

Australiana

February 2019 vol 41 no 1

RESEARCHING, PRESERVING AND COLLECTING AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE



W. L. W. W. W.
1849



SIMPSON'S ANTIQUES

FINE AUSTRALIAN ANTIQUES



An excellent Colonial cedar **Writing Box** attributed to Richard Dowling of O'Brien's Bridge, Hobart, Tasmania. It features a central 'compass' star (of four native timbers) within a panel of Tasmanian native cherry. Flanked by two 'Tumbling Block' decorated panels of casuarina and pine, within borders of ebony stringing and feather-banding. The fitted interior contains two drawers and a sliding panel concealing five secret compartments. 19th century patina, c 1855

\$4,750

AA&ADA

AUSTRALIAN
ANTIQUE AND
ART DEALERS
ASSOCIATION

www.australianantiques.com.au

By appointment Mobile: 0404 051 999

Email: simpson@casuarinapress.com.au



Australiana

RESEARCHING, PRESERVING AND COLLECTING
AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE

February 2019 vol 41 no 1 SSN 0814-107X

THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

www.australiana.org.au

PO Box 2335 Bondi Junction NSW 1355

info@australiana.org.au

ABN 13 402 033 474

Australiana, the magazine of The Australiana Society Inc, is published in February, May, August and November and is available only by subscription.

EDITOR

John Wade 0400 674 466

johnwade@optusnet.com.au

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2019

Household and institutions.....\$75

Life.....\$1500

Overseas: please contact us for rates.

To subscribe, email us for a brochure or download a membership form from the website and mail with your payment, or email with your credit card details.

ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL

Contact the editor about advertising or contributing an article. You can download a Style Guide from the website.

INDEX

An index to *Australiana* is available on the website.

GIFTS

The Australiana Society is listed on the Australian Government's Register of Cultural Organisations and recognised as a Deductible Gift Recipient.

Gifts to the Society are tax deductible.

COMMITTEE 2018-19

President

Dr Jim Bertouch

Vice-President

Annette Blinco

Secretary

Vacant

Treasurer

George Lawrence

Committee

Phillip Black

Timothy Cha

Lesley Garrett

Judy Higson

Michel Reymond

Andrew Simpson

Contact details for state chapters and interest groups are listed on the website www.australiana.org.au/about

All articles appearing in *Australiana* are eligible for the annual Peter Walker Fine Art writing award sponsored by Peter Walker Fine Art, Adelaide

contents

5

Portrait of an artist: rediscovering Rose Blakemore

Timothy Roberts

12

Scrimshaw – art of the mariner: the Colin Thomas collection

Scott Carlin

24

A table for the Asylum, New Norfolk

Philip Reid

28

Trust the women: women lead the way in preserving Queensland's heritage

Judith McKay

34

Convict artist Frederick Strange ... the mystery deepens

Robyn Lake

44

Tribute: John Houstone

John Wade

45

How to use protein glues

Paul Gregson

ADVERTISERS

Simpson's Antiques 2

Walter & Co 4

Colonial Rarities 11

W J Sanders 11

The Merchant of Welby 47

Peter Walker Fine Art 47

J B Hawkins Antiques 48

DESIGN

Kylie Kennedy, Reconstruct Design 0402 417 871

PRINTER

Scott Williams, Point Graphics 0414 242 244

COVER

William Duke (1814–53), *Offshore Whaling with the Aladdin and Jane* 1849.

Oil on canvas, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery AG2997, photograph by Simon Cuthbert (detail)

© Copyright 2019 The Australiana Society and/or individual authors and photographers.

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society.

WALTER & CO

TASMANIA



1



2



3



4

1. A scarce Remued pottery jug with applied koala. - \$3,650
2. Mid 19th century scrimshaw whale's tooth with whaling scene. Sourced from a Tasmanian collection. - \$3,850
3. Mid 19th century powder horn with 'Advance Australia' motto. Attributed to C.H. Wood. - \$4,500
4. Rare Staffordshire blue and white plate c.1822, depicting a view of Hobart Town and titled this to the reverse - \$3,850

Portrait of an artist: rediscovering Rose Blakemore

Recently rediscovered information pertaining to the life of Australian painter and art teacher Rose Blakemore has enriched our understanding of four portrait miniatures in the Queensland Art Gallery's collection.

TIMOTHY ROBERTS

In 1947 the Queensland Art Gallery received a gift of four portrait miniatures from Sydney resident Bertha Pearshouse. She was motivated to donate the works following a conversation with Maria Theresa Treweek, another Sydney resident with links to Goondiwindi, and a generous donor to the Queensland gallery.

We don't know how Miss Pearshouse acquired the portraits, possibly through their joint involvement in the National Council for Women and other women's groups. In her correspondence, Miss Pearshouse noted:

[The portraits] were painted by R. Blakemore (Miss), who is a Queenslander by birth, now retired, and quite unable to do such work. She was a very successful art student at the Sorbonne in Paris and gained a medal in Competition. I feel that she should be represented in her native land as she has done so much good work as an art teacher.

With such modest biographical information provided by the donor, the details of Blakemore's life and work escaped recognition for nearly 70 years. Nonetheless, following the few leads in the donor's correspondence has uncovered a biography that connects this artist with the wider Australian art scene at the turn of the 20th century.



1.

Rose Blakemore (Australia 1870–1958), *Portrait study*, c 1910. Tempera on ivory, 12 cm (diam.) Collection: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, gift of Miss B. Pearshouse 1947 acc. 1:0419. Photograph Natasha Harth



2.

Rose Blakemore (Australia 1870–1958), *Portrait study*, c 1910. Tempera on ivory, 9 x 6 cm (oval). Collection: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, gift of Miss B. Pearshouse 1947 acc. 1:0420. Photograph Natasha Harth

3.

Rose Blakemore (Australia 1870–1958), *Portrait study*, c 1910. Tempera on ivory, 9 x 6 cm (oval). Collection: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, gift of Miss B. Pearshouse 1947 acc. 1:0421. Photograph Natasha Harth



Rose Blakemore was born on 31 January 1870 in the central Queensland community of Copperfield, second child and only daughter of William Blakemore and his wife Elizabeth (née Casey). William and Elizabeth were both immigrants from England and were married in Brisbane in 1864 before moving to Copperfield. Copperfield aptly coined its name from the mining community that formed around the Peak Downs Copper Mine, which was founded in 1863. William Blakemore worked as a smelter at the mine, beginning a career that would see him work across Australia as a leading mining engineer.

At the time of Rose's birth in 1870, Copperfield was a modestly successful town, boasting several pubs, an Oddfellows hall, a bank and stock exchange, a school, and from 1874, a locally published newspaper, *The Copperfield Miner*. Conversely, like most regional communities, the town did not possess significant cultural

infrastructure; theatres, galleries and concert halls were not to be found.

During the 1870s, the majority of artists working in Queensland were concentrated in the south-eastern colonies. Artists including Joseph Backler, William Ewart, and Auschar Chauncy travelled between Brisbane, Ipswich, Gympie and Rockhampton to secure commissions from graziers, miners and distinguished local personalities. By comparison, very few artists explored the north and centre of Queensland. One notable exception is Harriet Jane Neville-Rolfe, trained at the Slade School in London and L'École Nationale de Dessin pour les Jeune Filles in Paris, who documented the flora, fauna and daily life at her family property near Alpha, 150 km from Copperfield, during her travels to Australia in the mid-1880s.

In Copperfield itself, more democratic arts flourished, most notably photography. The broadly skilled and enterprising accountant, auctioneer, valuer,

sharebroker, general commission agent, town Alderman and Treasurer of the Copperfield Amateur Dramatic Club, W J Dibdin was active as a photographer around 1874, when he curated an entertainment of dissolving views, using the “magnificently brilliant and unsurpassed magnesium light”. Another photographer, Albert Crownson, is recorded as working in Copperfield at the same time, while travelling photographer William Boag visited the community in 1876.

Blakemore’s family moved from Copperfield to the central NSW mining community of Nymagee, sometime after the birth of Rose’s younger brother William in 1878. The town, located 89 km south of Cobar and 32 km north of The Overflow Station, made famous by Banjo Patterson’s 1889 poem *Clancy of the Overflow*, swelled to a population of over 2,000 between 1870 and 1900 as important deposits of copper were extracted. During the family’s time in Nymagee, William Blakemore Sr was increasingly involved in mine management, firstly as interim manager of the Nymagee Copper Mine and later the Manager of the Girilambone Copper Mine from 1896.

By 1890, Rose Blakemore’s older brother George had moved to Broken Hill and established himself as an assayer. Rose moved further afield to Adelaide, where she studied freehand drawing with Rosa Fiveash (1854–1938) while boarding at the Misses McMinn’s Tormore School in Buxton Street, North Adelaide (**plate 5**). Fiveash was celebrated for her studies of flowers; she had been commissioned to supply illustrations of native plants for John Ednie Brown’s publication *The Forest Flora of South Australia*.

Around the time of Blakemore’s residence in Adelaide, the city boasted an active community of women artists. Emily Anson, Annie Benham, Ann Elizabeth Billiatt, Sarah Ragless, Eliza Strawbridge, Elise Turck and Mesdames Bailey, Broad, Hilpers, Miller, Randall and Smart displayed paintings at the 1887 Adelaide Jubilee Exhibition. It is possible that Blakemore was introduced to portrait

miniature painting while residing in Adelaide, as during this time sisters Helen, Alice and Milly Hambridge, students of H P Gill at the Adelaide School of Design, were emerging as accomplished painters.

From Adelaide Blakemore moved to Sydney, where she furthered her artistic education at the Sydney Technical College in Ultimo between 1891 and 1897. She undertook art courses including perspective, practical geometry, antique modelling and plant drawing. While studying, she began a career of art instruction, firstly securing a position as an Assistant Teacher in the Sydney Technical College’s Art Department before being promoted to the position of Art Teacher in 1898, after completing the requirements for a Teacher’s Certificate. Blakemore taught women’s day classes for life drawing and antique modelling (**plate 6**), which formed the basis of the portraiture study at the college.

Blakemore stood alongside a talented and renowned group of teachers at the



4.

Rose Blakemore (Australia 1870–1958), *Portrait study*, c 1910. Tempera on ivory, 8.8 x 6.8 cm (oval). Collection: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, gift of Miss B. Pearshouse 1947 acc. 1:0422. Photograph Natasha Harth

Sydney Technical College, who collectively made a great contribution to the local and national art scene. She worked alongside teacher of china painting J A Peach and art teacher A G Reid, who taught prominent Australian decorative artists including Ethel Warburton; her colleague George Arousseau had studied under celebrated French émigré art instructor Lucien Henry. Blakemore’s colleague Edith Brown was a landscape painter, sketcher and china painter (**plate 7**).



5.

Boarders at Tormore House School, North Adelaide, 1890. Collection: State Library of South Australia B 52606.

The sitters in this photograph have been identified as Jessie Killicoat, Katie Banks, Lottie Gosse, Lizzie Murray, Helda Warren, Rosie Blakemore, Maud Goodhart, Jessie McFarlane, Ina Deland, Annie Roberts, Edith Coppen, Lillie Thomas, Annie Grosse and Miss Young

6.

Antique Drawing class at Sydney Technical College 1909

Inside and outside the classroom, Blakemore enthusiastically participated in Sydney Technical College life. Her 1895 work *Summer*, depicting two female figures reclining in the shade of large trees after bathing was included in the College's second annual exhibition of students' work in January 1896, where it was awarded the prize for best study from life. She served as the inaugural Honorary Secretary of the College's Minerva Art Club from 1896 and sat as the club's President in 1902. She also sat on the organising committee for the College's annual picnic for several years, and engaged with the wider art

community, attending an exhibition of portrait miniatures by fellow Sydney Technical College graduate Ella Richards in 1903.

At the 21st Annual Exhibition of the Art Society of NSW in 1900, Blakemore exhibited two portraits, titled *Irene* and *Study of head*. The following year she displayed *The water carrier* in the Black & White section of the Society of Artists Spring Exhibition; *Study of head* was included in the 22nd Annual Exhibition of the Art Society of NSW. These works highlight the artist's preference for figure painting, and were priced respectably for miniatures – 10 to 15 guineas apiece.

In the 1901 Society of Artist's exhibition catalogue, Blakemore listed her residence as *Hulverstone*. The six-bedroom "commodious harbourfront residence" with 65 metres of beach frontage to Double Bay boasted a billiard room, dining room, breakfast room and lounge room. *Hulverstone* was located next to *Banksia* – the residence of Philip Gidley King, Member of the Legislative Council of NSW and grandson of the third Governor of NSW – and only a short walk from the Fairfax family's estates *Elaine* and *Fairwater*. Such comfortable conditions would have been ambitious for an art teacher with a reported salary of £84 per annum in 1901, increasing to £124 in 1902.

By 1903 Blakemore had embraced more modest living arrangements in the St Bernard's Home for Working

Gentlewomen in William Street, Darlinghurst. The home, designed "to provide an inexpensive residence for gentlewomen who are compelled to work for their livelihood" had re-opened in larger premises in April 1901, accommodating about 30 boarders; rooms could be rented for about £1 per week according to size.

Around 1907 Blakemore sailed to London and Paris, the recognised European hubs for artists at the turn of the century. These cities were regarded especially highly by Australian artists: for example, Ipswich-born miniature painter Bessie Gibson had arrived in Paris in 1906 following her tutelage under Godfrey Rivers; New Zealand-born painter Kathleen O'Connor would visit London and Paris in 1910 and 1911; and Daphne Mayo studied in London from 1919 after being awarded the inaugural Godfrey Rivers Travelling Scholarship in 1914.

The Paris that welcomed Blakemore in 1907 was an exhilarating city for artists. That year, a retrospective of the work of Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) was held in conjunction with the *Salon d'Automne*, as were retrospectives of the work of Berthe Morisot (1841–95) and Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux (1827–75). Major developments in the art world were taking shape – 1907 was the year a young Basque artist, Pablo Picasso, painted *Les Femmes d'Alger*, a painting so controversial that the artist

did not exhibit it until 1916. Henri Matisse – one month Blakemore’s senior – opened his own private art school in 1907 and exhibited *Nu bleu (Souvenir de Biskra)* at the Société des Artistes Indépendants. According to Pearshouse’s letters, while in Paris Blakemore studied at La Sorbonne and displayed miniatures in an unidentified exhibition where she received a gold medal of merit.

Upon her return to Australia in 1908, Blakemore briefly stayed in Adelaide to visit friends and her former teacher Rosa Fiveash. When she returned to Sydney, the students at the Technical College – including Annie Brandis, Muriel Halbert, Beatrice Minchin and Misses Loveridge, Parsons and Small – welcomed and congratulated her with gifts of flowers, music and recitations of French at a specially organised reception.

Blakemore’s absence from Australia in 1907 meant that her work was not included in the First Australian Exhibition of Women’s Work held in Melbourne. However, the four portrait miniatures donated by Bertha Pearshouse to the Queensland Art Gallery are likely to have been painted during the first decade of the 20th century, as evidenced by the distinctive hairstyles and dress of her sitters (**plates 1-4**). Most clear in the four works is Blakemore’s high attention to detail and delicacy in her technique.

In 1916 a Miss Blakemore designed a “charming emblem” for the Centre for Soldiers’ Wives and Mothers in Sydney; it is reasonable to consider given her qualifications that Rose Blakemore may have produced this design, which consisted of a sprig of rosemary – a symbol of remembrance – above a scrolling ribbon emblazoned with the words “Rosemary for Remembrance”. It is also likely that Blakemore was the Miss Blakemore who participated in the Professional Women Workers Association and National Council for Women activities in the 1910s and 1920s. If so, it may explain her relationship with Bertha Pearshouse, who sat on the executive of both groups.

Blakemore’s career at Sydney Technical College continued for another decade,



into the 1920s. She continued to involve herself actively in teaching life – she assisted the organisation of a display of paintings, drawings and needlework by the Sydney Technical College Girls’ Art Club at an impressively patriotic Bastille Day spectacular held in the centre of Sydney in 1917. At this time very little is known about the artists that Blakemore studied alongside in Sydney, and the students whom she mentored throughout her three-decade career.

In 1926 Rose Blakemore retired from her role at the Technical College, only a few years after the art department had moved to new accommodation in the refurbished former Darlinghurst Gaol. She left Sydney aboard the *SS Vedic* on 30 January 1926 and arrived in London on 2 April. She stayed in Piccadilly and St James Square for nearly two years before returning to Australia in 1928, where she purchased a cottage, “Mascor”, between Bell Street and Arcadia Road in the Blue Mountains village of Blackheath.

She returned to Sydney by the late 1930s, when she lived in rooms on Macquarie Street. Around this time, she met her great-nephew Michael, who remembered her as “someone with strong and concisely expressed opinions”, like her brother George. By 1943, Blakemore resided in Edgecliff in Sydney’s eastern

7.

Instructors in art at Sydney Technical College, 1909. Back row: H B Wright, P W Atkins, G H Arousseau, J A Peach, G McIntosh. Front row: Rose Blakemore, A G Reid, J R Wright (Lecturer in charge of the Department), G A Thomas, Edith Brown. From *A Quarter Century of Technical Education in New South Wales* p 143

suburbs, and by 1949 was lodging in a boarding house in Grafton operated by Rachael Ford. In the 30 years from her retirement until her death Blakemore’s art is not mentioned in news articles or exhibition catalogues; it appears that she was enjoying a well-earned retirement.

On 16 January 1958, just two weeks before her 88th birthday, Blakemore died at the Balmoral Hill Private Hospital in Mosman, Sydney from a coronary occlusion; she had suffered from myocardial degeneration and arteriosclerosis – conditions that may have contributed to her inability to continue painting in her older age. She had previously resided at the Bundarra Convalescent Home in Mosman. Her

funeral was held on 18 January at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium in North Ryde.

Rose Blakemore's known extant artistic legacy exists in just four delicately executed portraits, however Bertha Pearshouse's comment "she has done so much good work as an art teacher" suggests Blakemore's true endowment to Australian artistic culture was the enrichment of the lives of hundreds of students over three decades. Furthermore, our new understanding of Blakemore's life and work reaffirms the dynamic contribution women made to developing Australia's artistic vibrancy. It is encouraging to think that further information about this artist and other extant works by her await rediscovery.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article is an expansion of a paper delivered to members of the Queensland Women's Historical Association in May 2016. Further details of the QWHA's objectives and programs can be found at www.miegunyah.org.



Timothy Roberts is a researcher and consultant in Australian art heritage and decorative arts. He is President of the Professional Historians Association (Qld) and a Councillor of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland.

NOTES

- Miss Treweeke donated over 50 works from her own collection to the Queensland Art Gallery. Her bequest of £2,000 afforded the acquisition of over 20 pieces of Australian and international art. See *Courier Mail* 15 Aug 1951 p 3; Judith McKay, 'The Remarkable Miss Treweeke', *Artlines*, 3, 2012, pp 26-28.
- QAGOMA Artist File: Rose Blakemore. QAGOMA Research Library, Brisbane. The gift had brief mentions in the *Courier-Mail* of 12 Feb 1948 p 4 and *Telegraph*

- 11 Feb 1948 p 3; the former claimed they had been painted in Paris.
- Queensland Birth Record 1870/C2320; Qld Marriage Record 1864/B1025, Qld Births, Deaths, Marriages and Divorces.
- Significant collections of Harriet Jane Neville-Rolfe's work are held in the collection of QAGOMA and Rockhampton Art Gallery.
- Copperfield Miner* 11 Apr 1874 p 3.
- Copperfield Miner* 11 Jul 1874 p 2;
- Dianne Byrne, *A travelling photographer in colonial Queensland: the work of William Boag*, Brisbane: State Library of Queensland, 1994 pp 5, 11, 15, 117.
- Daily Telegraph* 6 Oct 1896 p 6.
- E.g. *Express & Telegraph* 20 May 1890 p 4; *Evening Journal* 12 Jul 1890 p 6; 5 Dec 1890 p 3; 11 Dec 1890 p 2.
- Shirley Cameron Wilson, *From shadow into light: South Australian women artists since colonisation*, St Peters SA: Delmont, 1988 p 14; Rachael Biven, *Some forgotten....some remembered: women artists of South Australia*, Sydenham Gallery Norwood SA 1976.
- Shirley Cameron Wilson, *op cit* p 16; *South Australia in 1887: A handbook for the Adelaide Jubilee International Exhibition*, Government Printer, Adelaide 1887 pp 234-7.
- Rachael Biven, *op cit*; Jane Hylton, *South Australian Women Artists 1890s-1940s*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide 1994 pp 4, 86.
- SMH* 14 Jan 1893 p 7; 15 Jan 1898, p 7; *Evening News*, 18 Jan 1896 p 3. Blakemore earned Honours for her 1897 Plant Drawing examination.
- Sydney Technical College offered certificates and diploma qualifications, some of which were required by public school teachers in NSW. 'The Department of Art' *Australian Technical Journal of Science, Art & Technology* 28 Mar 1898 p 41.
- NSW Technical Education Branch, *A Quarter century of Technical Education in New South Wales: a monograph published on the occasion of the exhibition of students' work held at the Sydney Technical College, Easter week, 1909*, Govt Printer, Sydney 1909 p 145; *NSW Government Gazette* no. 434 4 Jun 1896 p 3863; no. 340 22 Apr 1898 p 3183.
- In 1907, the *Evening News* listed the staff as "The lecturer in charge is Mr. J. R. Wright, and his assistants are Misses R. Blakemore and E. I. Brown and Messrs. G. A. Thomas, A. G. Reid, G. H. Arousseau; G. Macintosh, J. A. Peach, and P. W. Atkins." *Evening News* (Sydney) 23 May 1907 p 6.
- 'The Technical College. Exhibition of Students Work' *Daily Telegraph* 29 Jan 1896 p 6.
- 'Art Notes' *Australian Technical Journal of*

- Science, Art & Technology*, 31 Mar 1899 p 60; 31 Mar 1902 p 63.
- Australian Town & Country Journal* 2 Sep 1903 p 42.
- Twenty-first annual exhibition of the Art Society of NSW* [exhibition catalogue], Art Society of NSW, Sydney 1900.
- Spring exhibition, Society of Artists, October 1901* [exhibition catalogue], Sydney: Society of Artists, 1901; *The 22nd annual exhibition of the Art Society of New South Wales: illustrated catalogue* [exhibition catalogue], Sydney: Art Society of New South Wales, 1901
- Batt, Rodd & Purves Ltd, loose leaf sale plan for "Hulverstone" a commodious water-frontage residence, "Woodlands", a cosy cottage & 6 choice marine villa sites / for sale by public auction at the rooms, 88 Pitt Street, Tuesday 15th September 1896 at 11.30 a.m., Batt Rodd & Purves Ltd., auctioneers, National Library of Australia Cartographic Material, Bib ID 3021999, MAP Folder 50, LFSP 717.
- Supplement to the Government Gazette of the State of NSW* no 21, 9 Jan 1902 p 183.
- 1903-4 NSW electoral roll, Darlinghurst division. Other women listed at the same address include Ada Ansell, mantelmaker; Mary Christine de Gyulay, teacher; Elizabeth Findlay, Superintendent WCA; Ada Freeman, dressmaker; Mary Ann Glassen, needlewoman; Edith Gordon Gracie, Assistant Matron WCA; Sarah Emily Machen, dressmaker; Isabel Sophie Maddocks, private teacher; Annie Mayers, Secretary WCA; Mary Quinan, needlewoman; Ethel Mary Reeve, saleswoman; Janet Usher, school teacher; Elizabeth Henrietta Walker, needlewoman; Frances White, private teacher.
- SMH* 23 Feb 1901 p 7.
- QAGOMA Artist File: Rose Blakemore. QAGOMA Research Library, Brisbane
- Register* 28 Jan 1908 p 4; *Evening News* 28 Mar 1908 p 14.
- Sun* 8 May 1916, p 7.
- SMH* 27 Sep 1918 p 4; *Sun* 14 Dec 1919 p 14; *SMH* 15 Dec 1920 p 8; *SMH* 15 Sep 1925 p 15.
- SMH* 14 Jul 1917 p 14.
- Supplement to the Government Gazette of NSW* no 135, 15 Oct 1926 p 4423.
- Blue Mountains Star* 16 Feb 1929 p 4.
- Email correspondence received from Michael Blakemore AO, OBE, 8 October 2018.
- 1943 Commonwealth electoral roll, Wentworth electorate, Woollahra division. Blakemore is listed as residing at 7 Albert St, Edgecliff; 1949 Commonwealth electoral roll, Cowper electorate, Grafton division. Blakemore is listed as living at 84 Queen St, Grafton along with at least 33 other residents.
- NSW Births, Deaths & Marriages death certificate 2058/1958; *SMH* 17 Jan 1958 p 18.

Colonial Rarities



AN ANTIQUE COLONIAL CEDAR FOLK ART CABINET IN THE FORM OF A GOTHIC STRUCTURE.

19th century

Fastidiously handworked and carved, the interior features a bank of brass-handled drawers and shelves, the top has three secret compartments. An unusual, one-off piece of Australiana H 134, w 65, d 21 cm.

By appointment Philip Wheatley, Newcastle NSW

02 4957 0165 | 0417 205 298

bpw@colonialrarities.com

www.colonialrarities.com

THE ONLY COMPANY THAT WELCOMES THE RETURN OF DAMAGED GOODS.



WHETHER IT'S GOLD, SILVER OR BRONZE, IT'S ALWAYS A STERLING JOB.



The next time you look at a beautiful piece of antique silverware you may be actually looking at a beautiful piece of restored antique silverware. Since 1911, WJ Sanders have been renowned as Australia's premier silversmiths. Today we still employ those

same traditional skills, honed over almost a century, to restore pieces to their former glory. We can also hand craft and design new pieces completely from scratch. For more information or a free quote call 9557 0134 or email us today.

UNIT F, 34-36 FITZROY STREET, MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204.
PH (02) 9557 0134. FAX (02) 9557 0086. EMAIL: wjsanders@optusnet.com.au
www.wjsanders.com.au

W.J. Sanders
Excellence in craftsmanship since 1911
ANTIQUE RESTORATION METALWARE SPECIALISTS

ACN 076 667 887 868



Scrimshaw – art of the mariner: the Colin Thomas collection

Colin Thomas, the inaugural chairman of the Tasmanian Chapter of the Australiana Society, has assembled a significant collection of scrimshaw, mostly of Tasmanian origin, which reflects Tasmania's early prosperity as a result of maritime industries.

In the first of these articles, Scott Carlin gives the background to whaling and scrimshaw in southern Australian waters.

SCOTT CARLIN

Whaling in Tasmanian waters was one of Australia's leading export industries up to 1860. Before the advent of petrochemicals, whale oil was used to lubricate machinery,¹ provide the fuel for domestic and street lighting and was the basis for perfumes and soap. Pre-plastics, whale bone was an important material, providing handles for clothes brushes, tooth brushes and other items. Flexible baleen from the feeding plates of the southern right whale was famously used to reinforce women's corsets.²

This era is brought to life through the private collection of Colin Thomas,

who has assembled a scrimshaw collection matching the breadth and quality of the institutional collections in New Bedford, Massachusetts USA; Hull, Yorkshire, England; and other former whaling centres.³ Thomas's collection is chiefly Tasmanian in origin and a touchstone for understanding early Hobart.

Thomas is quick to say that he does not support whaling today in any form:

What was acceptable in the early 19th century is not acceptable today. I fully support the conservation of these majestic marine mammals. However, the personal risk faced by early whalers and their creativity shown in scrimshaw artworks should be acknowledged and respected.

Scrimshaw, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is to “adorn whalebone, ivory, shells, or other materials with carved or coloured designs.” Its derivation is said to be “early 19th century: of unknown origin ...” Scrimshaw has an ancient lineage, with engraved deer horn found in prehistoric sites such as the painted Lascaux

Caves in the Dordogne, France dated around 17,000 BC. The term “scrimshaw” has since come to embrace all items that are a by-product of the whaling industry.

The 19th century had a highly visual culture and the quality of Tasmanian scrimshaw indicates that it was practised across the social spectrum. In the era of elephant ivory, tortoise shell and bone domestic items, there was no prejudice against whale bone, whale ivory or baleen. Indeed, these materials appear to have been prized as a memento of a fierce adversary.

Whaling is inextricably linked with Hobart's origins. In 1803, the ship *Albion*, captained by Massachusetts-born master Eber Bunker (1761–1836)⁴ was hired by the NSW Government to take Captain John Bowen and his party to Risdon Cove near Hobart. The *Albion* encountered a pod of sperm whales off Tasmania's east coast. Bunker's contract allowed him to conduct whaling during the voyage and the expedition waited at Great Oyster Bay while he boiled down three carcasses for their lucrative oil.

Lieutenant-Governor David Collins, who re-established the settlement at Sullivan's Cove

1.

Baleen corset busk engraved for Constantia Elizabeth Cooper c 1830. The verso of this busk is engraved with two Tasmanian whaleboats pursuing a right whale. Provenance: Harry and Christine Wright and Langley collections



in Van Diemen's Land in 1804, requested a report from his harbour master, William Collins (no relation), on the maritime commercial potential of the settlement. Collins was not slow in recommending the relocation of the British whale fishery from London to Hobart, were it became known as the Southern Whale Fishery. By 1805 William Collins had established a shore whaling station at Tryworks Point (now Droughty Point), Rokeby.

While colonial, British, French and American vessels exploited whaling and sealing in Tasmanian waters, the British Government saw Hobart Town primarily as a prison settlement and it remained closed to merchant ships until 1813. Even after 1813, trade continued to be hampered – not until 1828 did the British Government lift heavy import duties on whale oil.

From bay whaling to deep sea whaling

The Southern right whale (*Eubalaena australis*, also known as the black whale) came north from the Antarctic in winter to calve in the sheltered bays of south-eastern Tasmania. Such were their numbers that in 1803 the Rev Robert Knopwood recorded travelling up the River Derwent by boat and needing to keep close to shore owing to the risk of the boat being capsized by right whales.⁵ Other commentators recorded difficulty in sleeping because of the calls from whales cavorting in the Derwent.

Right whales (**plate 1**) feed by sieving krill through horny baleen plates which hang down from their upper jaws. Flexible baleen became an ideal material for corset busks and stays, umbrella spokes and inlays for furniture and walking sticks. As fibre it provided bristle for brushes.

2.

William Duke (1814–53), *Offshore Whaling with the Aladdin and Jane* 1849. Oil on canvas, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery AG2997, photograph by Simon Cuthbert



Schools of sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) also migrated north, searching the Tasman Sea for their favoured food, giant squid and cuttlefish. Sperm oil is superior to right whale oil for lighting, burning more clearly. Spermaceti, a sweet smelling oil made from a wax in the whale's head cavity (where it played a role in the whale's echolocation) improved the brightness of candles. Additionally, ambergris, a sperm whale's intestinal secretion, was used as a fixative in the perfume industry.

In shore or bay whaling, right whales were sighted from an onshore vantage point (such as the escarpments above the Derwent River) and the whaleboats returned to shallow water to process their kill. With the right whale being hunted almost to extinction by the late 1830s, bay whaling was abandoned in favour of deep-sea whaling.



3.

William John Huggins (1791–1845), painter and engraver, *South Sea Whale Fishery* – a representation of boats attempting to kill a sperm whale from descriptions given by experienced Masters and Officers in the South Sea Whale Fishery. Lithograph, hand coloured, engraved by W J Huggins, Marine Painter to his Majesty, published at 105 Leadenhall Street, London, 1834. The harpooned whale has taken the longboats on the 'Nantucket sleigh ride'. The harpooner in the foreground boat has the killing lance poised to pierce the vital organs

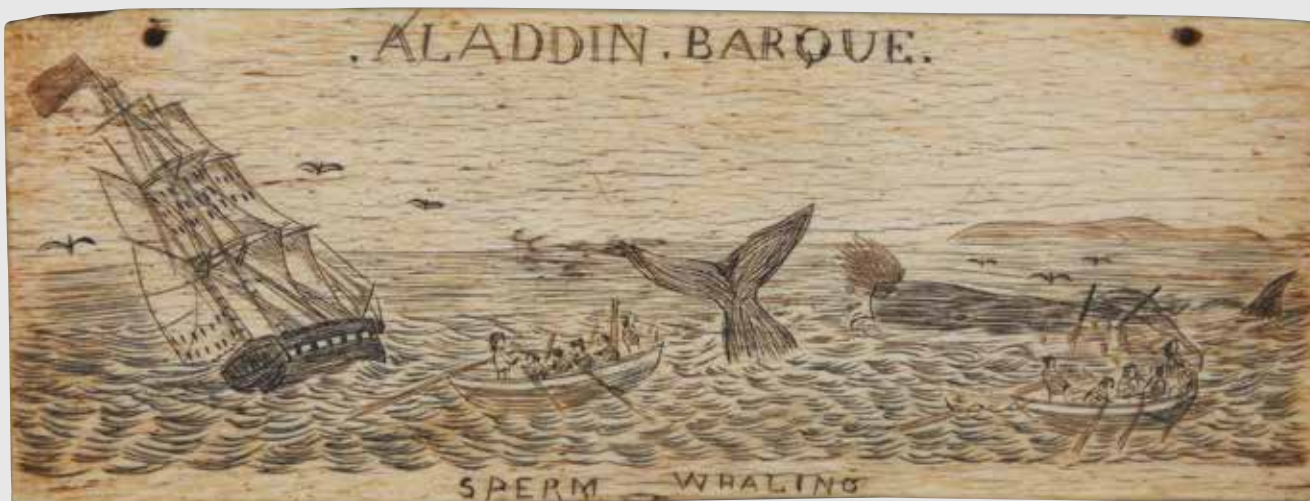
4.

Scrimshaw sperm whale tooth titled "Whaling at Twofold Bay NSW" with a scene of harpooning a spouting whale from a longboat c 1840s. Provenance: Masterpiece Gallery and the Langley collection

5.

Iron trypot commissioned by Charles Seal c 1845. Charles Seal (1801–52) was the owner of more than eleven whale ships including the *Aladdin* and the *Maria Orr*. The *Maria Orr* was named for Maria Orr née Lackey, later Lempriere (1821–84) who owned *Narryna* 1847–84. Photograph by Scott Carlin





6.

Artist unknown, engraved pan bone titled “*Aladdin* barque and sperm whaling” c 1846. The barque *Aladdin* 287 tons was launched as the Royal Navy 10-gun brig *Mutine* in 1816. She was sold by the Royal Navy in 1842, converted to a whale ship and purchased by Charles Seal of Hobart in 1846. The *Aladdin* remained in commission until 1885 when she was purchased by the Tasmanian Government for use as a powder hulk, broken up in 1902. The *Aladdin* was believed to be a ‘lucky ship’ mainly due to her consistent sizeable whale oil cargoes. The ship bore the blue ‘S’ house flag of Charles Seal (1801–52), a merchant, pastoralist, shipowner and whaler. He was born at Whissonsett, Norfolk and arrived in Tasmania in 1823 per the *Regalia*. In 1835 he rented Maria Island from his brother-in-law Matthew Goggs and established two whaling stations there. By 1850 Seal owned the largest whaling fleet in the colony with his shipping office at 20 Salamanca Place, Hobart. His ships included the *Aladdin*, *Prince Regent*, *Highlander*, *Sussex*, *Southern Cross*, *Cheviot*, *Litherland*, *Pacific*, *Dundee Merchant*, *Prince Leopold*, *Pride* and *Maria Orr*

7.

John Skinner Prout (1805–76), *Hobart from the New Wharf* (showing Salamanca Place warehouses) c 1844. Coloured lithograph by W. L. Walton





The dangerous business of sperm whaling is recorded in William Duke's 1849 theatrical tableau, *Offshore Whaling with the Aladdin and Jane* in the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery collection (**plate 2**). Set in Storm Bay against a backdrop of Mount Wellington, ten whale boats, their prows painted red typical of Tasmanian whale boats, aim to slaughter a large pod of whales.⁶ Several sperm whales are diving out of reach but two in the foreground are in their death throes, blood foaming from their blow holes. Sailors are being dragged to safety from boats swamped by the heaving whales. Few of the sailors of the day knew how to swim.

Duke shows the catch rather than the pursuit in which the harpooned whale dragged the whale boat for several kilometres, an experience known as the 'Nantucket sleigh ride' (**plates 3–4**). As the pursuit got underway, water was thrown over the rapidly unwinding harpoon rope, which could easily claim a whaler's arm or leg. A harpooned whale could drag the boat under, so a tomahawk was always on hand to chop the rope if needed. Hours of pursuit and loss of blood would exhaust the whale, allowing the harpooner to move in to pierce its vital organs.

In Duke's scene, one whale's flesh is being flensed (cut away from the bone) and hoisted in 'blankets' onto the *Aladdin's* deck for rendering down in trypots (**plate 5**). The trypots sat in lead trays on the ship's deck. Furnaces under them were kept burning day and night until the whale was consumed – its flesh melted into oil and drained off into barrels which were then stowed in the hold. The smoke, stench and grease were constant and permeated the sails and rigging. A fire spreading from a ship's galley or tryworks was fatal to operations. The *Aladdin* was also depicted on scrimshaw (**plate 6**).

In 1834-36, Hobart's New Wharf was constructed together with the warehouses that face what is now Salamanca Place (**plate 7**). By the late 1840s, as many as 50 whaling ships might be seen tied up at New Wharf with most of the colony's businessmen taking a financial interest in whaling; the proceeds helped provide their substantial houses (**plate 8**). The mid-1830s to the 1850s was the great



8.

Narryna was built 1835–40 by Captain Andrew Haig (1793–1871) merchant, ship builder, whaler and builder of Salamanca Place's first warehouses. In the 1830s–50s the majority of Hobart's moneyed class had an interest in whaling. Medico, historian and collector Sir William Crowther (1887–1981) was one of the founders of the Van Diemen's Land Memorial Folk Museum at Narryna in 1955. Crowther's grandfather, also Sir William, was a surgeon, whaler and briefly Premier. Crowther's scrimshaw collection was divided between Narryna and the Crowther collection at the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office. Photograph by Peter West

9.

Pair of jack knives, steel and brass with banded whale ivory (teeth) and baleen shafts, used in cutting and splicing ropes, as well as for scrimshaw

10.

Pair of sperm whale teeth c 1850 scrimshawed with whalers in traditional garb dancing the shuffle steps of a hornpipe. Provenance: Langley collection

11.

Dressing table set c 1820-30. This dressing table set is in the style of scrimshanders and turners Charles and James Bayley of Runnymede, New Town. A pair of teeth flank a whale ivory (sperm whale tooth) pin cushion sitting on a triple-reeded blackwood plateau (with baleen plate insert) on turned bun feet with acorn corner finials. The teeth are coloured in red and blue inks with British and French-flagged vessels. The British vessel also flies a shipping line house flag. The French ship sits above a scene of a spouting sperm whale being killed with three longboats in attendance. Provenance: Langley collection





12.

Artist unknown, British-flagged whalers off Lord Howe Island with Ball's Pyramid on the horizon c 1840. Sperm whale pan bone (jaw section 240 x 160 mm) inscribed in black and red inks in Huon pine shadow box. Provenance: Masterpiece Gallery and Langley collection. This scene from the whaling 'Middle Grounds' reflects exceptional first-hand observation of whaling. The ship has hove to, the lower sails on its foremasts furled, possibly in anticipation of whaling rendering on deck. Four longboats pursue three sperm whales. The whalers are holding the oars vertical and crossed so the boat cannot be pulled to one side or under as the whales endeavour to evade capture.

era of sperm whaling. While mainland Australia struggled in the years following the financial crash of 1842, Van Diemen's Land's economy remained buoyant owing to whaling, wool and a convict labour force.

In 1919 medical practitioner and collector Sir William E.L.H. Crowther (1887–1981) described the four principal whaling grounds off the coast of Australia.⁷ The most popular Middle Grounds "lay between the south-east coast of Australia and the west coast of the North Island of New Zealand to Norfolk Island ... The 'Northern Grounds' were north of Norfolk Island and between Queensland and New Caledonia. The 'Western Grounds' stretched ... south of the Great Australian Bight, with the 'Eastern Grounds' between south-east Tasmania and the Chatham Islands including the coastline of the South Island of New Zealand."

In the 1840s Thomas Scott described his fellow crewmen on the whaler *Wallaby* as "the scrapings of Hell, Bedlam [psychiatric asylum] and Newgate [prison]." Deep sea whaling crews included former slaves and ex-convicts. Captain James Kelly and others founded the Derwent Whaling Club

in 1826 to train young Tasmanian-born men as whalers. Tasmanian and mainland Aboriginal men played a leading role in whaling crews owing to their navigational skills, their physical dexterity and spearing / harpooning skills. Tasmanian Indigenous man William Lanne (c 1835–1869) sailed on whaling ships and made his final voyage on the *Runnymede* in 1869.

A pan bone plaque commemorating the ship *Pacific* in the W L Crowther collection of the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office is incised "The *Pacific* whaling ship, Captain Robert Gardiner of Hobart Town, homeward bound, 900 barrels [of] sperm oil, 10 months out, 1848". A whaling voyage of ten months was not uncommon, indeed in the 1840s a colonial act was introduced limiting offshore whaling voyages to three years. Captains were reluctant to return to shore without a full cargo, lest their crew abscond.

In the 1860s with sperm whale populations declining, petroleum and its by-product kerosene replaced whale oil in lighting and industry. The last Tasmanian whale ship sailed out of Hobart in 1899. English and Norwegian whalers still plied Tasmanian waters into the 1920s and 30s.

13.

Pair of engraved sperm whale teeth c 1835. The fineness of the engraving is in contrast with the massive scale of this pair of sperm whale teeth. The teeth were formerly in the collection of Sir William Crowther (1887–1981) but later separated. One was purchased by George Burrows at Freeman & Duff auctioneers of Hobart and the other surfaced in NSW. Colin Thomas has reunited the pair, their different colouring reflecting different light exposure during their years apart. Photograph by Nick Osborne



A remarkable collection

Colin Thomas's collection encompasses the breadth of scrimshaw from items of personal adornment, to sailors' gifts to their sweethearts and tools to maintain the majestic rigging of the whaling ships.

Whalers were paid a 'lay' or a proportion of the proceeds of the ship's earnings according to the value placed on their role.⁸ Harpooners earned a very high share. Herman Melville's 1851 novel *Moby Dick* records the whalebone and teeth being divided among the crew according to their lay. Sperm whales have between 40–52 teeth in their lower jaw (closing against sockets in the upper jaw), hence the number of scrimshaw sperm whale teeth in circulation. Sailors occupied the lengthy periods between whale sightings in scrimshandering. Melville recorded in *Moby Dick*,

Some of them [the whale-men] have little boxes of dentistical-looking implements, specially intended for the scrimshandering business. But, in general, they toil with their jackknives alone ...

In addition to bespoke tools and jack knives (**plate 9**), sailmaker's needles were also used to incise the design before rubbing in a colouring in the form of ink, soot or tobacco juice. A sailor using a jack knife was clearly responsible for the pair of teeth engraved with sailors dancing the shuffle steps of a hornpipe (**plate 10**). The thick and dense base of the sperm whale's lower jaw bone was cut for walking sticks. The adjacent flat 'pan bone' sections were cut for plaques and plateaux or shaved and bent as the sides of ditty boxes.

In 1841 Thomas Scott sailed with Captain Charles Bayley on a 22-month whaling voyage to the Pacific Islands. His diary tells of crew members who made 'very neat' walking sticks, cribbage boards and other items. The captain took a lathe on board to turn sperm whale teeth into 'whale ivory' components of walking sticks and household items. A fine collection of Bayley scrimshaw is on exhibition at Runnymede, New Town, a house named for the leading ship in the Bayley whaling fleet.

The same hand can be detected across scrimshaw pieces in public and private collections and the subject is worthy of a study similar to those produced on Australian furniture, silver, jewellery and

studio ceramics. A desk or dressing table set in Thomas's collection (**plate 11**) appears to be by the same hand as the Bayley desk set at Runnymede. Desk or dressing table sets were somewhat 'architectural' trophy items. They took the form of a raised platform, often with a back plate of engraved pan bone, supporting a pair of engraved sperm whale teeth. Occasionally the space between the teeth was occupied by a pin cushion fitted into a carved sperm whale tooth or a pocket watch holder.

Another scrimshaw artist was responsible for the fine engraving of both a pan bone with a scene of two ships off Lord Howe Island (**plate 12**) and a pair of enormous sperm whale teeth (**plate 13**). Has this engraving been done using the 'dentistical' tools referred to by Melville, a surgeon's tools or fine steel plate engraving tools? The composition of the scenes is reminiscent of William Duke's work, which may have provided inspiration for scrimshaw.

Whale ships required maintenance and it is natural that tools for this were made from whalebone and ivory. Sailors' tools include fids used to splice ropes (**plate 14**); serving mallets to bind ropes together, thus



14.

Whale bone fids (tools for splicing rope) c 1820–50. Whalebone fids are shown alongside the more usual metal fid, also known as a marlin spike, which nevertheless sports a fine whale ivory (sperm whale tooth) handle. The collection includes three of the largest whale bone fids known, together with scribed, rope-turned, cross hatched and faceted decoration. Photograph by Nick Osborne



15.

Serving mallet c 1820–50. A serving mallet was used for wrapping spliced ropes with twine. Some retain a tar residue from this process. Provenance George Burrows collection

16.

Seam rubbers c 1820–1875, whale bone and whale ivory (sperm whale teeth), brass and baleen. Seam rubbers were used to flatten the ridges created by seaming canvas for use as sails. Seam rubbers were carved (e.g. with a Turk's head knot finial) and inscribed with monograms or the names of their makers. The top of the whale ivory example (centre) unscrews to reveal a paper of sailmakers' needles. Photograph by Nick Osborne



avoiding rope burn (**plate 15**); seam rubbers used in flattening sail canvas for sewing (**plate 16**); rope blocks with pulleys (**plate 17**), ergonomic palm thimbles (**plate 18**) and net maker's shuttles. Sealers' clubs were improvised from a whale baculum or penis bone (**plate 19**).

Among sailors' scrimshaw gifts to their sweethearts, ditty boxes to contain jewellery or sewing materials were a favourite. Ditty boxes had sides of whale bone or baleen with Huon pine or cedar oval tops and bases (**plate 20**). The sides were often pierced, with the junction at the back in the form of strapwork, reminiscent of American Shaker boxes. A ring dated 1873 is pierced with an early version of the Australian coat of arms (**plate 21**). An article in a future edition of *Australiana* will survey scrimshaw made for domestic contexts.

Prestige scrimshaw items such as walking canes may have been sold or presented to ship's captains or patrons. Walking canes are superlative examples of turning and carving, decorated with a range of traditional and folkloric motifs. The carved finials take many forms including the clenched fist, the albatross and the lady's leg. The turned shafts can be made up of contrasting whalebone, whale ivory and baleen sections. This banding is used to good effect on the model of 'Pharaonic' crooked sceptres. Carving may include reeding and gadrooning, barley-twist reeding, cross-hatching and corkscrew carving (**plate 22**). A walking cane with a splendid Turk's head finial (modelled on the rope knot) was owned by Captain Richard Copping (1821–92), whose whaling career between 1831 and 1852 makes for exciting reading.⁹

Colin Thomas's collection provides an extraordinary view of whaling as a highly dangerous trade and an era with vastly different sensitivities from our own. Southern Right Whale populations faced extinction by the mid-1830s and are still listed as endangered. However, they have been sighted recently in the Derwent. Their current worldwide population is not known and their conservation status is listed as Vulnerable (IUCN 2008). We can only hope that international pressure



17. Rope blocks, single, double and triple pulley, 19th century. Photograph by Nick Osborne

18. Palm thimble for use with fids made of a whale vertebra thimble decorated as a sperm whale in profile with the verso decorated as a whale tail. Bored depressions for needles include the shape of a press stud. Provenance: Gowan's Auctions. Photograph by Nick Osborne

19. Whale baculum (penis bone) clubs, used in sealing, 16½ and 23 inches (42 and 58 cm). Photograph by Nick Osborne



20.

Oval ditty box in pierced whalebone (pattern of interlocking wheels) with bird's eye Huon pine lid and base, c 1835. Provenance: Gowan's Auctions and Hobart's northern suburbs. Photograph by Nick Osborne

21.

A ring dated 1873 is pierced with an early version of the Australian coat of arms. Photograph by Nick Osborne

22.

Walking sticks. Whalebone (jaw bone section), whale ivory (sperm whale tooth), baleen, other inlays. The whale ivory finial of the third stick unscrews as a lidded bucket for dice. Captain Richard Copping (1821–92) owned the large stick on the far right. Photograph by Nick Osborne



will succeed in allowing this great marine mammal to rebuild to the critical mass needed for survival. Minke whales are still a target for Japanese, Icelandic and Norwegian whalers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This article grew out of an exhibition *Scrimshaw – Art of the Mariner* from the collection of Colin Thomas displayed at Narryna, to coincide with the MyState Australian Wooden Boat Festival in February 2017. Narryna is the 1830s house of merchant, shipbuilder and whaler, Captain Andrew Haig (1793–1871).

FURTHER READING

- Colin S Thomas, *Scrimshaw “The Ancient Art of the Mariner”*, published by Colin S Thomas, Hobart 2011
- Stuart M. Frank, *Ingenious Contrivances, Curiously Carved, Scrimshaw in the New Bedford Whaling Museum*, Boston 2012, published by David R. Godine in association with the New Bedford Whaling Museum
- Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* 1851
- Peter Mercer, *A Most Dangerous Occupation, Whaling, Whalers and the Bayleys: Runnymede’s Maritime Heritage*, National Trust of Australia (Tasmania) 2002

NOTES

1. Whale oil was used to lubricate machinery at the Port Kembla steelworks, NSW into the 1960s.
2. Baleen was also called ‘whalebone’ in the 19th century. This essay differentiates whale bone (sperm whale jaw bone) and whale ivory (from sperm whale teeth) from baleen.

3. Major scrimshaw collections can be found in the New Bedford Whaling Museum, Martha’s Vineyard Museum, Mystic Seaport Museum, Nantucket Whaling Museum, Mariner’s Museum in Newport News, USA; Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge and Hull Maritime Museum, England.
4. Eber Bunker built his house Collingwood at Liverpool NSW in 1810.
5. The Diary of the Rev Robert Knopwood, first Chaplain of Van Diemen’s Land 1803-1838, 28 June 1803.
6. The red painted prows of Tasmanian whaleboats emulated the red canvas-covered prows of British Arctic whale boats.
7. Quoted by Peter Mercer in *A Most Dangerous Occupation* (Hobart, 2002).
8. Clifford W. Ashley, *The Yankee Whaler*, 1926. The accompanying Glossary of Whaling Terms defines a “lay” as “a whaleman’s proportionate share of the earnings of a voyage”.
9. Arthur G. Credland, “Captain Richard Copping of Hobart Town”, *The Great Circle*, journal of the Australian Association for Maritime History, vol 10 no 1 April 1988 pp 22–32

23.

Artist unknown, engraved sperm whale pan bone (jaw section) depicting two whaleships c 1830–50. Engraved pan bone depicting a similar scene to William Duke’s *Offshore Whaling with the Aladdin and Jane*, 1849. It depicts two whaleships, one under sail with lookouts in each mast, the other with bare poles hauling a ‘blanket’ of whale blubber aboard. Five whaleboats and five whales are in the foreground. The foreground waves have been “flattened” by whale oil. This has in turn been represented as a stylised albatross, which symbolised good luck for the mariner. Provenance: Clydebank collection, Sydney and Masterpiece Gallery

All items are from Colin Thomas’s collection and photographed by Andrew Simpson unless otherwise specified.



Scott Carlin is Manager of House Museums with the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, responsible for Narryna, 103 Hampden Rd, Battery Point; Markree, 145 Hampden Rd, Hobart; and The Private Secretary’s Cottage, TMAG campus. You can contact him at 03 6165 7000 or Scott.Carlin@tmag.tas.gov.au

A table for the Asylum, New Norfolk

You might easily pass by, without noticing, a basic item of furniture with little decoration or character, but a closer look can be revealing. Dr Philip Reid brings to life a small pine table, through a paper label pasted underneath, which reveals its maker, date, means of delivery and destination – the Hospital for the Insane at New Norfolk, near Hobart.

PHILIP REID

The pages of *Australiana* often display items of wealth and power from the colonial era. In contrast, this simple piece of furniture represents the obligation of the state to provide for the more vulnerable citizens. The table comes from the oldest psychiatric hospital in Australia, based at New Norfolk on the Derwent River upstream from Hobart, Tasmania from 1827 until its closure in 2001.

This simple side table (h 76, l 152, d 66 cm) has a top of Tasmanian Huon pine with rounded corners to the front (plates 1–2). The four tapered legs are of King William pine and are painted. On the underside of the table-top is glued a

paper maker's label with a hand-written inscription denoting the purchaser and the delivery instructions.

The Whitesides & Son maker's label is inscribed in ink with the words *Hospital for Insane, New Norfolk, Per Monarch* (plate 3). The cabinetmaker was located at this address, 48–50 Liverpool Street in Hobart, between the years 1857–1889.¹ The label proclaims that Whitesides held a royal warrant “BY APPOINTMENT TO His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh” which must have been awarded during or shortly after HRH Prince Alfred's visit to Tasmania in January 1868.² Whitesides & Son's advertising mentions their Royal appointment, in the same format, from 21 July 1870 to October,³ hence the table (or strictly, the

label) was probably made between 1870 and 1889.

The firm had already completed prestige items for the Department of Public Works, most notably in 1856 the carved President's Chair for the Legislative Council Chamber in Hobart.⁴ For the hospital, they were now providing furniture for the poorest and most vulnerable.

New Norfolk Asylum

Local lunatics were sent to the asylum in Sydney until the separation of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land in 1824. From then on, they were housed in the colonial hospitals.

The authorities of Van Diemen's Land used the term “invalid” to describe convicts who were unable to earn a living



1-2.

Table with Huon Pine top, from the Invalid Hospital at New Norfolk, c 1870–1889. Collection Dr Stephen Reid, photographs Peter Wise 2018

due to age, illness or injury. On gaining their freedom they often returned to penal establishments through vagrancy. By the 1820s the number of invalids was increasing and placing strain on the limited hospital facilities and medical staff. Before the arrival of Lt-Governor Arthur in 1824, hospital care in Van Diemen's Land was confusingly fragmented with an array of small hospitals, invalid barracks and depots. Most provided care that was unsatisfactory.

In 1827 Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur decided that all invalids in Tasmania would be housed at the invalid barracks at New Norfolk. The township of New Norfolk was 35 km from Hobart, accessible both by boat along the Derwent River and by road.

In New Norfolk, the Government Medical Officer Dr Robert Officer⁵ raised his concerns about the state of the living conditions of the invalids in his area. He wrote initially to the Local Magistrate who agreed and in turn forwarded correspondence to the Colonial Secretary. This created the impetus for the Lt-Governor to commit to a hospital.

His letter described the living conditions for the invalids:⁶

the Barracks consist of two apartments, which during the rain are inundated both from above and below, in which cooking, washing, and all other necessary operations are performed, and in which patients are all huddled together without regard to moral or physical discrepancy.

Arthur appointed the colony's architect John Lee Archer to provide the final design for the asylum, completed and opened around 1831 (plate 4). By 1833 the original Willow Court building housed 113 invalids and 18 lunatics.⁷ The building gained this title from the later willow tree that dominated the courtyard; Lady (Jane) Franklin (wife of Sir John, Governor 1837–43) provided the tree from cuttings obtained from the tomb of Napoleon Bonaparte on St Helena. The French general was exiled



here before his death and burial; his remains were returned to France in 1840.

There was a series of name modifications over the years due to a change in the governing authority and a series of inquiries. The names included Lunatic Asylum, Hospital for the Insane, Lachlan Park Hospital and finally The Royal Derwent Hospital.

In 1855 the colonial government took over the hospital and excluded the invalids. From here the numbers increased steadily with mentally ill patients mixed randomly with the intellectually handicapped. For the next 100 years the hospital expanded in different forms but was perpetually in a state of overcrowding and underfunding. Determined efforts from dedicated doctors, nursing staff and commissioners to improve conditions could not compensate for the lack of appropriate buildings, trained wardsmen and meaningful activities.⁸ The hospital was a source of public interest and its activities reported regularly in the local newspapers.

Robert Wilson, the Catholic Bishop of Hobart 1842–66, was one of the first commissioners when the hospital was taken over by the colonial government.

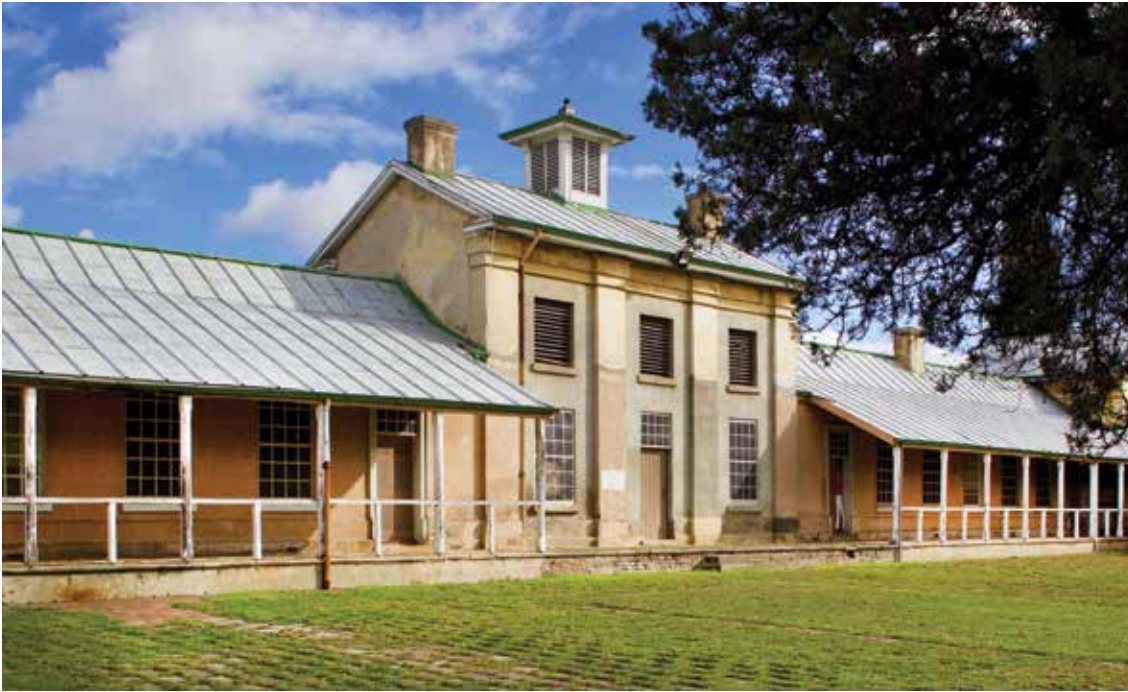
3.

Cabinet-maker's paper label from Whitesides & Son glued under table top, c 1870–1889. Photograph Peter Wise 2018

Having experience of asylums from working in England, Bishop Wilson was critical of the many deficiencies in the hospital. He felt the site was too cut off from regular supervision, and the buildings were⁹

designed by those much more conversant in cells for criminals than apartments for the infirm of mind ... if ingenuity could be called upon to produce the largest amount of gloom in the small amount of space, we have it here in perfection.

The men lived in an inner small quadrangle with a veranda on one side. Their dormitories were nearly all like the cells of a prison. They were gloomy, closed and ill ventilated. The light was supposedly worse than the gaol in Hobart Town. They would spend the



4. Some of the remaining buildings of the Invald Hospital at New Norfolk. Photograph Peter Wise 2018

day in a confined yard, closed in all round. The women's quarters were no better. Violent or excitable patients were confined in a narrow corridor into which their cells opened, leading to a dreary and monotonous existence.

Coinciding with Bishop Wilson's concern for the patients' amenities, English psychiatrists such as Dr John Connolly (1794–1866) were suggesting better environments to aid treatment. He preferred minimal restraint and an outgoing program that included pavilions and cottages. These types of dwellings were built or acquired around the original invalid hospital. Additional acreage was purchased.

Dr Connolly suggested that good food, cleanliness, tranquility, good air, free exercise outdoors, cheerful mental recreations, agreeable objects, pleasant walks, various employments within doors and out, especially farms and gardens contribute to the recovery of curable patients. He considered that without these, kindness, patience and humane attention from staff would be ineffectual.

An annual report for the hospital to the Tasmanian House of Assembly from 1864 documents the changes over the preceding years. Many of the high walls had been pulled down, recreation had been introduced including dances, professional entertainments, summer walks, drives and

picnics outside the hospital. Books and games were available, patients could have domesticated birds and small animals, while pictures decorated the walls. Many of the old cells had been pulled down and extra, well-lit day rooms erected. Gardens had been laid out in the grounds. Use of the straightjacket and confinement had been reduced to a minimum. The table may have been acquired with improved standards of living in mind.

In 1883 a Royal Commission recommended conversion of the hospital to a pavilion system of a series of separate cottages holding a maximum of 20 patients each, in order to enable better classification and the provision of better comfort for the patients. It suggested comfort and cure should be considered before cost, but in accord with Tasmanian government practice, the expensive recommendation was ignored.

A new hospital nearer to Hobart was frequently promoted but always strenuously opposed by the New Norfolk community. Better facilities and access to medical services in Hobart had to be balanced against the large greenfield site better suited to convalescence and recovery. There was concern that the mentally ill would be overly represented on the streets if the hospital was to be placed in the town.

One regular vessel to service the district was paddle steamer PS *Monarch*, a 128-ton 60-horsepower steamer built in 1854 at West Renfrew, Glasgow (**plate 5**). *Monarch* came to the Derwent in 1854 and was a feature of Hobart life travelling from Brooke Street pier to New Norfolk on a regular basis. Captain Wise worked the vessel hard until 1897. Her half-sunken remains were identifiable in New Town Bay up until the 1950s.

Newspaper articles document day excursions conducted by the *Monarch* with passengers dispersing from New Norfolk to observe Hop-pickers at Bushy Park, the Salmon Ponds and the Hospital for the Insane with consent of the doctor in charge.¹⁰

The presence of the *Monarch* carrying passengers, goods (such as this table) and services in part allowed the Hospital to remain at its original site.

The patients

Press articles not only gave insights into the living conditions but the illnesses that patients suffered.¹¹ In 1856 it was reported there were 200 patients classified into three classes according to the nature and severity of their condition. Cells were required for the more seriously ill.

Observers reported one patient having an antipathy to bright colours: red and

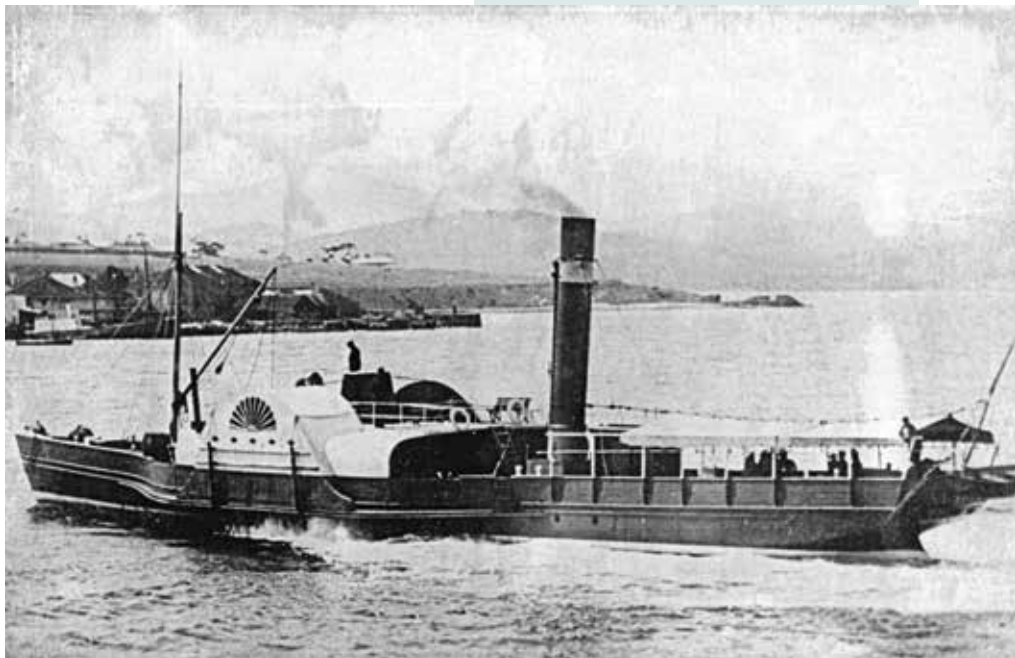
scarlet particularly excited a paroxysm. Instances of extraordinary delusions were common. One woman fancied herself as a princess, with a duke for a father and duchess for a mother, and would extend her hand to be kissed. Another young female imagined herself to be 1,200 years old and requested assistance to procure a more comfortable cottage.

Admission registers of the asylum of New Norfolk from the 1830s to 2001 represent the changing approach to the diagnosis of mental illness.¹² The mainstay of admission was psychosis, severe mood disorders and conditions related to alcohol. Intellectual handicap and patients suffering epilepsy were also admitted. Subtypes of mania included puerperal, hysterical, religious and a presentation thought to be related to alcohol intoxication. Delusional insanity was a common descriptor of a paranoid illness.

The main dynamic for the rise and expansion of the asylum in Tasmania was the decline of the penal system that had previously housed, fed and where possible worked convicts who were mentally ill. Interestingly mental illness rates were not extensively documented. Health records were mainly for administrative requirements focusing on physical ailments such as fevers and injuries that would impact on productive labour.

Treatments were provided as well as housing. Moral and medicinal approaches were taken. Moral therapy was seen as work, recreation and discipline. Restraint was needed at times, created by camisoles, sleeves, canvas mittens and separation rooms. Medicines included sedatives, narcotics, tonics and stimulants with the hope of some symptomatic relief.

The rate of cure was not high and patients gradually accumulated in the New Norfolk hospital. It was as much the death rate as the cure rate that kept the numbers from escalating. For example, in the years 1862–4 there were 103 admissions, 47 discharges but 49 deaths. It was not until the mid 1950s that effective pharmacotherapy became available which paved the way for de-institutionalisation.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Paul Armstrong, volunteer researcher with the Maritime Museum of Tasmania for the photo and background on the paddle steamer *Monarch*. Mr Peter Wise provided the images of the table and current day Willow Court.

5.

The Paddle Steamer *Monarch* on the Derwent heading toward New Norfolk. Collection: Maritime Museum of Tasmania, Hobart



Dr Philip Reid is a consultant psychiatrist who lives and works in Hobart, Tasmania.

NOTES

1. Kevin Fahy & Andrew Simpson, *Australian Furniture: Pictorial History and Dictionary 1788–1938*, Casuarina Press, Woollahra 1998 p 133f.
2. J B Hawkins, "A Royal Visitor. The Duke of Edinburgh KG 1867–8, 1869, 1870–71. Part 2: Victoria & Tasmania" *Australiana* August 1999 p 75ff.
3. *Mercury* 21, 23, 28 & 30 Jul 1870 p 1; 2 Aug 1870 p1; 6 Aug 1870 p 1 etc until 18 Oct 1870 p. 1
4. K Fahy, C Simpson & A Simpson *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*, David Ell Press, Sydney 1985 fig 62 on p 129.

5. Later Sir Robert (1800–1879), Speaker of the Legislative Council 1861–1877. He guided HRH Prince Alfred around the Salmon Ponds at New Norfolk in 1868, and his funeral was handled by Whitesides & Sons; *Mercury* 10 Jul 1879 p 2.
6. R W Gowland, *Troubled Asylum: the history of the Royal Derwent Hospital at New Norfolk*, Glenorchy 1981 p 4.
7. Heritage firm Godden Mackay prepared a conservation plan in 1992, see *Willow Court barracks building, Royal Derwent Hospital, New Norfolk: conservation plan, Final report*.
8. Alison Alexander (ed) *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, University of Tasmania, Hobart 2005 p 315.
9. Joan C Brown, "Poverty is not a Crime", *Social Service in Tasmania 1803–1900*, 1972 p 107.
10. "The Trip by the Monarch", *Tasmanian Tribune* 30 Mar 1875.
11. "The Lunatic Asylum, New Norfolk" *Hobart Mercury* 10 Mar 1856 p 3.
12. Eric Ratcliff & Kenneth Kirkby, "Psychiatry in Tasmania: from old cobwebs to new brooms" *Australasian Psychiatry* vol 9 no 2, June 2001 pp 128–132.



Trust the women:¹ *women lead the way in preserving Queensland's heritage*

One of the first events organised by the Australiana Society's Queensland Chapter was a visit to Miegunyah, the historic house museum owned and operated by the Queensland Women's Historical Association in Bowen Hills, Brisbane for the past 50 years. For the visit in June 2018, local member Judith McKay acted as a guide, giving members a snapshot of the association and its extensive museum and archival collection; recently she undertook a significance assessment of the collection under the National Library's Community Heritage Grant program.² Here she tells the story of the association and its pioneering efforts to preserve Queensland's heritage.

1.

Miegunyah in 1886, soon after it was built for the Perry family, well-known Brisbane ironmongers. The house is on the Queensland Heritage Register as a fine example of a substantial single-storey timber residence. Photograph: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, neg no 41592

2.

Miegunyah dining room.

Photograph: Queensland Women's Historical Association archives



JUDITH MCKAY

The Queensland Women's Historical Association (QWHA), established in 1950, is one of Queensland's leading historical societies.³ A self-funded voluntary organisation, it began as a branch of the state's oldest historical society, the (later Royal) Historical Society of Queensland, which had been founded in 1913. Though the parent society had always included a few women members, it provided no activities especially for women and some found its evening lectures difficult to attend. The QWHA's founding goals were to interest women in Queensland history, particularly that of pioneer women; to organise social functions at Newstead House, Brisbane's oldest surviving residence, which it shared with the parent society; and to arrange outings to historic places.⁴

Women from across Queensland were invited to join the new group, especially those related to pioneers. Many of the early members had links to notable pioneers – premiers, senior public servants, pastoralists and the like – while

others were notable in their own right, such as medical scientist Dr Josephine Mackerras, medical practitioner Dr Eleanor Bourne, educationalist and philanthropist Josephine Bedford, nursing administrator Eunice Paten, federal politician Senator (later Dame) Annabelle Rankin, and Brisbane's first female alderman, Petronel White.

In 1954 Martha Young (1900–1967) became president, eventually holding office for 12 years. A woman of enormous energy and organisational ability, she gave the association new impetus: membership rose to over 1,000 and activities expanded greatly. Tension developed between the two historical societies and in November 1965 “the women” were asked to leave Newstead House. Fortuitously, just as they were looking⁵ for a new home, a colonial house in nearby Bowen Hills came onto the market. A state-wide appeal was launched for its purchase; this succeeded and in June 1968. Miegunyah was opened as a folk museum and the association's headquarters (**plates 1–2**). The association remains one of the few historical societies in Queensland to own its own premises.

Preserving places

Among Mrs Young's initiatives as president was a scheme, begun in 1961, to mark places of outstanding significance to Queensland by fixing plaques explaining their history (**plate 3**). This was inspired by London's famous “blue plaques” scheme which she had observed during a recent visit.⁶ The scheme was not confined to Queensland. In 1964 she and the secretary, Gyneth Campbell, travelled around England and Scotland to mark several places there, including Caldrees Manor, Ickleton, the former home of Queensland's first premier, Robert Herbert. In all, before the project ended in the 1980s, some 90 places were marked. The project was unique in Australia⁷ and pre-empted official heritage protection in Queensland by 30 years, predating the establishment of a local branch of the National Trust (1963) and the passing of state heritage legislation (1992).

The association also pioneered heritage conservation in Queensland. In 1979 another visionary president, Lorraine Cazalar (1934–2009), obtained a grant through the National Estate program to engage heritage specialists,



Richard Allom Architects, to undertake a conservation management plan for Miegunyah; this has guided the house's conservation and interpretation almost to this day. The work not only represented best practice but was also pioneering, for in 1979 the heritage movement in Australia was in its infancy. Though the Commonwealth had recently introduced heritage legislation (1975), Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), the country's leading organisation of heritage professionals, was still drafting its "Burra Charter" for places of cultural significance.

3.

Plaque formerly fixed to Carlton, Brisbane, the home of medical practitioner and naturalist Dr Joseph Bancroft, now demolished. The first plaques were of blue enamel, like the London prototypes. Photograph: Queensland Women's Historical Association archives

4.

Mrs Young receives, on the association's behalf, a silver spade from Queensland premier Frank Nicklin in 1957. The spade, made by Walsh Bros of Melbourne, had been presented to Governor Bowen in 1865 when he turned the first sod for the Great Northern Railway. It was donated by his granddaughter and sent from London via Queensland's agent-general. Photograph: Queensland Women's Historical Association archives

5.

Medallion quilt made in England c 1808 by Elizabeth Kent and kept by her descendants in Australia for more than 150 years. It was brought by her military officer son, John Kent, who was appointed to the Moreton Bay penal settlement in 1839 as Deputy Assistant Commissary General. The quilt's chintz fabric includes Egyptian motifs fashionable at the time of its making. Photograph: Queensland Women's Historical Association archives

Preserving collections

From its inception, the association has been active in historical collecting, often in conjunction with its lectures, publications, outings, exhibitions, place-marking, etc. Mrs Young set up the archives-library collection and never missed an opportunity of adding to it (plate 4). For instance, in 1955, with the cooperation of the *Sunday Mail* social editor, she appealed for photographs of Queensland governors' wives; needless to add she was successful.

The artefact collection is extensive, comprising about 15,000 items, many of which furnish Miegunyah's several recreated rooms. The collection has particular strengths in costume and textiles (plate 5), but also includes furniture, domestic and personal items, artworks, toys (plate 11), handicrafts, jewellery, medals and souvenirs.

Given its early membership – not to mention its direct approaches to descendants of governors, etc – the association was able to collect outstandingly significant material that would normally have gone to state collections. At the time it had few competitors in Queensland actively collecting historical artefacts, for it was not until 1966 that the Queensland Museum established a history section and for years this was more interested in technology than social history, while other specialist



6-9.

John Wilson Carey, cabinetmaker (1828–1902), and Matthew Fern, carver (1831–1898), davenport for William Pettigrew, 1873. Queensland yellow-wood and other timbers, 100 x 67 x 65 cm. The masks on the console supports are portraits of Pettigrew's daughter, Margaret, for whom the davenport was made. Photographs: Judith McKay



museums were yet to emerge. The material collected was recorded in the association's newsletters, initially the *News Sheet* and later *Historical Happenings*, hence many items have detailed provenance, a situation rarely encountered in historical collections assembled without the help of museum professionals.

Of the material collected in the early years, two collections are particularly significant: the Bowen collection, relating to Queensland's first governor and later Victoria's governor, Sir George Ferguson Bowen and his wife Diamantina, Lady Bowen; and the Herbert collection, relating to Queensland's first premier and later imperial statesman, Sir Robert Herbert. Both collections comprise papers, artworks, photographs and books, and, in the case of the Bowen material, domestic items and jewellery. The latter includes a spectacular gold and emerald bangle presented to Lady Bowen in 1867 on her departure from Queensland, which has already featured in *Australiana*.⁸

Other significant material includes the christening robe and slippers worn in Scotland in 1815 by Patrick Leslie, later to become the first white settler on Queensland's Darling Downs; the autograph book of Catherine Macarthur (later Leslie) of Parramatta and the Darling Downs, kept in 1835–67; the name plate from the rooms of Queensland's first female medical practitioner, Dr Lilian Cooper; the full walking out uniform, including a rare bonnet, worn by Queensland army nurse Winifred Croll during World War I; a ball gown worn by Queensland's first female federal politician, Senator Annabelle Rankin, during the royal visit of 1954 (plate 10); and the dress worn by Queensland's first female governor, Leneen Forde, at her inauguration in 1992 – the list is endless.

The collection includes many heirlooms – such as bridal costumes, christening robes, shawls, quilts and Bibles – that have been passed down families for generations. One heirloom was of special interest to

Australiana Society members on their recent visit: a carved and inlaid davenport made in 1873 for Brisbane sawmiller William Pettigrew, which was donated by his

10.

Humpty Dumpty soft toy made by Lady Chermiside, the wife of Queensland's governor, for Miss N Hutchison in 1903.

Photograph: Queensland Women's Historical Association archives



granddaughter a century later (plates 6–9). The davenport, made by the noted local craftsmen John Wilson Carey and Matthew Fern, features 37 species of Queensland timbers, making it a triumph of local materials as well as craftsmanship.

The *Queenslander* newspaper of 23 August 1873 has the following description:

The framing of the davenport ... consists of deep tinted yellow-wood, which, being well polished, presents a beautiful appearance. The trusses are of plum tree, and the manner in which they are carved reflects great credit on Mr Fern, George Street, who executed this portion of the work. The lid of the stationery case is of *lignum vitae* and tulip wood, tastefully inlaid in the form of cubes and triangles, surrounded by a border of forest oak and muskwood. This lid is in itself an exquisite specimen of workmanship, but undoubtedly the most striking parts of the whole davenport are the front and back panels, which exhibit great skill and patience on the part of the workman, while affording specimens of the most useful and ornamental Queensland woods. The front panel is especially interesting in this respect, the design being a “star” composed of pieces of the following woods [34 listed] ... The back panel is of equal beauty, also containing a large number of woods. Although of course the chief interest attaches to the production on account of its composition, beauty is by no means sacrificed to utility...⁹

Though the collection purports to focus on women, much of the material collected in earlier times relates to men – important men – rather than women and shows a broader interest in white settler history than just women's history. In recent years the association has adopted a more specific collecting policy, focusing on women and the furnishing of Miegunyah, and has begun transferring to other public collections, particularly state collections, material that is beyond the scope of the present policy and more appropriately housed elsewhere.



11.

Gown worn by Senator Annabelle Rankin (1908-1986) to Brisbane's gala ball for the royal visit of 1954. The ballerina-style gown, made of layers of pink and yellow tulle, attracted attention. Brisbane's *Truth* newspaper of 14 March 1954 reported that it was "one of THE frocks of the night ... Her colouring provided all the appeal of an apricot chocolate ice cream." Photograph: Judith McKay

12.

Miegunyah's name plate carved by pioneer woman architect and association member Beatrice Hutton (1893-1990). In 1912 she became the first woman admitted to an architectural institute in Australia. Photograph: Judith McKay

Summary

For almost 70 years the Queensland Women's Historical Association has been active in preserving Queensland's heritage. Besides collecting historical material, it has pioneered heritage protection and the conservation of historic buildings. Without its valiant efforts much of Queensland's history and heritage would have been lost, and such significant material as the Bowen and Herbert collections would never have come to Queensland. Its contribution deserves more recognition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the Queensland Women's Historical Association for providing photographs and encouragement. In particular, I thank the collections manager, Jennifer Steadman, and the president, Sandra Hyde-Page.

NOTES

1. This article's title is drawn from the "Trust the women" women's suffrage banner painted by Dora Meeson Coates (1869-1955) and carried by Australian women in London's suffrage procession of 1911; it is now in the Parliament

House Art Collection, Canberra.

2. See Judith McKay, *Queensland Women's Historical Association. Significance Assessment of the Collection*, downloadable at www.miegunyah.org.
3. Until 1957, the Association was called the Women's Historical Association. See www.miegunyah.org.
4. Jean Stewart, "Background to the birth of *Miegunyah*: the (Royal) Historical Society of Queensland and the (Queensland) Women's Historical Association, 1950-1968", *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, vol 22 no 8, Feb 2015 p 611.
5. *Ibid* p 619.
6. London's "blue plaques" scheme was launched in 1866, on the initiative of politician William Ewart (1798-1869), to mark the homes and workplaces of famous people. Since then the scheme has been administered by successive organisations, including, at the time of Mrs Young's visit, the London County Council. Now it is the responsibility of English Heritage.
7. Lorraine Cazalar, *Not Only a Plaque but also a Story*, Queensland Women's Historical Association, Brisbane, 1979.
8. *Australiana* vol 40 no 2, May 2018 p 30.
9. *Queenslander* 23 Aug 1873 p 2.



Dr Judith McKay is a museum consultant and historian, for many years on the staff of the Queensland Museum. Her publications include *Queensland architects of the 19th century: a biographical dictionary* which she co-authored with her husband Donald Watson. In recent years she has undertaken significance assessments of some of Queensland's major museum collections and until 2016 served on the Queensland Heritage Council. Contact her at mckay.watson@bigpond.com.



Convict artist Frederick Strange ... the mystery deepens

In 2002, Therese Mulford and Robyn Lake co-authored an article on the shadowy painter Frederick Strange (c 1807-1873),¹ best known as a painter of landscapes and portraits in Tasmania.² Some of his works were recently showcased in an exhibition, *The Enigmatic Mr Strange*, at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery;³ his 1859 view of Launceston is a typical detailed topographical study (plate 1). This sequel provides poignant new information about his life in Tasmania, which deepens the mystery as to his origins.

1.

Frederick Strange (c 1807–1873), *View of Launceston looking east from Cataract Hill c 1859*, watercolour on paper, image 86.5 x 142.0 cm, (detail). Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston. Jean Campbell wrote “Strange was a painstaking artist, who delighted in a wealth of detail, combining accuracy of draughtsmanship and observation with delicacy of colour. ...”⁷³ This section of his large painting of Launceston from the Cataract Hill includes the streets where he lived or worked between 1841 and 1873

ROBYN LAKE

The behaviour of the prisoner who gave his name as Frederick Strange appears to be that of a person acting out of character. In the days following his apprehension in the garden of Colchester carver and gilder Mr Paul Aggio on 7 May 1837, it became evident that the watch, silverware and other items in his possession were from three burglaries committed during the previous month. All that was missing was some cash from the first robbery (plate 2).⁴ During the indictment proceedings Strange looked pale and dejected, and declined to say anything; at Moot Hall on 22 May 1837 he was sentenced to transportation for life (plate 3).

On 13 July he was transferred from the Essex County Gaol at Springfield to the prison hulk *Ganymede* at Chatham, Kent. In the transfer document, the gaoler abbreviated Strange’s crimes to “Stealing a watch” (the first item in the first of three indictments). In his Gaoler’s Report, he wrote “Character and Connexions Bad”.⁵ This phrase, one routinely used by officials for prisoners who had committed several crimes, would in due course be incorporated into Frederick Strange’s Van Diemen’s Land convict record.⁶ Yet according to the *Colchester and Chelmsford Gazette* he was understood to be “respectably connected”,⁷ was well behaved while on remand, and there are no references to prior convictions. As to his occupation, following his apprehension in Colchester on 7 May

2.

Between 9 April and 4 May 1837 Frederick Strange burgled three respectable shopkeepers within a 20-mile radius while they, their families and servants were asleep. The first took place in Colchester, where Strange was living at the time. The victim was grocer Robert Gipps Craske. Three weeks later he burgled Braintree grocer and draper Thomas Joslin and at Sudbury three days later George Williams Fulcher, a bookseller. Strange was apprehended in the garden of Colchester carver and gilder Paul Aggio on the evening of 7 May



1837, Strange is reported as having said that “he was a painter by trade, and had been at work in Wire Street, but could not tell the name of his master”.⁸

Hobart 1838-41

Frederick Strange arrived in Hobart in January 1838 aboard the convict transport *Neptune*. To assist the Board of Assignment in their deliberations as to the dispersion of newly arrived prisoners, each was questioned as to his trade and skills. Based on his responses, the clerk recorded his trade as “Portrait Painter & House Painter”. As the ship’s two Appropriation Lists show, this presented the four-member Board with something of a dilemma – he was among the last of the *Neptune’s* 348 prisoners to be assigned. The “V” alongside his name in the “How Appropriated” column of the first Appropriation List indicates he had not yet been appropriated to either Private service, Government service, or the Loan Gang (as had his shipmate 38-year-old “House Painter”).⁹ James Salisbury). In the second List, the words “Vacant. No Application”, have been written for Frederick Strange, Police number 2474, but written in pencil is the word “Graves”¹⁰ (plate 4).

The person to whom the Board had assigned Strange at their 31 January meeting was John Woodcock Graves,¹¹ who had arrived in Hobart with his

second wife Abigail and family in 1834.¹² On the surface this was a suitable outcome; among the services Graves offered in his May 1836 advertisement were “Portrait, Miniature and Heraldic Painting in Oil or Water” and “House, Sign and Ornamental Painting”¹³ (plate 5). Although the members of the Board, which included Chief Police Magistrate Matthew Forster and Principal Superintendent of Convicts Josiah Spode, were well aware of Graves’ disturbing behaviour – he had appeared before the Hobart Town Police Court on a number of occasions – it was their duty to disperse the *Neptune’s* convict ‘cargo’.

For Frederick Strange, the outcome was almost three years of mistreatment from Graves (plate 6), culminating in his appearance before the Hobart Town Police Court on 26 November 1840 to claim the protection of the Government.¹⁴

Hobart Town Police Report. Frederick Strange appeared to claim the protection of the Government, he being assigned to Mr. Woodcock Graves. It appeared from his statement that he is an artist, and that he has, ever since he has been assigned to Mr. Graves, been the principal support to the family, and entirely so at the time Mr. Graves was away at Sydney; and although

he had been at all times unremitting in his endeavours for the family, his master was in the habit of beating him, and had latterly become so outrageous that the man is in fear of his life; his worship very properly returned him to Government.

At the time, John Woodcock Graves’ business and residence were at 32 Harrington Street, adjacent to and owned by Freemason’s Arms’ proprietor Samuel Whittaker. Frederick Strange’s departure marked a significant change in the lives of the Graves family. In 1841 Abigail Graves (plate 7) sought employment and was appointed as a hospital nurse at the Queen’s Orphan School, New Town, where her four younger children (Joseph, Isabella, and Abigail in August, the elder John in December) were enrolled that year.¹⁵ John Woodcock Graves had been admitted to the New Norfolk Invalid and Mental Asylum on 9 May 1841. His disease is recorded as “mania”.¹⁶ He was discharged on 15 July 1841 and spent the next few years in New Zealand, returning to Hobart about 1845.

Launceston 1841-53

Following Frederick Strange’s successful application to be returned to the Government in November 1840, he spent several months at the Prisoners’



3.

Moot Hall, Colchester's Town Hall, where Frederick Strange spent two weeks in the gaol accommodation following his apprehension. At the Midsummer Quarter Sessions Court held there on 22 May he was sentenced to transportation for life. From James Henry Savage, *The Old Moot Hall, Colchester*, used with permission from Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service

Barracks in Hobart. He was then assigned to the Convict Department in Launceston as a messenger at the Prisoners' Barracks. This was the hub of the Department's activities in the north of the colony, a turbulent place in a state of flux 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Messengers were needed to take communications from the superintendent and other officials to the Treadmill, Gaol, Female House of Correction, Commissariat, Hospital, Court House and other public offices.

By early 1843 Strange had been assigned to a position which involved far less public interaction, that of watchman at the Female House of Correction, or Female Factory as it was more commonly known. The consequences of overcrowding and what the *Launceston Examiner* described as "the want of proper and adequate employment" were predictable. On 8 February 1843 the *Launceston Examiner* reported that an attempt was made to set fire to the Female Factory, and a 15 July report is headed "Riot in the Factory".

About half past seven on the morning of 25 April 1843, Strange was returning to the Barracks from his watchman duties when he responded to Launceston builder William

Tyson's cry of "Stop thief!" and assisted him in apprehending two soldiers fleeing after breaking a window of watchmaker James Barclay's premises. An early work linked to Strange is the small oil on plywood portrait of William Tyson's young son William jnr, inscribed on the verso "William Tyson/ Born Tasmania 1838 /died Sydney 1918 / Portrait painted in Tasmania about 1843 by:- Frederic Strange ..." ¹⁸

In 1838, when Frederick Strange had arrived in Van Diemen's Land, the transition from the Assignment to the Probation System was bringing about major changes to the way in which convicts served their sentences. On 1 January 1844 notice was given that convicts in Assigned service would become entitled to the same rights as Probation pass-holders, that is to Wages from their masters at a rate of £9 per annum, with the usual allowances of Rations, Bedding &c. Frederick Strange gained Probation pass-holder status in February 1844.¹⁹ He had to remain with his current master (the Convict Department) until September 1844, after which he could seek employment with another master sanctioned by the Lieutenant-Governor.

In March 1845 Frederick Strange was granted a ticket-of-leave.²⁰ This indulgence,

given at the Lieutenant-Governor's discretion, allowed prisoners the freedom to work for wages, go into business, and hold property. His entry into the ranks of the colony's professional portrait painters was a tentative one, done in collaboration with William Wilson snr, who had settled in Launceston in 1842.

Wilson had initially advertised as a "Cabinet maker, Upholsterer, Carver and Gilder, Chair, Sofa, and Compo Manufacturer"²¹ but by the mid-1840s competition from imported furniture and established cabinetmakers resulted in removal to his Welman Street residence, where his business activities concentrated on Carving and Gilding, and Looking Glass and Picture Frame Manufacture.²² The goal was to provide Strange with an opportunity to showcase his skills, with William Wilson's substantial gilt frames enhancing the overall effect.

In March 1846 surveyor James Scott wrote to his brother Thomas Scott (who had returned to Scotland) that he had got portraits of himself and his wife Agnes²³

done in the first style & 2 gilt frames & full size busts, at £4-each which is

No.	Name	Age	Trade	How Sent	Native Place	How appropriated.
277	Ship Henry	58	Launceston	Conditional Pardon	7 Collyer	Capt. P. Wood, Collyer 7.
77	Sellers Robert	47	Launceston	Chattel	14 London	Wheatstone, not fit to report -
78	Smith John	51	Chapman Wharf	Chattel	24 Collyer	Capt. P. Wood, Collyer - 7.
74	Strange Frederick	31	Portrait Painter & House Painter	Yves	24 Nottingham	V. No application -
76	Lummas John	32	Chapman	House	7 Collyer	Rest. Mr. J. G. - (Melville St. Hobart)
74	Stephen John		Dead	"	24	(Civil or Board 6 th Mo 1837)

much cheaper than could be done at home – They were done by Mr Strange late a Prisoner – who has been practising, & to get himself into practice & notice, did them so reasonable – they are remarkably well done & like – ... he also took several for old Mr Thos Scott.

Thomas Scott (c 1782–1854), usually referred to as Thomas Scott Snr, was a Launceston merchant. When the 1848 Launceston census was taken, Strange was sole occupier of a house owned by Thomas Scott Snr in York Street.²⁴ The location was in a quiet part of the town with no immediate neighbours, near the corner of Tamar Street and opposite Windmill Hill, which is shown in the foreground of many of Strange’s landscapes of Launceston and the Tamar.

As a prisoner transported for life, Strange would never be free by servitude. Notification that he had been recommended for a Conditional Pardon appeared in the *Hobart Town Gazette* on 20 June 1848. Eighteen months later notification that it had been approved reached Hobart.²⁵ The condition on which the pardon was granted to Strange and another 269 prisoners was that they did not return to the country in which they were convicted, or the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. His conduct record shows that during his 12 years as a prisoner of the crown he had committed only one offence: in April 1841, soon after his arrival in Launceston, he had been sentenced to 14 days solitary confinement for “gross misconduct”,

a term which included behaviour such as disobedience of orders, being absent without leave, or insolence.²⁶

The circumstances in which Frederick Strange was living when his conditional pardon was granted in 1849 are not known, nor was he in charge of a household when the 1851 Van Diemen’s Land census was taken. Evidence that he was still in Launceston comes from a newspaper report of 5 March 1851 regarding an Exhibition of Paintings to be held at Launceston’s Cornwall Hotel in connection with a Bazaar to assist in liquidating the debt on Reverend John West’s chapel. The Bazaar Committee proudly announced that the very valuable collection of paintings would include²⁷

a great number of specimens from the pencil of the late Mr. Glover ... But we must not omit to mention the name of another contributor to the exhibition, Mr. Strange. This artist has resided in Launceston for several years, and his paintings will be at once recognised having been taken from the immediate neighbourhood, whilst some are views of the town itself.

In May 1853 William Hedger, publican of the Royal Oak Inn in Brisbane Street advertised that²⁸

Unless Mr F. Strange calls to pay the amount of my claim, for Board and Lodging, the articles left in his possession would be sold within twenty-one days by public auction, to defray the same.

4.

Ship *Neptune* Appropriation List, January 1838. Police number: 2474. Name: Strange, Frederick. Height: 5ft 6½ in. Age: 31. Tried Essex. Sentence: Life. Native Place: Nottingham. Trade: Portrait Painter & House Painter. The entry in “How Appropriated” reads: “V [Vacant] No Application”, to which the name “Graves” has been added in pencil. Tasmanian Heritage and Archives Office, CON27/1/7 Neptune Appropriation List

5.

John Woodcock Graves offered services including “Portrait, Miniature, and Heraldic Painting in Oil or Water, Varnishing, Japanning; House, Sign, and Ornamental Painting.” *Colonial Times* 3 May 1836 p 3

Coach-making, &c.
JOHN WOODCOCK GRAVES informs the Public, that he will repair, paint, and varnish carriages of every description, in the first style of elegance, and at the lowest possible rate of charge. Portrait, Miniature, and Heraldic Painting in Oil or Water. Varnishing, Japanning; House, Sign, and Ornamental Painting; Plumbing, Glazing, &c., on the shortest notice. Varnishes of all kinds on Sale, with instructions for use, “gratis.” Pictures cleaned; Plans, Drawings, &c. neatly mounted, glazed, or varnished. Clock Dials made and figured, &c. Mr. Graves has obtained leave at the Leaping-bar, and Black Horse Livery Stables, for any Gentleman desirous to see his work, to inspect several vehicles standing there; and, as he makes his own materials, he is competent of being enabled to turn work off hand, fully twenty per cent. lower than any other house in Hobart Town, and equal to any in London.
 ••• Melville-street, opposite the Wesleyan Chapel.
 May 3, 1836. (8688)



6.

John Woodcock Graves (1795-1886), who also wrote the lyrics to the well-known song *D'ye ken John Peel*. Lack of demand for a prisoner with Frederick Strange's work skills had played a role in his being assigned to John Woodcock Graves, a man known for his erratic and eccentric behaviour. TAHO, Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts AUTAS0011125645390

7.

Abigail Graves née Porterhouse (c 1791-1856), wife of John Woodcock Graves (detail). Frederick Strange's claim to have been "unremitting in his endeavours for the Graves family" is supported by the changed circumstances his departure brought about. TAHO PH30-1-7148

There is no indication that the articles were sold by public auction. What is known is that Frederick Strange left Launceston for Hobart during 1853.

Hobart 1853-54

As was the case in Launceston, Strange did not seek patronage by advertising. Evidence of his presence comes from the lithograph *City of Hobart from Knocklofty* R.V. Hood [1853] after Frederick Strange.²⁹ During the years he had spent in Hobart a decade earlier, Strange would have known of Robin Vaughan Hood, who was in business as a Carver & Gilder, Looking Glass and Picture Frame Maker

In 1854 Hood undertook a more challenging lithographic project, creating a cadastral map of Hobart "on a scale of upwards of 7 inches to the mile".³⁰ The result was the *Plan of the City of Hobart Town, compiled partly from Frankland's map & partly from recent surveys* / Published by R.V. Hood, Lithographer, Liverpool Street, September 4th 1854.³¹ It is possible the artist was involved in the map project, which required the patience and attention to detail his temperament provided. A month after the map's publication Strange began advertising as a teacher and portrait painter in Launceston.

Launceston 1854-1861

The modest advertisement Frederick Strange placed late 1854 was his first since he sought to earn his living as an artist in 1845:³²

LESSONS GIVEN in
Landscape Drawing.
Portraits in oil or Daguerreotype.
F. STRANGE.
Brisbane-street, Oct. 31.

In December he announced his removal to Paterson street "opposite Mr Stewarts Coach Building Establishment."³³ The advertisement, with the original few lines of text, appeared several times a week until March 1855.³⁴ On 22 May 1856, the *Launceston Examiner* announced³⁵

TASMANIAN ILLUSTRATIONS.
We have been favoured with a sight of some sketches of Tasmanian scenery, which it is intended to embody in a work to be published as soon as practicable, with a view of affording to the people of England and the world at large, better information respecting this highly favoured colony; to set forth its capabilities for forming the home of the emigrant; to give some

idea of the beauty of its scenery, as well as the salubrity of its climate. The views of Ben Nevis (taken from Green Hill) and the Third Basin on the South Esk, will give a pleasing idea of the native scenery; while the representations of Hobart Town and Launceston, with some of the principal buildings, will mark the progress we have made in the arts of civilization ... we wish its projector every success.

The ambitious project advanced to the stage where plate numbering and titles were inscribed on the 19 works³⁶ (plate 8). The project never came to fruition but the sketches, which Clifford Craig and Isabella Mead attributed to Frederick Strange, are now in the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery collection.³⁷

In the Launceston Valuation Rolls published in March 1857 Strange is listed as the occupier of "Offices" in Brisbane street with an assessed annual value of £25.³⁸ The previous occupier was Edward Allen, surveyor, land, house and estate agent, who had relocated to premises on the corner of Charles and Cameron Streets, where he established a Land Mart and Stock Exchange. In January 1857 Allen advertised that on future occasions

lithographed plans of properties for sale would be distributed. His 14 February advertisement reads³⁹

MR ALLEN having established a Lithographic press in connection with his Land Mart, is now prepared to print maps, plans, drawings, circulars &c., &c.

In April Allen advertised for a⁴⁰

respectable Youth, about 16 or 17 years of age, as an apprentice to the Lithographic Printing Business. He must be able to write a good hand, and have a taste for drawing.

Edward Allen's original occupation was grocer. The fact that by early 1858 Frederick Strange was the occupier of a newly created "shop" in Cameron street adjoining the Land Mart suggests he played a role in Allen's lithographic press business, examples of which are extant.⁴¹ The Cameron street shop, with an assessed value of only £20, served as Strange's studio and residence until his marriage in December 1861.

During this period, he completed his most important work, described by the compiler of the *Cornwall Chronicle* "Town Talk and Table Chat" piece after a visit to the studio on 6 January 1859⁴²

A large picture of Launceston, from Cataract Hill struck our attention as being extremely beautiful as well as most delicately executed. Every house in town within the scope of the artist from the spot whence they were sketched are put upon the canvas with unerring fidelity, and truthful delineation.

It was a valuable resource for Edward Allen's Land Mart business, which included sales of suburban allotments. On 15 January the *Launceston Examiner* carried an advertisement announcing the raffle of a large⁴³

Oil Painting of Launceston, by Strange, 5 x 3½ feet — 20 members £1.1s. each.



This painting, of Launceston from Westbury Road, is now in the QVMAG collection. Co-incidentally, Launceston artist John McKirdy Nelson had been working on a large oil painting of the same subject. In October 1858 a Committee of Members of the Royal Society meeting in Launceston had commissioned Nelson, who was then Joint Superintendent of Buckland House School, to "paint the picture of Launceston for the Crystal Palace Exhibition."⁴⁴ In February 1859 his painting of Launceston and the river and valley of the Tamar "taken from a point near Mr Cleveland's house above the Westbury road" was exhibited in the Cornwall Assembly Room prior to being sent to the Royal Society Committee in Hobart.⁴⁵

On 17 September 1859 the "Town Talk and Table Chat" writer noted that

Mr Strange, portrait and landscape painter of Cameron-street has added to his business that of a photographer and exhibits several very correct likenesses in his window.

It is probable the "photographer" was C A H Williamson (Charles Ammeil Holding Williamson, born Ammeil

8.

Frederick Strange (c 1807–1873), *View of the town & river Tamar from Windmill Hill*, one of the sketches for a proposed work to be published with a view to encouraging emigration to Tasmania, c 1856. The number has been changed from 4 to 6, and Patterson Street and Cameron Street identified by name. The inscriptions on the 19 plates are by an unknown hand or hands. Turnbull Bequest, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery QVM.2002.FP.50

Holding) who in April 1860 commenced business as a "Photographic Artist" in one of the offices in the adjoining Land Mart premises.⁴⁶ There were no subsequent references to Strange's studio, nor did he participate in the 1860 Exhibition of Works of Art, held to mark the opening of the Launceston Mechanics' Institute building. Of the 613 works, the only one by Strange was the portrait *A Faithful Guardian*, lent by Janet McKenzie, widow of Launceston merchant Richard Hellen McKenzie (1817–1856).

SEAT LETTING BOOK.

No. of Pew.	No. of Seats.	NAME AND RESIDENCE OF SEAT-HOLDER.	No. Taken.	Price per annum.	Half Yearly Term of	Half Yearly Term of	Yearly.
71	5	1866 Frederick Strange Mrs Jordan James Low	2	10	5	5	10
		1	5	5	5		
		2	5	5	5		
1867							
		Mrs Jordan	1	5	5	5	5
		Mrs Strange	2	10	5	5	
		James Low	2	10	5	5	
1868							
		J. M. Paterson	2	10	5	5	10
		Mrs Strange	2	10	5	5	
		James Low	2	10	5	5	
1869							
		Mrs Strange	2	10	5	5	10
		James Low	2	10	5	5	

9.

Chalmers
Presbyterian
Church Seat-letting
book 1866-72 lists
Frederick Strange
as the holder of two
seats in Pew 71 in
1866. The following
year the holder is
Mrs Strange and this
continued until 1869,
when only one seat
was taken. QVMAG
CHS82. 16/26

Following Edward Allen's removal to Latrobe in the latter part of 1859, J J Gwynne took over the activities of the Land Mart, including the provision of lithographic services. The venture lasted only a few months and in July 1860 "... the good will, furniture, lithographic press &c. of the Launceston Land Mart (late Allens)"⁴⁷ was offered for sale by Benjamin Campion, the solicitor now occupying the principal part of the premises.

On Christmas Day 1861 Frederick Strange married widow Mrs Elizabeth Campbell at her residence in Charles street. Solicitors Benjamin Campion & E C Button took over the occupancy of the adjoining Cameron street "shop" that had been Strange's studio as additional office space. In 1862 C A H Williamson occupied the shop for his "Alabastrine Portrait Gallery" for a few months, before taking up the position of postmaster at Evandale.⁴⁸

Launceston 1861-73 and Campbell Town 1864-73

On Christmas Day 1861 Free Church of Scotland minister Reverend James Lindsay took time from his other duties to perform a marriage ceremony at the residence of the bride Elizabeth Campbell, a widow aged about 60, who was a member of his congregation. The groom Frederick Strange was in his mid-fifties and gave his "rank" as

widower⁴⁹ (though in 1837 he had given his status as single). There were marked similarities in the couple's situation – they were of exemplary character and had no family in the colony or financial security.

Following the death of her husband, draper William Campbell, in 1859,⁵⁰ Elizabeth had rented one of three c 1843 weatherboard premises in Charles Street adjacent to the Coach & Horses Hotel and owned by the hotel's proprietor Robert Evans. In December 1861 the annual assessed value of the "house & shop" where she had established a modest grocery business was £28 (down from £40 earlier that year).⁵¹ In Valuation Rolls Frederick Strange became the "occupier" of the Charles Street property, but in regard to the grocery business and community affairs, newspaper advertisements and reports generally referred to the location as "Mrs Strange's".

For example, in February 1865 tickets for a "Soiree in the Chalmers School Room" were available from "Mrs Strange's, Charles-street".⁵² In 1866 a horse attached to a chaise cart "made a start from the shop of Mrs Strange, in Charles-street" while the driver was delivering a quantity of cheese from the Trevallyn Dairy.⁵³ However, because Frederick Strange was the "occupier" of the premises, the Launceston section of *MacPhail's national*

directory of Tasmania for the year 1867-68 lists "Strange, Frederick, grocer, Charles st." A letter to the *Cornwall Chronicle* by a disgruntled subscriber to the directory cautioned the public about being duped and "gulled" by the compiler Myles MacPhail, and concluded by stating that most information contained in the directory was "merely abridged extracts" from *Walch's Book Almanack*, "with an imperfect alphabetical list of the names of the inhabitants taken from the Electoral Roll" (which was taken from the Valuation Roll).⁵⁴

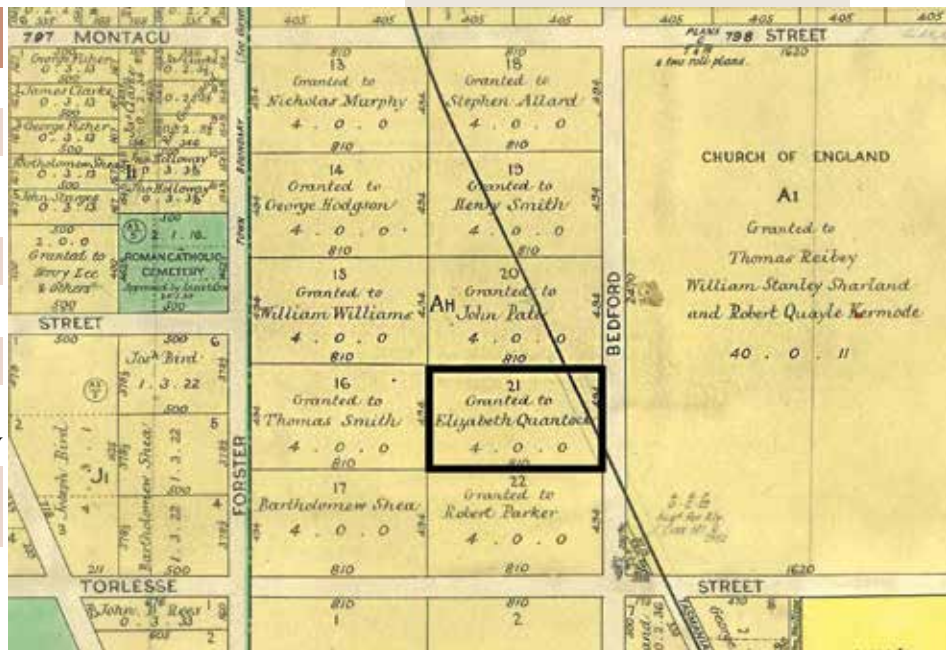
The reality was that in 1864 the Stranges had acquired a property on the outskirts of Campbell Town, and from the mid-1860s Frederick Strange spent time there. Launceston's Church of Scotland records confirm the Stranges' changing circumstances. Elizabeth Strange had been an active member of the congregation since her 1847 marriage to William Campbell. On 2 September 1866, Frederick Strange's name was entered in the Communicant's Roll book "For the first time". That year he is also recorded in the Chalmers Seat Letting book as having taken two seats in pew number 71 (of 75). The following year the two seats were taken in the name of Mrs Strange, and this continued until 1869, when only one seat was taken in her name (plate 9).

1864-73 Campbell Town

In May 1864 the title to the "4 acres known as Pensioners Allotment No. 21" in Bedford Street was transferred to Elizabeth Strange. The property had been allocated to military pensioner William Quantock in 1850 and granted to his widow Elizabeth in 1858⁵⁵ (plate 10). That year she had married Launceston barber James Duck, who occupied premises in Charles Street not far from the Stranges'. When first offered for sale by Elizabeth Quantock (Duck) in February 1860, allotment 21 Bedford Street was described as having "a snug little cottage erected thereon" and being substantially fenced.⁵⁶ The three-room brick and stone cottage⁵⁷ has since been demolished (plate 11).

From 1865 to 1873 Campbell Town District Valuation and Electoral Rolls record the "occupier" of the Bedford street property as a person with the surname Strange.

Date	Occupier	Source of property
1860-62	William Guilders	Valuation Roll
1863	James Mullins	Valuation Roll
1864	Acquired in Elizabeth Strange's name	
1865	Strange, William	Valuation Roll
1866-67	Strange, James	Electoral Roll
1867-68	Strange, William	Electoral Roll
1867-68	Strange, William laborer	MacPhail's Directory
1869-70; 1870-71	Strange, Frederick	Electoral Roll
1870; 1871; 1872; 1873	Strange, Frederick	Valuation Roll



The source of the Electoral Roll and 1867/68 Directory listings is the Valuation Rolls.⁵⁸

A possible explanation for the variation in the first names for Strange during the first few years is that Pensioners Allotment 21 was an anomaly. The Quantocks had left Campbell Town in the early 1850s. His widow Elizabeth's last tenants were William Guilder, an older emancipist whose trade is recorded as "Labourer & Cutter" in convict records,⁵⁹ and Irish born James Mullins, an emancipist with several aliases, whose reoffending and absconding saw him serve several prison terms. The Valuation Rolls are also inconsistent as to the Proprietor of Allotment 21. The most likely scenario is that for many years John Coombe Snr, a farmer and miller who owned adjacent property, had been leasing the land not immediately surrounding the cottage.⁶⁰

Campbell Town is about 40 miles (65 km) from Launceston. In the mid-1860s the population was about 750. To date the only link Frederick Strange is known to have had in the Campbell Town District is with John and Marion Nicolson, who were living only a short distance from Bedford Street at Camelford property. In Launceston in the mid 1840s the artist had painted the portrait of John Nicolson, who was then Deputy Assistant Commissary General in

the town, and in 1848 Marion Nicolson, at the request of her mother Mrs Walter Davidson. Following their return from Europe in 1860, the Nicolson's had leased a portion of Camelford from Walter Davidson's estate. After John Nicolson's death in 1867 Marion and her family remained at Camelford.

A work by Strange of the district around Campbell Town which may be extant is his landscape⁶¹ *Bona Vista near Avoca*. It was one of two Strange oil paintings lent to the 1879 Launceston Fine Arts Exhibition by Frederick Stanfield, who had moved from Hobart to Launceston in the mid 1860s, establishing a business as a Clothier and Merchant Tailor. A quiet and unobtrusive man, his hobby was books and pictures. *Bona Vista, near Avoca* was among the 22 oil paintings he lent to the Launceston Art Gallery [now QVMAG] in December 1893. A newspaper review from that time provides some idea of the composition⁶²

... this fine residence is situated on one of the slopes of a picturesque valley in the district of Ben Lomond, and forms the subject of this fine painting by F. Strange.

Frederick Strange's death

Frederick Strange was "in the 64th year of his age" when he died of rheumatic fever in Launceston on 31 March 1873. Friends were invited to attend the funeral,

10.

In May 1864 the title to four acres known as Pensioners Allotment 21 in Bedford Street, on the outskirts of Campbell Town, was transferred from Elizabeth Quantock [Duck] to Elizabeth Strange. Valuation Rolls from 1865 to 1873, the year of Frederick Strange's death, record the "occupier" as a male with the surname "Strange" (initially there are variations in the first name). TAHO AF819-1-42, Campbell Town C2 (detail)

which left from his late residence, Charles street, the following day.⁶³ It's likely they contributed to the costs of the funeral, which was conducted by William Hills, a Cabinetmaker, Upholsterer and Furnishing Undertaker. He had lived in Launceston since the 1840s and gave Strange's rank or profession as Artist.⁶⁴

In the decade between his marriage in December 1861 and death there had been only one reference in newspapers to Frederick Strange as an artist. This was in connection with the 20 May 1863 Launceston illuminations to mark the wedding of Queen Victoria's eldest son Prince Albert and Princess Alexandra of Denmark. Strange executed portraits of the Prince and Princess of Wales, which were erected above the portico of the Post Office.⁶⁵ He left no will, nor was an Administrator appointed.



11.

The approximate location of the three-room brick and stone cottage Frederick Strange occupied. In 1874 the Tasmanian Mainline Railway Company purchased a portion of the property. The cottage, still there when Elizabeth Strange sold the property in 1880, has since been demolished. Photograph Lake collection, 2015

12.

Aitkenhead & Button, lithographers, M. Cameron del, *Plan of Launceston Tasmania 1881*, with known locations of Frederick Strange in Launceston 1841–1873. Collection Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston 1981, no 233

Elizabeth Strange 1873–82

Elizabeth Strange was over 70 when her husband died. Evidence given at the Court of Bankruptcy on 18 November 1874 re Peters, Barnard & Co., Merchants and General Commission Agents, provides a moving insight into the financial pressures Elizabeth had been facing throughout her marriage. James Barnard told the court⁶⁶

... Mrs E. Strange I got accommodation bills from, but all that she had from us in cash, goods and bills was £140. She is a widow not in a large way of business, rather a small way.

When the Company's complex financial dealings were summarised, the total of Mrs Strange's bills from the past three years

amounted to £2,041, unsecured.⁶⁷ Elizabeth's own bankruptcy proceedings were already underway, and at a meeting of her creditors on 21 November an offer of composition of one shilling in the pound was accepted.⁶⁸

A month later in an advertisement headed "Collection of Oil Paintings by the late Mr Strange", auctioneer William Hartnoll announced that he had received instructions to sell by public auction on 24 December⁶⁹

... A number of excellent oil paintings by the late Mr Strange, many of them representing his best efforts. They are now on view at the mart. Fuller particulars tomorrow.

There were no further particulars in the next day's advertisement, nor a report on

the outcome of any sale.

The grocers listed in the Trade & Professional section of the *Tasmanian Directory* for 1881–82 include Mrs Strange, Charles street.⁷⁰ She died at Launceston's Invalid Depot for Females on Sunday 19 November 1882, aged 80. In his Funeral Notices for 21 November, Undertaker T.J. Doolan invited friends to attend the late Mrs Strange's funeral, which would leave Chalmers Free Church at 3.30 that day. Thomas Doolan had the contract for coffins and internments of paupers in Launceston, and Elizabeth's death was among a number he registered on 27 November of persons who had died at the Invalid Depot, Hospital or Gaol.⁷¹ The entry in the Communicants' Roll Book for the Congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church Launceston reads "Mrs Campbell now Mrs Fred. Strange died 19th Novr 1882, Aged 80 Peace."⁷²

NOTES

1. Therese Mulford & Robyn Lake "A stranger to the town: the life of colonial painter Frederick Strange" *Australiana* vol 24 no 3 August 2002.
2. C Craig & I Mead, "Frederick Strange – Artist-c 1807–1873" *Papers & Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania* vol 97 1963 49ff. Strange is represented in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Folk Museum of VDL, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Allport Library, Mitchell Library and National Gallery of Australia.
3. Yvonne Adkins, *The Enigmatic Mr Strange*, QVMAG, Launceston 2017.
4. When formally indicted for the three thefts, the prisoner declined to say anything, but while in custody in Colchester he confessed to Joshua



- Nunn, publican of the Spread Eagle Inn in the nearby village of Witham, that he was the person who had broken into the bar and stolen a quantity of copper from the till. No charges were laid.
5. PRO4822 HO9/12, 1837-1844 Ganymede and Warrior Letterbook.
 6. Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office (TAHO) CON31/1/41. Frederick Strange, Police number 2474.
 7. *Colchester & Chelmsford Gazette* 13 May 1837 p 3.
 8. *Essex Standard, and Colchester, Chelmsford, Maldon, Harwich, and General County Advertiser*, 12 May 1837 p 3.
 9. TAHO, MM33/6 Appropriation List, *Neptune* 1838.
 10. TAHO, CON27/1/7 Appropriation List, *Neptune* 1838.
 11. *Hobart Town Gazette* 2 Feb 1838 p 90. The word 'Graves' is in the second Appropriation List, but the newspaper report simply records that one prisoner from the Prisoner's Barracks was assigned to 'J.W. Greaves'.
 12. <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/graves-john-woodcock-3654>, accessed 27 Apr 2018.
 13. *Hobart Town Courier* 27 May 1836 p 1. In June 1837 Graves had applied to the Lieutenant Governor for employment as lithographer. He was unsuccessful, but in an advertisement dated 17 February 1838, a few weeks after Frederick Strange's assignment, Graves is named as Agent for 'Jas Thomson and J.H. Hughes, surveyors, &c.' soon to be published 'Series of highly finished Lithographic charts ... the whole forming a useful set of charts which no Ship master in these Islands should be without' *Colonial Times* 20 Feb 1838.
 14. *Colonial Times* 1 Dec 1840 p 6.
 15. Claim an Orphan www.orphanschool.org.au. The Graves' eldest child Marie Annie was too old for the school.
 16. TAHO, HSD104/1/1. Alphabetical monthly register of patients and attendants, with details of diet.
 17. *Launceston Examiner* 3 June 1843 p 350.
 18. Yvonne Adkins, *The enigmatic Mr Strange: creating a past: the life and art of Frederick Strange c.1807-1873*, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston 2017 p 86.
 19. *Hobart Town Gazette* 23 Feb 1844 p 245.
 20. *Hobart Town Gazette* 18 Mar 1845 p 368.
 21. *Cornwall Chronicle* 7 Jan 1843 p 3.
 22. *Cornwall Chronicle* 20 Nov 1844 p 3.
 23. *The Scott letters: VDL & Scotland 1836-55* transcribed by DJL Archer, p 228.
 24. TAHO, CEN 1/1/95 p 187.
 25. *Hobart Town Gazette* 4 Dec 1849 p 908.
 26. TAHO, CON31/1/41, Frederick Strange, Police number 2474.
 27. *Launceston Examiner* 5 Mar 1851 p 154.
 28. *Cornwall Chronicle* 28 May 1853 p 3.
 29. TAHO, Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts. AUTAS001139593925.
 30. *Courier* 8 Sep 1854 p 3.
 31. TAHO, Tasmaniana Library (Crowther pamphlets) Hobart.
 32. *Launceston Examiner* 25 Nov 1854 p 1.
 33. *Launceston Examiner* 4 Nov 1854 p 1.
 34. *Launceston Examiner* 11 Jan 1855 p 1.
 35. *Launceston Examiner* 22 May 1856 p 3.
 36. The 19 plates included *Ben Lomond, from Greenhill, Van Diemen's Land*, a lithograph by M & N Hanhart after Elizabeth Hudspeth. The lithograph appears to have been cropped and given the alternative handwritten title "Ben Nevis from Greenhill".
 37. See n 2.
 38. *Hobart Town Gazette* 10 Mar 1857 p 188. In *Australiana* vol 24 no 3 Aug 2002 pp 79 & 80, Robyn Lake stated that the 'offices' were part of the premises occupied by merchant David Murray, on the northern side of Brisbane street between Charles and St John Streets. This is incorrect, they were part of the first premises in the block between St John and George streets.
 39. *Launceston Examiner* 14 Feb 1857 p 1.
 40. *Launceston Examiner* 23 Apr 1857 p 1. The advertisement for an apprentice continued to appear during May.
 41. Lithographs associated with Edward Allen's Lithographic Printing business include: Plans for the sale of Town, Country and Suburban Lands (to be forwarded to Principal hotels in the various locations), Allen's Map of Torquay, and Notes for the Launceston Philharmonic Society's 'Music for the Millions'. Three extant lithographs: 'Linnellville', Frankland Street, Launceston, 1857. A hand-coloured lithograph on a subdivision plan of building allotments on Cox's Hill (private collection; Clifford Craig, *Old Tasmanian Prints*, Foot and Playstead, Launceston 1964, text p 262 & 264, illustration p 263). A lithograph 'Sale by public auction at Allen's Land Mart, building lots in the township of Campbell Town' (LINC Tasmania, Tasmaniana Library, TL.PE 333.33 COH) and a William Peter billhead, 'E. Allen Litho.' for Launceston Waterworks, dated 30th June 1962 (QVMAG 1959/79/139A).
 42. *Cornwall Chronicle* 8 Jan 1859 p 4.
 43. *Launceston Examiner* 12, 15 & 18 Feb 1859. There is no indication that the raffle, advertised as 20 members at £1.1.0. each, took place.
 44. *Launceston Examiner* 21 Oct 1858 p 3.
 45. *Launceston Examiner* 17 Feb 1859 p 3; *Courier* 31 May 1859 p 2.
 46. *Launceston Examiner* 24 April 1860 p 3. In May, Williamson relocated his 'Cheap Portrait Gallery' to Brisbane St.
 47. *Launceston Examiner* 14 Jul 1860 (the ad appeared 18 times from 14 Jul to 13 Oct 1860).
 48. *Launceston Examiner* 29 Mar 1862 p 5; *Launceston Examiner* 14 Aug 1862 p 3.
 49. TAHO, RGD37/1/20, no 568. That Frederick Strange gave his status as "widower" contradicts the information he gave when in custody in England. In the 1837 Essex County Gaoler's Report his status recorded as "single".
 50. When William Campbell and Elizabeth Denny married in Launceston in 1847, his occupation is given as shoemaker. They later established a drapery business in Charles St.
 51. *Hobart Town Gazette* 13 Dec 1861 p 1883; 22 Feb 1861 p 385.
 52. *Launceston Examiner* 21 Feb 1865 p 7.
 53. *Cornwall Chronicle* 26 Dec 1866 p 2.
 54. *MacPhail's national directory of Tasmania for the year 1867-68*, including a correct and complete map of the colony: and the Tasmanian yearly advertiser, Hobart Town, Myles MacPhail, 1867 p 53; *Cornwall Chronicle* 20 June 1867 p 3.
 55. Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment, Land Transactions Office, Certificate of title vol 3 folio 72. Pensioners Allotment 21 in section AG in Campbell Town. Dated 31 May 1864.
 56. *Launceston Examiner* 15 Feb 1860 p 4.
 57. *Hobart Town Gazette* 27 Nov 1870 p 1933.
 58. *MacPhail's national directory of Tasmania for the year 1867-68*, including a correct and complete map of the colony: and the Tasmanian yearly advertiser, Hobart Town, Myles MacPhail, 1867. William Strange Campbell Town p 68.
 59. TAHO CON18/1/7 William Guelder-Guelder Police number 1280, Elphinstone, 1837.
 60. The title was transferred to Elizabeth Strange, but her name does not appear in Campbell Town Valuation Rolls or Electoral Rolls as the Proprietor until after Frederick Strange's death in 1873. Until 1868 Campbell Town miller and farmer John Coombe Snr, who owned adjacent property on the corner of Bedford and Franklin streets, is shown as the 'Proprietor' or 'Lessor'. It is plausible he was leasing the area not immediately surrounding the cottage. From 1869 until 1873 Frederick Strange is recorded both being the Occupier and Proprietor of 21 Bedford St.
 61. *Examiner* 9 July 1909 p 6. Obituary of Frederick Stanfield.
 62. *Launceston Examiner* 23 Dec 1893 p 8.
 63. *Launceston Examiner* 1 Apr 1873 pp 2,3.
 64. TAHO, RGD 35/1/42 no 2014.
 65. *Launceston Examiner* 21 May 1863 p 3.
 66. *Launceston Examiner* 19 Nov 1874 p 5.
 67. *Launceston Examiner* 21 Nov 1874 p 1.
 68. *Launceston Examiner* 21 Nov 1874 p 2.
 69. *Launceston Examiner* 21 Dec 1875 p 4.
 70. *FB Maning's Tasmanian Directory for 1881-2*, Hobart, Francis Beresford Maning, 1831 [i.e. 1881] p 348.
 71. TAHO, RGD35/1/51 no 907.
 72. QVMAG, CHS82, Uniting Church, Launceston, churches, Launceston. 16/25. Free Church of Scotland Communicant's Roll Book 1855-1894. Elizabeth Strange's origins have not been established. When as Elizabeth Denny she married William Campbell in Launceston in 1847 her age is recorded as 37 (born c 1810) but when she died in 1882 her age is recorded as 80 (born 1802). As Elizabeth Strange died at the Invalid Depot for Females, it is possible she is the Elizabeth Denny (born c 1800) who arrived in Hobart from England in August 1832 to serve a seven-year sentence. In 1837 she married a James Potterell. There is no record of his death in Tasmania, nor of any children born in the colony. In December 1841 an 'Elizabeth Denny' was one of three females who arrived in Launceston from Port Phillip, seeking employment.
 73. Jean Campbell, *Australian watercolour painters 1780-1980*, Rigby, Adelaide 1983 p 25.

John Houstone, a complete collector



John Houstone with Cinderella. Photo John Wade

JOHN WADE

David Scott Mitchell (1836 –1907) had a private income which allowed him to pursue his collecting and become the greatest Australiana collector. About a century after British settlement, Mitchell identified the need to collect Australiana that was, at the time, rapidly disappearing. His collection of somewhere between 40,000 and 70,000 items, cluttering his house in Darlinghurst, ultimately formed the nucleus of the Mitchell Library in Sydney, opened in 1910.

John Houstone likewise identified the need to collect and document – albeit on a less grand scale than Mitchell – the convict and free silversmiths who worked in early 19th century Australia. Like Mitchell, Houstone had a pet cockatoo. Cinderella was loyal to John and he adored her, but others were terrified of her unpredictable behaviour,

shrieking, sharp beak and talons.

Every Thursday, from 1971 to 2006, the *Australian Financial Review* used to publish Terry Ingram’s well-read and entertaining Saleroom column on the antiques and art market. This essential reading for collectors often mentioned the “Lower North Shore solicitor” or the “member of the legal fraternity” who bought Australian silver, and who, in Ingram’s words “did much to underpin the value of Australian silver.”

Terry’s phrases were code for John Houstone, who died peacefully at home on 16 December 2018, looking at his favourite view of Mosman Bay with his wife Diana and family around him. He was frail from having been ill for some time, relieved by palliative care from his doctors and nurses, but eventually succumbed to kidney failure. He was 88.

John Michael Houstone was born in Sydney on 22 March 1930. He studied law at the University of Sydney and

was admitted as a solicitor in 1953. In September 1963, he married Diana, the luckiest find of his life. He became a partner in Asher Old and Jones, which merged with Henry Davis York in 1980.

Always interested in silver, in the 1960s he focused his attention on collecting early Australian silver. Much of the earliest and rarest Australian material which has survived was flatware and other small pieces, identified by their maker’s punch marks or inscriptions. Perhaps other collectors ignored this material as it was unprepossessing. Later examples became more elaborate.

Few had taken Australian silver seriously before, and for over 40 years, John was a dedicated collector and researcher. He formed good relationships with many dealers, especially John Hawkins and Jolyon Warwick James, so that when they acquired a good piece, they would offer it to him first. He was also active at auctions. Committee member and solicitor Michel Reymond came across John in the mid-1970s on a legal matter: “He had an office in Macquarie Street and when I went there we spent most of the time talking about Australian silver he was collecting.”

John didn’t just collect and, for security reasons, lock his collection away. At lunchtime and at night after work, he’d trot up to the Mitchell Library and read the old newspapers available on microfiche and microfilm, searching for historical information about silver presentations and silversmiths. This activity gave John a double dose of elation, first at finding a piece of silver, then his research would eventually lead to revelations about the piece, the maker or its recipient. I have no doubt that, in that repressive, silent Mitchell reading room, unable to imprison his excitement, his eureka moments would raise eyebrows.

His research culminated in a series of articles in magazines such as the *Australian Antique Collector* and *Australiana*. At times he even examined historic legal questions, for instance sifting the evidence from Alexander Dick's 1829 criminal trial to see if he deserved to have been found guilty of receiving stolen goods.

Ultimately, this research led to John's privately published book about his collection issued in 2012, the result of many years of collecting, research, introspection and discussions with colleagues. This is a must-have for collectors.¹

John Hawkins described John as "one of the most dedicated of collectors. His early Australian silver collection is the finest assembled and his mastery of the marks and the makers was his particular study and forte. In this field he led and others followed." Fellow silver dealer Jolyon Warwick James, while recognising

John's impeccable connoisseurship, added that he had "lost a very, very, very dear friend" and recalled numerous splendid dinners with John and Diana.

John wanted his collection to be kept together but faced difficulties in deciding on an institution on which he could rely to preserve it. After much deliberation and ruling out an approach to MAAS because of its uncertain future and narrowing focus, he decided to offer his collection to the National Gallery of Australia. Senior Curator of Decorative Arts, the late Dr Robert Bell, recommended the acquisition, which was not only the best collection of early Australian silver but also pre-researched – a curator's dream.

John was a member of both the *Australiana Society* and the *Silver Society*. He served on the committee of the *Australiana Society* in the early 1980s, which gave some of us a chance to see his

collection when he and Diana hosted the committee at their home.

Many people were grateful to John for generously sharing his knowledge of silver, and a lucky few were invited to the Houstone's home. Diana spared no effort in making you welcome and relaxed, and in preparing an excellent meal. Wine and conversation flowed freely, sparked by John's endless curiosity and interest in everything. The spectacular views out the windows of the waters of Sydney Harbour were complemented by their many paintings and views of Mosman and Sydney Harbour. I hope John and Diana enjoyed the visits as much as their guests.

John is survived by his wife Diana, their four children and seven grandchildren. Cinderella died some time ago.

1. John Houstone, *Early Australian Silver. The Houstone Collection*. Halstead Press, Ultimo NSW, 2012.

How to use protein glues

Furniture restorer Paul Gregson follows up Dr David Bedford's article on "hide glue" in *Australiana* for November 2018 with some practical advice, although he suggests that a demonstration is more informative to understand the process.

PAUL GREGSON

Using protein (animal) glue over many decades, for the joints of antiques and for timber objects I make today, has given me the experience to be able to explain its use.

The importance of hide glue, no longer made in Australia, was impressed on me decades ago by Mr Jim Gillespie from the Glues and By-products division of Davis Australia, whose knowledge and instruction were invaluable. We could use modern adhesives to mend, repair or consolidate objects, but animal glue creates a joint or surface that is both sound and reversible (easily) in the future.

Cold liquid hide glues can be convenient, but I don't recommend them. The long setting time is achieved by adding up to 17% urea, so the long-term prospects under varying applications may be questionable.

Animal glues are made by washing the raw materials, treating them with alkaline solution, then removing hair and unwanted impurities, resulting in collagen. This is washed to remove excess alkali, re-treated in acid and converted to glue. Grading and purification for different uses is critical for the end use. The specification sheet clarifies viscosity, bloom, pH, moisture (%), ash (%), fat (%), NaCl (%), odour, impurities, gel strength, joint test. The final product is clean, free from bacteria and edible. More purified forms are sold as gelatine and jelly powder, to name just two domestic uses.

The final stage is extraction, drying and presenting as a powder or pearl. Pearl is made by showering the glue liquor into a chilled spirit solution which forms small globules of jelly and when dried is marketed as "glue pearls". Treat the glue with respect regarding its correct use,

heating and protection from bacteria.

My preferences are cabinet grade (pure hide), Russian (pure hide), rabbit (hide) and parchment (from sheep and goat hide). Isinglass (from the sturgeon fish) is predominantly used on 'easel' works. The lowest grade for wood purposes is Joiner's Pearl, generally extracted from bones, which are crushed and 'pressure cooked' to convert to collagen.

These hide glues are suitable for both wooden antiques and to make furniture:

1. Cabinet grade hide glues, used for all joint and veneer work as well as leather, cloth, paper etc. where appropriate.
2. Parchment clippings or rabbit skin glue are used to make gesso, but not for veneering timbers.
3. Russian hide glue is a very high strength glue with 'quick tack'. Generally used for musical instruments,



Left to right: Small patterned lidded pot in its water jacket; modern Australian-made lidded air-jacketed thermostat set glue pot; inner glue pot in its trivet; and its water jacket

it has a higher tensile strength but is too brittle for furniture use.

Pointers for preparation and use

Glue must be prepared daily unless a controlled heat can be maintained thermostatically. Set at a maximum of 70° C, my modern pots are air-jacketed (not water-jacketed) with tight-fitting lids and are left on for the duration of the batch. I do not use double-jacketed pots unless the glue container is tinned and a tight lid is fitted, to avoid constantly having to skin the surface. My delightful small, old pots have hinged lids. It is hard to regulate heat (the glue must never boil or chill) over an electric or gas ring.

If old cast iron or aluminium pots are used, at the end of each day or session the pots must be cleaned. Adding water to the residue overnight will make it jell (the pet dog will love the result). Prior to reuse, wash in boiling water. Reheating the glue the next day is never advisable as the glue's ability to bind deteriorates with reheating and the stench increases due to bacteria and rotting.

For gilding, I store the glue size for its short working time in the refrigerator until required. Even so, the size will deteriorate in a few days, and present as a sloppy liquid on top of an unstable jelly.

Protein glues are hygroscopic. While encapsulated in a unified joint, their water content and that of the timber will be in equilibrium. Known as the Equilibrium Moisture Content (EMC), in Sydney that is 12–15%. Glue does not 'desiccate' as I have read elsewhere, but in hardening, water is lost. Over time, moisture emerges from the timber, its rate dependant on relative humidity.

Prepare glue by adding dry powder to water. Allow the glue to take up the water and swell prior to heating. After heating, never try to stiffen the mix by adding dry glue.

When heated, paddle the contents and add hot water if required. The glue should run in a steady stream without splutters off the brush when lifted off the surface by 5 cm. Cheap bristle brushes can be washed and reused.

Parchment (size) comes as clippings. The protein is extracted by simmering in water in a lidded container for 1-2 hours. While hot, strain the liquid to recover the remainder of clippings, which are discarded. The remainder, when cooled, is a soft jelly of parchment size.

When joints have been taken apart, remove all old glue from the entire joint(s) both mechanically and by applying hot water, to take the surface back to clean timber. New glue will never bind with aged protein in a joint.

The re-gluing process can then be commenced confidently, with an expectation of longevity after drying. Warm the joint or work in a warm environment, as latent heat loss from glue passing from the pot to a cold joint is substantial. You can inject glue with a hypodermic if required, but it needs exacting dexterity. Cleanliness is essential.



Paul Gregson

has 50 years' experience learning about and demonstrating the use of animal glues.

He works at

Narellan NSW as a conservator and restorer, repairing and maintaining antiques and fine furniture, upholstering, gilding, and making furniture and architectural objects. His articles on gluing and other subjects can be found in the *Australian Woodworker*. Email him at gregsonsantiques@gmail.com.



THE MERCHANT OF WELBY ANTIQUES

Noel Ferguson
The Merchant of Welby
72 Old Hume Hwy Welby NSW 2575
3km west of Mittagong
T 02 4871 2158 M 0408 480 111

www.merchantofwelby.com.au
noel@merchantofwelby.com.au

Open Thursday to Sunday 10am – 5pm
and by appointment



19th century Australian cedar Dwarf Bookcase,
full cedar with nice old finish
c 1860-80
H 153 W 161 D 38 cm

PETER
WALKER
FINE
ART



Mouth of the Murray from Hindmarsh Island

R. E. MINCHIN 1831—1893

Mouth of the Murray from Hindmarsh Island
Watercolour
Diameter 8.5 cm
Titled in artist's hand to mount

A very rare early image showing Barker's Knoll, a large sand dune where Captain Collett Barker disappeared presumed speared by Aboriginies in 1831. The high dune drifted into the sea in the mid-1800s but the area still bears his name.

PETER WALKER FINE ART
101 WALKERVILLE TERRACE
WALKERVILLE, SA 5081

08 8344 4607
INFO@PETERWALKER.COM.AU
WWW.PETERWALKER.COM.AU



J.B. HAWKINS ANTIQUES

44 INVERLEITH PLACE
EDINBURGH EH3 5Q13
SCOTLAND UK
Mobile: 07 831 0931 98
Email: emma@emmahawkins.co.uk
www.emmahawkins.demon.co.uk

'BENTLEY'
MOLE CREEK ROAD
CHUDLEIGH 7304 TASMANIA
Mobile: 0419 985 965
Email: jhawkins@acenet.com.au
www.jbhawkinsantiques.com



ROYAL & GOLD

A fine and extremely rare New Zealand gold mounted Maire wood Royal Presentation Stock Whip made by George Dowse and John Thompson Telfer of Dunedin.

An inscription engraved to the gold mount:
PRESENTED/ to/H.R.H./The Duke of Edinburgh/ by the/STOCKMEN/of/DUNEDIN/OTAGO/April 1869.
37 cm long, 3.5 cm diameter (max) 14½ inches long, 1¼ inches diameter (max)

Commemorating the first visit to New Zealand by a member of the British Royal family, this stock whip was presented to Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh by the stockmen of Dunedin.

The *Daily Southern Cross* newspaper reported on 10th May 1869:

“After the race for the Tradesmen’s Plate at Dunedin, a very handsome gold mounted stockwhip was presented to H.R.H. the *Duke of Edinburgh* by Mr. Wingfield, representing the stockmen of Dunedin. The presentation took place in the marquee, Mr. Wingfield being presented to his Royal Highness on the occasion by F. Wentworth, Esq. His Royal Highness expressed his gratification at the reception of the present, and shook Mr. Wingfield heartily by the hand. The whip was furnished by Mr. G. Dowse, and the gold mounting manufactured by Mr. Telfer, both of Rattray-street.”

Prince Alfred was born at Windsor Castle in 1844 and was second in line of succession to his brother Albert, later King Edward VII. He was destined for a career in the Royal Navy and as the Commander of HMS *Galatea* and newly created Duke of Edinburgh, in 1867 he embarked on a world tour. He became the first member of the British Royal family to visit Australia where he narrowly survived an assassination attempt. He arrived in New Zealand in 1869 where he was greeted with great enthusiasm. In 1871 Prince Alfred married the Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna, daughter of Alexander II of Russia, and in 1893 succeeded his uncle Ernest II as Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Prince Alfred died in 1900.

