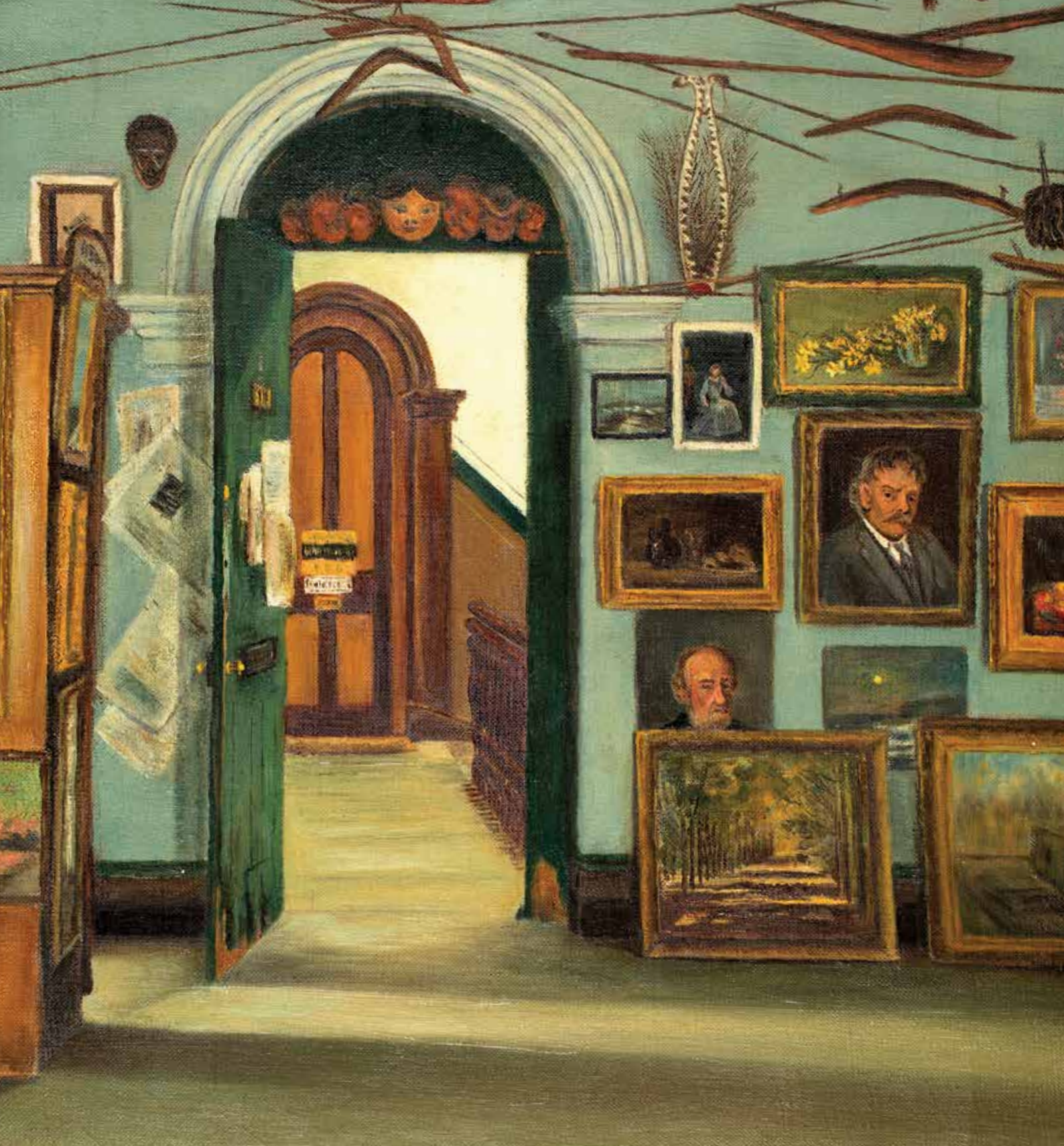


Australiana

August 2020 vol 42 no 3

RESEARCHING, PRESERVING AND COLLECTING AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE





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

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COVER

Vera L Coates (1889–1975), *Art exhibition at the Institute Building, North Terrace*, oil on canvas, signed l.r. 'VERA COATES.', c 1915, h 51 w 35 cm (detail).

The South Australian Society of Arts exhibitions could show several hundred works. Collection: State Library of South Australia, B740

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A Cook discovery

Exactly 250 years ago, HMB *Endeavour* commanded by Lt James Cook was the first British ship to sight the east coast of Australia, then known as the Great South Land or *Terra Australis Incognita*. As one of the most important exploration milestones in Australia's history, it now seems to be passing largely unnoticed, a casualty of the present pandemic.

TREVOR HANCOCK

James Cook RN (1728–1779) made three voyages of exploration, each an epic journey with their own aims, all of which yielded their own spectacular discoveries.¹

Cook's voyages

Lieutenant Cook's first voyage of discovery made in His Majesty's Bark *Endeavour*, began on 27 May 1768, and had three aims: firstly, to record the transit of Venus (when the planet passed between the Earth and the sun) at Tahiti on 3 June 1769; secondly, to study, describe and collect the plants of the lands they encountered, led by 25-year-old wealthy collector Joseph Banks (1743–1820) and the botanist Daniel Solander; and thirdly, to continue the search for the Great South Land. This third goal was contained in Cook's secret orders from the British Admiralty to seek 'a Continent or Land of great extent' and take possession of it 'in the name of the King of Great Britain'.

Cook achieved his third goal when he reached the southern coast of Australia.

On 20 April 1770, Lieutenant Zachary Hicks is credited with seeing the first 'land', which Cook named Point Hicks on the Victorian coast, before turning north, charting Australia's eastern coastline for the next four months. Cook entered Botany Bay and landed at Kurnell on 29 April, first naming it Stingray Bay, but later amending it to Botany Bay after the botanical discoveries of Joseph Banks, Dr Daniel Solander and their colleagues.

In several places Cook claimed the land for Great Britain, and on 22 August 1770 he wrote 'in the Name of His Majesty King George the Third took possession of the whole Eastern Coast' at Possession Island (Bedanug) in Torres Strait.² *Endeavour* then sailed on to Batavia, capital of the Dutch East Indies (modern day Jakarta), returning to England in 1771 via the Cape of Good Hope. On his return, Cook published

a map of his discoveries made in the Southern Ocean up to 1770.

Cook carried astronomical instruments on the first voyage but had to wait till his second voyage for the Royal Society and the Board of Longitude to provide him with accurate, tested chronometers – a copy of Harrison's pocket chronometer H4 by Larcum Kendall (K1) and three boxed chronometers by John Arnold.

Cook's second voyage began in 1772 and lasted until 1775 in HMS *Resolution* accompanied by HMS *Adventure*, commanded by Tobias Furneaux (1735–1781). This second voyage would cross the Antarctic Circle on three occasions proving that the southern land mass was not as large or as habitable as was once thought. It would show the Great South Land was separate from Antarctica and pave the way for ships to sail east across the Indian Ocean and around the Great Australian Bight to the Pacific.

1-2.

William Greatbatch (maker),
creamware teapot with printed and
enamel decoration, Stoke-on-Trent,
England. H 14.9 cm w 21.0 cm.
National Museum of Australia, Captain
Cook Teapot Collection, 2017.0013.0001.
Photographs courtesy John Howard,
www.antiquepottery.co.uk



His third voyage (1776–1779), also in *Resolution* with HMS *Discovery*, was an attempt to discover the North West Passage, a mythical ice-free route which linked the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Cook himself died in Hawaii on 14 February 1779. A later search for the North West Passage claimed the life of Sir John Franklin, who served as Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen's Land from 1837 to 1843.

The teapot

Commemorative items relating to Cook's voyages are very rare. The teapot is made of creamware (a cream-coloured earthenware), printed underglaze with the subject 'Captain Cook being directed by Britannia' and painted overglaze in enamel colours, and on the reverse the subject, also printed, the 'World with Sun, Moon and Stars', c 1776, including the Hebrew word for 'Heaven'. The teapot commemorates Cook's discoveries on his first and second voyages, the most important of which was the first. It was made by William Greatbatch (c 1735–1813) of Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent, England, a contemporary of the great potter Josiah Wedgwood, who famously produced an exceptionally fine creamware known as Queen's Ware (because he presented a tea set to Queen Charlotte), and with whom Greatbatch corresponded.³

Only four examples of this printed pattern are known to survive; three are cylindrical while this one is globular or 'ball'-shaped. James Fairfax gave one to the National Trust (NSW) while another may

have been in the collection of the late Mrs Frances Shand Kydd and a third was in the collection of the late New York collector Henry H Weldon, (ex Donald Towner collection), illustrated by David Barker as colour plate XII in *William Greatbatch A Staffordshire Potter*, now in the Ciry Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent.

The fourth, globular example is now in the collection of the National Museum of Australia, Canberra.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Michel Reymond, Peter Foster and Judy Butlin contributed to this article.

NOTES

1. For maps of Cook's voyages of exploration, see Geoffrey Blainey, *Captain Cook's Epic Voyage*, Viking 2020 and *Sea of Dangers: Captain Cook and his rivals*, Penguin 2009.
2. Cook's *Endeavour Journal*, 22 August 1770, <http://southseas.nla.gov.au/journals/cook/17700822.html> accessed 8 May 2020. Cook's journal was bought by the National Library of Australia in 1923.
3. David Barker, *William Greatbatch a Staffordshire Potter*, Jonathan Horne Publications, London, 1991.

Endeavour Voyage: The Untold Stories of Cook and the First Australians is a new exhibition at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra marking the 250th anniversary of James Cook's remarkable 1770 passage up the nation's east coast in HMB *Endeavour*. Expanding on the familiar *Endeavour* story – a turning point in human history on this continent – the exhibition honours both Cook's great voyage of scientific and geographic exploration and the rich Indigenous culture that has thrived in Australia for some 65,000 years.



Trevor Hancock is an antique dealer, formerly of Perth now in Gippsland, who has sourced many items now held in Australian institutions. You can contact him on 0431 226 343.



RECENT HIGHLIGHTS



Left: "THE SOMERSETSHIRE"
marquetry workbox with
ship portrait inlaid on the lid,
interior fitted with tray and
compartments, circa 1870
Lot 18 (A457) June 2020 –
Result: \$4,302 inc BP,
estimate: \$2,000–3,000



Right: IDA RENTOUL
OUTHWAITE (1888-1960)
fairy with daffodils
watercolour
Lot 812 (A457) June 2020 –
Result: \$5,975 inc BP,
estimate: \$1,500–2,500



Above left: A rare Colonial
powder horn engraved
"ADVANCE VAN DIEMEN'S
LAND", circa 1825,
Lot 397 (A457) June 2020 –
Result: \$5,736 inc BP,
estimate: \$1,500–2,500

Above right: FRANZ
BERGMANN, Austrian cold
painted bronze kookaburra,
early 20th century,
Lot 77 (A457) June 2020 –
Result: \$3,346 inc BP,
estimate: \$600–800

Right: A 19th century ship's
figurehead of Don Francisco
Assis de Bourbon, circa 1850,
Lot 10 (A457) June 2020 –
Result: \$11,950 inc BP,
estimate: \$4,000–6,000



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AUCTIONS



The mystery of the missing James Coutts Crawford watercolours of Glebe, Sydney c 1845

The authors are seeking to locate a number of watercolours painted by amateur artist James Coutts Crawford, who lived in Australia in the late 1830s and 1840s, especially his views of early settlement on the Glebe peninsula. Then an Arcadian rural retreat, Glebe is now a densely settled inner Sydney suburb, but retains the picturesque water views that attracted Crawford the artist.

ROBERT HANNAN & PETER CRAWSHAW

James Coutts Crawford (1817–1889) was born in Lanarkshire, Scotland, the son of Captain James Coutts Crawford RN. Young Coutts,¹ as he was known, was educated at the Royal Naval College at Portsmouth, and in spite of winning a gold medal, serving in HMS *Prince Regent* and being awarded a Royal

Humane Society medal for saving two sailors from drowning, resigned from the Navy in 1836. In 1838 he sailed from Plymouth to Sydney on the *Coromandel*, arriving on 2 October 1838,² made several journeys through the colony and was one of the first Europeans to travel overland from Sydney to Adelaide, driving livestock which fetched a higher price in the new South Australian settlement.

In November 1839 Coutts Crawford sailed to New Zealand and while there

1.

James Coutts Crawford (1817–1889), *Bay near the Glebe, Sydney*, watercolour c 1845. View from near the current-day corner of Bellevue St and Railway St Glebe in the garden of Lyndhurst, looking up Blackwattle Bay towards Balmain. Purchased 2019, authors' collection

2.

James Coutts Crawford (1817–1889), *Forest Lodge Glebe Sydney* c 1845, home of the artist. Photograph of a watercolour, SLNSW PXA55



he bought land on the Watts (Mirimar) Peninsula, Wellington. This property became known as the Glendavar cattle farm.³

He was back in England in 1841, and in 1843 married Sophia Dundas, the daughter of Admiral Sir James Dundas. By 1844 they had returned to Sydney and on 23 April 1845 rented the house Forest Lodge in Glebe, Sydney for a year. The next year they crossed the Tasman to settle in Wellington, where he spent most of the rest of his life.

The Glebe peninsula, now an inner-city suburb, had been given to the Anglican Church in 1792 as a farm, to provide income for the clergy. It proved poor farmland, so the church began subdividing in 1828. Two major private estates were created, George Allen's Toxteth Park and James Bowman's (John and Elizabeth Macarthur's son-in-law) Lyndhurst. Forest Lodge (1836) on a smaller holding had earlier been the residence of two prominent colonial families, David Jones and John Fairfax.⁴

Coutts Crawford was a keen botanist, engineer, agriculturalist, a Fellow of the Geological Society of London and most importantly for us he was an amateur artist. What survives today is an extensive collection of diaries, drawings

and watercolours of his trips, life in the colonies and his time in Australia and New Zealand.

His first wife, Sophia, died after they returned to England in 1852. In 1857 he married Jessie McBarnet (c 1827–1880) and they returned to New Zealand in the same year, where he served as Resident Magistrate in Wellington, was appointed a Member of the Legislative Council and conducted a geological survey of the province. The New Zealand Institute published many of his scientific papers and in 1880, Crawford published his *Recollections of Travel in New Zealand and Australia* in London. In failing health, in 1888 he returned to London where he died on 8 April 1889.⁵

James Coutts Crawford's watercolours of Sydney

In 2019, we curated an exhibition called *The Villas of Glebe and Forest Lodge pre-1870* and produced an exhibition catalogue, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Glebe Society.⁶ Our interest lies in tracing the whereabouts of the handful of known watercolours of Glebe that he painted.

Two of the watercolours featured substantial homes designed by colonial

architect John Verge in the 1830s. They depicted Lyndhurst (1837) which still survives to this day and Forest Lodge (1836) which was demolished in 1912. John Verge was also responsible for the construction, among others, of Camden Park, Elizabeth Bay House, Tempe House and Bedervale in Braidwood NSW.⁷

Another watercolour depicted *The Gothic Cottages* which had been built in 1842 as semi-detached houses and are early Australian examples of the Gothic Revival style being championed in England by A.W.N. Pugin (1812–1852). Only one half survives today, hidden behind shops on Glebe Point Road. His watercolours of Glebe also included rudimentary slab huts and ringbarked trees in the bush – now part of the city's earliest suburban development.

The State Library of NSW had the opportunity to purchase these images in 1966. The offer was declined but black and white photos of the delicate watercolours, as well as others of Wellington NSW and of New Zealand, were taken as a record for the collection. They were reproduced on high gloss paper and much of the definition did not transfer well in reproduction. These photos and other items are held by the State Library under citation number PXA55.

3.

James Coutts Crawford (1817–1889), *The Gothic Cottages Glebe Sydney* c 1845, Photograph of a watercolour, SLNSW PXA55



The National Library of Australia's Joint Copying Project copied Coutts Crawford's papers, including letters, manuscripts, a sketchbook and 11 volumes of his diaries 1837–1848 and 1857–1864, describing his journeys and places he visited.⁸ In 1966 the originals were owned by Coutts' grandson, Brigadier Henry Nevay Crawford (1907–1993), of Naughton House Farm, Wormit, Fife in Scotland.

Descendants of the Crawford family put up the watercolours for sale through Sotheby's London on 2 November 1988. This was lot 76 and consisted of 18 sheets. This is the only time we can find through the sales search engine *Australian Art Digest* the referencing of watercolours named *Bay near the Glebe*, *The Glebe*, *Hut at the Glebe* or *Forest Lodge*.

In the same auction, lot 75 consisted of 15 sheets and included scenes of rural NSW, the Parramatta River and St Mary's Cathedral,⁹ Sydney. Both lots 75 and 76 were passed in at the Sotheby's auction. The last two sheets from lot 75 came up at a subsequent auction with Leonard Joel Auctions, Melbourne on 25 October 2009.

On 25 August 1998, Sotheby's Australia auctioned 27 sheets by James Coutts Crawford in Melbourne as lot 124 and again they were passed in. The

provenance given was by direct descent from the family and then a private collection in Tasmania.

Between the 1988 London and the 1998 Melbourne auctions, six sheets have gone missing and a Tasmanian collector, dealer or family has been included in the line of provenance. A letter from Sotheby's Melbourne dated 23 September 1998 confirms this Tasmanian connection. A detailed letter to Sotheby's Sydney and Melbourne in mid-2019, and our follow-up phone calls asking for further information, have gone unanswered.

4.

James Coutts Crawford (1817–1889), *Glebe* c 1845, with Blackwattle Bay to the left and Lyndhurst on the hill to the right, with its two servants' wings at the back of the house. The servants' wings were removed in the 1878 subdivision which saw the 37 acres of gardens and outbuildings demolished for inner-city Victorian terraces and workers' cottages. Photograph of a watercolour, SLNSW PXA55



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After the Sotheby's Melbourne auction of 1998, we think some or all of the James Coutts Crawford sheets were bought by a private buyer from the Mornington Peninsula. In 2002 he generously donated sixteen sheets of various watercolours of NSW scenes to the State Library of NSW.¹⁰ We met with him in Victoria in 2019, but he could not recall where he bought the Crawford watercolours, nor if he had seen the other Glebe images, nor if he had sold any of the Glebe images individually. We bought from him the watercolour inscribed *Bay near the Glebe Sydney*. This c 1845 image was created in the garden of Lyndhurst looking up Blackwattle Bay over to Balmain.

The other sheets depicting Glebe are still missing. We are keen to find them because we think they are an important part of Sydney and Glebe's history. They illustrate early colonial buildings that have subsequently been destroyed or have been heavily altered. They illustrate how the land was cleared, slab huts built and over time the quality of the buildings improved with the fortunes of the early colonists. They reflect the European struggle to fashion culture, customs and industry from another place in the Australian context and demonstrate the impact on the land of the Indigenous people.

We are keen to hear from anyone who might know where they are.

NOTES

1. See "Crawford, James Coutts 1817–1915 [sic]", Joan Kerr (ed), *The Dictionary of Australian Artists*, Melbourne, OUP 1992, p 180. *Te Ara/ Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1c26/crawford-james-coutts/sources> accessed 10 June 2021.
2. *Australian* 4 Oct 1838 p 2.
3. The National Library of New Zealand has a Crawford watercolour of Glendavar dated 1848, https://natlib.govt.nz/records/23025512?search%5Bi%5D%5Bname_authority_id%5D=-82510&search%5Bpath%5D=items accessed 10 June 2020.
4. On Glebe, see Freda MacDonnell, *The Glebe: Portraits and Places*, Sydney, Ure Smith 1975 and Max Solling, *Grandeur and Grit, a History of Glebe*, Ultimo, Halstead Press 2007.
5. Obituaries in *Lyttelton Times* 10 Apr 1889; *Star* (Canterbury) 10 Apr 1889; *NZ Mail* 12 Apr 1889. Death notice *SMH* 10 Apr 1889 p 7.
6. Lyn Collingwood, Peter Crawshaw & Robert Hannan, *The Villas of Glebe and Forest Lodge Pre 1870*, Sydney, Glebe Society 2019.
7. W. G. Verge, *John Verge Early Australian Architecture, His Ledger and His Clients*, Sydney, 1962.
8. NLA M600, M687–M688.
9. St Mary's Chapel became a Cathedral in 1842 with the arrival of Archbishop Polding, a fervent exponent of the Gothic Revival.
10. State Library of NSW PXA953.

Australiana Society members **Robert Hannan** and **Peter Crawshaw** made their house and collection in Glebe available for Christmas drinks for the Society in 2018. In 2019 they curated an exhibition called *The Villas of Glebe and Forest Lodge pre-1870* and produced an exhibition catalogue. You can email them at robert72hannan@yahoo.com.au.

Scrimshaw for presentation

Colin Thomas, Australiana Society Tasmanian Branch Chair, has assembled a scrimshaw collection with the scope and quality of institutional collections in the former whaling centres of New Bedford in Massachusetts¹ and Hull in Yorkshire.² Thomas's collection encompasses the breadth of scrimshaw from tools to maintain the majestic rigging of the whaling ships to sailors' gifts to their sweethearts. An earlier article focused on how his collection tells the story of whaling in Tasmania.³ This second article looks at scrimshaw made for presentation.

SCOTT CARLIN

Whaling was Australia's leading export industry pre-1840. Whaling may have had a pre-European settlement history, with the local Yuin people working with the famed pod of killer whales (*Orcinus orca*), off the coast of Eden in south-east NSW, to shepherd baleen whales into Twofold Bay.⁴ Of the eleven transport ships of the Third Fleet that delivered convicts, provisions and the NSW Corps to Sydney in late 1791, five continued on whaling voyages. The 1790s also saw New England whalers and the British/Northern whaling fleet in Australian waters.⁵

Whaling was intricately connected with the European settlement of Hobart in 1803 and sustained Tasmania's economy through the 1840s when eastern Australia was in depression. The last Tasmanian whale ship sailed out of Hobart in 1899. English and Norwegian whalers plied Tasmanian waters into the 1920s and 30s. In the early 1950s whaling was raised to an industrial scale at Tangalooma on Moreton Island near Brisbane, with Australia's last whaling

station at Cheynes Beach, Albany, Western Australia closing in 1978.

The first article in this series covered Australia's two principal whaling endeavours – early shore-based bay whaling of the southern right whale and ocean-going hunting of the sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*). At Moreton Bay the humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*, another species of baleen whale) was hunted and in more southern waters pilot whales (*Globicephala melas*, the largest of the oceanic dolphins), porpoises, walrus and seals were also hunted for their oil.

Before the advent of the petrochemicals industries around 1860, whale oil was used to lubricate machinery, provide the fuel for domestic and street lighting and was the basis for perfumes, soap and some margarines. While the wanton killing of marine mammals is repugnant to us today, scrimshaw illuminates a past society of contrasts – between those enjoying a level of domestic comfort and the sailors themselves who endured the privation of a whaling voyage of between ten months and three years and the danger of the pursuit of whales who naturally did all

they could to resist slaughter. Whaling was done from small whaleboats, the ancestors of modern-day surf life-saving boats – with the significant difference that whalers generally could not swim. As Herman Melville wrote in *Moby Dick* (1851):⁶

... be economical with your lamps and candles! Not a gallon you burn, but at least one drop of a man's blood was spilled for it.

1.

Baleen *busk* (corset support) engraved for Constantia Elizabeth Cooper c 1830. Baleen from a Southern right whale (*Eubalaena australis*). Image shows detail of verso engraved with two Tasmanian whaleboats pursuing a right whale. Provenance: Harry and Christine Wright and Langley collections

2.

Whalebone *busk* (corset support) c 1830. Engraved pan bone from a sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) Provenance: Carl Gonsalves and Caressa Crouch collection





Scrimshaw became more plentiful into the 1830s as a result of longer ocean-going sperm whaling voyages to the Pacific, involving larger crews and hence more 'down time'. Scrimshaw had a human resource management or occupational therapy aspect. A whaling voyage involved great highs and lows: from the calculations involved in navigation to the adrenalin pursuit of a whale, followed by hours spent flensing and rendering down whale carcasses, then cleaning decks and rigging. At other times whalers were in states of boredom owing to long periods between whale sightings. Captains found their whalers calm when engaged in the productive labour of their scrimshaw, thinking of family and sweethearts at home.

3.

Whalebone *busk* (corset support) with heart-shaped top c 1840. Engraved pan bone from a sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*). Provenance: Langley collection, photograph Andrew Simpson

4.

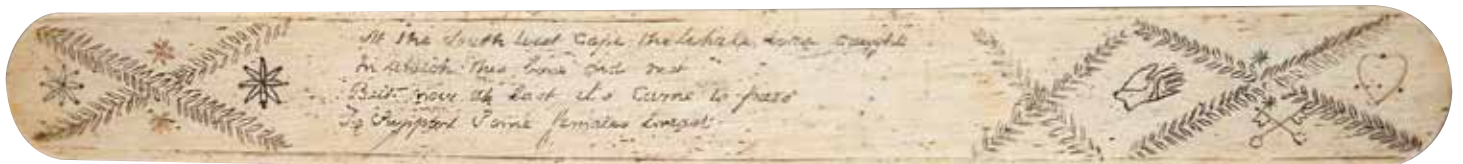
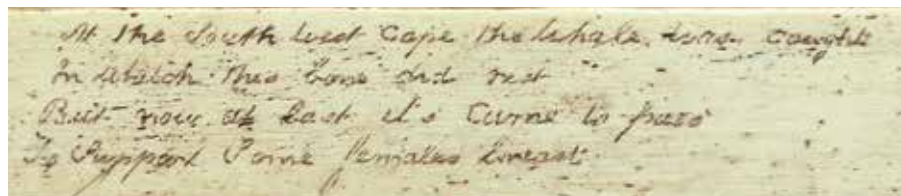
Whalebone *busk* (corset support) c 1840. Engraved pan bone from a sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) with verse: 'At the South West Cape the whale was caught / in which this bone did rest / But now at last its come to pass / To support some female's breast.' Engraved decoration of crossed palm fronds, heart, hand and crossed keys. The South West Cape, south of Port Davey, marked the entrance to whaling's 'Western Grounds'. Provenance: Masterpiece Gallery

Scrimshaw is a 19th-century term applied to any craft associated with whaling voyages, which may even include rope mats or ships in bottles. This article is concerned with items carved or engraved from baleen, whalebone and whale ivory, the solid by-products of the quest for oil.

Baleen

Baleen, the keratin protein substance that made up the feeding plates of the southern right whale (*Eubalaena australis*) is found as an inlay in early Tasmanian-made furniture such as the Australian red cedar corner cabinet c 1815 from the Caroline Simpson collection at Vaucluse House, a property of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW (Sydney Living Museums).⁷

Baleen's fibrous structure meant that it could be incised and carved but not as luxuriantly as denser whale ivory. Its chief decorative quality was contrast, particularly as bands or rings for walking canes, separating shafts of whale bone and whale ivory. Baleen was valued most for its strength and flexibility, hence its use as boning in corsets and for umbrella spokes. As fibre it provided bristle for brushes. A busk engraved for Constantia Elizabeth Cooper c 1830 in Colin Thomas's collection (**plate 1**) provides a suitably unflattering image of the southern right whale, which is backed up by a description in Melville's *Moby Dick*.⁸



... he is a very sulky looking fellow ... Look at that hanging lower lip! ... a sulk and pout ... about twenty feet long and five feet deep, a sulk and pout that will yield you some 500 gallons of oil and more. ... The roof [of the right whale's mouth] is about twelve feet high, and runs to a pretty sharp angle, as if there were a regular ridge-pole there; while these ribbed, arched hairy sides present us with those wonderous, half-vertical, scimitar-shaped slats of whalebone, say three hundred on a side, which depending from the upper part of the head or crown bone, form [what appear to be vertical] Venetian blinds ... The edges of these bones are fringed with hairy fibres through which the right whale strains the water, and in whose intricacies he retains the small fish, when open-mouth he goes through the seas of brit in feeding time ...

The busk was fitted into a centre pocket (running parallel with the sternum) of early 19th-century corsets or



5. Dupin after Pierre Thomas Le Clerc, 1778, *Gallerie des modes* - *Tailleur costumier essayant un cor a la mode*. Coloured engraving, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/RP-P-2009-1157>

6. *Ditty box* c 1830. Oval lidded ditty box in pierced baleen with Australian red cedar base and lid. The lid features a penwork scene of lighthouse and two whaleboats. Characteristically, the baleen has been pierced with belt strapping where joined at the rear. Provenance: Tulloch's Auctions

7. *Ditty box* c 1830 (shown open, different image from *Australiana*, Feb 2019). Oval lidded ditty box in pierced pan bone (interlocking wheels) with bird's eye Huon Pine lid and base. Provenance: Gowan's Auctions and Hobart's northern suburbs



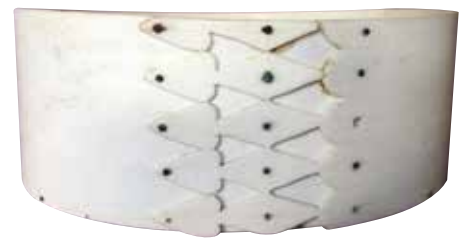
8. Pan bone carved as sides and lid valance, before being shaped into a round ditty box. Collection: Narryna Heritage Museum, Hobart





9.
Ditty box c 1860. Engraved pan bone from a sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*); metal staples, Cedar base, inset sateen-covered pin cushion, engraved with with an American flagged ship. The whale bone has been pierced with belt strapping where joined at the rear. Provenance: Douglas Park, Tasmania, where it sat in the laundry as a soap container. Provenance: Tulloch's Auctions

10.
 Artist unknown, engraved *pan bone* with wave-cut top. Titled 'Cape Moon East ...' c 1835, made as the back plate for a desk set. Provenance: Gowan's Auctions



stays. It provided a rigid centre for the corset which was then laced at the back of the body; brassieres were not worn at this time. The corset was worn over a chemise with the busk performing the role of 'lifting and separating' per the language of later advertising (**plates 3-4**). Corset busks were a favourite with whalers. The *Gallerie des Modes* engraving shows a tailor-costumier providing the intimate service of fitting a busk (**plate 5**).

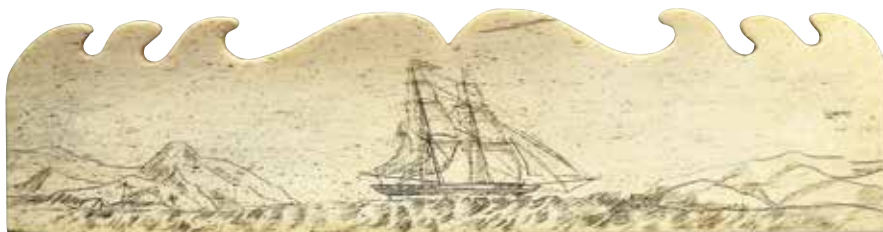
In early 19th-century stays, stretched fabric (apart from the busk) did most of the work in 'flattening the curve'. Later 19th-century corsets were reinforced with baleen at regular intervals. Baleen (then known generically as whalebone) thus continued to be a marketable

commodity, exported in bulk. In 1825, Hobart's *Colonial Times* reported:⁹

On Wednesday the schooner Australian, the property of Captain Kelly, came up to Port, having finished the whaling season. She has taken 16 [right] whales this season in the River Derwent; which have netted 150 tons of oil, and 6 tons of whalebone.

Next year, *Colonial Times* reported on the high prices of oil and whalebone:¹⁰

Sperm oil was in great demand, fetching from £50 to £53 per ton. The Greenland [or Northern] Fishery has very considerably failed this year. Whalebone [baleen] has in consequence increased in value to £180 sterling per ton at home. This ought to induce some of our small craft to proceed down the river, there being, as we are informed, immense quantities of whalebone on various parts of our coast. We hope the Members of the Derwent Whaling Club may hold out some encouragement this season to the harpooners and other persons connected in the fishery in our bays and rivers.



11.
Pin cushions with reeded sides c 1820. Whale ivory (sperm whale teeth, fitted into ivory base), velvet upholstery. Provenance: Carl Gonsalves & Caressa Crouch collection



Values later readjusted: in 1835 and 1836, Captain James Kelly (1791–1859), per his Articles of Agreement between ship owners and crews, paid £7/10/- per Imperial ton for half the whale oil (Kelly claimed a half share for providing and provisioning the ships) and £35 per ton for baleen.¹¹

Thomas's collection includes three ditty boxes, the earliest in pierced baleen with an Australian red cedar base and lid (**plate 6**). Ditty boxes were presented by whalers to their sweethearts to contain sewing materials or possibly jewellery. Stuart Frank, author of *Ingenious Contrivances, Curiously Carved – Scrimshaw in the New Bedford Whaling*

Museum (2012) traces the origins of the oval ditty box to the larger Dutch 17th-century *kapoodos* form. The ditty box is constructed around an oval timber base and top. Baleen's flexibility assisted the creation of the shape, with pleasing strapwork joins secured by metal pins at the return of the sides.¹²

Whale pan bone would be shaved down to 2 – 3mm thicknesses and steamed to shape, as seen in an example with a Huon Pine lid and base (**plate 7**). The New Bedford Whaling Museum contains around 65 ditty boxes which have solid engraved sides. The few examples in Australian collections¹³ suggest that the form commonly

12.

Sperm whale *tooth* engraved with portrait of Quaker prison reformer, Elizabeth Fry c 1830, showing the pouncing or stipple method of transferring a design from paper to a whale tooth. Provenance: Langley collection

13.

Sperm whale *tooth* with scrimshaw portrait, probably based on a studio photograph c 1865. Provenance: Langley collection

14.

Engraved sperm whale *tooth*, celebrating Vice-Admiral Viscount Nelson (1758–1805) shot by a sniper while securing the Royal Navy's victory over the French and Spanish fleets at the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October 1805. This scrimshaw portrait appears to be after the mezzotint by Charles Turner (which was after the oil portrait by John Hoppner) published 1806. Provenance: Langley collection

15.

Attributed to Edward Robert Mickleburgh (England 1814–90, active in Australia (chiefly Melbourne and Twofold Bay) from c 1841–1870s, 'Victory 120 guns' c 1840–50. Sperm whale *pan bone* (jaw section), sepia ink, Tasmanian fiddleback blackwood frame, brass screws. HMS *Victory*, Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar in 1805, is seen against a backdrop of the Chatham Docks. Provenance: Langley collection





16.

Pair of sperm whale *teeth* engraved with images of a woman praying and a figure of the angel of death holding aloft an hourglass c 1835. Provenance: White's Store, Bothwell and George Burrows collection

17.

Pair of sperm whale *teeth* engraved with Sailor and Sweetheart c 1855. This lively pair of scrimshaw teeth tell a story. The sailor, wearing Boston whaler's garb, holds his full sovereign purse while his sweetheart dreams of the return of his ship. Provenance: Dr Clifford Craig collection

encountered here had pierced basketwork sides and lids (Frank illustrates examples all with handles and without lids).¹⁴ Two panels of an incomplete lidded ditty box in the collection of Narryna Heritage Museum, Hobart (**plate 8**), indicate how the basketwork sides were traced out as overlapping circles (probably based on a penny) with holes bored ahead of the lattice being fully carved. The pierced rim of the oval lid complemented the detail of the sides.

A ditty box c 1860 in Thomas's collection has solid pan bone sides engraved with an image of a US flagged ship (**plate 9**). This ditty box is without a lid but its cedar base features an inset sateen-covered pin cushion, as often seen on the tops of ditty boxes. While more American in presentation, this ditty box is provenanced to the Tasmanian northern Midlands pastoral property Douglas Park. US imagery appears on a number of pieces in Thomas's collection; such were the international permutations of whaling.

Sperm whale bone and ivory

With the right whale being hunted almost to extinction by the late 1830s, bay whaling was largely abandoned in favour of deep-sea sperm whaling, requiring high capital outlays for the provisioning of ships. Sperm oil was superior to right whale oil for lighting, burning more clearly, and was hence a more lucrative cargo. Spermaceti, a sweet smelling oil made from a wax in the whale's head cavity improved the brightness of candles. Ambergris, a sperm whale's intestinal secretion, was used as a fixative in the perfume industry.

In the context of this article, whale bone is the lower jaw of the sperm whale and whale ivory the teeth. Through evolution the remainder of the sperm whale's bones had lost most of their

density to aid buoyancy. The teeth closed into sockets in the upper jaw. The sperm whale's head was removed from the carcass early in the process of flensing i.e. cutting up its flesh for rendering down into oil. Melville's *Moby Dick* provides an account of harvesting whale bone and whale ivory:¹⁵

... this lower jaw – being easily unhinged by a practiced artist – is disengaged and hoisted on deck for extracting the ivory teeth, furnishing a supply of the hard white whalebone with which the fishermen fashion all sorts of curious articles, including canes, umbrella-stocks and handles to riding-whips ... There are generally forty-two teeth in all; in old whales much worn down but undecayed ... The jaw is afterwards sawn into slabs, and piled away like joists for building houses.

The flat sections of jaw were known as pan bone while a ridge below the teeth provided wider sections that were turned for fids (rope separators), whip handles and the shafts of walking canes. Pan bone can be differentiated from whale ivory (tooth) by its density, grain and colour.

Whalebone was used occasionally in furniture-making and joinery such as door and drawer handles, finials, escutcheons and other inlays. A wave-top plaque (**plate 10**) provided a cresting



for a desk set while a rare, early shaving mirror c 1830-50 in Australian red cedar, Huon pine and musk features whalebone column mounts. (plate 32).

The most graphic of Thomas's whalebone corset busks (plate 2) depicts two whale ships under sail with four whale boats and their crew hunting sperm whales. Two harpooners are wielding their killing lances. Its borders incorporate drapery (reminiscent of a theatre curtain or furled sail) and fans reminiscent of neoclassical furniture veneers. A more naive example (plate 3) is engraved with symbols according to the evangelical climate of the era – a cross and anchor (symbolic of hope),¹⁶ the hexafoil (a pre-Christian symbol to ward off evil) and a lighthouse, another symbol of hope, invoking protection at times of separation. Whalers were generally regarded as heathen Sabbath-breakers¹⁷ with the hubris to take on Leviathan.¹⁸ It seems whalers were prepared to let their womenfolk be 'God's Police'.¹⁹

A similar repertoire of motifs is found on walking canes, seam rubbers and bodkins – embroidery tools for separating strands of fabric in cloth, effectively a miniature fid (plate 31) – including faceted and turned tops, shafts made up of four columns and the clenched fist, a symbol of friendly societies²⁰ but useful as it made a

18.

Pair of sperm whale *teeth* engraved with images of a lady in her finery and a lady of the night c 1875. The woman on the left wears a fashionable 'Princess Line' dress with buckle, the woman on the right wears a low neckline and raised skirt. Provenance: Dr Desmond Liddy and the Langley collection

19.

Sperm whale *tooth* engraved with a scene of a fond farewell embrace and on the reverse the whaler returned to find the woman with another man c 1875. Provenance: Peter Woof, Evandale Antiques

20.

Engraved sperm whale *tooth*, kangaroo and emu c 1810-1835 or possibly related to the 50th anniversary of British settlement. Provenance: Sir Alfred White and Carl Gonsalves and Caressa Crouch collections

21.

Pair of pilot whale *jaw bones* engraved with Pre-Raphaelite-influenced guardian angels c 1860-75. Provenance: Bob Slack, Masterpiece Gallery & Langley collection





22.

Sperm whale *tooth* engraved with a scene of a lighthouse, a full-rigged whale ship and pod of spouting sperm whales and the greeting, 'All the Greasy Luck, A. V. Davies' c 1875. When rendering whale flesh, the rigging, decks and sailor's clothing became permeated with whale oil, hence this ambivalent salutation.

Provenance: Carl Gonsalves and Caressa Crouch collection

23.

Blackwood and whale ivory (tooth) *rolling pin*, length 445 mm.

Provenance: Gail Darby collection

24.

Comb, baleen, indeterminate date. Provenance: Dennis Patten collection

comfortable pommel for the rod. A cross atop a bodkin was no doubt a reminder of the Protestant work ethic.

Scrimshanders made other textile working tools, knitting needles, crochet hooks and wool winders. Wool winders or swifts (**plate 30**) were the result of complex engineering, requiring the preparation of scores of pan bone rods fitted together in order to fold, together with a turned column, finial and a clamp to secure the winder to the table. In the days when the term *spinster* referred to a woman's textile work to furnish her 'hope chest' ahead of marriage, the wool winder perhaps stood in for the missing suitor who may have held the wool on outstretched hands while it was measured onto the skein.

A ladle c 1820 (**plate 27**) with a coconut shell bowl and handle of rose mahogany, whalebone and baleen with a whale ivory acorn finial has a distinguished decorative arts pedigree. Coconut cups were seen as the ultimate exotic symbols, being mounted in silver by South German craftsman from the second half of the 16th century. The coconut continued to lend exoticism to the fruit served in rum punch, popular in early and Macquarie-era Australia. Thomas's collection features Australian punch ladles with baleen handles and bowls of baleen and tortoiseshell, a continuation of 18th-century craftsmanship. A wine funnel fashioned from a single whale tooth (**plate 28**) was an elegant accompaniment to an early 19th-century decanter, which may have been uncorked with a corkscrew with a turned whale ivory handle.

Sperm whale teeth

The first article in this series referenced Captain Charles Bayley (later of the *Runnymede*) having a lathe on board his ship, *Wallaby* in 1841, which was used to turn whale ivory as components of desk sets, plateaux with acorn finials supporting engraved sperm whale teeth either side of a central item such as a pin cushion or fob watch stand. Other turned items were handles for rolling pins and vessels such as pin cushions



and egg cups. A pastry crimp (**plate 29**) has a faceted wheel carved from a cross section of one whale tooth supported on the turned handle of another of similar beautiful colour. An intricate pair of hinged serving tongs (**plate 25**) is made from three whale teeth with baleen rings supported on metal dowel. A particularly attractive item in Thomas's collection is a flask surrounded by small goblets, (each turned while 'green' from a sperm whale tooth, very soon after harvesting from the whale, hence their loss of shape) sitting on a turned whalebone stand (**plate 26**). The flask contains enough liquid to fill all six wine cups.

Engraved sperm whale teeth²¹ were presentation items. While today we think of scrimshaw as 'folk art' (possibly based on prejudices about the material and class-based assumptions about the artists), in the 19th century it clearly was part of popular culture with high art aspirations. The Hobart *Courier* described an 1858 presentation, admiring the artistry but pointing out the unusual medium:²²

A Present from the Antipodes — ... we expect to receive intelligence through the London Press of the arrival in England of four beautiful sperm whale teeth, elegantly mounted upon silver bases upon a marble pedestal, which are to be forwarded to England by Mr. John McGrath as a presentation to a sincere friend, Mr. E. T. Smith, lessee of the Drury Lane Theatre, and proprietor of that popular sporting journal The Sunday Times. Their value as a natural curiosity has been significantly increased by the excellent style in which they



25.

Serving tongs made from three whale teeth with baleen rings c 1900. Made from three tooth sections supported on metal dowel. Provenance: Andrew Shepherdson

26.

Flask and dessert wine goblets. Whale tooth, turned (flask, glasses and shaft of stand). The top and the base of the stand are turned whalebone. The flask contains enough liquid to fill all six wine glasses. Provenance: J.B. Hawkins Antiques



and tessellated Pavement, and the mysterious appurtenances and insignia of the Craft. The teeth in the rear have representations of Salisbury and Milan Cathedrals, the perspective in both is admirable, and the details are so faithfully carried out as to warrant us in the opinion that in becoming a whaler the artist had indeed lost his real vocation ...

Perhaps these presentation sperm whale teeth were akin to mounted emu eggs, as an Australian memento?

Scrimshanders belonged to a visually literate culture, with people creating art through sketching, watercolour and compiling albums of their family and colleagues' artwork. Stuart Frank, however, credits the overwhelming majority of pictorial scrimshaw as being copies of published sources, the exceptions being conventionalised ship portraits, panoramas and the more adventurous whaling scenes, although these depictions may be informed by 'canonical' depictions such as W. J. Huggins' *South Sea Whale Fishery* series of lithographs (London, 1834).

Thomas's collection of engraved sperm whale teeth includes portraits of actors and actresses, people in Romantic/theatrical 'Biblical', Medieval and Scottish costume, celebrities and ladies of fashion – reflecting a great variety of sources including book frontispieces and fashion plates from high-end magazines such as Ackermann's *Repository* (London, 1809–29), *Godey's Magazine and Lady's Book* (Philadelphia, 1830–1878) to portraits of royalty and other celebrities from the *Illustrated London News* (1842–2003) and other publications. One small portrait in Colin Thomas's collection is clearly based on an early studio photograph (**plate 13**).

A sperm whale tooth engraved with a portrait of naval hero, Horatio, Lord Nelson (1758–1805) is after the mezzotint by Charles Turner (which was in turn after the oil portrait by

are carved, especially when it is remembered that the work was performed by a seaman on board the old whaling brig *Grecian*, the common sail needle being his only graver, and that two years were occupied in the completion of the designs. The two front teeth, as set upon the pedestal, are cut with Masonic emblems, the one on the left with the Lamb and the Cross, the one on the right with the Pillars

27.

Ladle c 1820–50. Whalebone, baleen, coconut shell bowl, rose mahogany handle, whale ivory acorn finial. Provenance: Carl Gonsalves and Caressa Crouch collection

28.

Wine funnel fashioned from a whale tooth and corkscrew with whalebone handle. Whalebone, steel, pig or badger hair bristle



John Hoppner published in 1806 (**plate 14**). Of course we can never be sure whether a Tasmanian scrimshander had access to an original mezzotint or copied the depiction of Nelson from a local pub sign. This tooth sits alongside an engraved pan bone plaque firmly attributed to Edward Mickleburgh (1814–90) of Nelson’s ship inscribed ‘Victory 120 guns’ (**plate 15**).

Images were transferred from paper templates onto the teeth by pricking the paper and pouncing powdered graphite or pigment onto the ivory surface. This method is evident in a portrait of Quaker prison reformer, Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845) (**plate 12**). The scrimshander (possibly a former convict, a person with Evangelical / social justice sympathies or a New England Quaker?) has not joined the dots but allowed the stippled effect to form the composition.

Scrimshaw images contain humour, often across a matched pair of teeth such as the contrast between a lady of fashion and a lady of the night (**plate 18**) or irony between the two sides of the one tooth e.g. a single sperm whale tooth engraved with a scene of a fond farewell embrace and (on the reverse) the whaler returned to find the woman with another

29.

Pastry crimps, whale ivory (tooth) with baleen, steel. The survival of pastry crimps indicates their popularity as a scrimshaw form and gift (possibly to the ladies who did not receive a busk). It is also testimony to the popularity of the pie in Australian cuisine. Provenance: Langley collection, Grange Antiques, George Burrows collection



30.

Wool winding *swift* c 1850. Whalebone, partly lathe-turned, with clamp for securing to a table top. Provenance: Carl Gonsalves and Caressa Crouch collection

31.

Bodkins c 1840–75. Whale ivory (tooth), whale bone (jaw bone), baleen, Casuarina, turned, carved and inlaid. Finial and shaft motifs include crosses, hearts, clenched fist, a puzzle ball between ‘portico’ columns, a scroll, hammer and a woman’s hand holding aloft a letter. Sailor’s gifts to their womenfolk included knitting needles, crochet hooks, embroidery tools, wool winders, buttons and combs. Bodkins were a recurrent gift and generally carved with a range of folkloric motifs, comparable with those that appear on walking canes, seam rubbers and other scrimshaw staples





32.

Shaving mirror with whalebone column mounts c 1830–50. Original glass and veneers of Huon pine, Tasmanian musk and Australian red cedar. Illustrated in Fahy & Simpson, *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture*, cat 257, p 408. Provenance: Simpson's Antiques

man c 1875 (plate 19). One whale tooth is titled 'The Heiress'. In the scene a kneeling man proposes, while a woman at the door warns against the match.

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery's collection is rich in engraved pilot whale jaw bones. The jaw bones retain their teeth and both sides of the lower jaw sometimes remained linked. The jaw bone's large triangular shape presents a large surface for engraving. A pair in Thomas's collection are illustrated with a magnificent scene of Pre-Raphaelite angels (plate 21).

Scrimshaw has a long association with Tasmanian museum collections, first being on view in quantity at photographer J. W. Beattie's Port Arthur Museum, located at 51 Murray Street Hobart from c 1910. A first tranche of Beattie's collection was acquired by the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery Launceston in 1927. A showcase titled 'Scrimshaw – the ancient art of the mariner' was the focus of newspaper and magazine articles over the ensuing decades. The collection has been on exhibition at QVMAG's Inveresk site since its redevelopment in 2001.

The Ship Lover's Society was founded in Hobart in 1931, its collection exhibited at Narryna from 1957 to 1974

when it became the basis of the Maritime Museum of Tasmania. At Narryna it was exhibited alongside the private collection of Sir William Crowther (1912–1981) now at the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office.

The Australian Museum in Sydney has exhibited its scrimshaw through the lens of that institution's relationship with the Pacific and an interest in the totemic qualities of scrimshaw to the people of Polynesia and Micronesia. In Tasmania, scrimshaw has a natural relationship with the Tasman Sea, Antarctica, the Hobart docks and Salamanca warehouses. Tasmania has always been Australia's smallest economy, hence the survival of the 19th-century built environment which reflected the wealth generated by whaling. In Tasmania there lingers a nostalgia for past technologies and the loss of economic opportunity. To hold a piece of scrimshaw is to come face to face with a complex history.

ILLUSTRATIONS

All items are from the Colin Thomas collection, Hobart unless otherwise specified. Photographs by Scott Carlin or Nick Osborne unless otherwise specified.

FURTHER READING

- Scott Carlin, 'Scrimshaw the art of the Mariner – the Colin Thomas collection' *Australiana* February 2019 vol 41 no 1.
- Colin S. Thomas, *Scrimshaw, the Ancient Art of the Mariner*, Hobart 2011.
- Stuart M. Frank, *Ingenious Contrivances, Curiously Carved – Scrimshaw in the New Bedford Whaling Museum* Jaffrey, New Hampshire USA, David R. Godine publisher, 2012
- Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* first published London and New York, 1851, Baker & Taylor Publishing Group, San Diego California USA. Chapter references have been included in the notes so quotes can be traced in numerous editions available today e.g. Penguin.

NOTES

1. New Bedford Maritime Museum, New Bedford MA, www.whalingmuseum.org.
2. Hull Maritime Museum, Kingston-upon-Hull, Yorkshire, currently closed for refurbishment.
3. Scott Carlin, *Australiana* February 2019 vol 41 no 1.
4. The killer whales received in return for a portion of the kill. Bruce Pascoe, *Dark Emu* (2014) p 71.
5. Frank claims sperm whaling as 'an indigenously American phenomenon' p. 9
6. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, Ch 45, p 198. The novel draws partly on the author's experience as a whaler in the early 1840s.
7. John Hawkins, 'Australian Decorative Arts in the Clyde Bank collection', *Australiana* May 2003 vol 25, no. 2. Hawkins identifies the inlaid designs as having been taken from the Edinburgh cabinetmaker's book of prices.
8. Melville, Ch 75 p 326.
9. *Colonial Times* 2 Sep 1825 p 2.
10. *CT* 19 May 1826 p 3, copied in *Australian* 31 May 1826 p 3.



11. James Kelly biography.
12. Frank p 215. The Americans refer to strapwork inelegantly as rattail joins.
13. All have Tasmanian provenances. Collections of Colin Thomas, Trevor Kennedy and National Gallery of Australia.
14. Frank figs 11.17 and 11.18.
1. Melville, Ch 74, p 234.
15. Bible, New Testament, *Hebrews* 6.19
16. *Hobart Town Courier* 13 Oct 1821 p. 2 Lieutenant Governor's Court, Thompson v Nash, a case of whaling. Captain Nash having taken baleen stockpiled by crew of the brig *Active* on the beach at Sloping Island. 'The Judge Advocate said, that ... the plaintiff's employing his crew to labour on the Sabbath, as a punishment, was a circumstance quite novel to him.--Acts of necessity were sometimes tolerated on that day; but it was the first time that he had ever heard so religious a one devoted to such a purpose.'
17. Leviathan is a creature with the form of a sea serpent referenced in Biblical books of Job, Isaiah and Amos, the Psalms and

- the apocryphal First Book of Enoch. It is later equated with Satan, enemies of Israel, crocodiles and by the 19th century, the great whale. The great whale who swallowed Jonah in the Biblical Book of Jonah is portrayed as doing the work of God. In Melville's *Moby Dick* Captain Ahab's hubris or monomania in pursuing the white whale brings his enterprise to destruction.
18. Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police* (1975) a social history which dealt with the historical stereotyping of

- women in Australia which led to women's limited opportunity.
19. Closed hand motifs are often depicted on Tasmanian tombstones, possibly denoting membership of a Lodge that provided healthcare benefits.
20. In Australia, relief carving of teeth does not appear before the 20th century.
21. *Courier* (Hobart) 8 Feb 1858 p 3.
22. Such as the pan bone scene of Lord Howe Island and Ball's Head Pyramid reproduced in the first article in this series.



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Branch committee. You can contact him at 03 6165 7000 or Scott.Carlin@tmag.tas.gov.au.



33a.

A whale tooth depicting a veiled woman c 1820s. Provenance: Langley collection

33b.

A whale tooth depicting a woman wearing a large sun bonnet early 1830s. Provenance: George Burrows collection

33c.

A whale tooth depicting a woman wearing coal scuttle bonnet and leg o' mutton sleeves c 1838. Provenance: Langley collection

33d.

A whale tooth depicting a woman wearing a *patelot* (cape) and triple-tiered crinoline dress mid 1850s. Provenance: Vickers & Hoad Auctions

34.

Clothes brush labelled 'Dr A. Van Dursen's Whalebone brush Manufactured by Thomas & Co. Patent Aug 15 1900 [? indistinct]'. Broom handle embossed 'The Universal Broom Guaranteed Samuel Taylor Patent 19782 Sydney'.

‘Angels in the Studio’ in Western Australia: the precursors

Dr Dorothy Erickson begins a new series of articles on Western Australian art, exploring the production and themes adopted by women artists in the 19th century, and putting their work into its social and artistic context.

DOROTHY ERICKSON

In the 19th century, marriage was the only sanctioned career path open to gentlewomen. They were expected to be ‘The Angel in the House’, after Coventry Patmore’s 1854 poem about his ‘perfect’

wife Emily – a refining influence on the men who had to venture forth into the increasingly industrialised and ‘contaminating’ commercial world. Girls were educated from the cradle for duties as hostesses. Unmarried daughters were thus dependent on their fathers and failure to marry was considered a

social disgrace. Unmarried gentlewoman without adequate family support often became governesses or teachers, as painting and needlework were considered genteel pastimes and part of their own education that they could pass on. Failure to achieve either of these positions could lead to prostitution. The opportunity to train as artists was a rare chance to escape these confines.

Art schools had been set up mid-century to skill working-class women for the pottery factories, but these classes were invaded by middle-class women anxious to learn or perhaps even earn a living by artwork. By the end of the 19th century, when there was an overabundance of women in the British population, the men who footed the bills began to think that perhaps the gentlewomen ought to be able to earn a living, and these women began to claim their right to work. Setting up an art studio became a respectable, even fashionable, occupation. A few strong-willed individuals even continued their careers after marriage. They were what writer Anthea Callen dubbed the ‘Angels in the Studio’¹ (plate 1).

In Western Australia, some women set up as artists with their own studios and art schools. Most of these women were newcomers to the colony who, in the normal course of events, would not have



1.

‘Lady Students at the National Gallery’,
Illustrated London News 21 Nov 1885



considered migrating to such an isolated outpost. Most came to join family members drawn to a colony which had escaped the international depression of the 1890s by being in the middle of a gold boom, with a dry West Coast Maritime Climate suited to those suffering from consumption (Tuberculosis or TB).

The newcomers found a capital that had begun to bloom with new buildings and even amenities in advance of older cities. In 1902, an enchanted traveller, May Vivienne, wrote of Perth (**plate 2**):

... beautifully situated, and one cannot fail to be charmed with its picturesque and lovely surroundings. ... a handsome and prosperous city, with noble buildings on all sides, electric light, tram cars, beautiful parks around it, and yachts dancing on the broad waters of the Swan River.²

But to return to earlier times, when most upper-class women were merely

wives, teachers or governesses, Jessie Cowan was an early example of a professional woman. Jessie was a painter and art teacher who was born in Perth, Western Australia on 12 October 1845 to Walkinshaw Cowan and his wife Elizabeth née Dyer. At the time of Jessie's birth, Cowan was 'Clerk to Council'. In 1846 he became Secretary of the Government Grammar School but by 1848 was the Guardian of the Aborigines 'Over the Hills' in the rural district of York where he became Resident Magistrate from 1873–1888.³ Their family home is now the Residency Museum in York.

It is not known exactly how Jessie was educated. Many of the daughters of the gentry were home-schooled by their parents or governesses. Other classes during the 1840s were held at the convents run by Irish nuns or at the 'chapel' schools. The Young Ladies Academy, which offered 'Every facility afforded to young ladies

2.

Attributed to Blanche Mary Habgood née Brown, *Perth from Mt Eliza* by 'obscured MH after JA'. A painting expedition overlooking Perth Water. Collection and photograph courtesy Royal Western Australian Historical Society. The 'angels' could venture out of doors if accompanied by a suitable chaperone. Habgood was the sister of Edith Cowan and a niece by marriage of the painter John Absolon, while Jessie Cowan had been her art teacher and her sister Edith married Jessie's brother James



3.
Lily, Agnes or Annie and Jessie Cowan with their father. Courtesy Royal Western Australian Historical Society

4.
Blanche and Edith Brown. Courtesy Royal Western Australian Historical Society



for the acquirement of a thorough English Education ... attention to ... the formation of gentle and graceful manners' which would enable the pupils to 'preside over a family circle ... in whatever station it may please Divine Providence to place them'⁴ was run by the Sisters of Mercy, who advertised that they taught French, Italian, music, drawing, painting in watercolours and illuminating. The daughters of the Methodists were educated at The Perth Young Ladies School run on the 'Principles

of Reformed religion' offering English, Arithmetic, Writing, Geography and History in addition to Music, Drawing and Plain and Ornamental Needlework.⁵

Jessie's half-sister Agnes Cowan and a Mrs Knight (formerly Miss Munroe who had come out as a governess to Governor Kennedy's daughters) opened a boarding school in Perth in the 1860s. In 1868 when Mrs Knight retired, Jessie and her sisters Annie and Lily went to help at the school where Jessie taught drawing before marrying Joseph Hillman in 1874 (**plate 3**). They had three children: Alfred, born 1875, Jessie 1881 and Lillian 1883. In August 1881 the Hillmans moved from Perth to live in North Fremantle with Agnes who had opened another school in a large, three-storey, former hotel and which ran until 1887. Jessie died in 1893 having taught some interesting girls.

One pupil was Edith Dircksey Brown (1861–1932) (**plate 4**), the daughter of Kenneth Brown, pastoralist at Glengarry,

Champion Bay and his first wife Mary Eliza Dircksey Wittenoom, teacher and daughter of the colonial chaplain the Rev. J. B. Wittenoom. Edith married Agnes and Jessie's brother James Cowan in 1879 and, as Edith Cowan, became the first woman parliamentarian in Australia. She now has a university named after her and is featured on the \$50 note.

Edith's elder sister Blanche Mary Elizabeth Brown (1860–1912) was another pupil at the boarding school. In 1880 Blanche married Robert Henry Habgood, son of Robert Mace Habgood jeweller and merchant of Perth and London, Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths. Blanche is presumed to be the painter of a delightful watercolour (**plate 2**), a copy of an original by her relative by marriage John Absolon.

Jessie Cowan had exhibited drawings in the Loan Exhibition of Works of Art and Industry held in the Mechanics Hall in 1870; her sister Edith Cowan had

noted that Jessie ‘painted beautifully’. So far none of her paintings has been located, although the Battye Library holds a scrapbook containing sketches and drawings.⁶ Jessie is however known for the lilies painted on a dress that belonged to Blanche now in the collection of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society (**plate 5**). Silk taffeta panels are painted with pink and white tiger lilies with green leaves and stems. Helena Habgood, wife of Blanche’s son Robert wore the dress to the Western Australia Centenary ball in 1929. The dress, stabilised and restored with a gift from the Utah Foundation, is on display at Stirling House, the headquarters of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society.

Local interest in the unique flora of the colony has always been considerable. Wildflowers, of which there are some 14,000 species endemic to Western Australia, have been identified as a particularly Western Australian subject. This is not merely a legacy of the 19th century interest in botany but an assertion of local identity. They are depicted in metalwork and featured strongly in watercolour sketches, illuminated addresses, china painting, embroidery, woodcarving and textile design. Wildflower paintings were always prominent in the entries for the international exhibitions, such as those of 1886 in London, 1899 in Coolgardie, 1900 in Paris, 1902 in Glasgow and 1904 in St Louis. They provided a sense of identity, for Western Australians both new and old were entranced by the unique flora. This interest was led by the Premier’s wife Margaret Forrester (**plate 6**).

Margaret Elvire Forrester (née Hamersley 1844–1929), from an old Western Australian family with Royal antecedents, was not a professional, however she always had a private studio. Her social position, descended from five English kings and her mother a French princess, decreed that professionalism was not an option. Marrying the explorer John Forrester (later Lord Forrester) was also frowned on, so she had to wait until after her father died as he would not give his permission. Not surprisingly many of the other women artists at the turn of the century came from somewhat privileged backgrounds.

Lady Forrester was a painter, particularly of wildflowers. She was born in France to Ann Louise Cornelius and Edward Tours Hamersley, a wealthy Cambridge graduate mathematician, while her father was there studying oenology. The family, known as the Rothschilds of Western Australia, were minor aristocracy descended from Henry II. They had migrated to Western Australia in 1837 having married for love against both families’ wishes, but often spent time in France. They returned to his property Pyrtton at Guildford in Western Australia in 1850 where Margaret was educated by her parents and governesses.



5. Blanche Habgood’s *dress with Tiger Lilies* painted by Jessie Cowan/Hillman in the 1880s. It has apparently been remodelled to some degree



6. Margaret Lady Forrester in evening dress. Courtesy West Australian Newspapers



7.

Margaret Forrest, *Wildflowers from the Greenough Flats*, watercolour and gouache, 53.9 x 37.6 cm, 1889. State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia

8.

Margaret Forrest, *Hovea and Bossia*, watercolour and gouache, 54.0 x 37.7 cm, 1889. State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia

Her father Edward Hamersley was a proficient painter who taught this skill to his children and painting excursions were a regular occurrence. In 1876, after her father's death she married surveyor John Forrest who was to become the first premier of Western Australia, knighted in 1891 and created the first Australian-born Baron – Baron Forrest of Bunbury, Privy Councillor, in 1918. She was a hostess, confidante, counsellor and frequent traveller with her husband, the most powerful man in Western Australia from 1890 until his death in 1918. Margaret, with her social skills and contacts smoothed his path.

Margaret had a room set aside as a studio in her home The Bungalow in Perth where she painted many of the colony's unique wildflowers and exhibited some at the 1881 International Exhibition in Perth. Margaret Forrest

hosted famous wildflower painters Marianne North and Ellis Rowan when they visited Western Australia. They went on painting excursions to various parts of the colony. Margaret Forrest was closely involved in the development of what became King's Park, which was not far from her home and which at this stage still was abundantly blessed with wildflowers.

She was an active member of the Wilgie Sketching Club, second president of the West Australian Society of Arts and a foundation member of the Karrakatta Club, the first women's club in Australia, founded in 1894. She won a special first-class award for 'WA Wildflowers in watercolour' at the 1899 Coolgardie International Exhibition. She exhibited a collection of wildflower paintings in the Western Australian Pavilion of the Paris *L'Exposition Universelle* of 1900. As Western Australia

was a sovereign state at this time, it had its own pavilion. This work was sent on to the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1902.

She was President of the Australian Women's National League and the Women's Executive of the National Political League of Western Australia, which she had helped to establish. She was also President of the Women's Executive of the Liberal League of Western Australia. Her paintings were used to illustrate at least two books. When her husband went into Federal politics in 1901 and much time was spent in Melbourne in a suite at the Grand Hotel, she had less time to paint but returned to it after his death in 1918 with a studio in the Perth beachside suburb of Cottesloe.

The women's movement that emerged in the 1880s, combined with a craft revival had encouraged artists to expand beyond their traditional art forms of embroidery and painting so the products of the studios were diverse and included pottery, china painting, leatherwork, pyrography, woodcarving and metalwork. Margaret and a number of women, together with the new

9.
Margaret Forrest,
*White Myrtle and
Leucopogon*,
watercolour and
gouache, 54.0 x
37.6 cm, 1889.
State Art Collection,
Art Gallery of
Western Australia

10.
Lady Forrest's
paintings of
wildflowers on display
in Paris in the Timber
Court in the Western
Australian pavilion at
*L'Exposition
Universelle*, 1900.
Photograph courtesy
Battye Library, Perth

11.
Catalogue for the
1890 Wilgie Sketch
Club exhibition, Perth





12.

One of the few records of a Gussie Knight painting. This image looks rather like a view from her veranda and is probably *Albany from Mt Melville*, a watercolour exhibited to acclaim in 1890. Photograph courtesy Albany Library

13.

Gussie Knight, *Kalgan River* 1896. Collection of the National Trust (WA) at Old Farm, Strawberry Hill, Albany. Photograph courtesy of the National Trust (WA)

architectural fraternity in the colony, joined the Western Australian Society of Arts, formed in 1896 by the members of the Wilgie Sketch Club of which she had been a driving force (plate 11). The aim was ‘...to advance Painting, Sculpture, Architecture and Kindred Arts in the colony.’⁷ The first President was Bernard Woodward, who became curator of the new Museum and Art Gallery the following year. Frederick Williams, who was the foundation head of the Technical Art School

in 1900 proposed that the Society enlarge the scope of future exhibitions to ‘... include such work of artistic merit as embroidery, woodcarving, art needlework, designs for silver and gold work, ceramic and hammered ironwork’⁸ allowing for wider participation. In conjunction with the annual exhibition, they held design competitions which were open to non-members in ‘order to cultivate a taste for art’.⁹

One of the first women we could perhaps deem an ‘Angel’ was Ann Augusta (Gussie) Knight (1840–1904), the daughter of wealthy ships’ architect John McKail who had sailed out in the founding fleet in 1829 on the barque *Parmelia* with Governor Stirling. Her mother Henrietta Jenkins sailed out a little later in 1833 with Sir Richard Spencer, the Government Resident in Albany, and his family, as Spencer employed her father. She and her sister Mary Henrietta (Mrs James Manning 1844–1931), another accomplished artist, were educated with the Spencer daughters, one of whom, Elizabeth, became Lady Grey.¹⁰ John McKail travelled regularly as an owner of a shipping business and was Consul for Hamburg so it is possible Gussie and Mary Henrietta were ‘finished’ abroad. In 1863 Gussie married William Grills Knight and they lived





at Woodlands, one of her father's properties in the Porongorup Ranges near Albany. Gussie became a collector of wildflowers for the Director of Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, who visited in 1867. Mary Henrietta married engineer and photographer James Manning in 1869.

On her father's death in 1871, the Knights moved to Albany and a mansion *The Rocks* was built to her design where they entertained regularly (**plate 16**). One of the large rooms was designated 'The Studio'; here she hung many of her paintings and conducted an art school on an enclosed balcony. W. G. Knight became Mayor of Albany for three terms and she was the Lady Mayoress but that did not stop her painting. She exhibited in the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London where she won a bronze medal. She also joined the Wilgie Sketch Club in Perth and exhibited in the 1890 exhibition when her panoramic landscape, *Albany from Mount Melville* (**plate 12**) was praised for its 'high artistic merits and accuracy of detail'; sadly it is known only from a faded photograph.

As most of her paintings were destroyed in a fire after her death in 1904, Gussie Knight has slipped from



memory. Perusal of the social notes of the times indicates she usually gave a painting as a wedding present so there should be a number in private collections just waiting to be found. One by her sister Mary Henrietta recently came to light at auction so there is hope that more of Gussie's may be located and more of Mary Henrietta's career may become known. Mary was married to a photographer and her sister-in-law Jane was also a

14.

Kalgan River 1904. Collection of Albany Historical Society (Inc), photograph courtesy of Albany Historical Society

15.

Gussie Knight, painted plate, probably of their home Woodlands in the Porongorups. Collection of the National Trust (WA) at Old Farm, Strawberry Hill, Albany. Photograph courtesy of the National Trust (WA)



Dr Dorothy Erickson is a jeweller, historian, curator and author who has been exhibiting her jewellery since 1972. Her work, often kinetic and featuring Western Australian wildflowers, is found in museums in Australia and Europe. In 2020 she was inducted into the Design Institute of Australia Hall of Fame for her own creative work and for promoting the work of Western Australian artists through her exhibitions, books and many articles in publications such as *Australiana*. www.dorothyerickson.com

16.

Gussie Knight's home The Rocks in Albany became a five-star hotel. Photograph Michael Lyon

17.

Mary Henrietta Manning, *Princess Royal Harbour, Albany* 1906
50 x 90 cm, oil on canvas. Manning, the widowed sister of the recently deceased Gussie, painted this from a vantage point at The Rocks. Whereabouts unknown

photographer so she may have had a professional life (**plate 17**).

To be continued

NOTES

1. Anthea Callan, *Angel in the studio: women of the arts and crafts movement 1870–1914*. New Jersey, Astragal Press, 1979.
2. May Vivienne, *Travels in Western Australia: Being a Description of the Various Cities and Towns, Goldfields and Agricultural Districts of that State*. London, Heineman, 1902, p 29.
3. Rica Erickson (comp.), *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians pre 1829–1988, vol. 1 A-C*. Perth, UWAP, 1988, p 686.
4. Arthur Shenton, ed. *Western Australian Almanack*, 1855.
5. Arthur Shenton, ed. *Western Australian Almanack*, 1854.
6. BA2247. The scrapbook contains sketches and watercolour paintings of wildflowers, greeting cards, postcards, invitations, and pictorial ephemera.
7. The first exhibition catalogue.
8. *Western Mail* 7 Apr 1900 p 9.
9. 'Socialites', *Herald* 28 May 1901.
10. Wife of Sir George Grey (1812–1898) explorer, Governor of South Australia, NZ, and Cape Colony.



Rayner Hoff – sculptor for the 1st AIF and World War I

Historian and biographer John Ramsland surveys the permanent World War I memorials designed by Manx-born sculptor Rayner Hoff (1894–1937), constructed in Dubbo (1925), Adelaide (1927–30) and culminating in his work with architect Bruce Dellit in the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, Sydney (1931–34).

JOHN RAMSLAND

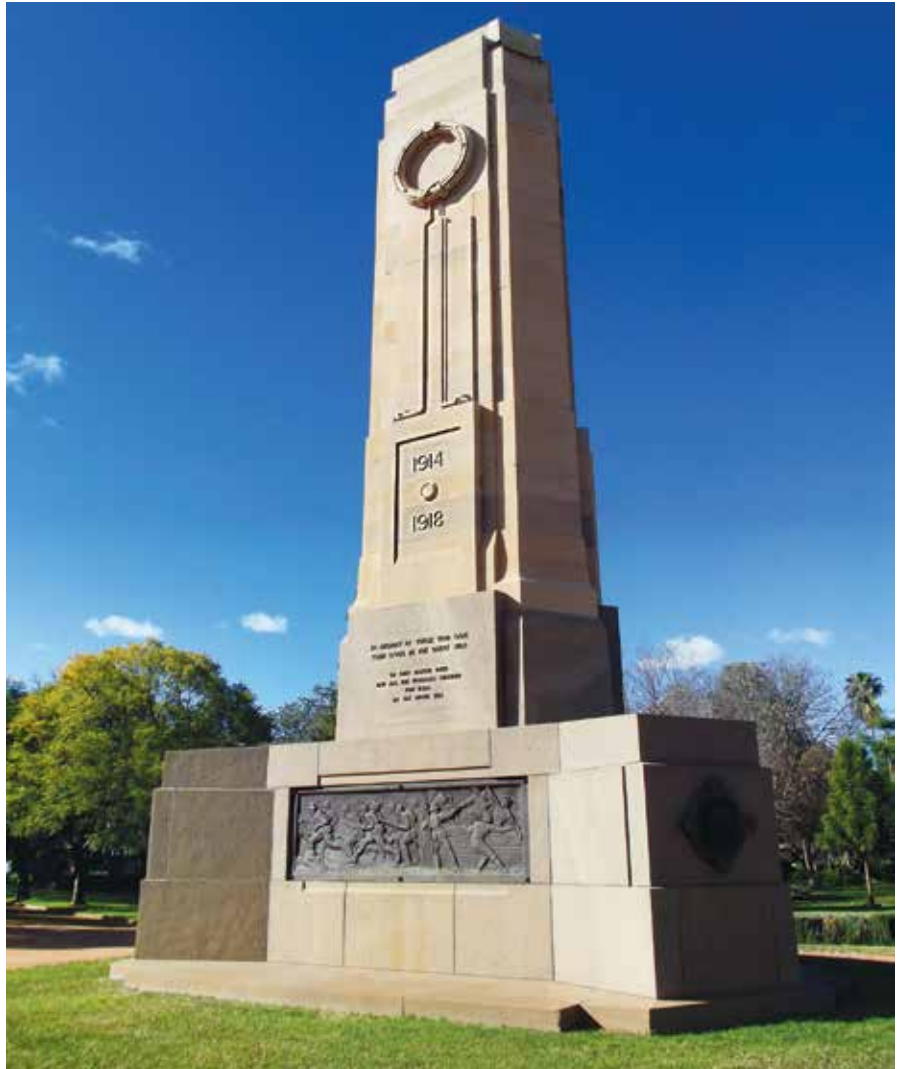
Hoff, the most able sculptor working in post-war Australia, executed bronze panels of battle for the tall pillar at Dubbo, New South Wales, built in 1925. ... He was later to do more adventurous figures for state memorials in Adelaide and Sydney.¹

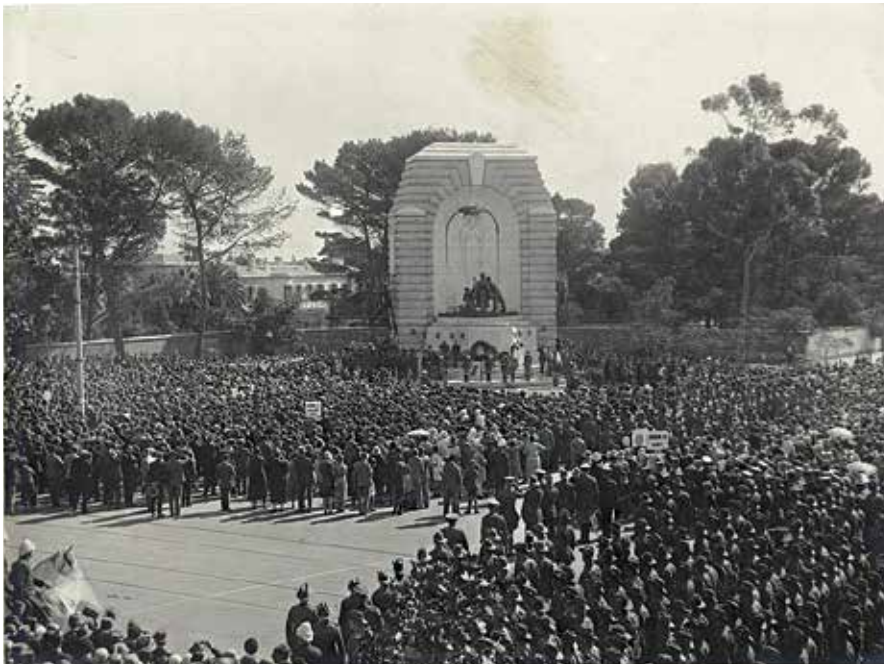
Eminent historian Ken Inglis in his book on war memorials in Australia has accurately distilled the cultural significance of George Rayner Hoff's magnificent sculptures in three war memorials for the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF) that have become embedded as icons in the Australian landscape. They thus inform the modern collective memory of the terrible events of the Great War and its impact.

Inglis' insightful 1998 analysis was quickly followed by Deborah Edwards' *This Vital Flesh: The Sculpture of Rayner Hoff and his School* and, more recently, Deborah Beck's meticulously researched biography *Rayner Hoff: The Life of a Sculptor* in 2017. In addition to these three authors leading the field of researchers about memorials, a number of well-developed articles on Hoff's sculpture and related subjects appeared in the eminent journal *Art and Australia*

1-2.

Rayner Hoff (1894–1937), *Dubbo Anzac Memorial*, with bas relief sculpture completed in 1925. Photographs Brian Yap





3-4.

South Australian National War Memorial, North Terrace, Adelaide (1927–1931), architect Louis Laybourne Smith; sculpture by Rayner Hoff assisted by Julius Henschke and Arthur Heinicke. The unveiling ceremony, Anzac Day, 25 April 1931. Photograph State Library of South Australia; Mortlock Library of South Australiana, B 5909; photograph by J. McKenzie

and have provided a variety of arguments, insights and interpretations into his artistic achievements in Australia in the field of civic memorial sculpture.

Inglis places Hoff's successive commissioned contributions to the Dubbo (1925) (plates 1–2), Adelaide (1927–30) (plates 3–5) and Sydney (1931–34) War Memorials into the context of a vast range of small and large memorials across the Australian island continent – an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 are traced in terms of their origin and meaning. Art historian Edwards concentrates on Rayner Hoff's development of a distinctive Sydney vitalist school of Art Deco sculpture emanating from the School of Art at East Sydney Technical College in Darlinghurst. Beck, another art historian, provides a definitive biography of the artist from his childhood influences onwards.

All three authorities agree that Hoff's creative work on the NSW Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park was the crowning glory of the artist's career as being exciting, adventurous and heart-wrenching. He has captured spectacularly in visual terms the sad truths of the Great War as a modern industrial conflict of grinding intensity, its terror and terrible consequences. This is especially so with his crowded bas-relief sculptures depicting a chaotically intertwined frontline activity. While in symbolic terms he has captured war's grim gritty reality, it is at another level, a vast complex visual essay on the entire war as he, as a frontline veteran himself, remembered it.

In doing so, he has accurately informed the individual viewer and, at the same time, enlightened the collective military memory of the nation. Indeed, the Sydney memorial continues to refresh and revitalise it in the present and for the future. Thus, Hoff's memorial achieves what few others were able to do.

Inglis, Edwards and Beck agree that Hoff's group sculpture *Sacrifice* as the focal point of the Hyde Park Memorial is the greatest single achievement of his entire professional life as a public or civic sculptor and memorialist (plates 6–7).

Apart from the recent external restoration of the Anzac Memorial site, Hoff's work featured internationally with the release of six beautifully designed stamps issued on 4 August 2018 by the Isle of Man Post Office. The stamps, released on the day and month of the beginning of the Great War in 1914, were intended to mark the centenary of the end of the hostilities on 11 November 1918 (Armistice Day). They celebrate the Manx-born sculptor George Rayner Hoff whose work 'adorns the ANZAC memorials in Sydney and Adelaide Australia' and at the same time highlighting the lives of six young men and several others who left the Isle of Man for Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa only to join the Imperial Armies of the British Commonwealth to fight for King and Country on the Western Front.

The imagery of the six stamps is complex and includes the photographic portraits of six Manxmen who immigrated to Australia and served in the 1st AIF on Gallipoli and or the Western Front. They were:



1. John Joseph Corteen, a house painter by trade, emigrated from Castletown, Isle of Man, shortly before volunteering for the 1st AIF. He departed on 4 September 1915 from Sydney with his battalion for Egypt constantly training aboard the troopship. He arrived on the Gallipoli peninsula and saw three months of intensely dangerous action against the Turkish Army until the 1st AIF evacuated in December. He was soon moved to the Western Front where he took part in many of the major battles until Armistice Day. Corteen suffered from an ear infection that was made worse by the noise of battle and spent time in hospital, but otherwise survived the war without further injury. In July 1919, he was discharged from the AIF, but chose to return to live in Castletown on the Isle of Man instead of travelling back to Australia.



2. Jon Gell of Pembroke House on Castletown Promenade migrated and joined the 4th Australian Division. He was killed in the Suvla Bay landing at Gallipoli between 6 and 8 August 1915. The exact date is unknown. He was 27 years of age.



3. Charles Stanley Nicholson emigrated from Douglas, the Isle of Man, to New Zealand in 1907 and worked as a cheesemaker in the thriving dairy industry. He enlisted in the 1st New Zealand Rifle Brigade in the machine gun section in May 1915. After being transported to Egypt, he saw action against the Turkish Army in the Middle East. His brigade moved to the Western Front in the Somme region of France. On 15 September his machine gun unit was hit by an exploding shell. Charles vanished without a trace in the large explosion (and another man was also killed). The exploding shell had completely destroyed his body. He was 29.



4. Thomas Sayle Corlett migrated from Ballaugh to Western Australia in 1913 and took up farming before enlisting in the 3rd

Australian Pioneer Battalion in February 1916. He arrived on the Western Front in November of the same year. He was killed by shell fire on 19 October 1917 in the 3rd Battle of Passchendaele. He was 29.



5. Robert Joseph Caley was a close friend of **Thomas Corlett** and migrated with him to Western Australia. He joined the same battalion at the same time. Robert was wounded twice (June 1917 and September 1918), but survived the war.



6. Lance Corporal George Roberts MM, a barber, emigrated to Australia in 1912 from Port St Mary. He joined the 7th Battalion and was badly wounded in September 1917. He recovered slowly and was sent back to the Front where he was awarded the Military Medal for bravery in July 1918. A month later, 9 August, sadly he was killed aged 29. He left a wife and two children in Australia.

A seventh Manxman, **Samuel Robertson Rothwell**, doesn't appear on the stamps as there is no known photograph of him. He was 43 when he enlisted in the 12th Battalion 1st AIF in February 1915. He saw action on the Dardanelles in May that year, but had to be evacuated in August suffering from dysentery. He was later discharged from the Army because of extreme deafness. His wife joined him in Australia, but he died in an accident in 1921.²

The Manxmen, who immigrated to Australia and became members of the 1st AIF, were all of humble origins.

The photographs of six Manxmen occupy the left-hand corner of each of the six stamps in the set: 52 pence; 83 pence; £1.25; £1.40; £1.75 and £2.05. Each stamp depicts a complex cluster of images related to the creative work of the sculptor Rayner Hoff who was born on the Isle of Man on 27 November 1894.

Hoff appears on the 83 p stamp in a photograph standing proudly in his white dustcoat in front of his sculpture *Sacrifice* which is again depicted from another angle showing its full glory together with the stars of the Southern Cross and the floral emblem of the Kangaroo Paw of Western Australia.

Two of the three panels on the £1.25 stamp were devoted to the Hoff sculpture of the heroic Airman or Aviator of the AIF; the centre one shows a close-up bust of his face, above a sprig of rosemary, signifying that it commonly grows wild on the Gallipoli peninsula.

The £1.40 stamp portrays Hoff's bas-relief panel detail of the Dubbo memorial. The blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*), the floral emblem of Tasmania, is below and the Southern Cross appears above the Manxman's soldierly portrait in the stamp's corner.

Major Charles Rosenthal was a key figure in supporting the building of a war memorial in the central western NSW town of Dubbo. He arranged for an architectural competition to design what was intended to be a most suitable monument. Rosenthal came to Dubbo and held a consultation to provide some funding through the Institute of Architects.

The Dubbo Memorial on the stamp, built by the town council and unveiled on Anzac Day 1925, is an impressively large obelisk. Its dedication reads: 'To the memory of those men and women who lost their lives in the defence of their country 1914–1918 and 1939–1945'. Hoff's bas-relief is featured under this dedication at the base of the obelisk.

The lively work depicts infantrymen of the AIF landing on the beach at Gallipoli and charging up the sand

with their rifles cocked. More than anything else, it highlights the adventure of war in an invading situation. It is a competent work, but does not capture the grim realities of death found in Rayner Hoff's later bas-reliefs on the Hyde Park Memorial. Hoff's competent sculpture became more outstanding as time progressed. The work for the Dubbo Memorial, an earlier creation, was completed in 1925.

The next stamp, £1.75, takes the eye of the viewer to the detail of Hoff's sculpture of the dramatically huge female angel on the Adelaide War Memorial. The Flanders poppy is in the foreground.

On the obverse of Hoff's Adelaide memorial on the stamp is the sandstone carved stylised angel of death hovering in silent contemplation. On the £1.75 stamp it is shown before three much smaller bronze figures treated in a naturalistic manner observing the angel hovering above. These three modern bronze figures represent the common people who are overawed at the apparition of the giant sacrificial presence. The angel's power of life and death is conveyed partly through the phallic symbolism of the sword that is against her semi-naked body.

On the reverse side of the memorial (as shown on this stamp) is found the carving 'Spirit of Womanhood and a fallen soldier' where a female angel assumes control of the sword, the nude body of the dead soldier nestles against her, his head resting on her bare breast. Pure love and sexual love are elided in the relation between the figures which reads ambiguously as both mother and son and lovers. Separated from the power of the phallus in war, the soldier now finds erotic fulfillment in the form of death.³

The final stamp, £2.05, captures the image of the male angel on the back of the Adelaide memorial. Below the left wing of the angel is the golden wattle – Australia's symbol of celebration, national unity and remembrance.

Golden stars on selected stamps represent the Hall of Memory in the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park.⁴

The Isle of Man stamp set reflects their pride in the achievements of Rayner Hoff who had spent the first eight years of his life on the Isle before moving to England. Into his fourth year of study at the Nottingham School of Arts, he served as a recruit in the 18th (Service) Battalion of the King's Liverpool Regiment of the British Army in the Great War. He crossed the Channel to France on 11 December 1916, spent 12 months in the reserve trenches near the front in Picardy and then was employed in the Topographical Survey Department modelling maps from aerial photographs until the war's end. The terrible results of modern industrial warfare that he had seen remained an indelible memory.

In 1919 he returned to the Nottingham School of Arts for six months and entered the School of Sculpture, Royal College of Art, London, studying under Professor Derwent Wood who became his chief mentor. In 1922 he won the prestigious Prix de Rome and studied in Italy. While there, Professor Wood contacted him and recommended him for the position of Public Instructor in modelling and sculpture in the Art School at Sydney Technical College. He interviewed successfully and migrated to Australia in 1923.

Brilliant and charismatic as a teacher of modelling and sculpture, at the East Sydney academy he quickly developed a distinctive school of young sculptors who worked closely with him on major projects like the Hyde Park Memorial. Several of Hoff's students, like Eileen McGrath, Barbara Tribe and Otto Steen, went on to have substantial careers as professional sculptors, especially Barbara Tribe in England.

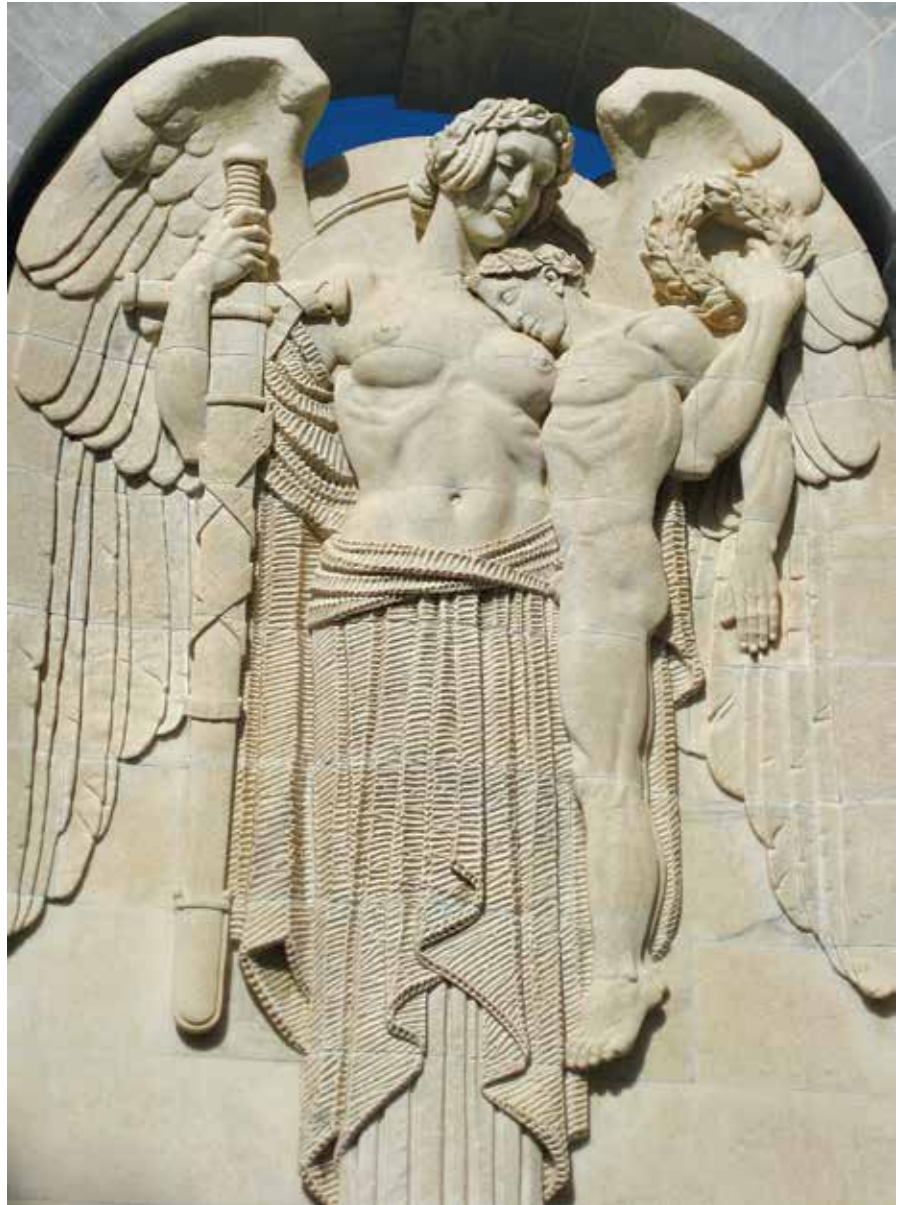
Hoff was prolific as a sculptor in Sydney from the very start. In 1924, less than a year after arriving in Australia, in the Society of Artists' Annual Exhibition he was able to show an extraordinary 23 pieces of sculpture of high quality.⁵

As his fame grew, Hoff became aggressively Australian in nature, philosophical outlook and lifestyle. He aimed idealistically 'at a sculpture of relevance for all Australians'.⁶ He quickly absorbed the dominant Australian egalitarianism. Hoff's desire from the early 1920s in Sydney was to create a profoundly moving art of 'equal and complementary male and female elements' of perfectible bodies of great beauty.⁷

He perceived optimistically what he considered as the real potential of Australians and their environment. He felt passionately as one of them. Hoff came to believe in Australians as a special heroic race that quickly informed his sculpture. This viewpoint came to its fulfilment in the early 1930s and became a crucial component of his largest and most significant sculptures commissioned for the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, Sydney which he executed between 1931 and 1934 in close collaboration with the memorial's architect Bruce Dellit (1898–1942). He gained the support and labour of several of his students. The project became the most resolved statement of sculptural and architectural unity ever seen in Australia – a duality that lies at the heart of Hoff's sculpture which reflected the Australian Art Deco movement at its height in the early 1930s (**plates 6–8**).

Hoff died suddenly and prematurely of haemorrhage pancreatitis in the Delaware private hospital in Victoria Street, Waverley NSW on Friday, 19 November 1937. He was just 42 years old. He had just been chosen to provide the sculptural features to the George V Memorial in Canberra.⁸

When it was completed in 1934, the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park was the most innovative of all Australia's public monuments. It embraced a style although popular in theatre and cinema architecture that had rarely been seen in so-called 'high art' and the public monuments of the period. It was a unique dramatic combined statement of architectural and sculptural visual unity. In fact, it was the ultimate conception of the Australian Art Deco style in a



tranquil public park in the centre of Sydney (**plate 9**).

Dellit had created the building virtually as a monumental sculpture in itself. It incorporated an extraordinary number of Rayner Hoff's sculptured figures both internally and externally. It contains, in microcosm, the modern-classical, national-international duality at the very heart of the sculptor's work and his intense sense of the Art Deco that explored the perfectible body in movement.

The memorial stands 30 m high and is topped by the stepped form of an Art Deco ziggurat incorporating classical Art Deco motifs including the rising sun.

On the upper exterior are the blocky masses of Hoff's 16 seated and four

5.

Rayner Hoff (1894–1937), *Spirit of compassion*, South Australian National War Memorial, North Terrace, Adelaide (1927–1931.) The first important statuary in which Angaston marble had been used, in which Hoff mastered the strong Australian sunlight (Earl Beauchamp *et al*, *Sculpture of Rayner Hoff*, 111)

standing figures in granite or cast granite. Two 10 m bronze reliefs by Hoff surmount the east and west entrances. In general, the external sculptures portray the complex functions of individuals and groups at war on the Front in a variety



of units of the AIF. The full range of their overseas activities is dramatically and authentically depicted.

The interior chamber of Dellit's building holds Hoff's seminal bronze sculpture *Sacrifice* surrounded above by a circular marble balustrade and relief panels representing *The March of the Dead*. Gold stars stud the sky-blue ceiling in majestic dreamy form – 120,000 of them, one for each man and woman from NSW who left for the war. The idea was that a memorial should function to bring the past into the present so as to benefit the future through the symbolism of Art Deco.

Dellit claimed that Rayner Hoff was chosen as sculptor of the project because he would provide the 'dynamism' required to complement the modernity of the architectural structure. Dellit had already collaborated with Hoff on the commissioned design of Kinsela's Funeral Parlour in Sydney's Darlinghurst which became a showpiece.⁹

At the heart of the memorial, *Sacrifice* is without a doubt the defining masterpiece of Art Deco sculpture with a duality code of meaning of the relationship of male and female, masculine-feminine timelessness and modern-ancient, sacred-profane, past-future. Symbolically it expresses in a dynamic form both the sacrifice and horror of war 'on the youthful manhood and womanhood of the nation'.

The life-size group in the sculpture can be viewed at eye level from the lower ground floor viewing area or from the circular balcony above, looking directly down (**plates 6 & 7**).

It is a caryatid form evolved from the 5th century Greek sculpture. The three caryatids are classically robed female figures used as a column to support capitals. The caryatid porch of the Erechtheion (Temple of Erechtheus, 448–406 BC) on the Acropolis in Athens was the inspiration for Hoff. The three female figures are moulded to form a shaft to support the huge Spartan battle shield on which lies the vulnerable handsomely slim naked body of a young warrior in Spartan fashion 'upon his shield' used to carry the dead from the battlefield.



6-7.

Rayner Hoff (1894–1937), *Sacrifice*, bronze sculpture in the Anzac Memorial, Sydney. Courtesy of Anzac Memorial, photo: Rob Tuckwell Photography

The caryatids are of a Girl, a Mother and a Wife, all the chief mourners of the dead warrior. The tripartite shaft symbolises those who gave Sons, Husbands and Lovers that the race might somehow survive.

Dr Mary Booth, one of the early promoters of the memorial, would have applauded such symbolism warmly: 'They gave sons, husbands and lovers that the race might live ... with your shield or upon it' – the inscription indicated on the caption of the famous photograph of *Sacrifice* from the lower ground floor level of the War Memorial published in *Art in Australia*, October 1932, p 35.

The youthful body on the shield shows a bronze male head and neck inclined backwards towards the setting sun with the features of a modern Australian of about 35 years (with a modern parted haircut and a neatly clipped military moustache). A preliminary study of the face is on display in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra (**plate 10**).

In 1932 art critic Howard Ashton claimed *Sacrifice* was the 'most beautiful and touching' work of sculpture that had ever been completed in Australia and a concept both simple and dignified.

Another critic in the same year described the work as:

Borne aloft by women on whose shoulders the war placed the burden of sacrifice equally with the men is the outspread body of a soldier lying on a shield with the back of his head cupped in a woman's upraised hand. His arms fall back over a sword in an attitude suggesting crucifixion.¹⁰

A second woman is carrying a healthy baby on her shoulders. It symbolises to Rayner Hoff as a vitalist the future generation that will overcome the tragedy of war. The third woman holds the warrior's feet in her hands.

In a rare interview in 1932, Hoff recognised that, during the Great War, thousands of women had lost 'all that was dearest to them – some they had borne and reared, husbands, fathers of their children, friends and lovers'. He felt that such women had received little or no acknowledgement in war memorials around Australia. And yet, he argued, 'they had endured all men's sacrifice quietly'. Thus he was determined that *Sacrifice* should depict them 'carrying their load, the sacrifice of their menfolk.' He did not wish to portray war triumphantly – 'no captains

and kings' exulting over victory. He had seen too much of war himself to take such an approach.

Hoff's overall work on the Hyde Park Memorial was eloquent in its rejection of war. Of all war memorial sculptures in Australia, Rayner Hoff's group sculpture *Sacrifice* was most admired by connoisseurs, as a 'masterpiece of craftsmanship'.

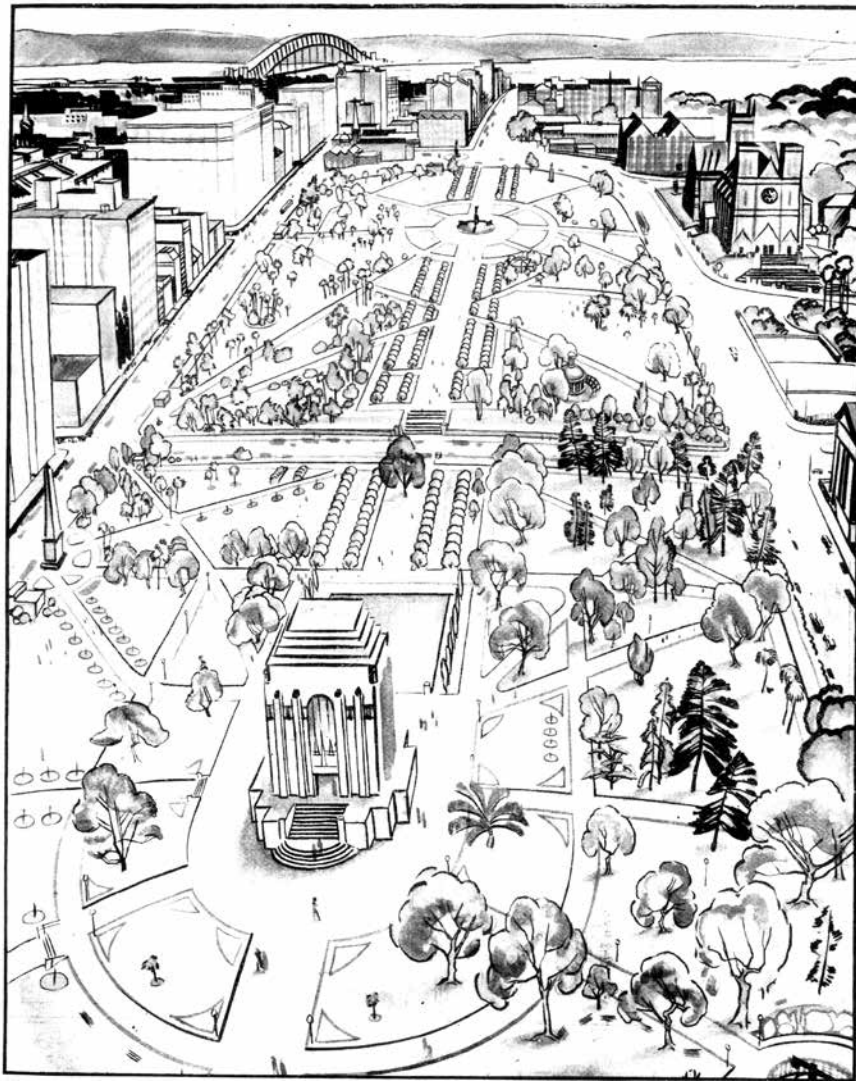
The classical allusions in it – the youthful dead warrior, the caryatid column representing womanhood and the classical robes of the three women – project into the realm of the timeless and universal war commentary. To the passer-by or the passionate observer, Rayner Hoff commemorates the brutal reality of death in warfare and evokes its timeless discomfiting memory.¹¹

From his arrival in Australia in 1923, Rayner Hoff rapidly translated his



8.

C. Bruce Dellit (1898–1942), architect & Rayner Hoff (1894–1937), sculptor, *Anzac Memorial*, Sydney. Courtesy of Anzac Memorial, photo: Rob Tuckwell Photography



9.

A perspective of Hyde Park, Sydney, with the Anzac Memorial in the foreground and the Sydney Harbour Bridge in the background. Both structures became iconic as soon as they were built (Cover of *Reveille*, vol XII no 7, 1 March 1939)



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sculpture into the egalitarian values of Australia's post-war society. In fact, he soon became a vitalist Australian in lifestyle as a close friend of Australian artist Norman Lindsay instead of a migrant from the Isle of Man and the English artistic culture. He eventually held the quite passionate belief that Australians were a new heroic race that had arisen from the multicultural nature of their history. This was aptly demonstrated as a crucial component of his largest and most significant sculpture commission in the Hyde Park memorial. Hoff and his valiant hardworking team of students executed this from his art school at Darlinghurst between 1931 and 1934, with the Art Deco architect Bruce Dellit facilitating the most resolved statement of sculpture and architectural unity seen ever in Australia. The memorial sculpture as a whole 'holds

in microcosm' the modern-classical, national-international dualisms at the very heart of Rayner Hoff's sculpture and the Australian Art Deco movement.¹²

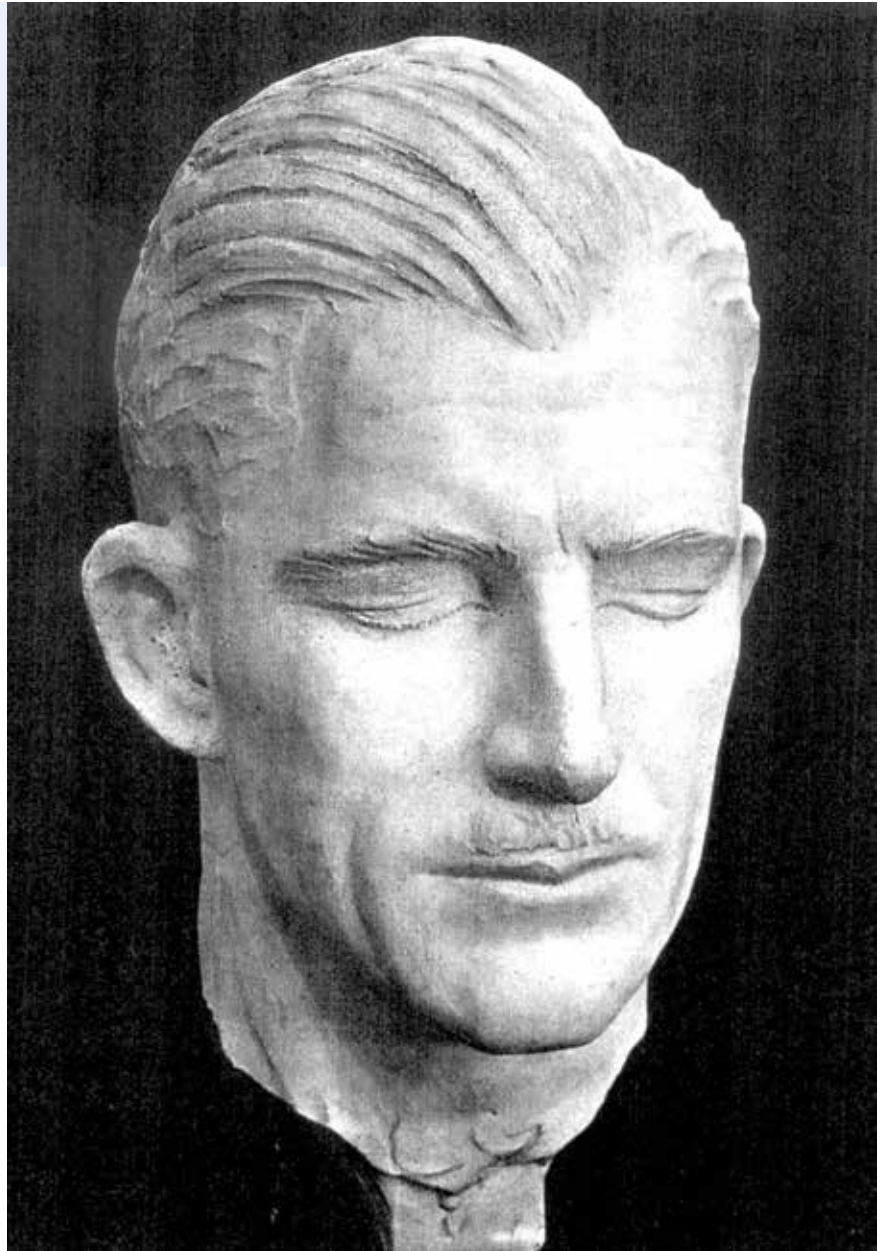
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10.

Rayner Hoff (1894–1937), Head study for *Sacrifice*—the naked dead warrior on the Spartan shield. Collection Australian War Memorial, Canberra, plate 11 (*Art in Australia*, Rayner Hoff Number, October 1932)

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2. Ivor Ramsden, 'Manx Anzacs', *The Anzac Memorials of Rayner Hoff* (booklet), The Isle of Man Post Office, Douglas, 4 August 2018 unpaginated.
3. Leigh Astbury, 'Death and Eroticism in the Anzac Legend', *Art and Australia*, vol 30 no 1 p 72.
4. *The Anzac Memorials of Rayner Hoff*.
5. Ken Scarlett, 'Hoff, Raynor [sic]', *Australian Sculptors*, Nelson, Melbourne 1980 p 260.
6. Deborah Edwards, '“This vital flesh”: the 1920s sculpture of Rayner Hoff', *Art and Australia*, vol 24 no 1, 1986 p 68.
7. *Ibid*.
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10. Lionel G Wigmore, 'A Description of the Anzac Memorial Building, New South Wales', *Sculpture for the Anzac Memorial Building, Hyde Park, Sydney, NSW*, Society of Artists' Exhibition 1932 <https://trove.nla.gov.au/version/45828817> p 8.
11. John Ramsland & Christopher Mooney, 'Apollo must contemplate a world of which he has never dreamed', in Gretchen Poiner (ed.), *The National Estate – Civic Heritage*, 2008 Conference Proceedings, Independent Scholars of Association of Australia Inc, pp 186–7.
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An early Australian mourning brooch



Finding one of the earliest dated examples of jewellery in Australia triggered Gregory Street's interest in researching the background to the brooch and the people whose lives were touched by this precious memento of a colonial farming family.

GREGORY STREET

Mourning jewellery – jewellery created and worn to remember people who had recently died – appears to date from the 16th century but became more common in the late Georgian and particularly during the Victorian era. Queen Victoria set a fashion to mourn the death of loved ones, following the death of her beloved consort Prince Albert at Windsor Castle on 14 December 1861, aged 42. After Albert's death, she and many of her court wore black clothing with matching mourning jewellery for forty years until her death on 22 January 1901.

Black enamel, pearls, black glass, Whitby jet, vulcanite and bog oak were all used, and many pieces incorporated a lock of the deceased's hair. Many pieces were engraved with the name and other details of the deceased.

A gold mourning brooch to commemorate the passing of John Hillas in 1847 at Bannaby (or Bunnaby) near Taralga in southern tablelands of NSW is typical of the early Victorian era

and many similar pieces come up for sale today (**plates 1-2**)¹. Black enamel surrounds a central glass-covered locket that most likely would have originally contained a lock of hair from the deceased. This is one of the earliest dated examples of jewellery worn in Australia.

John Hillas was a farmer and grazier who died, aged 50, on 21 January 1847. A discrete death notice appeared five days later in the *Sydney Morning Herald*²

At Bunnaby, county of Argyle, on the 21st instant, John Hillas, Esq., aged 50.

followed on 27 April by a notice that his executors were applying for probate.

His widow Martha Hillas would have sought a suitable memento to indicate her ongoing grief. In 1847, advertisements in the *Sydney Morning Herald* regularly mention the sale of imported mourning jewellery by auctioneers such as John G. Cohen (16 March) and Edward Salamon (21 January). The growth in the wool trade was making NSW settlers wealthy and jewellery is commonly used as a show

of wealth. Albrecht lists more than 20 jewellers active in New South Wales in 1847.³ Most if not all of these would have been selling items which they directly imported from England or purchased through the regular auctions.

Martha might have obtained a suitable mourning brooch through a Goulburn or a Sydney jeweller. In 1847, W. H. Smith was probably already running a watchmaker and jeweller's shop in Goulburn, as he advertised a move to new premises in July 1848 (**plate 3**).⁴ This may be the same W. H. Smith who was later operating in Maitland in the 1850s.⁵ In 1851 Samuel Davis set up a jewellery shop next door to the *Goulburn Herald*. Hugh S Clarke was reported as the principal jeweller in Goulburn in the 1850s.

John Hillas senior and Family

John Hillas senior (c 1769–1837) was born in Wakefield in Yorkshire and on 18 March 1789 married Barbara Dealtry, who was three or four years older than her husband. In 1797, their son John junior was born in Wakefield, a younger brother to Mark (c 1790) and Hannah (1794). John junior was baptised at All

1. (Opposite page)

Unknown maker, front of *mourning brooch* for John Hillas (1797–1847), inscribed “MEMORY OF”, bordered with rose, shamrock and thistle design. English, 1840s, width 20 x 25 mm. Private collection

2.

Unknown maker, back of *mourning brooch* for John Hillas (1797–1847), inscribed “John Hillas died 21st Jan^y 1847 Aged 50.” The engraving would have been added in the colony, most likely in Sydney



Saints' Church, Wakefield, Yorkshire on their eighth wedding anniversary, 18 March 1797.⁶

In 1800 the Hillas family was selected to join a group of artisans and farmers to go to New South Wales, where their skills were needed by the new colony. The settlers and their families travelled on three convict transports, the *Nile*, *Canada* and *Minorca*, which sailed from Portsmouth on 20 May 1801.

The Hillas family were passengers on the *Nile* of 320 tons. Colonial records show that passengers on the *Nile* numbered 10 men, nine women and 21 children. The male passengers included Richard Rouse, later of Rouse Hill in western Sydney. The *Nile* also carried 96 female convicts and four children of convicts. The three armed transports stayed together during the voyage, presumably for protection as this was during the Napoleonic wars. They called at Rio de Janeiro to take on water, wood and stores.

The *Nile*, *Canada* and *Minorca* all arrived in Sydney on 14 December 1801 after a voyage of 176 days. In addition to convicts and free settlers, the three ships brought around 19,500 pounds of beef, 18,130 pounds of pork and 46,000 gallons of spirits for the colony.

John senior and Barbara Hillas had three more children in the colony. Ann was born c 1804 at Parramatta as were her brothers George, born c 1806 and James, born c 1807.

On 31 March 1802 John senior received a grant of 100 acres of land

from Governor Philip Gidley King at Toongabbie near present-day Kellyville, which he called Hillas Farm. On 11 August 1804, he was granted a further 150 acres in the same area, which he named Stanhope Farm. John Hillas' Stanhope Arms Inn was one of the earliest refreshment houses on the road between Parramatta and Windsor.

Governor King, despite great promises, did not manage to reform the colony in his term. As his health declined, the fairly chaotic state when he took over from Hunter was no better. King was replaced by another naval officer, Captain William Bligh, who arrived on 6 August 1806. Governor Bligh came with orders from London to stamp out trafficking in spirits by the officers of the New South Wales Corps. This led to tension between Bligh and the officers, led by Captain John Macarthur.

On 26 January 1808, the troops commanded by Lt-Col. George Johnston arrested Bligh and took over control of the Colony. Several Bligh supporters were arrested, some spending the next two years in convict work gangs. Bligh remained in the colony, mostly in Hobart, until the arrival of his successor Colonel Lachlan Macquarie in 1810, when Bligh returned briefly to Sydney before his departure for England.

On 6 May 1808, five 'loyal settlers' from the Baulkham Hills district sent a letter to the Lieutenant Governor, Colonel William Patterson, supporting Bligh 'to whom we are most zealously attached' and urging that he be

permitted to return. The officers ordered the settlers to report all their property at a general muster. When the settlers did not comply, the officers sentenced them to a month's imprisonment.

Undaunted, on 11 November 1808 John Hillas and 25 other free settlers and farmers from Toongabbie signed a letter to Viscount Castlereagh, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, reporting on the sad situation in the colony since the removal of Bligh. They added: 'Several hundred more signatures could have been obtained but the system of terror which reigns in the colony prevented us from venturing further.'

Hillas and seven other free settlers from the Baulkham Hills district sent another letter complaining about conditions in the colony to Castlereagh on 22 February 1809. Governor Bligh, confined to a ship in Hobart awaiting passage to England, also wrote to Castlereagh complaining about the officers' treatment of Hillas and the other free settlers.

Hillas is mentioned in a letter to Bligh's successor Macquarie, from Lord Liverpool, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies (and subsequently Prime Minister) dated at Downing Street, London on 10 March 1809. Liverpool refers to an application made to him on behalf of Hillas and adds: 'I am induced to desire that if you find him to be a Person deserving the Encouragement of Government and likely to be benefitted by it, you will allocate to him a Proportion of cattle and offer him such

**W. H. SMITH,
WATCHMAKER & JEWELLER,
GOULBURN,**

IN returning his sincere acknowledgments to his numerous friends and the public generally, for the liberal patronage he has received in the above business, begs to announce that he has removed from his former residence to

**VERNER-STREET,
Nearly opposite the Argyle Stores,**

Where all commands in the above lines will be thankfully received, and every possible attention paid to them.

Watches and Clocks carefully and judiciously repaired, on the shortest notice.

••• Orders from the country executed with punctuality and care.

GOULBURN.

MR. J. BACKLER begs respectfully to inform the inhabitants of Goulburn and its vicinity, that he is now at Goulburn, for the purpose of painting some portraits, where he will remain for a short time. Terms, low. Address at Mr. J. Sinclair's, Goulburn.

August 22. 8078

Assistance you may think is reasonable.'

In the 1822 census, John Hillas senior has a well-developed agricultural holding at Hillas, Toongabbie including

- Total area of 210 acres with 50 cleared ground
- 14 acres of wheat
- 18 acres of maize
- 2 acres of barley
- 4 acres of oats
- some peas and beans
- 3 acres of potatoes
- 15 acres of garden or orchard
- 11 horses
- 55 horned cattle
- 300 sheep
- 30 hogs, and
- 45 bushels of wheat and 50 of maize on hand.

These stock figures are unrealistic for a 210-acre holding, so presumably Hillas was squatting on other areas or using common ground to graze his stock. By the 1825 census, Hillas senior had only 35 horned cattle, 98 sheep and 25 hogs, which may mean that some stock had been transferred to his sons.

John senior died at Hillas Farm on 19 March 1837, and his wife Barbara seven years later on 8 May 1844, aged 78. Both are buried in St John's Church of England cemetery at Parramatta.

3.

Jeweller W.H. Smith advertised moving premises in Goulburn in *The Goulburn Herald* 1 July 1848

4.

Joseph Backler's advertisement that he was painting portraits in the Goulburn district, *Sydney Morning Herald* 29 & 30 August 1845 p 1

John Hillas junior

The 1814 population muster shows John Hillas junior (1797–1847) living at Parramatta as a labourer, probably living with his father whose name appears next on the muster. Both were shown as having arrived free and living off (ie, not on) the stores.

Later, John became an overseer on the Macarthur estate or possibly a business partner of James Macarthur. Although there was some antipathy between John Hillas senior and John Macarthur, the link seems to be between John Macarthur's son James and John Hillas junior. James Macarthur, John's fourth son, accompanied his father to England in 1809, was educated at Hackney and undertook the grand tour, arriving back in the colony in 1817 to manage his father's Camden Estates. This he did with great competency, expanding the holding and greatly improving the sheep flock.

In 1819 'Jno Hillas Junior' is listed as having 60 acres at Windsor with eight acres of maize, one horse, 26 cattle, 140 sheep and 12 hogs, which is much the same as his father. Possibly the official ownership was split to minimise taxes.

By the 1821 census, John Hillas junior has 60 acres of granted land at Windsor, growing wheat on 12 acres.

Taralga

The land around Taralga, 50 km north of Goulburn, had been traversed by a party led by Charles Throsby in 1819 looking for an alternative route to Bathurst other than the arduous road across the Blue Mountains. Throsby and company journeyed from the Moss Vale area, crossing the Wollondilly River then the

Cookbundoon Ranges near Tarlo, turning north and eventually arriving at Bathurst.

Reports of these areas encouraged pastoralists to take up land; one of the first was Hannibal Macarthur, John Macarthur's nephew, at Arthursleigh on the Wollondilly River. Both John and Hannibal Macarthur are listed as two of the four settlers having holdings in the County of Argyle in the 1822 Sydney muster.

In a speculative venture in 1822, James Macarthur and partners Lachlan MacAlister and John Hillas with William Macarthur moved a mob of cattle over the Cookbundoons and left them at Tarlo about 17 km north of Goulburn in the charge of an assigned convict Thomas Taylor who had accompanied them. The Richlands estate, north of Goulburn in the NSW Southern Tablelands, was an important part of the Macarthur family pastoral empire for nearly 100 years. The Richlands estate acted as an outstation about one day's ride west of Macarthur's Camden Park estate and grew to around 38,000 acres including the private village of Taralga.

Hillas and MacAlister eventually took up a grant adjacent to the Macarthur holdings around 1824. The Hillas property at Bannaby, 5 km east of Taralga, was named Hillasmount. Much of the work on the property would have been carried out by convict labour. Dublin-born George Evans, who arrived in Sydney on the *Prince Regent* in 1824, was assigned to John Hillas at Bannaby.

On 2 October 1826 at St John's Church, Parramatta, Principal Chaplain the Rev. Samuel Marsden married John Hillas junior to Martha Pearce. She was the youngest daughter of Matthew Pearce of Seven Hills who had arrived on the *Surprise* as a free settler in 1794.⁷ John and Martha would have 13 children between 1827 and 1845.

John and brother George built an expansive rural homestead complex at Bannaby between 1828 and 1840, mostly made of local stone and timber, as well as a dairy of lathe and plaster. Some of the buildings remain to this day. Although John Hillas junior and wife Martha are buried in Goulburn, many

later descendants were buried in a family cemetery at Hillasmount, where they built a small church in 1898.

The November 1828 census⁸ lists John Hillas jr as age 31, came free, Nile, 1801, protestant, settler at Cookbundoon with wife Martha and daughter. On 21 March 1829 a son John Mark Hillas (1829–1861) was born to John and Martha Hillas of Seven Hills. He was baptised by Reverend Samuel Marsden on 23 November 1829.

Although the 1828 census document is damaged, John and Martha appear to have a substantial property with an astounding 2,700 sheep, 527 head of cattle and 17 horses with 17 acres under cultivation but only a total of 22 acres cleared. If this was the case then the country would have to have been fairly open for grazing, as many early explorers indicated.

In the 1837 Returns of the Colony John Hillas junior was paying rates of £3 on over 5,600 acres of land in Georgiana County of NSW between Bathurst and Goulburn.

Although in 1824 Governor Brisbane had promised John Hillas junior a further 150 acres, this was eventually granted on 18 October 1839 by Governor George Gipps. In 1840 Gipps granted him a further 100 acres at Bannaby. Hillas had probably been squatting on a much larger area of land than officially granted.

The 1841 Census records 73 people living on John Hillas' property at Bannaby in Argyle County, while three people were living on a property owned by John Hillas on the Ovens River and eight living in Yabtree District in Murrumbidgee. Environment NSW suggests the Yabtree property was owned by John Hillas senior but it makes more sense if John junior was the owner.

After returning to Sydney from Port Macquarie in 1843, artist Joseph Backler visited Goulburn in late August 1845 (**plate 4**) and it is likely that around this time he painted the portrait of Hillas now at Lanyon Homestead in the ACT. Backler captured the tough reputation that Hillas had acquired (**plate 5**). Richard Neville noted that 'The apparent literalness of his portraits could be startling, and rarely flattering (which explained why few middle-class families employed him).'⁹



John Hillas junior died at Bannaby on 21 January 1847 and is buried in Saint Saviour's cemetery at Goulburn. His son John Mark Hillas married Eliza Sophia Pearce, eldest daughter of William Thomas Pearce, of Seven Hills on 10 June 1859 at St Bartholomew's, Prospect.¹⁰ Their only child John William was born in 1860. John Mark Hillas died at his uncle (and father-in-law) W. T. Pearce's house Seven Hills on 7 April 1861.¹¹ Grazier John William Hillas (son of John Mark Hillas and grandson of John jr) died unmarried at Bannaby on 1 July 1922;¹² his estate was valued at £37,111,¹³ by which time the extended Hillas family had become the largest landowners in the Taralga District.

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1. Gowans Auctions Hobart, 18 June 2016.
2. *SMH* 26 Jan 1847 p 3.
3. Kurt Albrecht, *19th Century Australian Gold and Silversmiths*, Melbourne 1969.
4. *Goulburn Herald* 1 Jul 1848 p 1.
5. 'An Old Timer' *Australiana* vol 14 no 2 May

5.

Joseph Backler (1813–1895),
John Hillas jr, oil on canvas c 1845.
Lanyon Homestead Collection, ACT
Historic Places

- 1992 pp 38–40.
6. <https://australianroyalty.net.au/tree/purnellmccord.ged/individual/I67378/John-Hillas>.
7. *SG* 21 Oct 1826 p 3; *Monitor* 20 Oct 1826 p 8.
8. Malcolm R. Sainy & Keith A. Johnson (eds), *Census of New South Wales November 1828*, Sydney, Library of Australian History 1980.
9. Richard Neville, 'Backler, Joseph (1813–1895)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/backler-joseph-12778/text23055>, published first in hardcopy 2005, accessed online 11 July 2020.
10. *SMH* 14 Jun 1859 p 1.
11. *Empire* 13 Apr 1861 p 1.
12. *Goulburn Evening Penny Post* 4 Jul 1922
13. *SMH* 6 Dec 1922 p 10.



W. J. Williams and his paintings

In 2018, Dr Andrew Montana restored William Joseph Williams (1851–1918) as the artist responsible for the late 19th-century painted decoration in South Australia at Ayers House, the Museum of Economic Botany, Rigby’s bookshop, Trew’s South Australian Club Hotel and probably Para Para.¹ Now the artist’s grandson Graham Williams adds a new and personal perspective, based on his family’s recollections of W. J. Williams. He illustrates some of his “lost” paintings, after the family serendipitously re-discovered a stash of them in a wardrobe put up for auction.

GRAHAM J. WILLIAMS

Retirement gave me more time to indulge in my own painting and to discover more about my grandfather. This resulted in an exhibition in 2013 at the Old Fished Gallery, Wollombi, west of Newcastle in the Lower Hunter Valley NSW, which displayed examples of the art of four generations – my grandfather William Joseph Williams (WJW), my father Walter, myself and my son Mason Williams. This exercise

encouraged me and my sister-in-law, Alison Kingston, to pursue more research into WJW. We were excited to find what Dr Montana had discovered and published in *Australiana* in 2018; as we had some of his paintings, we thought that illustrating some of them here would help round out his story.

My great grandfather Joseph Williams (b 1813) and his wife Elizabeth (b 1819) were born in Wyke Regis, Dorset. Joseph’s occupation was with the Coast Guard in 1851 to 1861. They had nine children; WJW and

three others were born in Folkstone, Kent, where their address in 1851 was States Folley, and in 1861 States Folley Houses, which are still there, though somewhat altered.

In the 1871 Census, some of the family were back in Wyke Regis, Dorset, including William aged 20, his occupation recorded as a painter. WJW trained at the School of Design (now the Royal College of Art) in London and worked as an artist decorating houses. According to his obituary, in 1872 he visited the United States where he developed his skills as a wallpaper designer, a subject on which he later lectured several times in Adelaide. After six years training and working, he emigrated to South Australia.

Most likely he arrived in Adelaide early in 1878, as a young man aged about 27. By 7 August 1878 he was



1.

W.J. Williams, photograph from obituary. *Chronicle* (Adelaide) 12 January 1918 p 11

2.

William Joseph Williams (1851–1918), *Ayers family crest*, painted on the dining room ceiling of Ayers House, North Terrace, Adelaide, 1878–79. Photograph Andrew Montana, courtesy Ayers House

seeking painters to decorate the house of the former South Australian premier Henry Ayers on North Terrace, then for “the summer residence of Sir Thomas Elder”, Seafeld Tower house, Glenelg in December 1879, and for Sir Henry Ayers again in March 1879.² His elaborate work on the façade of Rigby’s bookstore drew attention.³ In 1902, Chief Justice Sir Samuel Way recalled that Williams had decorated his dining room in North Adelaide.⁴ WJW had the ability to establish himself among the decision makers of South Australia shortly after arrival and later maintained these contacts throughout his life.

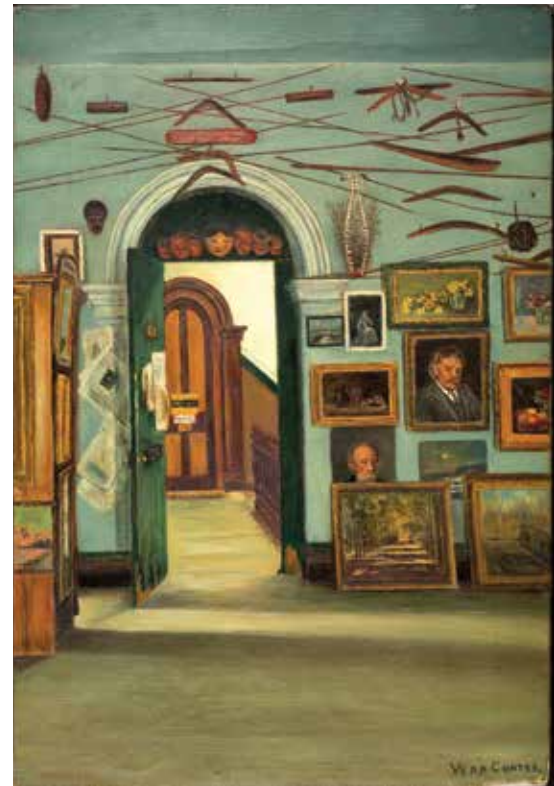
His work required careful planning of the designs, subtle use and mixing of colours, technical skill, stamina, managing and directing tradesmen and the capacity to work well with prominent citizens. Give a thought to the artist WJW lying flat ‘on his back on a mattress supported on ladders for three days’⁵ meticulously painting Sir Henry’s family crest on the ceiling (**plate 2**). WJW suffered from lead poisoning acquired during his time as a painter and decorator, as the common additive to paints during that time was lead.

The UK 1871 Census records my grandmother, Eliza Milton (c 1862–1953), living in Plymouth with her mother Elizabeth, father John and siblings. Eliza, a domestic servant aged 16, migrated to Adelaide as a single woman, sailing from Plymouth on 8 November 1878 with 291 other

immigrants on board the *Woodlark*, arriving in Adelaide on 21 February 1879,⁶ where she met WJW. She gave birth to their first child William Joseph (Will) on 17 October 1881. They were married on 4 August 1887 and subsequently had seven more children, all born in Adelaide – Sydney (Syd, 1888–1967), Percy Frederick (Perce, 1890–1958), Catherine Elizabeth (Kitty or Kate, 1892–1937), Victor (1893–1894), Walter (Wally, 1895–1972), George Paramor (1899–1931) and Joseph Paramor (Joe, 1902–1963). Several were artists – Sydney, Percy, Walter and Kate.

My father Walter told me that his father WJW was a somewhat severe man (**plate 1**). When he considered that any of his seven sons needed a little motivation, one of his favourite comments was ‘you will never set the Thames on fire my boy!’ He sent all seven sons overseas in their teens in order ‘to make men out of them’. My father was sent to the United States – and spent most of his time there trying to earn enough money to come home.

Before WJW died on 7 January 1918 he had been living at Forest Avenue Forestville, moving there in 1913 with his wife and eight children. His widow



3. Vera L Coates (1889–1975), *Art exhibition at the Institute Building, North Terrace*, oil on canvas, signed l.r. ‘VERA COATES.’, c 1915, h 51 w 35 cm. The South Australian Society of Arts exhibitions could show several hundred works. Collection: State Library of South Australia, B740

4.

William Joseph Williams (1851–1918), *[Child with wagon in garden]*, c 1898, oil on canvas h 38 w 56 cm signed W. J. Williams l.r. Private collection. Wally Williams told his son that he was the child in the garden, which would date the work about 1898–99 when he was three or four years old. Private collection, photo Mason Williams





5.

William Joseph Williams (1851–1918), *July Shadows. Field's Creek*, oil on canvas, signed W.J. Williams, date illegible, c 1902, h 80 w 110. The “ugly tree” in the foreground identifies this work as *July Shadows. Field's Creek*, exhibited at SASA in November 1902. Private collection, photo Mason Williams

6.

William Joseph Williams (1851–1918), [*Field's Creek, Fleurieu Peninsula*], 1901, oil on canvas, signed W.J. Williams, h 80 w 110 cm. Most probably close to Hallett's Cove. Private collection, photo Mason Williams

Eliza probably stayed at that address until about 1923 when the family moved to 20 Ningana Avenue, Kings Park,⁷ where she died aged 90 on 28 March 1953.⁸ I have memories of my parents taking me to see her at Ningana Avenue in the late forties. I remember her as a very petite lady of indeterminable age living in a very large inter-war bungalow. Both my grandparents are buried in Adelaide's West Terrace Cemetery, but their headstone has been obliterated over time.

Painting excursions

WJW deserves more recognition for his contributions to the art scene in South Australia, through his many landscape paintings and sketches submitted to the exhibitions of the South Australian Society of Arts (SASA) for over 25 years, his lectures on art and his work as a committee member of the SASA. These activities are documented in the reports of SASA exhibitions and meetings in South Australian newspapers, between 1890 and 1917.

My grandfather WJW took my father Wally along on his painting trips to the coast near Adelaide, to the Fleurieu Peninsula and into the Adelaide Hills (**plates 4–14**). When I was young, I asked my father about these trips and the whereabouts of the paintings WJW produced. He explained that they were put into the care of one of his brothers who had passed away, and that the paintings were now lost.

Years passed and in about 1963 my fiancée and I were staying with my parents. My father was regularly catching the train into the city from the family home in Grange. Like many South Australian commuters at that time, my father read the daily paper, the *Advertiser*, cover to cover. On one of those occasions, he arrived home rather excited and explained that while reading the *Warehouseman's Liens Act* he saw that an auction to be held the next day included a wardrobe full of old oil paintings. Quite a lot of discussion took place that night and the family decided that my father and a cousin should attend the auction on a hunch that those oil paintings just might be those painted by my grandfather.

At the auction house, he and his cousin quickly identified the paintings as the work of WJW, but how much should they



bid? Their dilemma was soon solved by the friendly auctioneer who suggested that they put in a bid for the wardrobe and its contents, not just the paintings. Success! I vividly remember my father arriving home that evening the proud owner of a cache of his father's oil paintings.

For some years, the paintings hung on the walls of my parents' home. On every visit, I remember admiring them for their realism and my grandfather's eye for colour. It struck me forcefully that the serene places my grandfather saw and painted would soon be lost due to the rapid suburban development under way in South Australia in the sixties.

While I was separated from the paintings for a time, in 1967 I received a copy of the *Adelaide Sketchbook* by Max Lamshed and Jeanette McLeod,⁹ with an article on Austral (Ayers) House, and a reference to my grandfather's work there (**plate 2**):

Sir Henry Ayers, his home on North Terrace – now Ayers House – and the life which flowed around it were big elements in Adelaide's establishment before the turn of the century. As President of the Legislative Council, he gave his Parliamentary dinners at home, his guests seated around a long cedar table and the Ayers family crest of three doves and an olive branch looking down from the ceiling. It had taken a painter named Williams, flat on his back on a mattress supported by ladders, three days to do.

In 1975 I moved with my young family and some of the paintings to Sydney. I was transferred to the Netherlands in 1982 and because my parents had passed away, the paintings came too. By this time, the paintings and their frames were showing their age, particularly as a result of being locked up in a garage for many years. We were put in touch with a retired Rijksmuseum picture restorer and another family conference took place over the future of WJW's oil paintings. As a trial, we had one small piece restored. The results were



very satisfactory, so during our stay in the Netherlands all of the oil paintings were restored. We returned to Australia with them in 1996.

The South Australian Society of Arts

The SASA was founded 1856 and claims to be the oldest art society in Australia. From 1890, it held Annual Exhibitions, usually in June, then in 1898 held the first of another series of exhibitions, the First Federal Art Exhibition, in November, with artists from other colonies or states invited to take part (**plate 3**).¹⁰ Some of the artists represented in the exhibitions were Will Ashton, Hans Heysen, C. D. Richardson, W. Lister Lister and Harold S. Power. These exhibitions are generally reviewed in some depth in a variety of Adelaide newspapers, which often mention the titles of works by W. J. Williams and comment on his treatment of the subject.

By comparing these reports to extant works, sometimes we may be able to identify the title and date, although it is not always clear which paintings are by Williams. Catalogues of the Society's exhibitions are held in the State Library of South Australia on microfilm (RM140) but are not currently accessible. Vera Coates



7-8.

William Joseph Williams (1851–1918), *The Approach of Evening*, oil on canvas, signed W.J. Williams dated 1911, h 52 w 78, with paper label inscribed "The Approach of evening" / W.J. Williams/159 Grenfell St City/ 25 0 0 / Oct 14 19[11]. Perhaps this is one of the 'sunny landscapes' Williams exhibited in 1912. Private collection, photo Mason Williams

(1889–1975) depicted the hanging of an exhibition in her c 1915 oil painting *Art exhibition at the Institute Building, North Terrace*, now in the State Library of SA (B74051) (**plate 3**).



Newspaper reports of Williams' paintings at the exhibition give us some idea of his work. Most of his extant paintings are signed 'W. J. Williams' and some are dated. They include landscapes and still lifes, though none of the latter are now held by the family. Here they are listed by year:

1890

Passing a golden sunset (27) and a large view (28) of the sea beating wildly amongst the rocks, with a lowering dark sky, we are arrested by a fresh marine

view, in which the sea ruffled by a breeze is good. It is one of W. J. Williams's, and is not bad. ... One of the best, if not the best fruit piece in the list, is one by W. J. Williams (55), and 56 is not a bad flower piece.

Adelaide Observer 21 Jun 1890 p 42;
SAR 17 Jun 1890 p 7.

W. J. Williams, an Adelaide artist, has a seascape showing a rough surf, which is in striking contrast to his beautifully painted grapes on another canvass.

Advertiser 19 Jun 1890 p 7.

9.

William Joseph Williams (1851–1918), [Adelaide Hills], oil on canvas, signed W.J. Williams, h 52 w 78 cm. Private collection, photo Mason Williams

10.

William Joseph Williams (1851–1918), [Adelaide Hills], possibly *Sketch in the Hills*, oil on canvas, signed W.J. Williams I.L., dated 1911 or 1912, h 52 w 78 cm. Private collection, photo Mason Williams

1893

Of Mr. W. J. Williams's work "A Gusty Morning, Marino Rocks" (35), is perhaps the best. The sky in his "September Day" is well worked.

SAR 21 Sep 1893 p 7; *Observer* 30 Sep 1893 p 5.

Mr. W. J. Williams is past the probation stage; he has complete mastery over his material, and he shows decided and unusual ability. His "Peaches" (No. 36) are perfect as a study of still life. His September sketch of a "Paddock, North-terrace," is full of sunlight and shows his artistic faculty for evolving a subject out of very simple elements, and the rocks and cliffs in his "Gusty Morning" (No. 35) are solidly painted, but he fails in his wave forms and the action of his sea. Indeed, marine painting is well left till complete skill has been attained in seizing motion and rapidly fleeting effects. Very few artists succeed in it till late in their professional experience.

Advertiser 21 Sep 1893 p 5; *Express* 21 Sep 1893 p 4.

Mr. W. J. Williams gives a fine idea of a swelling sea coming in on to the Marino Rocks.

Quiz & Lantern 29 Sep 1893 p 12.

1894

Mr. W. J. Williams has produced a nice spirited sylvan scene in 149, "Winter, Brownhill Creek." His grey sky is well treated, and there is merit in the

landscape, as there is also in “Winter Twilight” (148) — a bold scene near the Black Forest, with trees showing darkly against a golden and grey sky.

Observer 23 Jun 1894 p 34.

Mr. W. J. Williams is somewhat ambitious, his “Winter Twilight near Black Forest” being an attempt at very bold effects in heavy coloring. “Winter at Brownhill Creek” has merit.

Quiz & Lantern 28 Jun 1894 p 15.

Mr. W. J. Williams in his “Summer Afternoon in the City” is seen to advantage. The effect of sunlight is well secured, his work is bold, and if the greens are a trifle too pale they are not sufficiently so to be displeasing.

Advertiser 14 Jun 1894 p 6.



1895

“Hallett’s Cove,” by W. J. Williams, is a big picture with plenty of color laid on. “Early Sunrise,” by the same artist is good, but the effects are not Australian, and his “Noon, near Goodwood,” has the appearance of a public-house sign.

Quiz & Lantern 17 Jun 1895 p 14.

Mr W. J. Williams, whose sunny pictures in past exhibitions attracted notice, contributes three canvasses, in all of which is evidence of his ability. “Afternoon, Hallett’s Cove,” takes premier place among these. It is vigorous in execution and the only feature that displeases is the distant sea, which is heavy and scarcely horizontal, faults that require but little time to rectify.

Advertiser 14 Jun 1895 p 5; *Chronicle* 22 Jun 1895 p 7.

WJW showed “five of his broadly painted canvasses” at the Conversazione of the Literary, Scientific, and Art Societies of South Australia in the Exhibition Building.

Chronicle 30 Nov 1895 p 18

1897

Mr. W. J. Williams comes fairly forward with satisfactory work in “Rocky Pastures,” but he cannot come up to [George] Webb in animal painting.



11–12.

William Joseph Williams (1851–1918), *Midsummer on the Sturt*, oil on canvas, 1911, h 46 w 66 cm with paper label inscribed ‘Midsummer on the Sturt / Mr W.J. Williams/159 Grenfell St/ 10 10 0 [10 guineas]/ 3 Oct 14 1911.’ Private collection, photos Mason Williams

His treatment of landscape and sky is conscientious. The three pictures of these two men are the most meritorious in the array.

Critic 9 Oct 1897 p 16.

There are catalogued 223 exhibits. Undoubtedly the three best pictures on view are those of Mr. G. A. J. Webb, a Victorian artist, settled in our midst, and Mr. W. J. Williams. ... Next best is Mr. W. J. Williams’s “Rocky Pastures” (145). His sky is capital, his rocks extremely good, and his sea fairly expressed: but the sheep show some slovenliness, shall we say, or carelessness, as if put in as an after-thought. Barring that, it is by no means a bad painting — better than his “September Sunlight” (147)

SAR 30 Sep 1897 p 7.

W. J. Williams shows a capital seashore picture entitled “Rocky Pastures,” the only blemish being the narrow strip of sea. It is the best picture shown by this painter; and “The Hour that Daylight Dies” has brilliant color and atmosphere. “September Sunlight,” also by the same, is lacking in relief, and is generally inferior to his other exhibits.

Express 30 Sep 1897 p 4; *Advertiser* 30 Sep 1897 p 6.

1898

First Federal Art Exhibition W. J. Williams’s (sic) ‘Ramparts of Noarlunga’.

Quiz 17 Nov 1898 p 7.

In the domain of landscape “Cloud Shadows” by Mr. W. J. Williams, is seen to good advantage when viewed from the centre of the room.

Advertiser 1 Nov 1898 p 6



13.

William Joseph Williams (1851–1918), *Rocky pastures*, c 1897, oil on canvas signed W. J. Williams l. l. h 50 w 80 cm. Exhibited SASA 1897. Private collection, photo Mason Williams

1901

Mr W. J. Williams (S.A.), in his “Clearing After a Sou’-Wester near Noarlunga,” has contributed a canvas of fair size, and showing some amount of power in sea depicting. The yeasty foam is well portrayed, but more attention to the differentiation between sea and sky would have added to the value of the work.

Advertiser 11 Nov 1901 p 6.

The waves are too vertical in “Clearing After A Sou’-Wester near Noarlunga,” by W. J. Williams.

SAR 9 Nov 1901 p 4.

1902

South Australian Society of Arts, Annual exhibition, 25 July 1902, opened by the Lieutenant Governor the Right Hon. Sir Samuel Way the President of the Society:

“[Sir Samuel] was delighted to see Mr. W. J. Williams so well represented. Mr. Williams decorated his dining room more than a quarter of a century ago, and he remembered he was blamed at the time for introducing a workman from Melbourne to do this unaccustomed work. Few men in South Australia had a better sense of colour than Mr. Williams, and ‘Summer Afternoon on the Coast’ was a most

successful painting of our coastline, which Mr. Williams had studied very earnestly and lovingly. Then he noticed the admirable frieze for Morris wallpaper, which Mr. Williams was not only able to design but to execute.”

SAR 25 Jul 1902.

Sir Samuel Way, opening the exhibition, commented:

“Few men in South Australia had a better sense of color than Mr. W. J. Williams, who was not only able to design, but also to execute.”

Advertiser 25 Jul 1902 p 7.

W. J. Williams has got some beautiful sunlight into “July Shadows. Field’s Creek.” It is a pity he introduced the ugly tree into the foreground. “Summer Afternoon on the Coast” has been praised before.

SAR 6 Nov 1902 p 6; *Observer* 15 Nov 1902 p 3.

Mr. W. J. Williams exhibited an excellent view of coast work in Summer Afternoon on the Coast.

Critic 2 Aug 1902 p 9.

1907

Mr W.J. Williams is a New Exhibitor, who is not lacking in talent.

Advertiser 12 Jun 1907 p 8.

1910

Mr. W. J. Williams is once more to the fore with two pictures (“A Woodland Pool, Summer Sketch,” and “Late December Afternoon. Black Forest”), which do him credit.

Advertiser 14 Apr 1910 p 10.

1911

Mr. W. J. Williams, whose canvases always compel attention, shows a sketch near Blackwood, and a rendering of the hills from the plains, dappled with sunshine and shade. We prefer his sketch, in which he has allowed himself color in greater variety.

Advertiser 6 Apr 1911 p 9.

1912

W. J. Williams this year deals with gleams of sunshine, suffusing well-chosen hill scenes ... W. J. Williams shows a careful pencil sketch of Upper Mitcham.

Advertiser 18 Apr 1912 p 3.

I had almost overlooked the works of W. J. Williams, who contributes sunny landscapes.

Daily Herald 18 Apr 1912 p 6.

Among the water colors is a small oil “Sketch in the Hills,” by Mr. W. J. Williams (who, by the way, was a

14.

William Joseph Williams (1851–1918), [*Semaphore*], oil on board, unsigned, h 35.5 w 47 cm. Painted south of the jetty (completed in 1860 and used for the pilot cutter and mail ship), view from north of Grange. To the right is the signal tower with the time ball used to set ships' chronometers. Private collection, photo Mason Williams



pupil of William Morris, the celebrated designer and man of letters). This sketch is unpretentious so far as technique is concerned, but pleasing in color. ... and Mr. W. J. Williams "Sundown, Forestville," and "Tapley's Hill from Blackwood."

Advertiser 14 Nov 1912 p 12.

1913

W. J. Williams, in Sydney and Blackwood landscapes respectively (88-9), has put forward some good studies, giving promise of better things, and he also shows a decorative frieze of peonies stencilled on linen.

SAR 8 May 1913 p 9.

Before coming to the two works by Mr. W. J. Williams, namely "Morning Sunshine, Domain, Sydney" and "Summer Mists, Blackwood," for which he will receive the plaudits of those who understand,

Advertiser 8 May 1913 p 14.

W. J. Williams, whose decorative talent is not surpassed in this city, shows a Sydney morning view and summer mists at Blackwood.

Mail 10 May 1913 p 9.

The sixteenth Federal Exhibition of the South Australian Society of Arts was declared officially open at the

Institute Building, North terrace, by the Governor (Sir Day Hort Bosanquet) at a conversazione last evening. ... The Governor ... considered the society had an admirable exhibition of pictures. The picture he was standing in front of ("Red Gold," by Hans Heysen) was something quite remarkable and was the best pictorial representation of true Australian scenery he had seen. ... He had seen several pictures by an artist named W. J. Williams which displayed much merit. The whole exhibition had really been quite a surprise.

Daily Herald 15 Nov 1913 p 3.

A neighbouring sketch, "Sturt Valley, Blackwood" (119), not half so ambitious, is infinitely more pleasing, and the painter, W. J. Williams, has put some good work into his interpretation of the shadows against the bright sunlit spaces.

The Journal 14 Nov 1913 p 4.

1914

Mr. W. J. Williams has done well with a pencil study of gum trees.

Advertiser 8 May 1914 p 11.

Sydney

In 1915, WJW was a finalist in the Wynne Prize for 'the best landscape painting of Australian scenery in oils or watercolours

or for the best example of figure sculpture by Australian artists' with his landscape painting *Late Afternoon, Sturt Valley, South Australia* at the then National Art Gallery of NSW. Eleven paintings by six artists were listed as finalists.

Locations

WJW is recorded as painting at these locations in South Australia: Marino Rocks on the coast 15 km SW of Adelaide; Hallett's [Hallett] Cove 2 km S of Marino Rocks; Noarlunga on the coast 13 km S of Marino Rocks; Blackwood in the foothills S of Adelaide; Sturt Valley near Stirling in the Adelaide Hills; Brownhill Creek in the foothills SE of Adelaide; Forestville and Goodwood, inner SW suburbs of Adelaide; Upper Mitcham and Black Forest, inner S suburbs of Adelaide; Field's Creek, probably Field River, a waterway S of Adelaide that debouches near Hallett Cove; Sydney.

Conclusion

W. J. Williams' work as an architectural decorator was at the forefront of the South Australian decorating trade in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as Andrew Montana revealed. Williams' analysis of nature, rhythm, colour and tone in his interior decorative work and compositions, which achieved beauty, harmony and restfulness, was allowed explorative dimensions in his other artistic



15.

William Joseph Williams (1851–1918), [*Coastal inlet*], unsigned, h 41 w 51 cm. Private collection, photo Mason Williams

16.

William Joseph Williams (1851–1918), [*Hallett Cove*], signed W. J. Williams dated 1901, h 75 w 105 cm. The folded metamorphic rocks in the cliff face are typical of Hallett Cove. Private collection, photo Mason Williams

activity, painting. His love of sea, sky and land, the changing atmospheric effects, and the colours, tones and textures he directly observed in nature, were disciplined afresh through painting.

Painting his canvases (which he aimed to sell, as some still bear prices) meant that he could enjoy painting outdoors and with greater freedom, even taking his children with him to enjoy the experience.

Here he revelled in his subjects, portraying landscapes and seascapes in realistic fashion. He had a strong interest in structure; his landscapes often have a central tree or gully to which the eye is led, and his seascapes a rock or more prominent wave in the centre, a focus of attention. Trees are favourites, with contrasting shapes, foliage and colours; he often uses a single, even broken or distorted, tree as a foreground feature. Scenes are almost devoid of buildings, which if they appear

are obscured or in the far distance.

Most paintings have an element of disorder – jumbled rocks, windswept trees, shadows of trees that are not shown, turbulent waves and skies nearly always alive with masses of cloud. Nowhere is this clearer than in *Hallett Cove*; the centre of this scene is comparatively calm, surrounded by the contorted strata of the rocks, the towering masses of cloud, and the crashing waves, their white wind-blown spray contrasting with the almost translucent green of the wave fronts.

The play of light attracts his attention, giving shape to hills or lighting up parts of a landscape where the sun might shine through clouds, trees or foliage. *Midsummer on the Sturt* breathes heat, and is one of the few paintings which shows a parched landscape and even picks out detail, with the wildflowers in the central foreground.

More work on finding the titles of his paintings exhibited with the South Australian Society of Arts, when research is possible again, might throw more light on W J Williams' art and his development as an artist.

NOTES

1. Andrew Montana, 'W.J. Williams Art Decorator of Ayers House, North Terrace Adelaide' *Australiana*, November 2018 vol 40 no 4. Yvonne Barber added some important information about the family in her article "Digitisation for Researchers" *Australiana* May 2019 vol 41 no 2 pp 44–46.
2. *SAR* 7 Aug 1878 p 1; *SAR* 12 Dec 1878 p 1; *Evening Journal* 27 Mar 1879 p 2.
3. *Evening Journal* 13 Aug 1879 p 3; *SAR* 13 Aug 1879 p 4; *Express* 14 Aug 1879 p 2.

4. *Register* 25 Jul 1902 p 3.
5. *Mail* 18 Aug 1928 p 12.
6. *Express* 21 Feb 1879 p 2
7. J.P. Williams of 20 Ningana Ave is recorded having an experimental (receiving) wireless operator's licence, *Mail* 1 Dec 1923 p 11.
8. *Advertiser* 30 Mar 1953 p 16; *Chronicle* 2 Apr 1953 p 35.
9. Max Lamshed with drawings by Jeanette McLeod, *Adelaide Sketchbook* Rigby, Adelaide 1967 p 30.
10. Catherine Speck, 'Adelaide's Federal Art Exhibitions 1898-1923' in Kate Darian-Smith et al, *Seize the Day*, Monash UP 2008, <http://books.publishing.monash.edu/apps/bookworm/view/SEIZE+THE+DAY/123/xhtml/chapter17.html> accessed 20 Jul 2020.
11. Williams explained the principles in his lecture on 'Beautifying the Home', reported in some detail in *Evening Journal* 8 Sep 1894 p 5.



Graham John Williams is the grandson of the artist W. J. Williams and is himself an artist, currently focussing on

seascapes near his home on the NSW Central Coast. His father Walter was a tally clerk with Elders, a model and clock maker, artist and photographer. Graham's son Mason John Williams is also an artist, who trained at the Blackheath School of Art London and Billy Blue School of Graphic Art Sydney, see masonjohnwilliams.blogspot.com.au. Email Graham at g.l.williams@iinet.net.au



Una Deerbon 1882–1972, Australian potter

Una Deerbon was a well-known maker of hand-built pottery, often with applied moulded decoration. When in her late 40s, she began making pottery in 1930. Just three years later she held three solo commercial exhibitions in Sydney and Melbourne, launching her on a successful career as a potter which lasted until 1964. Now her grandsons have dutifully documented her life and her art in a new book.

1.

Una Deerbon (then Una Darlow), passport photo taken in London on 13 August 1915. Private collection

2.

Una Deerbon (1882–1972), *jug* c 1933. Earthenware, with cutaway spout, copper-coloured glaze with incised decoration, 22 x 15.5 cm, incised under base DEERBON 1. Exhibited at Anthony Hordern & Sons Fine Art Gallery exhibition, July 1933. Collection: Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney, A2900, purchased 1933, photo Ryan Hernandez

RELTON & PETER LEAVER

Una Clare Eden Deane was born in Sydney in 1882. In 1904, she married an Englishman, Richard Relton Wise, who had changed his name to George Relton Percival Darlow. In Sydney, Una studied painting at the Julian Ashton School and was a member of the Society of Women Painters. In 1913 the couple left Australia and travelled to

North America, Europe and England; she attended art classes at the Chicago School of Art and the Slade School in London. In 1915 Una (**plate 1**) returned to Australia with her six-month old daughter, Diana.

Una first came to public notice in 1918 when Sydney's *Sunday Times* reported that Una Darlow had produced a set of humorous postcards. By 1919 she had petitioned for divorce from her husband, granted in 1923. In the 1920s she rose swiftly in the Sydney fashion world. She was employed as the head designer at David Jones and she conducted classes in costume design and embroidery. During this time, she used the names Madam Darlow and Madam Darlôt.

In 1923, she relocated to Brisbane where, as Una Darlot, she married Charles Francis Deerbon (formerly Karl Jellinek) on 1 February 1924. Later that year the family moved back to Sydney and in 1925 their son Murray was born. Her second marriage lasted only two years, and her husband left Australia.

Now with two children to support, Una threw herself into running her home in Randwick as a guest house; guests included players in the England cricket team from the Bodyline Series of 1932–33. She took up pottery making in 1930, attending art classes with Rayner Hoff at East Sydney Technical College, where she became skilled in mould making. She joined the Society of Arts





3.

Una Deerbon (1882–1972), *jug with figures* c 1933. Earthenware jug, hand-built, painted decoration of figures and geometric pattern, with two handles, glazed, 16.5 x 20.4 x 16 cm. Incised in base: DEERBON 74. Collection: Shepparton Art Museum, photo Holly Grech-Fitzgerald

4.

Una Deerbon (1882–1972), *wall pocket with satyr head* c 1934. Earthenware, hand-built slab construction, ochre glaze, applied decoration of green glazed satyr's head, 19 x 17 x 6 cm, inscribed on back UNA DEERBON. Private collection, photo Mark Ashkanasy

& Crafts of NSW, exhibiting textiles and ceramics at their exhibitions in 1931 and 1932, alongside potters such as Grace Seccombe, Nell Holden, Vi Eyre, Ada Newman and Harry Lindeman.

The year 1933 would prove to be momentous for Una Deerbon, with three major solo exhibitions of her work. In April she showed 350 individually made and decorated jugs at David Jones' department store, Sydney; the advertising highlighted her many sources of inspiration:¹

DEERBON POTTERY EXHIBITION.

See this wonderful display on the fourth floor of 350 individually hand made Pottery Jugs. Designs are rare and unusual as many of them were inspired by Australian Aboriginal Art; others by Persian, Grecian, and Aztec pieces and vases taken from the tomb of Tutankhamen.

5.

Una Deerbon (1882–1972), *platter with fruit border* c 1937. Earthenware, hand-built slab construction, turquoise glaze with a border of applied sprig-moulded multi-coloured fruits, 36 cm diam, incised in base DEERBON. Private collection, photo Mark Ashkanasy



6.

Una Deerbon (1882–1972), *bowl with applied dragons* c.1937. Earthenware, hand-built fluted slab form, green glaze with applied black glazed dragons, 34 cm diam, incised in base DEERBON. Private collection, photo Mark Ashkanasy



7.

Una Deerbon (1882–1972), *vase with grapevine*, mid 1950s. Earthenware, thrown form, ochre & green glaze, with applied sprig decoration of grapes & vines, 20 x 18 cm, incised in base Una Deerbon. Private collection, photo Mark Ashkanasy

Following this show, in June Anthony Hordern & Sons department store held an exhibition of 200 of her pieces in their Fine Art Gallery, where the Sydney Technological Museum (now Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences) acquired four works (**plate 2**); the *Sydney Morning Herald* described her exhibition as presenting “the work of an exceedingly enterprising and vigorous potter.”²

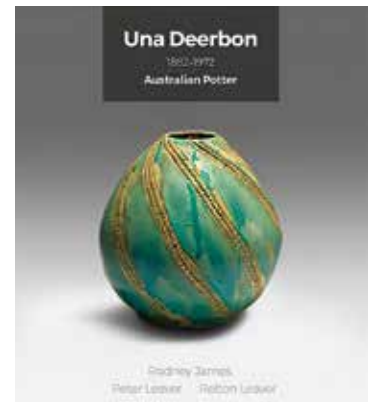
In November, she showed 100 pieces at the Webb Salon, Myer Emporium, Melbourne. Deerbon remained in Melbourne where she quickly established studio spaces in Collins Street, offering classes and demonstrations. She opened a large studio in South Yarra in 1937. At the end of the war, she moved to Camberwell where she continued to work, selling at fashionable outlets including Myer’s and George’s department stores. Her last home was in Boronia where she set up her studio and worked till 1964, when a broken hip brought an end to her career. Una died in 1972 at 90 years of age.

As a potter, Una Deerbon was one of only a few practitioners to make a living from her vocation. With her unique style of predominantly hand-built pottery, Una’s work was recognisable for its brightly applied colours, exuberant detailing, multifarious decorations and

topical subject matter. She was versatile, strong-willed and resourceful. She possessed excellent entrepreneurial skills and could glide seamlessly between the world of fine art pottery produced for exhibitions and commercial ware that was more commonly made and sold for everyday use.

Throughout our childhood and early adulthood we had frequent and close contact with our grandmother, when we were exposed to her creativity and especially to the ceramics she made. Later we realised that she was an important figure in early and mid-20th century pottery production in Australia,





Vase with green & brown glaze c.1940 Handbuilt, glazed earthenware, 21.2 X 20.7 cm, incised in base: DEERBON. National Gallery of Australia, purchased 1980

8.

Una Deerbon (1882–1972), *vase with fruit* c 1935. Earthenware hand-built oval vase with lug handles, turquoise and brown glaze, applied decoration of a garland of multi-coloured fruits, 21 x 20 x 16 cm, unsigned. Two stickers on base: 'The Myer Emporium Ltd' and '£3.3.0 (Una).' Private collection, photo Mark Ashkanasy

represented in public collections.

We vividly remember Grannie's Sunday visits and how at lunch she would insist on good table manners. We recall how she would throw material on to a table and cut out a garment without any pattern. We often stayed at her various

homes where she would encourage us to be creative with clay as part of our entertainment but there were strict rules about entering her studio unsupervised.

Like most children we thought our grandmother was old and in fact she was. Her career in ceramics did not begin until she was in her late forties and continued into her eighties. She had enormous fortitude and drive and worked tirelessly in the full-time production of her ceramics. This required hard physical effort in stacking a large kiln, wedging clay and producing hand-built pottery.

NOTES

1. *SMH* 25 Apr 1933 p 1.
2. *SMH* 13 Jun 1933 p 6.



Peter Leaver has had a long-term interest in antiques and decorative arts. In the last few years he has been researching family history, especially Una's artistic life. He has uncovered much of the information from old newspapers linked to the NLA Trove website. **Relton Leaver** was encouraged by his mother and grandmother to pursue his interest in the arts and to complete a Diploma of Ceramics at RMIT, under the tuition of Jeff Wilkinson and Jack Knight, who knew and worked with Una.

The family held an extensive collection of her ceramics as well as business cards and letterheads, photographs and other memorabilia and a large collection of art reference books she had used. At this later stage in our lives we felt it important to record our memories and the oral history we had gleaned from our mother, Diana, about our Grannie. Our aim, then, in producing the book is to tell Una's story and document her artistic skills in graphics, fashion design and, in particular, ceramics.

In 2015 we invited Rodney James to write about the life and art of Una Deerbon. Rod is an independent writer and curator with 30 years' experience in the Australian visual art sector. Mark Ashkanasy, a Melbourne photographer with extensive experience in working with artists, galleries and art organisations, was responsible for photographing hundreds of images and coordinating the production of the book. He worked closely with Anthony Pearsall, book designer. *Una Deerbon 1882-1972 Australian Potter* is a limited edition (500 copies) hardcover volume of 152 pages. For more information and to order, go to www.unadeerbon.com.



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Australian Cedar Press on Chest, attributed to Andrew Lenahan. The pediment of crossbanded cedar sits atop a pair of crossbanded cedar doors concealing 4 cedar drawer slides, above 4 cockbeaded drawers with crossbanded surrounds, standing on turned feet. Full cedar construction, with good 19th century finish, c 1845. H 229 W 130 D 56 cm. \$9,500. The design closely matches two marked Lenahan examples, with his 271 Castlereagh St address (1844–7), including all crossbanding. See website for details.



DORRIT BLACK

AUSTRALIAN, 1891–1951

Black Swans, 1937

Linocut in coloured ink from five blocks on thin oriental laid paper.

Signed, titled and numbered, 24/50 in pencil in lower margin.

23.5 x 32 cm

A rare linocut in wonderful condition by this highly collectible Australian artist.

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This fine and very rare 18-carat gold and malachite brooch with a contemporary photograph of the owner to the rear is probably not South Australian. The oak leaf and acorn in a wreath was a symbol of strength, wisdom and longevity, unlikely to be found in the wine growing colony of South Australia. Although the brooch is unmarked, the acorn would suggest that the brooch was made c 1870 by Christian Ludwig Qwist, who was both a photographer and goldsmith in Sydney, from malachite mined at Peak Downs near Copperfield in Queensland. With the conclusion of the tortuous sale of the Kennedy Collection to the National Museum of Australia, nearly all the known gold-mounted malachite jewels formerly in private hands are now held in institutional collections. The purchase of this brooch by a collector of Australian jewellery provides him or her with an opportunity to buy something seriously rare for the sum A\$9,750.

