristol Key (now Bristol Quay) in 1775.

On 4 January 1800, Henry Lane travelled by coach from Bristol with a female companion, Mrs Charlotte Holland, to Chipping Sodbury, a market town some ten miles north-east of Bristol. There they passed some forged notes to local shopkeepers. Lane was apprehended after a chase by local citizenry who, having secured him, settled down to some serious roistering that evening.

At his subsequent trial Lane complained that

The people who had me in custody were drunk and they did nothing all night but laugh, drink and sing songs and used very unbecoming language.

One of his capturers, a Mr Bruton, cried out at one stage

Boys, another song, for we will hang them both before it is long.

Henry stood trial on a charge of for uttering a forged bill at the Bristol Sessions on 5 April 1800 before recorder Vicary Gibbs and a jury of twelve. He was duly convicted and the sentence of death imposed.

The *Bristol Journal* of 19 April 1800 announced 'the execution of Henry Lane will take place at St. Michael's Hill on Friday next.' Happily the issue of 26 April reported that the sentence had been commuted to transportation for life by Royal clemency.

Nearly two years later, Henry sailed from Spithead on the *Perseus* with 112 other male prisoners on 12 February 1802 and arrived in Sydney Cove on 4 August 1802. Within a year of his arrival, Lane was granted a Ticket of Leave and had opened a business in Pitt Row.

Lane's companion Charlotte Holland was convicted of the same crime in Gloucester on 30 July 1800 and also sentenced to transportation for life. She arrived at Sydney Cove on 11 March 1803. By 1806, and probably before, Charlotte was living with Henry in Sydney. In a petition to the Governor in 1810, Henry described Charlotte as his housekeeper; in Rev. Samuel Marsden's Female Muster of 1806 she is described more bluntly



2
Henry Lane, long case clock made in Bristol c. 1780. Detail of dial engraved 'Henry Lane / BRISTOL'. Collection: Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, 97/262/1, purchased 1993, photograph by Sotha Bourn



as 'concubine'. They eventually married at St John's Parramatta in 1813 and after he died, she advertised that she intended to apply 'for Letters of Administration to the Estate and Effects of her deceased Husband'.⁴

Several clocks and watches made by Henry Lane in England prior to his conviction are recorded.

Lane is mentioned in Britten's *Old Clocks and Watches and their Makers* for manufacturing a 'long case clock designed to show High Water

3
Henry Lane, long case clock made in Bristol c. 1780. Detail of dial engraved 'Henry Lane / BRISTOL'. Collection: Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, 97/262/1, purchased 1993, photograph by Sotha Bourn

4

Henry Lane, long case clock made in Bristol c. 1775. Owned by the late Mr J.W. Gordon, Ocean Grove, Victoria

5

Henry Lane, pair cased silver pocket watch made in Bristol c. 1774, the dial painted with the name DANIEL HOOPER. Private collection

6

Henry Lane, pair cased silver pocket watch made in Bristol c. 1774, engraved 'Danl. Hooper, /Small Street / BRISTOL /13 NOVr. /1774.' Private collection



at Bristol Key' above its arch. This clock was purchased by the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney in 1993 (plates 1–3).⁵ His name also appears on a pocket chronometer numbered 4003 in a silver case hallmarked for 1797 (not located).⁶ Another long case clock made by Lane in England exists in Australia. This was owned by the late Mr J. W. Gordon of Ocean Grove, Victoria and remains with his family (plate 4).

A silver pair cased pocket watch made by Lane in Bristol in 1774 (case hallmarked for 1773) appeared on the market in 2008 and was purchased by the writer (plates 5–7). Early in 2011, a handsome tavern clock appeared on the English market and was purchased by a Sydney collector (plate 8).

These English clocks and watches demonstrate that Henry Lane was the earliest significant watch and clockmaker to come to Australia.

Two months after he came ashore in the colony, in October 1803 he was established as a 'clock and watch maker', and advertised for another 'clock and a clock case maker, who understands movement making, finishing or any branch connected with the profession.'⁷

Accurate clocks were essential to navigation and exploration, so having a clockmaker in a remote port such as Sydney was essential for mariners needing to repair and adjust their

7

Henry Lane, pair cased silver pocket watch made in Bristol c. 1774, the movement engraved 'Hen.y Lane/ Bristol 130'. Private collection



timepieces. The Powerhouse Museum is also home to a regulator clock, made in London by Thomas Earnshaw (1749–1829) in 1791.⁸ This clock belonged to the Board of Longitude and was issued first to George Vancouver for his exploration voyages mapping the north-west coast of North America between 1791 and 1795.

Later, his regulator was issued to Lt Matthew Flinders for his circumnavigation of Australia 1801–03 in HMS *Investigator*. Flinders mapped the coastline, and to check the accuracy of his chronometers which were used to calculate longitude, Flinders would set up a land-based observatory for astronomical observations, using this regulator. Returning to Sydney in 1803, Flinders' astronomer James Inman looked after the clock, and had it repaired by Henry Lane.⁹ The regulator returned to England in about 1805.

In April 1804, Lane advertised for sale a nautical timekeeper which he had nearly completed and which had a 'Detached Escapement, Compound Barometer Balance and a going Fusee Jewelled', certainly a sophisticated instrument. This did not move quickly, as he advertised it again in June and July.¹⁰

In October of the same year, he advertised to purchase 'a few good watch glasses, 2 ½ inches in diameter,'¹¹ suggesting that he had completed watches for sale. At this time there was no facility to manufacture glass in the colony.

While these advertisements seemed to show he was making clocks and watches, he was also importing. An 1806 advertisement mentions 'having his assortment of gold, silver and metal watches of various sorts renewed by the ship Pitt.'¹²



8
Henry Lane, tavern clock
c. 1785. This clock with
dial painted with the
maker's name 'H. Lane /
BRISTOL' and the case
featuring Chinoiserie
decoration was purchased
in England in 2011.
Private collection, Sydney

9
Henry Lane, pair cased
pocket watch made in
Sydney, c. 1809. Private
collection

10
Henry Lane, pair cased
pocket watch made in
Sydney, c. 1809, the
movement engraved
'LANE / Sydney'.
Private collection

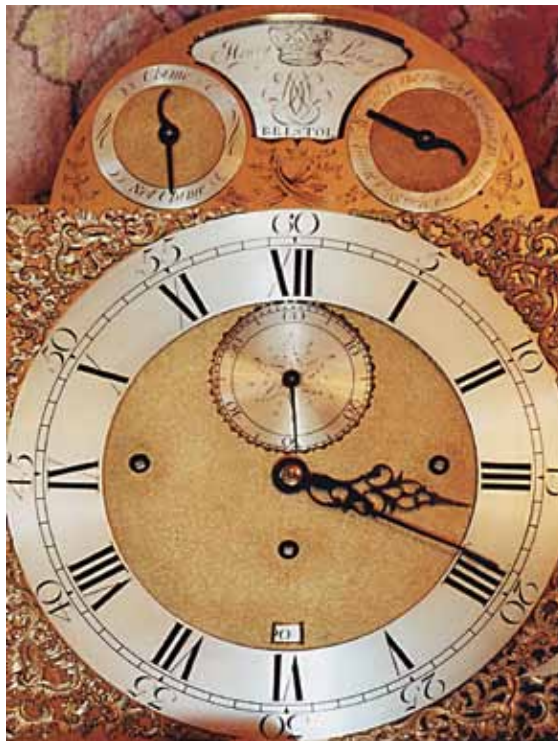




After tempestuous weather, on 3 June 1806 the town clock tower collapsed and Henry was entrusted with the clock's repair and installation in a new tower. He informed the public through the advertising columns of the *Sydney Gazette* on 8 June that

Lane, Watch-maker, Pitt's row, informs the public that since they have been by accident deprived of the advantage of the Town clock, a Time Piece is fixed in the centre of the adjoining window to which he works ... that every person may see the time of day as they pass in any part of the street.¹³

Perhaps as a result of this display of public spirit in 1808, Lieutenant-Governor Foveaux granted Lane a conditional pardon 'for his good conduct and usefulness as a watch and clockmaker.'¹⁴ In 1811 Henry was appointed Government Clock Keeper, a position he held until his death, aged 65, on 15 April 1815.¹⁵



11

Henry Lane, pair cased pocket watch made in Sydney, c. 1809, the movement stamped 'H L'. Private collection

12

Henry Lane, long case musical clock made in Bristol, c. 1775. Chiming hourly and playing a selection of six tunes on 12 bells, with a three-train eight-day movement. Private collection

13

Henry Lane, long case musical clock made in Bristol, c. 1775. Chiming hourly and playing a selection of six tunes on 12 bells, with a three-train eight-day movement. Detail of dial engraved 'Henry Lane / BRISTOL'. Private collection

14

Henry Lane, long case musical clock made in Bristol, c. 1775. Detail of tunes. Private collection

In November 1809,¹⁶ and again in January 1810,¹⁷ Henry advertised, after a range of imported items, three clocks and a pocket chronometer not yet completed. The first clock was a nautical timekeeper

finished in style, warranted to perform equal to any ever imported to this colony, slung in a neat cedar box and fit for sea.

The second was an eight-day clock

with a ship in motion in the arch, in a new cedar case;

and the third, an eight day regulator showing in its face

the representation of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream, as described in the 4th and 5th chapters of Daniel.

The last of these is advertised again two years later on 25 April 1812 'in an elegant Cedar Case' as prize in a raffle, Henry seeking to sell 25 tickets at two guineas each.¹⁸

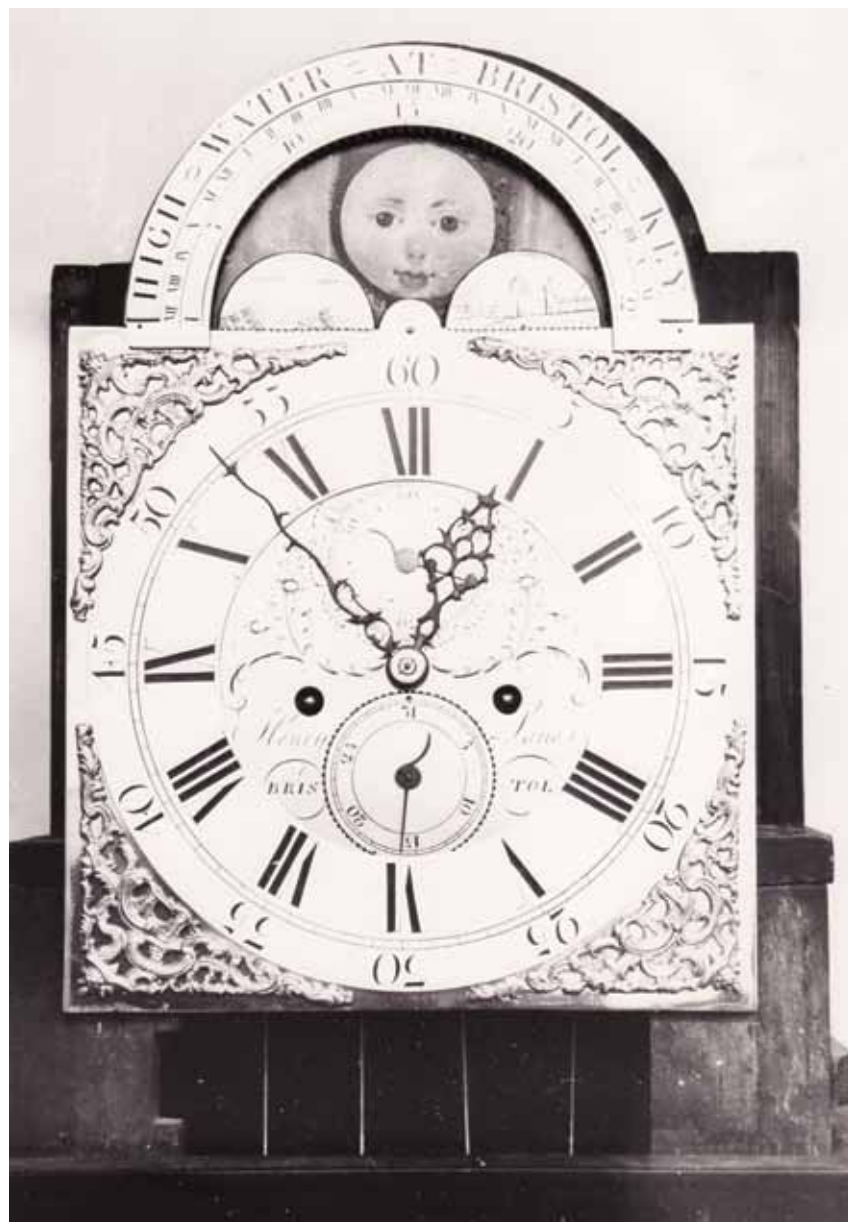
By October 1812, he had

with much labour completed a Mathematical Month Timepiece, for ascertaining the Rates, and regulating Chronometers and other Time-pieces. It is a dead-seconds Scapement, a complete Compound Pendulum, finished in style, and regulated by the nicest astronomical performance.¹⁹

Quite a feat it was to produce such a clock in the primitive Sydney of 1812!

But the most extraordinary of Henry's advertisements is that of 24 December 1814, only four months before his death:

Mr. Henry Lane informs the Public that either of the following Orders will be received at the Prices specified. – A plain eight-day Clock, in a neat cedar case, 40 guineas; ditto with a ship, moon, sawyers, or any other common figure in the face, 50 guineas; ditto with musical quarters, according to the number of tunes and other fancies, from £100 to £200; with organs £250; with a lady playing a harpsichord or spinnet, 5 parts £500 pounds and upwards;



a representation of the Heathen Gods, or Tantalus doomed by Jupiter to perpetual hunger and thirst in a periodical motion, constantly deceived by delicious fruits, lion, and wild beasts with eyes rolling, and their mouths chopping at him, £130; a country wake, back-sword or cudgel playing, £120. These 2 in one, £150 dogs and duck hunting; Maurice dancing; bird-catching, etc. by timely application.— It is not his intention to accomplish more than one order of moment while he remains in this Colony.— A Curioso in this place asked, "Can you produce one making Money?" – If

15
Henry Lane, long case clock made in Bristol c. 1780, detail. Location unknown

that or any other Gentleman give the order, for £150, they will have it in perfection; and while one works the press, the other shall certainly supply it.²⁰

Apparently the only Australian-made watch or clock by Henry Lane which has survived is a silver pair cased semi-hunter pocket watch with verge escapement and of typical English design, its movement engraved 'Lane Sydney' (**plates 9-11**). When the watch was disassembled, it was found to have the initials 'HL' punched on the main plate under the case spring. The year '1809' is scratched on the plate. The dial of silvered brass has Roman numerals rather unevenly hand engraved. As found, the watch had broken crown and contrite wheels and a missing fusee chain hook. It also had a broken hour hand and lacked a watch glass.

The cases are hand hammered and the outer case shows signs of many years of wear. The restrained wriggle work decoration around the rims of each half of the case has been largely rubbed away. The remains of the large engraved initials 'RG' in script can be vaguely discerned. The bow on the silver pendant of the inner case is plated.²¹

Having regard to Henry Lane's advertisements for his clocks of considerable complexity and involving automaton and musical functions, questions have arisen as to whether these clockmaking tours de force were in fact made in primitive New South Wales at the beginning of the 19th century, or whether Lane's advertisements were simply puffings, particularly having regard to the fact that none of these clocks has yet been located.

The question of Henry Lane's competence to make complex clocks has been established by the appearance in recent months of a splendid long case Bristol musical clock dating to about 1775, chiming hourly and playing a selection of six tunes on twelve bells (**plates 12-14**). The clock has a three train, 8-day movement. The case is a typical Bristol case of the period of the highest quality and is in immaculate condition. The writer bought this clock in London and it has now arrived in Australia. Its timekeeping and musical functions are first rate.

His works show that Henry Lane was a more accomplished clockmaker than James Oatley, who arrived in Sydney 12 years later than Lane and whose clocks, while excellently made, were

of a simpler degree of sophistication.

Hopefully a Henry Lane clock made in Australia with automata or music may eventually be discovered.

John Houstone is a retired solicitor with a life-long interest in colonial metalwork. A frequent contributor to *Australiana*, his new book on his outstanding private collection *Early Australian Silver. The Houstone Collection*, will be published by Halstead Press in 2012.

Notes

- 1 Kevin Fahy, 'James Oatley and his long case clocks', *Australiana* vol 23 no 3, Aug 2004, 22-27.
- 2 *Sydney Gazette* 22 May 1803 p 2.
- 3 *Sydney Gazette* 5 Oct 1811 p 4.
- 4 BDM NSW; *Sydney Gazette* 16 Dec 1815 p 2.
- 5 Britten, *Old Clocks and Watches and their Makers* p.513
- 6 L. J. Bellchambers, *The Somerset Clockmakers*
- 7 *Sydney Gazette*, 9 Oct 1803 p 4.
- 8 Powerhouse Museum 94/15/1; <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/database/?irn=138867#ixzzlyxTM0jns>
- 9 Dr Nick Lomb, Curator of Astronomy who acquired the clock for the Powerhouse Museum, provided the following information: Thomas Tooth, *It was a matter of time*, self-published, 1992, pp 84-85, relates how on the return of HMS *Investigator* to Sydney on 9 June 1803, James Inman took possession of the instruments. Inman found that both the regulator and the associated journeyman clock were no longer functioning. 'However Inman was able to find a good clockmaker in Sydney by the name of Lane. This clockmaker who, it appears, had once worked for the well known London clockmaker, John Brockman, seems to have made a good job of repairing the two clocks'. Tooth does not give a reference for the information, but from the bibliography it is likely that the information comes from Inman's 'Observations on Garden Island, Port Jackson, and A short account of a voyage from Port Jackson in New South Wales to Canton in China', Board of Longitude Papers, Vol 54, pp 171-256, Mitchell Library ref: PRO Reel 1759.
- 10 *Sydney Gazette*, 8 April 1804, 15 April 1804, 10 June 1804, 22 August 1804
- 11 *Sydney Gazette*, 14 October 1804, 21 October 1804
- 12 *Sydney Gazette*, 27 April 1806, 11 May 1806
- 13 *Sydney Gazette* 8 Jun 1806 p 3.
- 14 P.R.O., Reel 6001 p.1346
- 15 *Sydney Gazette* 30 Jan 1813 records his salary as £30 and describes him as 'Government Clock Maker'.
- 16 *Sydney Gazette* 5 Nov 1809 p 2.
- 17 *Sydney Gazette* 7 Jan 1810 p 4.
- 18 *Sydney Gazette* 25 Apr 1812 p 1.
- 19 *Sydney Gazette* 31 Oct 1812 p 2.
- 20 *Sydney Gazette* 24 Dec 1814 p 2.
- 21 John Houstone, 'Australia's First Watchmaker', *Australian Antique Collector* no 45, 1993 p.71

The Peter Walker Fine Art WRITING AWARD 2011

Judge's report

The Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award is an annual award generously sponsored by Peter Walker Fine Art of Walkerville, South Australia. Peter Walker is a valued member and longstanding supporter of the Australiana Society. All articles which were published in *Australiana* in 2011 are eligible for the 2011 Award.

The high standard of research, writing and publication for which *Australiana* has become renowned continued in the four issues of the magazine for 2011. It is no exaggeration to say that *Australiana* has become the journal of choice for those with personal and professional interests in Australian decorative arts. It provides a unique and much appreciated source for the publication of original research and information found nowhere else on a wide variety of different subjects in its general fields of interest.

With so many outstanding articles appearing in *Australiana* in 2011, it was a challenge to select the winning article. All contributors should be congratulated on their articles which not only enhance the reputation of *Australiana* as a serious journal of merit and scholarship but also provide valuable new research and primary references on their subjects. I also commend the authors' efforts in selecting excellent complementary images to illustrate their articles and the outstanding editorial work, design and quality of production of the journal.

As my final choice for the 2011 Peter Walker Fine Art Writing Award, I have selected the article by Dr Dorothy Erickson, 'William Howitt: woodcarver of distinction' which appeared in *Australiana*, vol 33, no 4, November 2011. Dr Erickson is a regular contributor to *Australiana* and has built up an impressive record through her series of articles in which she has rediscovered and described the work of many notable Australian craftspeople.

In her article on William Howitt (1846–1928) she has provided an exemplary account of a figure who is perhaps not widely recognised today but was described by a contemporary as 'one of the finest wood carvers in Australia.' Dr Erickson demonstrates well how family records and information combined with secondary source research enabled her to document Howitt's career, which included wood carving for St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Holy Trinity, Kew and the Roman Catholic Church of St Peter and St Paul, all in Melbourne, as well as working as an advisor to the Victorian Government. The latter part of Howitt's life was spent in Perth where important examples of his wood carving and furniture are still extant in public and private collections.

Dr Erickson's article is clearly and elegantly written and the images, many from private collections, are an integral component of her excellent account of the life and art of William Howitt.

Elizabeth Ellis OAM
Emeritus Curator, Mitchell Library, Sydney

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An interesting and unusual collection of two scent bottles and five silver and gold mounted vasa cases; the bean would appear to be the Queensland Black Bean *Castanospermum australe*.

Contemporary descriptions can be found as follows:

The Victorian Intercolonial Exhibition Melbourne 1875; 'The bean of the Queensland supplejack mounted in silver makes very pretty lockets and vinaigrettes.'

Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886, Brunkhorst: 'a lady's companion containing Northern Territory Beans mounted as smelling bottles' and Evan Jones: 'emu egg casket with scent bottles manufactured from Australian Chestnuts.'

