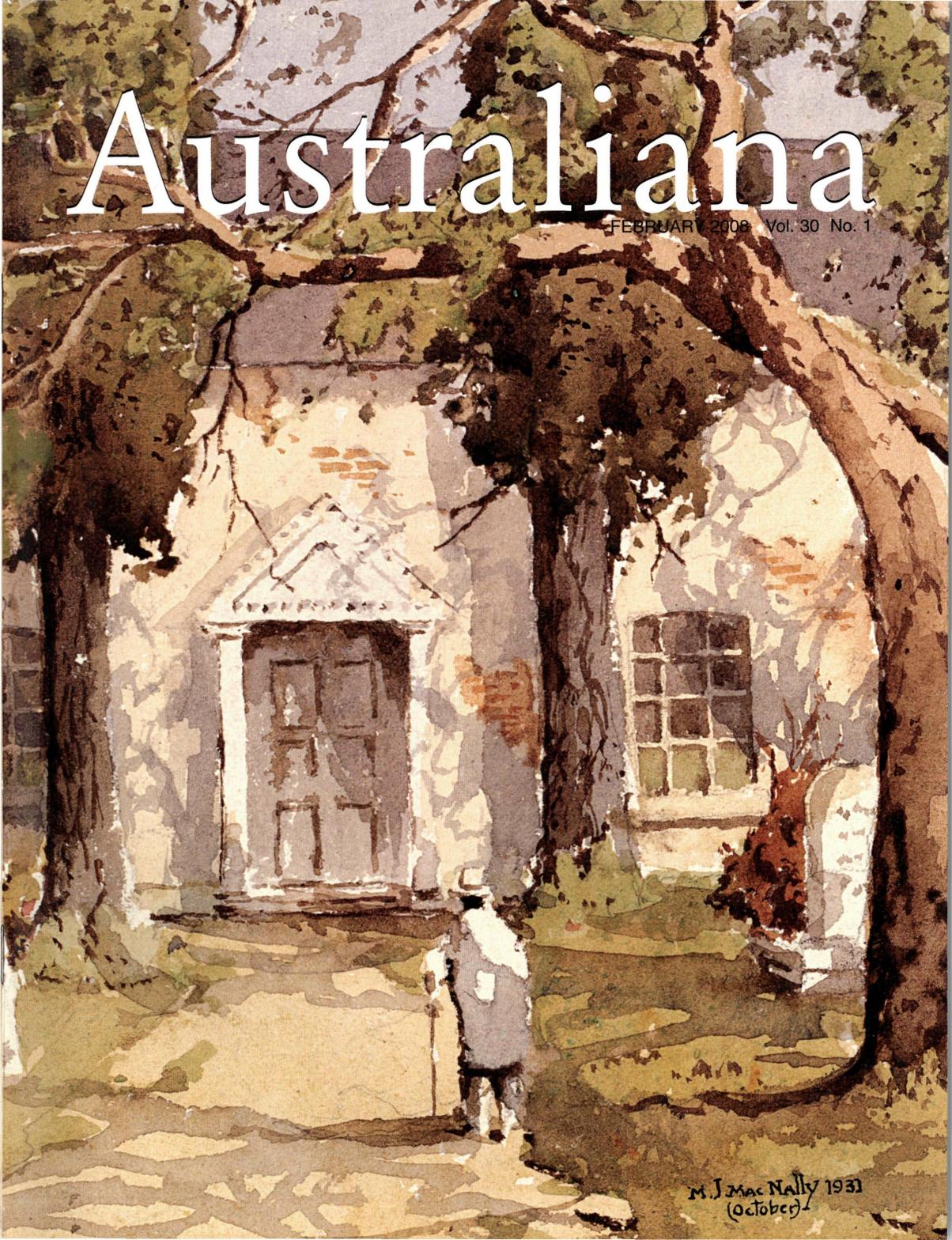


# Australiana

FEBRUARY 2008 Vol. 30 No. 1



M. J. Mac Nally 1931  
(October)



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## NOTICE TO ALL AUSTRALIANA MEMBERS

YOUR COMMITTEE is planning a tour to Tasmania in Spring 2008 for Australiana members and would welcome your suggestions. It is currently planned to last for approximately 7 – 10 days and to include tours of collections, houses, gardens and galleries. Travel would be by mini-bus, with overnight accommodation in motels or hotels. The cost is, as yet unknown, but every endeavour will be made to keep it low without sacrificing quality. Please contact us, by mail or email if you are interested or have any suggestion to make.



*Residence of Mr. Robt. Mark.  
1871. W. Tibbits.*

1

## William Mark:

‘WORKER IN METALS, PRECIOUS STONES,  
ENAMELLED AND INLAID WORK’

William Mark (1868–1956) was a distinguished Australian craftsman noted for his fine ecclesiastical metalwork enriched with figurative enamels.<sup>1</sup> That he has not been as widely known in Australia as his contemporaries, for instance James W.R. Linton, can be attributed in part to his lengthy domicile in England.

<sup>1</sup> William Tibbits (1837–1906), *Residence of Mr Robert Mark, Scarsdale* 1871, watercolour. Collection: Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

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### Kenneth Cavill

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**W**illiam Mark, son of Robert and Rachel Mark, was born in 1868 at Scarsdale, a small town 20 km south-west of Ballarat,

Victoria. His early years were spent in Scarsdale the family home; was drawn by William Tibbits in 1871.<sup>2</sup> Tibbits' watercolour (plate 1) shows a neat colonial cottage enhanced by a large vegetable garden within a picket fence, the surrounding landscape somewhat

sparse. Scarsdale was a postal town serving a then extensive alluvial mining district of some 4,000 persons.<sup>3</sup> As a youngster, he would have become well versed in the folklore of the Victorian goldfields.

Mark attended school in Scarsdale and Melbourne.<sup>4</sup> In the mid-1880s he was apprenticed to John R. Rowland, manufacturing jeweller, gold and silversmith of Melbourne.<sup>5</sup> John Rowland was noted for his enamelling expertise, receiving commendations for his jewellery exhibits displayed at the International Exhibitions held in Sydney 1879–80 and Melbourne 1880–81.<sup>6</sup> Evidently he encouraged his apprentice to acquire this skill.<sup>7</sup>

By 1891, William Mark had established his own workshop at 101 Swanson St, Melbourne and is listed at this address until 1894; unfortunately no record of his jewellery from the 1890s has been found. A processional cross of 1890 marked 'W MARK crossed hammers' has been reported but there is no further information.<sup>8</sup>

Having weathered the severe economic depression of the early 1890s, he left Australia around 1895. Many Australian writers, painters and performing artists chose to seek overseas experience and hopefully gain greater recognition abroad. William Mark is one of the earliest craftsmen to take this path, remaining an expatriate for close on a quarter of a century.

After a short period in South Africa, he joined Nelson Dawson's craft workshop in London.<sup>9</sup> Nelson Dawson (1859–1942) and his wife Edith were highly regarded for their fine enamelled jewellery; much of their craftwork displayed Art Nouveau motifs.<sup>10</sup> Mark would have gained valuable experience while working in this environment.

### THE GUILD OF HANDICRAFT

In 1901, Nelson Dawson became co-founder and art director of the newly formed Artificer's Guild Ltd.<sup>11</sup> However Mark chose to join C.R. Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft founded in 1888 in the industrial East End of London. Charles

2 William Mark (1868–1956), enamelled silver box, G of H Ltd, 1903. Courtesy Van Den Bosch, Camden Passage, Islington, London



3 Alec Miller (1879–1960), William Mark, 1903 pencil sketch. Collection: Powerhouse Museum, Sydney





4



5

4 Guild of Handicraft, silver tableware c. 1908-12. Collection: Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

5 William Mark (1868-1956), silver christening bowl, stamped 'W.M' 1917, h 7, diam 13 cm at the rim. Private collection

Robert Ashbee (1863-1942) was a leading exponent of the Arts & Crafts Movement<sup>12</sup> and under his direction the Guild had achieved an enviable reputation for its handcrafted silverwork, jewellery, enamelling and forged ironwork. The Guild decided in 1901 to move from the city to the country. Craftsmen, their families and workshops moved to Chipping Campden in the foothills of the Cotswolds, Gloucestershire. For Mark, living and working in a country town may have been an added incentive.

Mark's commitment to craftwork may be sensed from his period in London with Nelson Dawson and was greatly enhanced through the years 1902-1912 in the Guild workshop at Chipping Campden. The Guild worked as a cooperative: the designs were essentially those of Ashbee, one or more craftsmen

made the wares. In particular, William Mark and Fleetwood C. Varley have been credited with the figurative enamelling employed in decoration, skills they brought to the Guild.<sup>13</sup>

Pictorial enamelling became a feature of the Guild's work and is seen on jewellery, trinket and cigarette boxes crafted during the Guild's early years at Chipping Campden. While the designs would have been those of C.R. Ashbee, the following pieces bearing Mark's signature display his enamelling expertise. Firstly, an individually crafted silver hand mirror, illustrated in the Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum's exhibition catalogue of 1986 *Ashbee to Wilson*,<sup>14</sup> has the back enamelled with brilliant stylised 'peacock feathers' and the silver handle inset with 'mother-of-pearl'. The circular silver box (plate 2)

has the lid inset with a colourful figurative enamel - a 'Crusader'? Both pieces are marked 'G of H Ltd' and hallmarked London 1903. Enamellers were in a unique position as their signatures could be incorporated into the enamelling.

Decorative enamelled plaques were very much part of the Guild's output. A rectangular copper plaque (12.1 x 15.9 cm) painted in enamel over gold and silver foil with the design of a rooster is signed 'W. Mark'. It is inscribed on the back: 'Executed by W. Mark for the Guild of Handicraft Ltd, Campden, Glos. 1906'.<sup>15</sup> Some years later Ashbee observed in his journal that Mark 'has a superb sense of colour combined with a masterly technique'. He was not as impressed by Mark's drawings and added that 'His most successful work had been to render in colour the drawings of others'.

While noted for his enamelling, Mark was an experienced jeweller, gold and silversmith who contributed to the Guild's repertoire. As a member of the Guild's jewellery and silver workshop, Mark was involved in crafting table silverware (see plate 4). He was also involved in their art metalwork; a photograph from the Ashbee Collection (A18) shows Mark in the metal workshop, furnace at rear, crafting an ornamental hinge or bracket.<sup>16</sup>

The Guild exhibited its productions through the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society in London and at selected exhibitions in Europe and the United States. Income was derived from the craftwork marketed in its London shop and importantly from public and private commissions. A considerable range of church work was undertaken — furnishings and fittings, ecclesiastical silver and metalwork.

Notwithstanding the interest shown in fine handcrafted work, by the early 1900s craft guilds were facing increased competition from manufacturing jewellers and silversmiths producing quality wares in the Arts & Crafts and Art Nouveau styles. The cost of individually crafted items was such that

fewer patrons could afford them. Eventually the Guild went into voluntary liquidation in 1907.<sup>17</sup> Mark was one of the craftsmen who remained at Campden; many sought work elsewhere.

With the financial assistance of an American benefactor, the old Silk Mill housing the Guild's workshops was purchased and made available to the remaining Guild craftsman through a newly created Guild Trust. Members of the Guild Trust from the jewellery and silver workshop formed a Guild of Handicraft partnership which operated from 1908 to 1912. The partners were George Hart, J.K. Baily, G.E. Harwood and William Mark. George Hart entered their mark 'G of H' in the London registry in 1908.<sup>18</sup> A table cigarette box, the lid inset with a brilliantly coloured enamel depicting a deer hunt -- the hunter on horseback and a hound chasing the deer through the forest -- is marked 'G of H' for the Guild partnership and hallmarked London, 1913. It is attributed to George Hart and the enamelling to William Mark.<sup>19</sup>

Few examples of Mark's jewellery and silverware from the partnership years are on record. The silver teapot (plate 4, far left) circular in form with curved elongated lines and domed lid that is enhanced by the ivory handle and decorative finial, a cast sea-lion riding an ivory wave was designed by Ashbee and crafted by Mark.<sup>20</sup>

A personal item, an engagement brooch made by Mark on the occasion of his betrothal in 1908, was lent to the exhibition 'C.R. Ashbee and the Guild of Handicraft', held in 1981. Unfortunately, the brooch (G5a) is not described, but it had Mark's and his wife Eliza Fincham's initials on the back.<sup>21</sup>

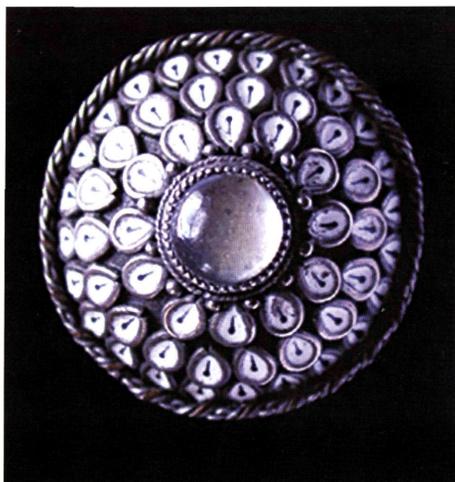
### AFTER THE GUILD: WILLIAM MARK AT CHIPPING CAMPDEN

The silver partnership was dissolved in 1912.<sup>22</sup> By then William Mark was firmly established in England. He set up his own workshop in High Street, Chipping Campden, and his maker's mark was entered in the London register as a 'gold



6 William Mark (1868–1956), design for pendant, 1912–19. Collection: Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

7 William Mark (1868–1956), enamelled silver brooch, set with a central moonstone, marked 'WILLIAM MARK CAMPDEN GLOS.' c. 1912–19, diam 2 cm. Courtesy Van Den Bosch, Camden Passage, Islington, London. A similar brooch is illustrated by Nancy N. Schiffer, *Silver Jewellery Design*, p 54





8 William Mark (1868–1956), processional cross c. 1931, St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. Photograph by Sue McNab, courtesy National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

and silver worker' in March 1912.<sup>23</sup> His mark is a distinctive one: 'W·M' within two conjoined ovals. Mark undertook a considerable range of work prior to his return to Australia in 1920. Noteworthy commissions included a gold bouquet holder for Queen Mary; previously pieces of his work had been purchased by Queen Alexandra. He crafted caskets for presentation to Field Marshal Lord Roberts and to Sir Robert (later Lord) Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement.<sup>24</sup>

However knowledge of his silver and jewellery fashioned for private patrons is limited. The silver bowl (plate 5) was designed and made by Mark for presentation as a personal gift in 1918. The two-handled, footed bowl is unmistakably of Arts & Crafts style. It is hand raised with a hammered finish, eight rock crystal stones *en cabochon* are set in a band below the everted rim, each being held in place with twisted-wire decoration. Minimal pricked work completes the decoration. Two looped strap handles are fitted to the bowl.

The appropriately jewelled bowl was a christening gift from a knight of the realm to his godchild Crystal. It bears

the maker's mark 'W·M' and the London hallmark for 1917.

The pendant (plate 6) features a silver 'peacock', the cast filigree tail encrusted with semi-precious stones. His drawings are from the 1912–20 period and are stamped 'W. MARK CRAFTSMAN IN GOLD, SILVER & ENAMELS, CAMPDEN GLOS.'<sup>25</sup>

The high-domed silver brooch (plate 7) is set with a central moonstone *en cabochon*. Enamelled white 'peacock eyes', centred with black, surround the stones. It is marked: WILLIAM MARK CAMPDEN GLOS.<sup>26</sup>

Ecclesiastical work has long been a mainstay for established craft workers. Mark's English contribution included noteworthy enamels, an heraldic shield for the tomb of an Archbishop of Canterbury and coats of arms for the Knights' Chapel at Westminster Abbey, London. He is also known to have crafted altar vessels and a reliquary for the Roman Catholic Cathedral, the Church of the Holy Cross, in Boston Massachusetts.<sup>27</sup>

A religious plaque 'Virgin and Child' in painted enamels, set in a copper frame decorated with bosses and beading (diam 11.2 cm) is listed in the exhibition catalogue *C.R. Ashbee and the Guild of Handicrafts* in the section 'After the Guild'. It is inscribed on the back 'W. Mark 1918'.<sup>28</sup>

## MARK'S RETURN TO MELBOURNE

In 1920, William Mark returned to Melbourne with his wife and young family, settling in Garden Vale, near Brighton. His studio-workshop was set up at the rear of his home. Mark's continuing commitment to craftwork is evident. Noted in particular for his enamelling expertise, his British passport issued in 1919 lists his occupation as 'enameller on metals'.<sup>29</sup> His listing in *Who's Who in Australia* from 1927 to 1935 provides a more extensive description: 'worker in metals, precious stones, enamelled and inlaid work'.

His return to Australia at the end of the First World War coincided with a period of church building and

refurbishment, a period when public and private memorials were being designed and fashioned to honour those who lost their lives in the conflict.

Ecclesiastical commissions were soon forthcoming. The first of these, a processional cross for All Saints' Anglican Church, Newtown near Geelong, Victoria was completed in 1921. The Appendix lists known ecclesiastical metalwork by William Mark from 1921 to 1926; a key feature of this work is the enamelling. His handcrafted processional and altar crosses have a symbolic central enamel depicting Christ as an *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God). Four enamelled medallions set at the extremities of the arms, also symbolic, depict the four Evangelists. The altar cross for the Warriors' Chapel in Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Newcastle NSW (1924) and the processional cross for St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Melbourne (c. 1931), are outstanding examples of his enamelling techniques (plate 8).<sup>30</sup>

In 1923, William Mark received wide recognition for his crafting of a fine chalice (plate 9 right) and paten for St Peter's Anglican Church, Eastern Hill, Melbourne. The parish committee had appointed Edward Spencer, art director of the Artificers' Guild London,<sup>31</sup> to design and fashion the altar vessels, a gift that celebrated the lengthy association of Canon E.S. Hughes with St Peter's as parish priest.

Spencer accepted the design commission, however following further consultation he recommended that the task of making the vessels be given to William Mark who had recently returned to Melbourne. Apparently there had been some misgiving that an Australian craftsman would be adequate to the task. On completion of the work, it was stated 'It is a matter of congratulations to all concerned that these exquisite products of Mr Mark were wholly manufactured in Australia and are the work of an Australian craftsman.'<sup>32</sup> The gold chalice and paten were displayed at the Victorian Arts & Crafts Society's exhibition later in the year.

9 William Mark  
(1868–1956), chalices.  
Left, Warriors' Chapel,  
Christ Church Cathedral,  
Newcastle 1925; right,  
St Peter's, Melbourne  
1923. Photograph  
courtesy National Gallery  
of Victoria, Melbourne



Spencer's design symbolised 'the Church of England and its transplanting on Australian soil'.<sup>33</sup> The bowl (plate 9 right) is mounted on a jewelled cylindrical stem tapering from the panelled circular foot. The spherical knob has four circular bosses with medallions featuring a kangaroo, birds, dolphins and fire. The base is patterned with ocean waves and sailing ships linking England and Australia. The vertical edge and support panels to the base have pierced decoration, the panels symbolise the 'Tree of Life'. On completion of this significant chalice, Mark received a further commission for St Peter's to fashion a matching ciborium.

### THE WARRIORS' CHAPEL, CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, NEWCASTLE

There can be little doubt that Mark's crafting of the St Peter's chalice and ciborium led to his being chosen to design and make the art metalwork for the Warriors' Chapel, Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Newcastle NSW constructed in 1923–24. The Warriors' Chapel is an impressive memorial that commemorates those of the Newcastle diocese who gave their lives in the course of the First World War. Mark's contribution to the fine ecclesiastical artwork of the chapel included the altar cross and candlesticks, the gold chalice and paten, the bronze alms dish together

with the sanctuary lamp and a bronze of the Crucifixion. The 'Book of Gold' as the Book of Remembrance as known, completed Mark's commission.

The altar cross and candlesticks have been described in detail in *Treasures from Australian Churches*.<sup>34</sup> They are crafted in brass, copper and silver. The brass cross is fronted with a silver panel, engraved with fruiting vine decoration. The four enamelled circular medallions set at the extremities of the cross are symbolic, depicting the four evangelists. The central medallion encases a fine painted enamel of an *Agnus Dei*, the circular cloisonné enamelled surround being set with twelve moonstones. The altar ornaments of exemplary workmanship have been fashioned in the Arts & Crafts manner. The altar cross demonstrates Mark's enamelling skills.

The gold chalice displays elements of the Gothic Revival style. The hand-raised bowl has a scalloped calyx set with precious stones, the hexagonal stem with fenestration motif is joined to the hexagonally panelled foot, set with cut stones. The globoid knob is set with an array of jewels including opals and pearls. The plain hexafoil base is enriched with a *basetaille* enamel depicting St Michael the Warrior of Heaven. The vertical edge to the base is pierced.

The gold paten complements the chalice. The rim is engraved with a

fruiting vine pattern interspersed with 20 gemstones. A small medallion is applied at the centre of the paten. William Mark's hand written description follows:<sup>35</sup>

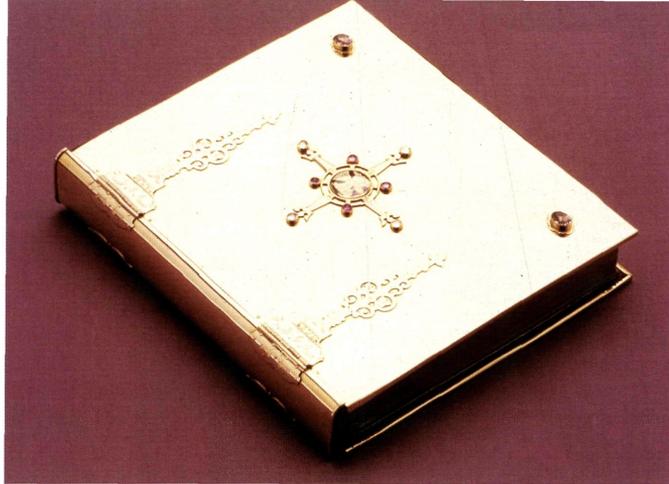
Chalice & Paten in Gold.  
Designed and fashioned by  
W. Mark.

They are 18ct gold, set with  
precious stones, and an enamel  
representing St. Michael carried  
out in the "Basetaille" method  
of enamelling.

The vessels are in the "Warriors"  
Chapel of S. Michael, Newcastle,  
N.S. Wales.

The gold and precious stones were  
the gift of the members of the  
Congregation of the  
Cathedral, Newcastle.

The 'Book of Gold' (plate 10), as the Book of Remembrance as known, contains the names of those within the diocese who lost their lives in the First World War. The names, arranged by parish, are hand inscribed.<sup>36</sup> The covers of the book are encased in gold sheet, the applied ornamental hinges are attached to the gold spine. The front cover is embellished with an enamelled 'Dove of Peace' set in a gold surround. The surround and tapering arms are enhanced with amethysts and moonstones, *en cabochon*.



10 William Mark (1868–1956) 'Book of Gold' 1924, Warriors' Chapel, Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Newcastle, NSW. Photograph by Sue McNab, courtesy National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Mark's contribution to the artwork of the Warriors' Chapel was a major one taking more than two years (1923–1925) to complete. His superior craftsmanship extended from the bejewelled and enamelled gold chalice to the hand-wrought bronze sanctuary lamp.<sup>37</sup>

### MARK'S CONTINUING AUSTRALIAN WORK

The years 1923 and 1924 were highly productive ones. Reporting on the exhibition of the Victorian Arts & Crafts Society, *The Argus* observed:<sup>38</sup>

'...Particular attention was taken in the silvered Communion bread box, the design and work of Mr William Mark. Although it is but 6" x 4" much attention has been paid to the details. It portrays fire, air and water ...'

The wafer or bread box (plate 11) is a fine example of Arts & Crafts silver. The actual size is 19 by 12.5 cm; all sides have embossed decoration, the front is enhanced with a large cabochon moonstone set in an elaborate mount and with painted enamels of a kangaroo and of dolphins, each set in a circular mount. The back has two comparable enamels, of a bird circling for its prey and of fire, in all symbolic of the four elements. Swing handles are fitted to the sides. Decorative ivory columns at the

corners of the box link the feet to the rim. The slightly domed lid has two applied pierced hinges and is further embellished with an applied gold dove surrounded by four cabochon moonstones.<sup>39</sup> The box was given in memory of a South Australian Rhodes Scholar, who was killed in action while serving with the Royal Flying Corps in 1918.

Mark's ecclesiastical work of the 1920s and 1930s fashioned in gold, silver, bronze and brass enriched with enamels is found in cathedrals and churches throughout south-eastern Australia (see Appendix).

Identification of William Mark's gold and silverware crafted in Australia rests on provenance. The maker's mark that he registered in London in 1912 has not been noted on Australian wares. His church work is well documented but very few objects are marked. For example, the altar cross and candlesticks of mixed metals made for Newcastle are not marked. The gold chalice (plate 9 left) is not marked, the accompanying gold paten has a small, 12mm long stamp 'W. MARK' (sans serif) impressed on the underside of the rim. The stamp is also impressed on the 'Book of Gold (plate 10) at the top of the spine. Immediately below is a shield cartouche enclosing two crossed hammers.

To date, there is even less knowledge of the jewellery and silver fashioned by

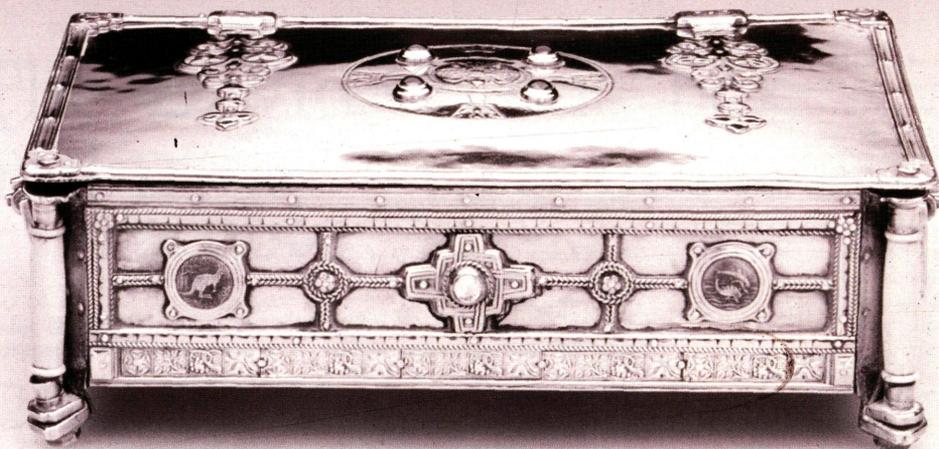
Mark for private patrons in Australia than in England. Arts & Crafts jewellery set with semi-precious stones that he made for family members has since been dispersed.<sup>40</sup> A small collection of decorative enamelled pieces – a copper cigar box, a silver cigarette box and a gold buckle were lent to the National Gallery of Victoria by his son Robert Mark at the time of the exhibition *Treasures from Australian Churches*.<sup>41</sup> A collection of 20 enamelled plaques assembled by his son are a reminder of Mark's lifelong speciality. The enamels, on copper panels, are of varying shape and size. The enamelling shows the *basetaille* and hand-painted methods. A cloisonné badge is included.

A small bowl bearing the initials 'C C' illustrated in *Collectables Trader* is captioned 'William Mark (Melbourne) three-footed Arts and Crafts bowl, 1938, height: 7 cm'.<sup>42</sup> Provenance would be of considerable interest; the bowl is similar to those made by the Guild of Handicraft in the early 1900s.

Mark did not engage in the commercial production of Arts & Crafts silverware or jewellery, rather as an individual craftsman he fashioned commissioned work for his patrons of the 1920s and 30s. The rarity of his Australian silver and jewellery is not surprising.

Mark chose to be listed in *Who's Who in Australia* as a 'worker in metals, precious stones, enamelled and inlaid work' rather than a jeweller, gold and silversmith. His choice melds with his use of the business stamp 'W. Mark, Craftsman in Gold, Silver and Enamels, Campden Glos' during the 1910s in England and emphasises his continuing commitment to craft work. He died, aged 88, in Melbourne in 1956.

The substantial Australian church commissions undertaken through the 1920s and 1930s enabled Mark to display his outstanding talents. In 1985, Judith



O'Callaghan, referring to his ecclesiastical metalwork chosen for the exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria, observed that William Mark was 'the most accomplished exponent of the Arts & Crafts style'.

#### AUTHOR'S NOTE

The present article provides an overview of Mark's work in England and Australia. It adds material from sources not available to the author when 'William Mark, a distinguished Australian craftsman' *Silver Journal of Australia* 2005 no. 1 pp 6-7 was published.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**Ken Cavill** is an Emeritus Professor of Chemistry who has made a study of Australian metalwork, jewellery and its makers, focusing on the early 20th century. He is author with Graham Cocks and Jack Grace of *Australian Jewellers* (CGC Gold, Roseville NSW, 1992) and of many articles.

#### APPENDIX: ECCLESIASTICAL METALWORK BY WILLIAM MARK, MELBOURNE, 1920-36

- 1 Processional cross, All Saints, Newtown Vic 1921
- 2 Chalice and paten, St Peter's, East Melbourne Vic (Edward Spencer, designer) 1923
- 3 Ciborium, St Peter's, East Melbourne Vic, 1923
- 4 Morse (clasp) for cope, St Peter's, East Melbourne Vic, 1923
- 5 Wafer (bread) box, Anglican Diocese of Adelaide SA, 1923-24
- 6 Altar cross and candlesticks, Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Newcastle NSW 1924
- 7 'Book of Gold' covers, Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Newcastle NSW 1924
- 8 Alms dish, Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Newcastle NSW 1924
- 9 Sanctuary lamp, Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Newcastle NSW 1924
- 10 Bronze of the Crucifixion, Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Newcastle NSW 1924
- 11 Chalice and paten, Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Newcastle NSW 1925
- 12 Processional cross, Armidale School Chapel, Armidale NSW c. 1925
- 13 Dean's staff, St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne Vic 1927
- 14 Processional cross, St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne Vic (Louis Williams, designer) 1931
- 15 Processional cross, St Peter's, Brighton Beach Vic 1935
- 16 Processional cross, St Peter's, Queenscliff Vic 1935
- 17 Paten (to accompany an 18th-century chalice), St Peter's, East Melbourne Vic 1936

11 William Mark (1868-1956), wafer or bread box c. 1924, Anglican Diocese of Adelaide. Photograph courtesy National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

For additional information, see Anglican Church of Australia Archives; *Newcastle Cathedral, the Warriors' Chapel - Its history and meaning*, David & Cunningham Ltd, Newcastle 1924.

#### NOTES

- 1 Judith O'Callaghan, *Treasures from Australian Churches* (exhibition catalogue), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne 1985 pp 16, 42-45, 49; Colin Holden, *The Holiness of Beauty: Ecclesiastical Heritage* (exhibition catalogue), St Peter's Anglican Church, Melbourne 1996, pp 3, 18-19; Kenneth Cavill, 'William Mark - a distinguished Australian craftsman', *Silver Journal of Australia*, 2005 no. 1, pp 6-7.
- 2 Joan Kerr, *The Dictionary of Australian Artists*, Oxford UP, Melbourne 1992 pp 802-3.
- 3 *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer* 1865, F.F. Bailliere, Melbourne 1865; James Flett, *The History of Gold Discovery in Victoria*, Hawthorn Press, Melbourne 1970, pp 321-9.
- 4 *Who's Who in Australia, 1927-28*, F. Johns Hassel Press, Adelaide; *Who's Who in Australia, 1933-34, 1935*, Herald Press, Melbourne.
- 5 O'Callaghan, *op cit* p 16 n 27.
- 6 J.R. Rowland exhibited 'enamelled monograms, well executed, showing good taste' at the Sydney International Exhibition 1879 where he was awarded 1st degree of merit (*Official Record* p 515) and 'enamelled gold and silverware, the enamelling

champlevé' at the Melbourne International Exhibition 1880-81 (*Catalogue* p 41).

7 For a description of enamels and enamelling see for example John Fleming & Hugh Honour, *The Penguin Dictionary of Decorative Arts*, Allen Lane, London 1977 pp 274-8.

8 *Sands & McDougall's Melbourne Directory, 1891-94*; Kurt Albrecht, *19th Century Australian Gold and Silversmiths*, Hutchinson Australia, Melbourne 1969, appendix 2 p 20.

9 See n 5.

10 *Collector's Encyclopaedia, Victoriana to Art Deco*, Random House, New York 1974 p 86; Annette Carruthers, *Ashbee to Wilson* (exhibition catalogue), Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, Cheltenham Glos 1986 pp 19-20.

11 *ibid.*

12 Alan Crawford *et al*, *C.R. Ashbee and the Guild of Handicraft* (exhibition catalogue), Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, Cheltenham Glos 1986, introductory essay by Fiona McCarthy, n p.

13 *ibid.*

14 Annette Carruthers, *Ashbee to Wilson*, (exhibition catalogue), Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, Cheltenham Glos

UK, 1986, p. 11.

15 Crawford *et al*, *op cit* Section D, n p. The V&A Museum bought the plaque (D56) in 1906 for £8/10/0.

16 Crawford *et al*, *op cit* Section A, n p.

17 See n 12.

18 John Culme, *The Directory of Gold and Silversmiths, Jewellers and Allied Traders, 1834-1914*, Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge 1987, vol 1 p 199, vol 2 p 329.

19 Carruthers, *op cit* pp 11, 27.

20 Mark's annotation on the reverse of the faded photograph of the teapot notes that it was made for an Austrian patron in 1910.

This is part of the Mark Archive, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, of documents and photographs relating to the work and life of William Mark, presented in 1998 by Barbara Davies on behalf of Nancy Mark, William Mark's daughter-in-law and wife of Robert, his eldest son.

21 Crawford *et al*, *op cit* Section G, n p.

22 Annette Carruthers & Frank Johnson, *The Guild of Handicraft 1888-1988*, Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, Cheltenham Glos, 1988, n.p.

23 Culme, *op cit*, vol 2 p 329.

24 See n. 4

25 Mark Archive, Powerhouse

Museum, Sydney.

26 Information kindly provided by Carole Van Den Bosch.

27 See n 4.

28 See n 21.

29 Mark Archive, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.

30 Anglican Church of Australia Archive.

31 Holden *op cit*, pp 18, 19.

32 *ibid.*

33 *ibid.*

34 O'Callaghan, *op. cit.* pp 24, 44.

35 Mark Archive, hand-written description on photograph c. 1925.

36 The Book of Gold was inscribed and illuminated by Mrs E.J. Dann, Newcastle.

37 *Newcastle Cathedral, the Warriors' Chapel - Its History and Meaning. Introduction by Dean Honac Crotty, Davies & Cunningham Ltd, Newcastle 1924.*

38 *The Argus* 28 March 1924, p 13.

39 Anglican Church of Australia Archive.

40 Information kindly provided by Mrs Barbara Davies, niece of Mrs Nancy Mark.

41 Loan receipt, Mark Archive, Powerhouse Museum.

42 William & Dorothy Hall, 'Collecting bargain silver' *Collectables Trader*, December 2003, p.9.



## TULLOCHS AUCTIONS

### The Private Collection from the Estate of the Late Mrs Toni Bessant

For some 30 years, Toni and Peter Bessant could be found in the front row of every major auction held in Tasmania. With a passion for the colonial, and knowledge born from experience, this well known couple discreetly built a collection that it is now our privilege to offer in our first major auction of 2008.

This auction will include some 80 lots of colonial cedar furniture, musk and huon frames, lamps of the highest quality, rare decorative arts, colonial works of art, quality Georgian furniture, sterling silver and further items of interest to serious collectors.

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**Starting at 11am**

**at our Launceston Auction Centre**

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# The 'David Collins' box and miniature portrait: a note

Lesley Garrett

Roger and Carmela Arturi-Phillips are internationally renowned experts on miniatures, based in both the United Kingdom and Melbourne. In 2003 the W.R. Johnston Trustees appointed them as Portrait Miniature Advisers to the Johnston Collection. They were instrumental in donating a miniature by Richard Cosway to the collection, all of which can be viewed by appointment at 'Fairhall' in East Melbourne.

Their work on the collection resulted in the publication of a book, *A Thing Apart*, which describes selected miniatures from the Johnston Collection in great detail. In the last days of her life, Caressa had great pleasure in listening to this book being read aloud to her and looking at the reproduced miniatures.

Caressa asked me to contact Carmela and Roger Arturi-Phillips to obtain an opinion as to the age and subject of the 'Collins' miniature as well as its frame. The Simpson family kindly allowed the miniature to be photographed and these images were forwarded to the Arturi-Phillips in Melbourne. Their response is recorded in two emails part of which are quoted below.

Thank you for your email and the images of this fascinating story! We can tell you straight away that it cannot be the David Collins that is supposed, as he died 1810 (born 1756) and this miniature (which we have no doubt is a genuine miniature) is of a very young gentleman – probably aged around 20/early 20s – and is painted around 1815, give a year here or there.

Caressa Crouch worked hard and with difficulty on her article about 'The 'David Collins' box and miniature portrait' published in the August 2007 of *Australiana*, as her life was drawing to a close.

We went to print before additional information, which she was investigating at the time of her death, became available. It is timely and appropriate to make it available now to readers of *Australiana* as a note to her article.

The frame may not be a contemporary frame – one would need to see the article in person to assess fit, manufacture etc. It is also possible that the 'C' has been added to existing plaited hair, which may or may not be original to the painting. Unless the sitter is titled, it is more usual to have the person's full initials used. There is more than a passing resemblance to the work of the artist Frederick Buck (who lived and worked in Cork). As it happens, all of this is, in our opinion, irrelevant, as the age of the painting and the lifespan of your David Collins do not match. Incidentally, there is a write up and an image of David Collins on Wikipedia that you might want to look up! We hope this solves your mystery. With best wishes, Roger and Carmela.

And, secondly:

... We are surprised that an auction house would accept a story



The 'Collins' miniature, which Roger and Carmela Arturi-Phillips date c. 1815. David Collins died, aged 54, in 1810

surrounding such a portrait with no proof of provenance, and nothing to link it with David Collins other than a 'C'!!!!...

Both of these emails were sent on 6 December, the day before Caressa died and by that stage she was too ill to read them. However she would surely have been more than interested in this additional expert opinion on the subject of her article.

# James MacNally and the blotting paper school of landscape



1. 1904 photograph of (left to right): critic William Moore, James MacNally and artist Charles Nuttall. This image was reproduced in a 1930s issue of *B.P. Magazine*. Author's collection

During the early decades of the twentieth century, watercolour painting became increasingly popular with Australian male artists. Perhaps inspired by the work of J.J. Hilder and Blamire Young, many artists took up the medium which had once been the domain of natural history painters. One artist who personifies this trend was Matthew James MacNally (1873–1943).<sup>1</sup> Despite being a respected painter during the interwar years, his contribution to Australian art has been largely forgotten since his death. We will try to redress this neglect by discovering more about James MacNally's life and career, and examine his little known contribution to art criticism.

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## Silas Clifford-Smith

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James MacNally was born in the north-east Victorian town of Benalla on 5 July 1873.<sup>2</sup> The Benalla district of his youth was then the late life hunting ground of legendary bushranger Ned Kelly. While Kelly and his gang were establishing their reputations, James MacNally's Irish-born parents were already well

established Benalla shopkeepers.<sup>3</sup> James was an only child so his parents were able to pay for his education, firstly at Benalla College, and subsequently at St Patrick's College in Melbourne.

As a youth, MacNally wanted to be an architect, but due to failed family speculations he was forced into an insurance career in Melbourne. Several years later, in the mid-1890s, he moved to Sydney and became captivated with the world of art while continuing to

work as a clerk. In Sydney he took drawing lessons with artists Hal Waugh and Hal Thorpe, and through them became friendly with several other painters, including Tom Roberts, who became an intermittent but lifelong friend. After being dismissed from his clerical post, MacNally returned to Melbourne in 1899 and enrolled in the National Gallery of Victoria's School of Design. He worked under Frederick McCubbin for a year, but the discipline

of drawing from plaster casts was irksome. He later studied watercolour and printmaking with John Mather and etching with John Shirlow.<sup>4</sup> MacNally's tentative etchings from this time are his earliest known surviving images.

Family financial pressures again forced MacNally to abandon his art and return to commerce. Turning his back on insurance, he began working for a butter exporting business. He found financial success in this venture, and soon purchased a studio apartment on the top floor of Oxford Chambers in Bourke Street, right at the heart of the fashionable Melbourne quarter known as 'The Block'. A very sociable man, MacNally began to mix with many of Victoria's prominent artists, musicians, critics and connoisseurs.

Despite his time-consuming business commitments, MacNally became increasingly dedicated to watercolour, often painting around Malmsbury (95 km north-west of Melbourne), and in 1908 he submitted several works to the Victorian Artists' Society annual exhibition. He established a 'Thursday' sketch club with a dozen or so artist friends. When the weather was fine, the group (which included George Courtney Benson, Percy Lindsay and Ambrose Paterson) drove to the picturesque sketching spots around Melbourne when they were not working in MacNally's city studio.<sup>5</sup>

MacNally's involvement with the Melbourne art scene was curtailed for several years when his employer relocated him to England for extensive periods. In England, MacNally continued to experiment with his art and enrolled at the Herkomer Art School in Hertfordshire. Although mostly taught by the school's art tutors, MacNally later acknowledged that the five-minute watercolour lesson he received from Sir Hubert Herkomer RA was the most valuable lesson he ever had in his life.<sup>6</sup> MacNally claimed that while in England he became a member of the prestigious Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours. While this may indeed be true, the Royal Institute



has found no lasting evidence of his membership in their archives.<sup>7</sup>

As war clouds formed over Europe, MacNally returned to Melbourne, but soon retired from the world of butter when his business was requisitioned by the government. MacNally's wartime works were mainly pastoral panoramas dominated by large rain-filled skies that showed the influence of J.J. Hilder. As well as his watercolours, MacNally experimented in oil and revisited the art of printmaking. He also began to exhibit his work regularly with the

2 Hal Gye, caricature of M.J. MacNally, from *The Bulletin*, 1928. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

Melbourne art dealer W.H. Gill at his Fine Art Gallery.

Dame Nellie Melba became friendly with MacNally, and in her circle he mixed with important art-loving establishment figures, such as Sir Baldwin Spencer and the wartime Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro-



3 Matthew James MacNally (1873–1943),  
*The Quarry*, watercolour.  
Private collection,  
courtesy Bridget McDonnell Gallery

Ferguson. The Governor-General became a good friend of MacNally and during his time in Australia was a frequent visitor to his studio. Leon Gellert (a co-editor of *Art in Australia*) later revealed that MacNally's Melbourne studio 'was open house to the local intelligentsia, and the first call for brother artists from neighbouring States'.<sup>8</sup>

During the final years of the war, MacNally joined two professional art groups, the Melbourne-based Australian Art Association<sup>9</sup> and the all-male, Sydney-based Australian Arts Club.<sup>10</sup> Both organisations had small select memberships, which included some of the most influential artists in the country. MacNally's friendly nature, art knowledge and powerful friends soon saw him appointed, in 1918, as the Victorian representative on the Commonwealth Art Advisory Board<sup>11</sup>

That same year, MacNally gained national attention with an illustrated profile in *Art in Australia*.<sup>12</sup> Written by the

Harry Julius, in the eulogistic style associated with the magazine, the article tells of MacNally's harsh editing of his own work, especially in the early years of his career when he often destroyed his work. The lack of early examples of his painting – especially his European period work – certainly raises doubt to the artist's claim that he was a member of the prestigious Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours when he was living in England before the war.

Several commentators recognised MacNally as a man who helped and encouraged emerging artists such as the Ballarat-born painter Harold Herbert. MacNally had noticed the skill of this watercolourist and helped him get attention on the Melbourne art scene. This mentorship led to the pair holding three joint exhibitions of their work in Sydney and Melbourne during the early 1920s. These shows were popular, especially after the publication of a MacNally and Herbert joint special edition of *Art in Australia* in 1920, a significant compliment for two early career artists.<sup>13</sup>

The period from the end of the war to the mid-1930s was arguably the

busiest exhibiting period in MacNally's art career and during that time he held over a dozen one-man shows in the eastern state capitals. The popularity of his heavy wash watercolours reflected the public interest in the medium in the early interwar period. This artistic style was not appreciated by all; George Lambert on his return to Australia in 1921 cuttingly described the Australian watercolourists as being of the blotting paper school of Australian painting.<sup>14</sup>

Despite Lambert's criticisms, the new interest in watercolour painting led to the establishment of the Australian Watercolour Institute (AWI) in 1923<sup>15</sup> The first AWI exhibition in Sydney in March 1924 was a triumph, both for the AWI and MacNally. One reviewer wrote that 'Mr J. MacNally is the outstanding figure among the artists who are exhibiting under the banner of the newly formed Australian Watercolour Institute at Anthony Horderns'.<sup>16</sup> Another critic recorded that 'the most brilliant work in the collection is "Twickenham Ferry", by T. McNally [sic], a spontaneous impression, well composed'.<sup>17</sup>

During the 1920s and 30s almost all of the Melbourne newspapers employed well-known artists to comment on the goings on in the local art world, so it was hardly surprising that *The Age* engaged MacNally as their principal critic from 1924 to 1926. MacNally took easily to journalism and his art writing and book reviews soon became a regular feature of the paper.

While working on *The Age*, MacNally – now aged in his early fifties – met the journalist and poet Margaret (Rita) McLeod, eighteen years his junior; the couple married on 19 March 1925.<sup>18</sup>The following year Mr and Mrs MacNally left Victoria for a new life in Sydney with their new son William. Initially settling in the Pittwater area, MacNally began to paint the northern beaches area of Sydney.

Although most states had one dominant art society, Sydney had two. The choice for MacNally was joining the Society of Artists (now led by

Sydney Ure Smith) or joining the more conservative Royal Art Society. Despite his association with Ure Smith, MacNally was no Modernist and therefore joined the Royal Art Society.

MacNally had several addresses in Sydney but by 1928 he was living in Cronulla, a beachside suburb on the southern fringes of the city. The couple's home, *Lynn Cottage* in Arthur Avenue, Cronulla, became a destination for artists and writers.

MacNally became the *Daily Telegraph* art reviewer after moving to Sydney. Along with his exhibition reviews, he wrote profiles on established traditional artists such as Lister, Heysen and Lionel Lindsay. While these articles were not ground-breaking, his observations on mild Modernists are sometimes revealing. After leaving the *Daily Telegraph* in 1927, MacNally wrote little during the late 1920s and early 30s apart from the occasional journal article and review in the Sydney *Sun* newspaper.

During the early thirties MacNally became friendly with W.H. Ifould OBE, then director of the Mitchell Library and an important trustee of the NSW Art Gallery. Through Ifould, MacNally received a large commission to paint many of the historic buildings in the 'Macquarie Towns' west of Sydney. For the project the MacNallys relocated to historic *Claremont House* (Claremont Cottage, c. 1822) at Windsor. This early colonial home was his base as he travelled to heritage properties in the district.

Many of these architectural-themed works were included in a 1931 show at the Macquarie Galleries, while others were exhibited later at the Mitchell Library. Through this commission, MacNally became increasingly known as a painter of historical buildings and he painted many grand Sydney houses during the Depression years.

Late in 1935 the MacNallys decided to relocate to Adelaide. Rita explained the move in a letter to a family friend:

I received a good offer to go back to journalism from the Adelaide "Mail", the paper I was on before

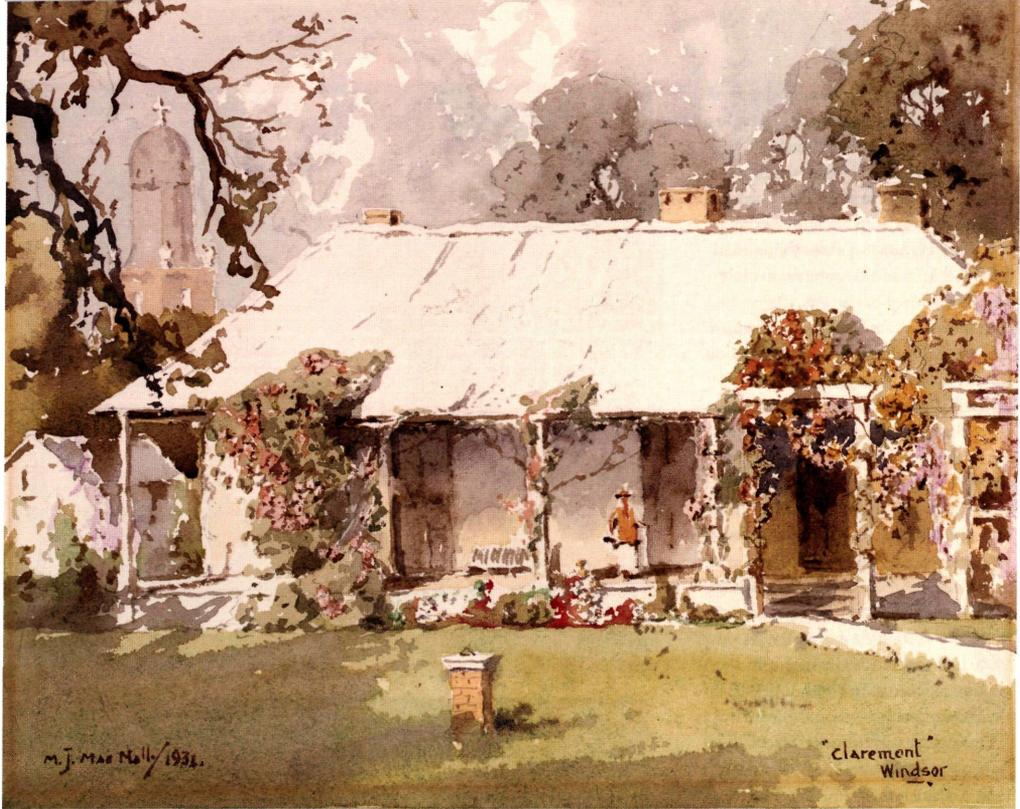


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4 Matthew James MacNally (1873–1943), *Heber Church, Cobbity*, signed and dated October 1931, watercolour. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

5 Matthew James MacNally (1873–1943), *Lennox Bridge, Parramatta*, 1932, watercolour, signed and dated. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. Several artists, including the early 20th century watercolourist J.J. Hilder, painted this historic bridge



6 Matthew James MacNally (1873–1943), “Claremont, Windsor”, 193[4], watercolour, signed and dated. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. In the background of MacNally’s home during the early 1930s can be seen the tower of St Matthews’ Anglican Church designed by Francis Greenway

the Melbourne “Age”, & I decided to accept it. Matt has got tired of the country & he has an opportunity of taking up the journalistic work he did on “The Age” when we go to Adelaide. He will do something for one of the papers there & start art classes. We like Adelaide very much. Claremont is a lovely place but too big for us – it’s like living in Buckingham Palace with one page boy!<sup>19</sup>

MacNally soon connected with the Adelaide art community by joining the Royal South Australian Society of Arts. Despite regularly exhibiting with the Australian Watercolour Institute, he rarely did so interstate after moving to South Australia. As planned, MacNally, after his move to South Australia, became the principal art writer on the Adelaide *News* and *Mail*.

In 1938 the New York-based Carnegie Corporation made a grant to the National Gallery of South Australia to assist in the establishment of extension services.<sup>20</sup> MacNally became a ‘Carnegie Lecturer’ at the gallery and gave talks on art appreciation from 1938 until the early 1940s. Titles for MacNally’s lectures included: ‘What is Art?’, ‘Australian landscape’; and the intriguing ‘Psycho-Analysis: What effect has it had on Modern Art?’

One of the few living artists who knew MacNally is Jeffrey Smart.<sup>21</sup> MacNally

reviewed the Adelaide-born painter in the early 1940s. In a recent interview, Smart mentioned MacNally’s review:

Yes he gave a favourable review at one of my early shows. That was at the Royal South Australian Society of Arts. He wasn’t a very perceptive person really. He was what you might call one of the gentleman artists. He was always dressed in tweeds, well dressed and had a great air about him.<sup>22</sup>

Smart fondly remembers the comic side of MacNally’s personality when he was lecturing at the Adelaide gallery:

He was rather amusing. One time he was lecturing a group of us and Louis McCubbin walked passed, and MacNally stopped and his eyes bulged and his finger came out and he followed Mr McCubbin



and he said [in a throaty voice], “there is the director of the gallery, look!” Poor Louis McCubbin felt terribly embarrassed.<sup>23</sup>

MacNally rarely exhibited in Adelaide during his final years, the exception being at Preece’s Gallery in 1938 and at the Royal South Australian Society of Arts rooms in 1942. After a long illness the 70-year-old artist died at his Mount Lofty home on Thursday 24 September 1943. Although the Adelaide press noted his death, interstate papers largely ignored his passing.<sup>24</sup>

During his career he had painted in Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and overseas. His works were mainly landscapes or house paintings, but reflecting his sporting interests included the occasional image of golfers, boxers and fly fishermen.

Since his death there have been two major exhibitions of his work, one at John Martin’s Art Gallery in Adelaide (1946) and a retrospective at the Benalla Art Gallery (1974). MacNally’s work is included in most state galleries, large libraries and several regional galleries, but, as watercolour is a light sensitive medium, his images are rarely on view.<sup>25</sup>

Although MacNally became an artist relatively late in life, he approached his new profession like he had his business career. Through a combination of hard work, talent and adept social networking he soon became a leading member of the art world during the interwar boom in Australian art. Although he did experiment with oil and printmaking, his reputation is based mainly on his skill with watercolour, and after the medium became less fashionable in the late 1930s, so did his reputation.

7 Matthew James MacNally (1873–1943), *Windsor*, May 1931, watercolour, signed and dated. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

While MacNally is best known as a painter, his little known writings may be his lasting legacy. While rarely an insightful art critic, his articles and letters reveal much about the friendships and conflicts in the Australian art world during the interwar period and deserve further study.

*Postscript: Silas Clifford-Smith is currently compiling a bibliography of MacNally’s writings. This will certainly help researchers and art historians discover more about MacNally and the Australian art scene during the interwar years.*



9 Matthew James MacNally (1873–1943), *untitled landscape*, (indistinct date c1930s), watercolour, signed and dated. Private collection

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to Jeffrey Smart for passing on his early memories of James MacNally. Thanks also to George Large, Ron Radford, Barry Pearce and Dr Catriona Moore.

Based in Sydney, **Silas Clifford-Smith** has a keen interest in garden history and landscape art, and is currently writing a book on the Australian artist Percy Lindsay.

## NOTES

- 1 Known as James MacNally, the artist mostly signed his work 'M.J. MacNally', although he sometimes signed his work with the shorter prefix 'Mc' during his early career. He was nicknamed 'Mac' by many of his close friends, while his wife called him 'Matt'.
- 2 Several listings wrongly give his birth as 1874 or 1875. The correct 1873 birth date is sourced from Victorian BDM records. The confusion over his birth date led to his centenary retrospective being opened on his 101st birthday (an error discovered just prior to the opening).
- 3 The artist's Irish-born parents were Matthew and Mary MacNally (née Noonan).
- 4 Bertram Stevens, 'M.J. MacNally', *The Watercolours of M.J. MacNally and Harold Herbert*, Art in Australia, Sydney, 1920 (unpaginated).
- 5 'M.J. MacNally a personality of Melbourne', *The Triad*, 11 April 1921, p 39.
- 6 M.J. MacNally, 'Some teachers of art and a critic', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 April 1927, p 19.
- 7 Information kindly supplied by the Royal Institute's archivist, George Large (letter dated 13 August 2007).
- 8 Leon Gellert, 'Just a couple of old-timers', *Sunday Telegraph*, 27 November 1966, p 83.
- 9 The Australian Art Association was established in 1912 and lasted until 1933.

- MacNally joined the group in either 1917 or 1918 and maintained membership until the early 1930s. Membership was restricted to professional artists. As the group exhibited only in Melbourne, the majority of members were from Victoria, although there were several NSW members.
- 10 This – all male – group grew out of the Sydney Sketch Club, but by the end of the war became known as the Australian Arts Club (AAC). Membership was chiefly Sydney based but there were some interstate members. The AAC had only three exhibitions (Melbourne 1918 & 1920, and Sydney 1919). The demise of the AAC after its 1920 Melbourne show suggests that its leader and driving force Sydney Ure Smith lost interest in the small group when he became President of the larger Society of Arts.
  - 11 The Commonwealth Art Advisory Board (1912–72) was a precursor of the current Australia Council. MacNally was a member of the CAAB until the mid 1920s
  - 12 Harry Julius, 'M.J. MacNally', *Art in Australia*, Sydney, Fifth Number, 1918 (unpaginated).
  - 13 *The Watercolours of M. J. MacNally and Harold Herbert*, Art in Australia, Sydney, 1920.
  - 14 'Our Art: Corot and blotting-paper – Lambert's criticism', (Sydney) *Sun*, 30 June 1921, p 4.
  - 15 MacNally became a member of the Australian Water-Colour Institute in 1923 and maintained membership until c. 1941.
  - 16 'Watercolour Institute – First Exhibition', *Sunday Times* (Sydney), 23 March 1924.
  - 17 William Moore, 'Watercolours – Institute's first exhibition', *Daily Telegraph*, 25 March 1924.
  - 18 Rita MacLeod was born in New Zealand in 1891. She spent her early years in Queensland, and in her mid twenties she became a published poet.
  - 19 Letter from Rita MacNally to Arthur Wigram Allen dated 10 December 1935, Mitchell Library, ML MSS 6434.
  - 20 R.G. Appleyard, 'History of the Gallery', from *Art Gallery of South Australia 1881–1981*, Adelaide, p 49.
  - 21 Jeffrey Smart was born in Adelaide in 1921. He knew MacNally when he was aged in his early 20s.
  - 22 Notes of telephone interview between Jeffrey Smart and Silas Clifford-Smith, 25 September 2007.

# A suggested history of Tasmanian Aboriginal

KANGAROO SKIN OR SINEW, HUMAN BONE OR SKIN, SHELL,  
FEATHER, APPLE SEED AND WOMBAT CLAW NECKLACES

Indigenous Tasmanians are famous for necklaces strung with tiny, lustrous shells. John Hawkins reviews their history, and proposes a new theory that Tasmanian Aborigines created these necklaces as a result of being given strings of glass beads at Adventure Bay by James Cook in 1777.

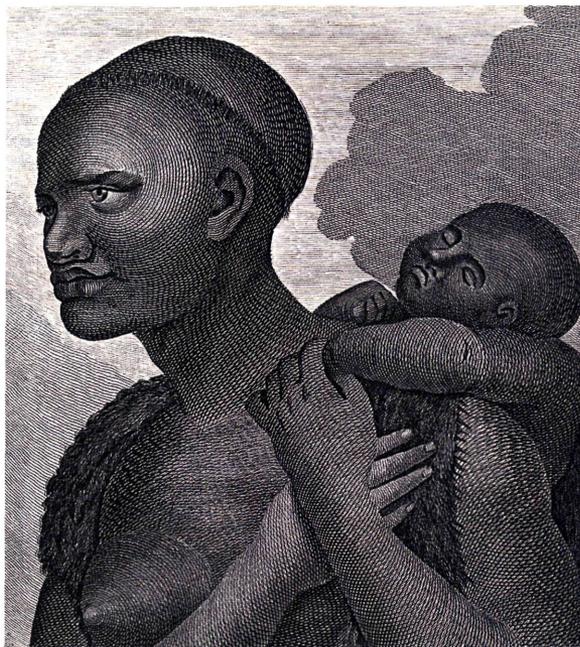
John Hawkins

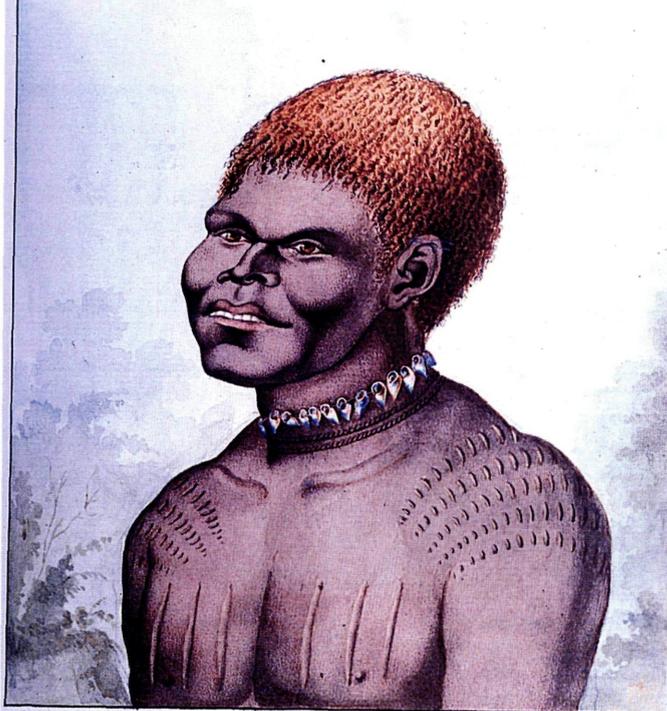
Tasmania, through its original Aboriginal population and their descendants, has a tradition of necklace production, a tradition that I suggest in part stems from Captain Cook's distribution of glass bead necklaces at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island in 1777,<sup>1</sup> a moment captured by an unknown, contemporary artist.<sup>2</sup> Cook notes, 'Some of the group wore loose round their necks three or four folds of small cord, made of the fur of some animal; and others of them had a narrow slip of kangaroo skin tied round their ancles [sic].'<sup>3</sup> In his Journal of 28

January 1777, Cook observes that the Bruny Island men were 'quite naked and wore no ornaments except large punctures or ridges raised on the skin.'<sup>4</sup> Cook states that some of the women 'had all the upper part of the head shaven close, leaving a circle of hair all round' (plate 1).

From the few descriptions or depictions of Tasmanian Aborigines taken at the point of European contact and published in the voyage records of Furneaux (1773), Cook (1777), Bligh (1788 & 1792), Bass & Flinders (1798-99), Bruny D'Entrecasteaux (1793) and Baudin (1802), only one artist depicted a Tasmanian Aboriginal wearing a necklace. This portrait, drawn by Baudin's artist

Plate 1. A woman of New Holland, engraving taken from a pencil drawing, signed J. Webber, 1777. 'But in this they differed from the men, that though their hair was one of the same colour and texture, some of them had their heads completely shorn or shaved; in others this operation had been performed only on one side, while the rest of them had all the upper part of the head shorn close, leaving a circle of hair all round ... The head as is the custom with some Fryers (Friars)' Cook, *Journals* III, 1967, p. 55, 29 Jan 1777. This is the first representation by a European of a Tasmanian woman with shaved hair, presumably by flint or singed by fire to leave a decorative circle just above the ears. Webber's two known pencil drawings of individual men shows them bearded, with unshaven hair and no necklaces. Captain Cook gave the natives 'a string of Beads and a Medal which I thought they received with some satisfaction.' Original print, J B Hawkins Antiques





*Von pohl*

Plate 1B. Petit's original watercolour at Le Havre, 20019.2. This was produced for the engraver from a pencil drawing (20019.1) Bara-Orou is shown wearing a *Phasianella* (whelk) shell necklace, so tightly fitted around the neck that it must be knotted at the rear, hence not easily removed and with its pointed ends most uncomfortable. It may be that only larger shells such as these could be pierced until the arrival of European glass or metal to facilitate the smooth interior boring of smaller shells. If not smooth they will cut through plaited thymi thread. He also wears a traditional kangaroo sinew/skin plaited necklace. Péron makes no mention of a necklace in his text but it is shown in the finished watercolour (Le Havre 20019.2).

Nicolas Petit in 1802, shows a male, though there is no evidence of a beard but his hair is ochered, the Maria Island Aborigine, Bara-Orou (plate 1B). Around his neck he wears a single string, large whelk shell necklace and, below, a plaited two-strand necklace of an unknown material but probably kangaroo skin or tail sinew.

I suggest that it is possible to trace an evolution of necklace placement on the body between the visits of Cook (1777) and Baudin (1802).

The French Government sent an expedition to Australia and the South Pacific in 1791 to search for the missing French explorer La Pérouse, while undertaking an extensive program of scientific work. Bruny D'Entrecasteaux led the expedition, and various

expedition members made individual statements regarding their time spent in the southeast of Tasmania, between Bruny Island and the Mainland, during January and February 1793.<sup>5</sup>

D'Entrecasteaux's captain on the *Recherche*, Alexandre D'Auribeau, relates that 'one of the men ... presented me [with] a long strip of kangaroo skin which he wore as a belt around his loins. This strip is so skilfully cut that there are no noticeable curves in its entire length which is sixteen feet.<sup>6</sup> I was a few paces from the shore and there set up the little store of objects intended for them. The bracelets and necklets of glass beads pleased them greatly, but they preferred to wear them around their head.'<sup>7</sup>

The expedition's botanist Jacques-Julien Labillardière reports<sup>8</sup>

One of them had the generosity to give me some small whelks perforat near the middle and strung on a cord: this ornament, which he called a 'canlaride' was the only one that he possessed; he wore it round his head: a handkerchief replaced this present, and gratified the wishes of the savage, who advanced that I might bind it round his head ... the women, even, where in general entirely naked, like the men; some of them only had their shoulders and part of their back covered with a kangaroo's skin, the hair of which was next to the flesh ... another had for her whole clothing, a strip of kangaroo's skin, half a decimetre in breadth, which was rolled six or seven times round her middle; another wore a collar of skin; some of the rest had their heads bound with several turns of a rather small cord. I afterwards discovered that these cords were mostly made with the bark of a shrub of the family thymi.<sup>9</sup>

A further account is given by Du Portail, a junior officer on the *Expédition*, who kept a journal:

Before we gave them glasses, medals etc they had an idea of finery, for besides tattooing the body and the layer of crushed charcoal with which they dirty their face, some of them had around their head strips of kangaroo skin and chaplets of 'Cantharides' (shells). The women had no ornaments and except for one whose face had a light colouring of red there was no evidence among them that art had been summoned to aid nature.

In a later letter, to his possible fiancée or girlfriend, he slightly expands on this statement<sup>10</sup>

...however some of them wore round their heads a little garland of those shells called 'Cantharides' ... when at their previous meetings we had offered the women some necklaces and other

adornments they adorned their children with them and had no wish at all to keep anything for themselves. <sup>11</sup>

The vocabularies compiled by these Frenchmen<sup>12</sup> refer only to a 'wreath of shells' (this being a translation from the French 'couronne de coquillages') as a 'canlaride' [Labillardière] or 'cantharides' [Du Portail] in the Tasmanian language - the spellings written as heard.

Between the arrival of Cook in 1777 and D'Entrecasteaux 15 years later, I suggest that the concept of wearing a necklace around the neck had not been taken up within the Aboriginal coastal community, but that Cook's 'circle of hair' cut into a woman's head had translated to a wreath of shells on a man's head, possibly as a result of European influence.

Women, being both carriers of children on their backs and providers of food obtained by sea diving, were surely prevented from wearing such decorative items; as a result, their hair was still being shaved in the traditional way as delineated by Piron, the expedition artist, in a drawing detail (partially lost by the engraver) of a similar view in Labillardière's published account (plate 1A). <sup>13</sup>

Nine years later on, between 13 January and 27 February 1802, the Baudin expedition successfully explored the southern part of the east coast of Tasmania. Baudin's journal<sup>14</sup> relates the following regarding necklaces, gifts and trinkets.

### 13 January 1802

When Mr. Freycinet left, I gave him mirrors, glass beads, snuff-boxes, hatchets, knives, etc., etc., etc., and recommended him to be sparing and impartial in any distributions of them that he might make.... As soon as they came up, Mr. Leschenault took them by the hand, embraced them and gave them some presents.... Sometimes they talked amongst themselves, sometimes they sang. One of them was wearing a necklace of fairly well-polished shells which he gave to him ... Most of the things that we carried appeared to attract them greatly, and they would

Plate 1A. Two details of women's hair taken from a photograph of a published Piron drawing, 'The Aboriginals at Black Swan Lagoon', drawn 10 February 1793. Note the shaved ring of hair and no necklace, for with a child on her shoulders any female would vouch for its impracticality. The original drawing is in the Musée de l'Homme, Paris



have been very pleased by our giving them our clothes. These men were naked from head to foot ... A second group of six or seven natives passed us. They, also, had been communicating with the men left in charge of the boats and were returning with their presents, which they carried hanging around their necks. One had a jacket given him by a sailor, another a piece of flag, etc., etc. Amongst this last group, two were remarkable for the elegance of their dress. One wore the skin of a kangaroo, or some other animal, which covered his shoulders and his chest right down to his navel. On his head he appeared to be wearing a sort of wig-shaped cap which, for a long time, we thought to be made of seaweed. Upon examining it more closely, however, we realised that it was his own hair. Divided into small strips about 3/4" wide and 1" long, and smoothed down with grease and reddish-brown dirt, it formed a skull-cap over his head. And every movement he made caused it to shake in a different way. The other native, who was quite naked, simply had his head shaved and wore a long strip of hair wound round it...

### 15 January 1802

...the natives, all told, numbered more than fifty. A great fire was lit, and upon their all collecting around it, they were asked to sit down. This they did immediately, and excellent relations continued between them and the oarsmen. Our artist took advantage of this occasion to draw

several of the natives...but he did not manage to obtain any drawings of the women and children, for they could not stay still for more than a moment. The men were more docile, however, and he succeeded easily in capturing their expressions ... One of our sailors exchanged his jacket for a kangaroo-skin. The native tied it around his neck and went off a little way. His principal concern was to remove all the buttons, and then he abandoned the jacket...Of these, they all appear to be very fond.

Citizen Bonnefoi gave a woman a small mirror in return for her necklace. The locket on it consisted of an English penny and a metal button, but nobody could discover when she had acquired them...With everyone sitting down again, they turned their attention to pockets and the metal buttons on some of the men's waistcoats. Several did not ask before searching through them for things they might fancy, while others indicated by unambiguous signs how pleased they would be to own the buttons. Some were cut off and distributed amongst them to their great satisfaction...'

### 30 January 1802

I had provided myself with a few presents, so I held up some necklaces of sparkling beads, which drew their attention. One of them signalled me to give them to him, but I made a sign to him ... Captain Hamelin wanted to exchange something for one of their spears. He proposed the deal by signs that were well understood,

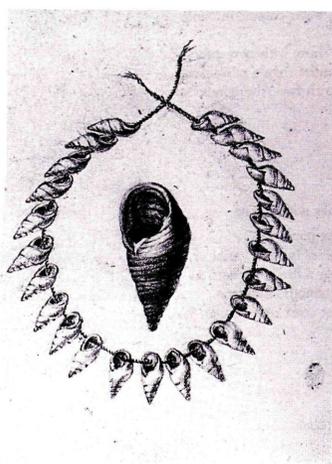
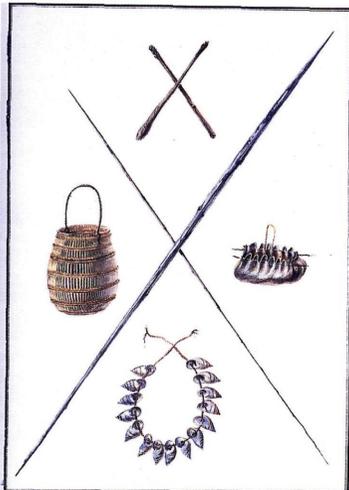
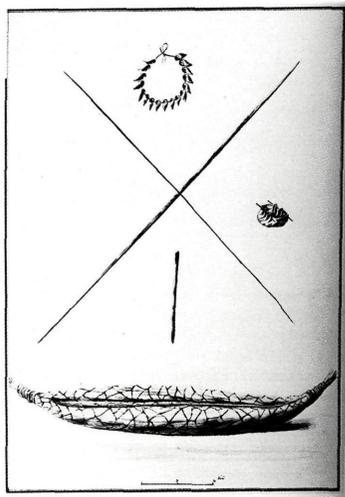


Plate 1C. Close inspection of the surviving material by Leseur<sup>15</sup> gives four possible illustrations of one shell necklace/headband – or are they two different necklaces/headbands? One has 15 shells, the other 24 providing for two illustrations for each. The tying material would appear to be Thymi and not sinew or skin.

Top left: The original pencil drawing  
Top right: The engraved Collier de Coquillages with 24 shells derived from the pencil drawing

Below left: The pencil drawing with knotted 15 shell necklace

Below right: The original watercolour with a 15 shell necklace but the knot undone



Left: Plate 1D. Engraving of Grou-Agara, after a pencil and ink sketch by Petit, which I suggest was done on the spot (Le Havre 2008.2). The shaven head with a ring of hair indicates a more practical and permanent form of hair decoration than a shell 'couronne de coquillages.' The small number of contemporary illustrations show men ochred their hair or cut to a band, while women also cut their hair to a band, but wear no ochre

and it was agreed that they would hand over a spear in return for a uniform button. The agreement concluded, one of them went and fetched the weapon and relinquished it upon receiving the settled price... The negotiations finished, the natives stood off a little from us, as if afraid that we might use against them the arms that they had just sold us. However, upon seeing that we were heading back to our boats, they followed us again. Citizen Petit, who had done a drawing of one of them, had the paper snatched away from him, but being as alert as the one who had taken it, he snatched it back again and we continued towards the shore...

*Particular Remarks concerning our sojourn in D'Entrecasteaux Channel in the southern part of Van Diemen's Land and our stay at Maria Island*

...Although we saw some with their shoulders and chest covered by a kangaroo skin, the men are more generally naked. However, women that we saw wore skins. These seem to be intended principally to form a sort of bag, in which they place what they are given or what they gather when out walking ... Of the various objects that we distributed amongst them, glass beads, smallwares etc., the buttons off our clothes appeared to give them most pleasure ... Later on, the jackets were found. The buttons, which were blackened bone and not metal, had disappeared...

I presented one of them with a small mirror, but it did not produce the



S. Petit del.

J. Robert sculp.

B. Rogee sculp.



2



3



4

effect that I expected for after looking at herself for a moment, she handed [it] on to another who made no use of it at all. These beauties, as well as the men, had their faces variously smeared, either with ground charcoal or with a type of dark red ochre. They painted in the same way several of the scientists, who good-naturedly tolerated this whim of theirs. The ceremony greatly amused the spectators and brought loud bursts of laughter from the natives...

*Concerning Maria Island and the bay known as Marion Bay*

...On the first day of our going ashore we communicated with the natives of the island. There were twenty-three of them: men, women and children...The natives appeared much stronger and more robust than those of D'Entrecasteaux Channel or Bruny Island. They are taller and better looking ...There is no doubt that they are the same peoples, as much by reason of their language as their customs ...(They) had the same desire for our bottles, glass-beads and buttons etc. However, they hesitated a long time before exchanging their spears ... The natives here did not seem to have been visited often by Europeans and, unlike the Bruny Islanders had no European objects in their possession ... [The European visitors would have been sealers who had been in Sydney since 1788, some 14 years] The people appear to have no knowledge of iron and its usefulness. They did not attach the slightest importance to the nails that

we wanted to give them and returned them to us as serving no purpose...

Baudin makes no mention of Bara-Orou or necklaces.

On 22 February 1802, Petit, Peron and a sailor Rouget went ashore at Maria Island, where they were met by a group of fourteen natives. Peron states: 'I set myself to studying them closely. Most of them were young men of around 16 to 25 years; two or three appeared to be of 30-35 years old. Just one, older than all of them, seemed to me to be from 50-55 years of age. He had a kangaroo skin over his shoulder; the others were completely naked.... Only one of them had his hair powdered with red ochre: he was a young man of 24 to 25 years named Bara-Orou.' Peron also makes no mention of him wearing a necklace.

Peron had made a special effort to comprehend the local language and produced a dictionary of 74 recorded words, compiled by Louis Freycinet. There is no Aboriginal word recorded for shell or necklace but, interestingly, there is a word for a glass bead.

Sheron continues: 'three men had been showered with gifts from us, mirrors, knives, glass beads, handkerchiefs, snuff boxes etc....we had indulged their every desire and whim without requiring anything in return for all or presents.'<sup>16</sup>

Right: Plate 5: Timmy wears both a kangaroo sinew and plaited jawbone necklace. The Oxford portrait inscription 'Timmy/Native of George's River'; and the additional notes are - 'jawbone - md to Jenny - about 19 native of Cape Portland - travelled with Mr Robinson'

From left to right:

Plates 2-9 are from a duplicate set of watercolours by Thomas Bock held in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. In Hobart, Bock painted the Aborigines who accompanied G.A. Robinson from Bruny Island on his expeditions of conciliation c. 1839. This set was painted for Sir John and Lady Franklin from Robinson's originals. These details show how necklaces were worn

Plate 2. Jenny wearing a feather or fur necklace, of which none are known to survive. The Oxford portrait is inscribed 'Jenny/Wife of Timmy/Native of Port Sorrell'; that in Captain A.W.F. Fuller's collection 'Jenny/Native of Port Sorrell/Van Diemen's Land', and also signed 'T. Bock delt.' The notes on the Oxford portrait are - 'about 20 - rather facetious and loquacious. no children. don't live very amicable.' As a female she wears no ochre in her hair

Plate 3. Woureddy wearing a kangaroo sinew necklace. The Oxford portrait is inscribed 'Woureddy/Native of Bruny Island', and that at the Royal Anthropological Institute 'Woureddy/Native of Bruny Island/Van Diemen's Land.' Painted c. December 1829

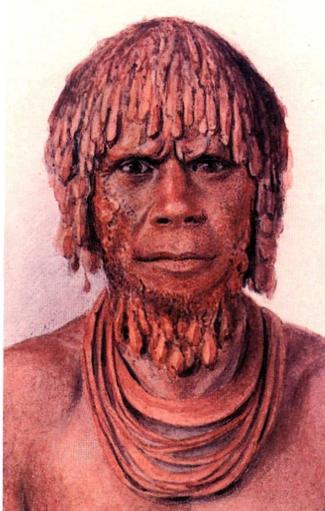
Plate 4: Truggernana [Trucanini] wearing a kangaroo sinew necklace. The Oxford portrait is inscribed 'Truggerana/Native of the southern part of Van Diemen's Land.' The portrait in the Tasmanian Museum has a similar inscription. The notes on the Oxford portrait read: 'Lalla Rookh. wife of Woureddi aged 27. partl. good. saved Mr R's life at Arthur river by pulling log/ 2 spars/ of wood across river on which Mr R. was.' This portrait by Thomas Bock is possibly c. 1829, the earliest known image of this iconic figure, wearing only a sinew necklace. Not with the additional shell necklace depicted in the Law plaster cast. As a female she wears no ochre in her hair

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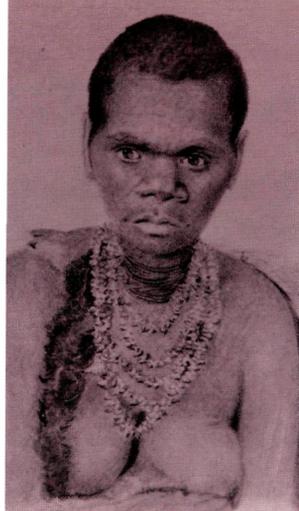




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Above left to right:

Plate 6. Larretong wearing a feather or fur necklace with bound breasts. The Oxford portrait is inscribed 'The Widow of a Chief and Native of Cape Grim' It notes 'dead about 3 years – mother of Adolphus, named Larretong. She never had any communication with Europeans till went to Flinders.' This and Plate 3 are the only Bock illustrations of Aborigines wearing feather or fur necklaces. The Oxford set of portraits is a copy for the Franklins of Robinson's original set; I suggest that Thomas Bock was unsure of the material and painted it more fur like than feathers. Painted c. 1832/3. She wears no ochre in her hair

Plate 7. Manalargenna. Four examples of this portrait are known. The Royal Anthropological Institute has two, one is signed 'T. BOCK' in capitals, and has associated with it a handwritten note, 'Mr Hobson of Hobart Town, gave me this drawing of Manalargenna on May 18th 1837. He told me that he had hunted with him often, and that this was a very good likeness. It was taken from life. The artist is a German.' The one at Oxford is inscribed 'Manalargenna/ A Chief of the Eastern Coast of Van Diemen's Land'; another in the Tasmanian Museum signed T Bock has a similar inscription. Notes on the Oxford portrait read 'dead – a powerful chieftain & considered a sage – sinews of kangaroo tail spun into cord around his neck.' This appears to be cut sinew of different thicknesses

Plate 8. Jack's wife/Fanny/Wortabowigee, wearing both a kangaroo sinew necklace (possibly plaited) and a many-stranded small shell necklace. The Oxford portrait is inscribed 'Jack's wife/Native of Port Dalrymple'; and the portrait in the Royal Anthropological Institute has 'Wortabowigee/Native of Port Dalrymple/Van Diemen's Land.' The Oxford portrait has the additional note 'Fanny aged 30 rather well disposed, but rather petulant.' The sinew necklace looks correct and natural, the shell necklace appears to have various sized shells in the stringing. In the bush, this necklace must have been difficult to wear and keep undamaged. It is the only shell necklace depicted in this series of Bock watercolour portraits. Port Dalrymple in the Tamar Estuary (present day Launceston) was in close contact with the sealers in the Bass Strait islands, which may account for her wearing a multi type shell necklace. As a female she wears no ochre in her hair

These interesting entries intimate that, as with Labillardière, it was a man who wore the necklace of polished shells. The original drawings and watercolours from the voyage survive in the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle at Le Havre.<sup>17</sup> The necklace around the neck of Bara-Orou, as shown in the published print, is taken from a drawing<sup>18</sup> and a finished watercolour<sup>19</sup> (plate 1B) by Petit. This necklace may have been added to the

portrait later, for it is likely that the necklace illustrated is that given to Leschenault, and was probably worn on the head of an unknown Aboriginal man as the fifteen-shell length which appears to be knotted at the end and this does not permit passing over the head. (plate 1C) In the watercolour (plate 1B), the subject is depicted as a hairless young man, yet Peron gives Bara-Orou an age of 24-25 years.

At this date, to make shell necklaces a proximity to the sea would have been a pre-requisite and the indigenous people who inhabited the islands of Maria or Bruny Island, off the South East coast of Tasmania, are the likely innovators of this tradition. Islander Aborigines gained their food from the sea by diving, and not fishing with a line or net.<sup>20</sup> Threading a necklace requires the use of a threading medium and, I suggest, due to the thickness of the threading material, thymi cord sinew or skin the Bara-Orou 'Collier de Coquillages'<sup>21</sup>, requires the use of a large shell.

I further suggest that the practice of wearing a shell necklace around the neck was a concept spread via sealers' women and inter-tribal visits, and by 1810 had become established in a limited way around the islands of Tasmania.

By 1810 female Aborigines were at even greater risk of kidnap and enslavement by European sealers, who then took them to the larger uninhabited sealing islands, such as Flinders and Cape Barren in the Furneaux Group<sup>22</sup> in Bass Strait<sup>23</sup>. The children of these unions were, I suggest, the conduit through which the concept of shell necklace making gained continuity. Through the sealers, the women would have gained access to cotton thread thus enabling the shell size used for necklace making to become smaller, as the threading medium became thinner,

stronger and more readily available.

G.A. Robinson was appointed by Governor Arthur to gather up the remainder of Tasmania's indigenous population and settle them on one of the islands in the Furneaux Group. This task Robinson accomplished and duly recorded in his detailed published diaries<sup>24</sup> between 1830 and 1834, and on Flinders Island between 1834 and 1839,<sup>25</sup> prior to leaving with some 15 Tasmanian Aborigines to become Protector of Aborigines at Port Phillip. References to the subject of necklaces in Robinson's diaries follow.

On 21 June 1830,<sup>26</sup> Robinson was on Robbins Island, off the North West coast, adjacent to the Van Diemen's Land Company grant at Woolnorth. Peopled by sealers with Aboriginal 'wives', the sealers' women 'presented me with several necklaces made of shells, and I in return gave them beads, pin cushions, buttons etc.' Here Robinson implies a distinction between beads and shells. Buttons without a needle and thread would be useless. Needles can also be kept in pin cushions, a possible reason for their inclusion in his gift.

On 12 August<sup>27</sup> Robinson was inland with Hellyer, the Van Diemen's Land Company surveyor, where the natives 'had strung on the sinews of the kangaroo for ornaments'. It would seem from this reference, that shells were not used inland, just the sinew of the kangaroo tail, presumably plaited and possibly, by 1830, in the manner of sailor's, sealer's or stockman's rope or whip work.

By 12 November 1830,<sup>28</sup> Robinson had reached the Furneaux Islands where he removed two Aboriginal women, Smoker and Isaac, from sealers on Gun Carriage Island, just north of Cape Barren Island. 'Those women were some time ere they could believe they were to be emancipated. It appeared like a dream to them.... They gave me eight strings of beads made by the black women what the Ty Ree Lore call Mair Ree Ner.' Robinson specifically uses the word beads not shells, yet the word 'Mair Ree Ner' is an Aboriginal word associated with shells.

On 6 November 1831,<sup>29</sup> whilst with

Captain Clark near Bothwell in central Tasmania, Robinson received from Clark 'a plaited necklace of kangaroo sinew' along with a spear and a waddy. This specific reference to plaiting is of interest.

By 22 June 1832, Robinson was back on the North West coast of Tasmania when he refers, without the use of an Aboriginal word, to 'small shells to make necklaces'. Access to the material resources of the Van Diemen's Land Company may account for this specific reference to small shells.

On 18 May 1833,<sup>30</sup> on the South West coast, Robinson had an unnamed Aborigine attached to his mission who 'had on her neck a thick cord made out of the skin of an Aborigine and which she wore round her neck as a necklace. This was used by her as a charm. This is customary with the natives of the east and north parts of the Island. This was Karn Ne Bunger.' This is the only reference to a human skin necklace that I have traced in contemporary Tasmanian literature.

When Robinson died in London in 1866, his widow sold his collection of Tasmanian artefacts, including the original Thomas Bock Aboriginal watercolours painted for Robinson between 1831 and 1834, while he was working with the Bruny Island Aborigines, and now in the Museum of Mankind, London. The collection was sold for £30 to Barnard Davis, who had previously collated and listed the collection.<sup>31</sup> I have extracted the Tasmanian Aboriginal necklaces noted in the Davis listing:

- 3 human lower jaws of Tasmanians with native cord wrapped round them. These were worn round the necks of the natives as amulets.<sup>32</sup> (plate 5)
- 2 human tibiae of Tasmanians prepared in the same way for wearing.
- 2 plaster busts of Tasmanians by B Law, Hobart Town. The man is the bust of Woreddy, a native of Bruny Island. The woman is Trugernanna, native of Sullivan Cove. [They are probably not

based on the Bock watercolours commissioned by Robinson, for both wear shell necklaces.]

- A necklace of six strands, feather (plates 3 & 6)
- Another with more slender strands
- 1 necklace made of sinew (plates 2, 4, 7, 9 & 10)
- 1 finely prepared thick sinew rolled up into perhaps an amulet
- 2 amulets made of the cremated bones of the dead. V.D.L. Roydeener or Numremureker
- An amulet consisting of the bones of a child tied up in a little grass bag. 2 femora, 2 ulnae and the bones of one hand. (In skull case)
- 2 human ribs, clean. For a charm or ornament.
- About twenty string necklaces made of native string [possibly sinew? If so possibly those now in the Museum of Victoria]
- A quantity of prepared sinew
- Box of worsted and other work done by the women, Tasmanian, at Flinders Island.
- Small amulet. Seems to contain bone.

The items listed above show that Robinson's interest was in pure native work, as depicted by Thomas Bock in his watercolours (plates 2-9), and not shell necklaces. This list provides the only tangible reference to the existence of feather necklaces, although feather necklaces may feature in the portraits of Jenny (plate 3) and Larretong (plate 6) by Bock. Ling Roth<sup>33</sup> also refers to a '...love of arrangement was displayed in the flowers and feathers with which the heads of both sexes were generally found to be attired.'

The recent publication highlighting the treasures contained in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, features a wombat claw necklace on its cover. Collected by George Augustus Robinson, c. 1839, it bears a 19th-century tag giving it his provenance. A claw necklace is not listed in the Robinson Collection acquired by Barnard Davis, detailed above, and it is more likely that

9



this object was collected by Robinson in Victoria after he left Flinders Island in 1839. However, another wombat claw necklace has recently surfaced in Hobart, so a Tasmanian provenance cannot be ruled out. The fine, thin animal sinew threading of this necklace is of great importance, if a Tasmanian provenance can be proved by DNA testing.

When Backhouse and Walker<sup>24</sup> visited Flinders Island, in their capacity as members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in 1832, Backhouse made note in his journal of the wearing and production of necklaces: 'Many of them have their necks ornamented by strings of beads or by shells hung on kangaroo sinews or by kangaroo sinews smeared with red ochre and grease and wound around others. (plate 4). By this means they form very neat brown necklaces. The shells they clean of the outer coat by stringing them on kangaroo sinew and exposing them to the action of smoke and grass with a few hot embers under it.'<sup>25</sup>

Backhouse draws a distinction between a string of beads and a string of shells. The use of kangaroo tail sinews, greased and wound round others, again smacks of rope or knotwork, perhaps an inheritance from the time spent by some of these women as sealers 'wives'.<sup>26</sup> 'They

From top:

Plate 9. Jemmy/Jimmy/Problatena, wearing a tightly strung sinew necklace presumably tied with a knot when wound on. It may or may not be plaited. The Oxford portrait is inscribed 'Jemmy/Native of Hampshire Hills' and bears further notation 'same as the grey bust', so far not identified

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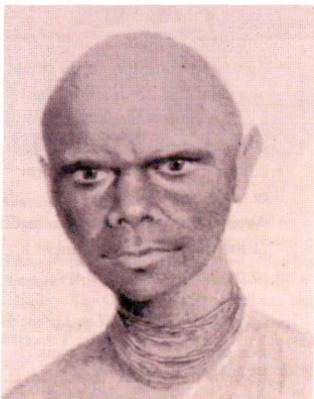
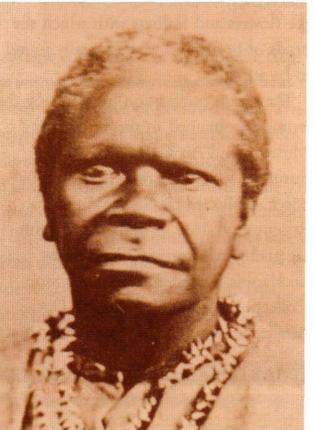


Plate 10. The British Museum has two portraits by Thomas Bock, or copied from his work, of unknown men wearing kangaroo sinew necklaces. Neither appear to be plaited. British Museum, London

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Plate 11. Charles Alfred Woolley (1834–1922), *Bessy Clarke*, 1866, original albumen photograph. Captioned in pencil 'Bessy Clarke or Pinnabathnac Kangaroo Head, 50 years old, Macquarie Harbour.' A fine long *Elenchus* shell necklace, colour unknown. Courtesy Tim McCormick from original photograph in his possession



wear necklaces formed of kangaroo sinews rolled in red ochre, and also others of small spiral shells. They likewise wear the bones of deceased relatives around their necks, perhaps more as token of affection than for ornament...The shells for necklaces are of a brilliant pearly blue: they are perforated by means of the eye-teeth, and are strung on a kangaroo sinew; they are then exposed to the action of pyroligneous acid, in the smoke of brushwood covered up with grass; and in this smoke they are turned and rubbed till the external coat comes off, after which they are polished with oil obtained from the penguin or the mutton-bird.<sup>27</sup> It is not clear from this whether the eye tooth is animal or human!

Backhouse continues, 'One couple in the settlement lost a child some time since and its skull is still frequently to be seen suspended on the breast of its father or mother. Others wear jaw (plate 5) or leg bones, but these are usually strapped closely with kangaroo sinew rolled in red ochre and grease, so that only the ends by which they are suspended are seen, and these are bright, either being polished, or by long wearing.' This is a traditional form of Aboriginal necklace and, as such, was collected by Europeans.<sup>28</sup> He continues 'The Aborigines are careful of their clothing ...as they have no closets or boxes wherein they can preserve those articles, which, with a clasp knife, a few strips of beads, and a handkerchief or two constitute their personal property.' Backhouse is specific that the Aborigines treasured the European strings of beads and handkerchiefs but makes no mention of shell necklaces.

A year later, in November 1833, Backhouse and Walker on board the *Shamrock*, visited Flinders Island again, bringing a further 15 Aborigines.

Backhouse records his purchases from the female Aborigines in the community<sup>29</sup>, 'after breakfast... We purchased many shell necklaces off them for cotton handkerchiefs which several women immediately set about to hem.' If these women could hem a handkerchief, they must have had access to needles and

Right: Plate 12. Charles Alfred Woolley (1834–1922), *Trugannini* c. 1866. Albumen print, cabinet, enlarged from carte – de-visite. This historic portrait of the ‘last of the Tasmanian Aborigines’ was originally taken by Charles Woolley, a Hobart photographer. It was later sent to the Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition of 1866 by the Commissioners for Tasmania and exhibited under the title ‘*Lallah Rookh, Trugannini (Seaweed)*’ (cat. 544). The accompanying description noted that the subject was then about 65 years old and belonged to the Bruni [sic] Island tribe. She is shown wearing a large shell Hobart necklace. Four other Aboriginal portraits by Woolley were shown at the exhibition together with the important lithograph, Governor Davey’s Proclamation to the Aborigines, 1816. Thomas Bock and Benjamin Duterreau both painted her portrait and in 1836, she sat for a plaster bust modelled by the sculptor Benjamin Law. Trugannini died in Hobart on 8 May 1876. This version was subsequently enlarged and published by Wilmot’s Premier Studio, Malop Street, Geelong, but failed to acknowledge Woolley as photographer. It also appears in J.W. Beattie’s album of *Photographs of Tasmanian Aborigines* (Mitchell Library, Sydney) stamped with his own label. Original photograph JB Hawkins Antiques



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Below: Plate 13. Frederick Frith, *The Last of the Tasmanian Aborigines*, contemporary photograph, Hobart, c. 1875, and a variation on the well-known view held by the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart. The sitters have been moved in order and the photograph hand coloured. It is possible that they have reverted to wearing shells in their hair, as couronne or crown, for this special photograph. Courtesy Jane Lennon Antiques, Hobart

thread and, hence, an ability to thread a small shell necklace.

In fact, G.A. Robinson refers in his 10 December 1835 journal entry to his visit to the school on Flinders Island to teach native women, ‘who were 8 in number’, to sew.<sup>40</sup> On a later visit in August 1838, Robinson lists 19 sewn items manufactured by the Aboriginal women in their own time, without European supervision.<sup>41</sup> These women, with their needlework skills, provide the key to the continuation of necklace-making in the islands off Tasmania.<sup>42</sup>

In January 1834, as part of his Friendly Mission, G.A. Robinson visited Patterdale Farm, the home of John Glover, with Aboriginal trackers and guides. Glover’s recently published sketchbook<sup>43</sup> records a series of 20 detailed portrait sketches, in which only one man is shown wearing a necklace, and this is plaited. The Aborigines depicted seem to have lost the sense of pride in their personal appearance evidenced in the drawings of Piron, Petit or Bock, and an overall sense of sadness permeates Glover’s rendition.

Strangely, little detailed official information remains in the Tasmanian State Archives relating to the last phase of survival of the indigenous people after their return to Van Diemen’s Land from the Flinders Island Reserve. The most intimate and revealing descriptions are found in the writings of James Bonwick and J.E. Calder, both prominent

members of the community.<sup>44</sup> Together with G.W. Walker and James Backhouse, they did much to record the actual relationships between the Aborigines and the settlers. All four had first-hand acquaintance with the establishments at Flinders Island and Oyster Cove, and a study of their writings is essential to understanding the events of the subsequent two decades, which saw the ‘extinction’ of the indigenous population on mainland Tasmania by 1876.

In December 1847, a group of 44 full and half blood Aborigines from Flinders Island arrived at the 1,000 acre Oyster Cove Reserve, south of Hobart.<sup>45</sup> Under

the direction of Dr J. Milligan, the group comprised 14 adult males, 22 adult females with three boys and five girls.<sup>46</sup>

James Bonwick states<sup>47</sup> that one of the children was Fanny Cochrane. Born in 1834 to a full blood Aboriginal girl called Tare Noo Tair Er, her father was possibly the sealer John Smith. Cochrane remained with the other Aborigines after the move to Oyster Cove but, in July 1854, she married William Smith, a splitter and sawyer. Cochrane was awarded a £24 a year pension, in lieu of her maintenance at the Cove, and moved out to live with Smith at North-West Bay, producing eleven healthy children.



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Plate 14. A selection of Tasmanian Aboriginal shell necklaces, J B Hawkins Antiques  
 1. Mariner shell necklace, c. 1880  
 2: Contemporary rice & mariner shell necklace made on Flinders Island, 2004

Plate 14A. Crossover shell and apple seed necklaces, J B Hawkins Antiques  
 1. Whelk and apple seed necklace, c. 1950  
 2. Shell and apple seed necklace, c. 1960  
 3. Shell and various seeds necklace, c. 1940?

Plate 14B. Apple and other seed necklaces, classic examples of Depression jewellery, Tasmanian c. 1930. J B Hawkins Antiques

15 groupings describing various forms of necklace. Eight word groupings refer to words describing sinew necklaces and five word groupings to a necklace, trinkets or beads. He lists only two words specifically correlating to shell necklaces. One I have already noted is 'Canlaride', the Aboriginal word for a 'couronne de coquillages', the second is the word 'Marthinna' as recorded by the Quaker missionary, James Backhouse, who was at Flinders Island between October and November 1832, and again in December and January 1833/4.

Backhouse assembled his information about the Aboriginal language in the following manner:

Several of the Aborigines were invited into the Commandant's hut for the purpose of enabling me to take down

Her half sister, Mary-Ann, married Walter Arthur, and Bonwick observed them together.

I have elsewhere described the gift of some Flinders Island diamonds from poor Walter. I was to receive a parting remembrance from his wife. He had given me what was most valuable in his eyes. She presented me with what was pleasing in hers. It was a charming necklace of the smallest and most brilliantly polished shells I have ever seen. Even then I felt the delicacy of her nature, as she said putting the glittering object in my hand: 'Give that to your daughter'. I

thanked her, and inquired if my lassie should wear it as a necklace.

The Aboriginal word variously phonetically heard as 'Marthinna', 'Merena', 'Mirana', 'Mirina', 'Mereener' or 'Mair Ree Ner', applies to the shells used in necklaces. A search of dictionary sources relating to Tasmanian Aboriginal languages or dialects confirms that this was one of two recorded words relating to the shells used in the necklace itself.<sup>48</sup>

N.J.B. Plomley's *Word List of Tasmanian Aboriginal Languages* notes the original sources tapped for Aboriginal words. For words associated with necklace, he gives

a few words as specimens of the language, which I had already commenced doing. The plan I adopted was to point to different objects, which they named, several repeating the word, for my better information. At a subsequent period, I uttered the words in the hearing of others with whom I had no communication on the subject of their language; if these understood my expressions, and pointed to the object the word was intended to represent, I took for granted that I had ascertained with tolerable accuracy the word used by them for that purpose.

From this I think it fair to assume that he pointed to a shell necklace and 'Marthinna' was the word that he noted. These are the only times an Aboriginal word for a necklace of shells appears in the record. Was it the word for the shell or the necklace? We cannot now tell. Against this, it should be noted that G.A. Robinson gives 16 Aboriginal words for necklace, yet not one of these words specifically describes a shell necklace. Ten different words relate to kangaroo sinew necklaces, three words to bead necklaces and two words to a necklace of no specified type. From 1829, Robinson had close contact with the Tasmanian Aborigines, and I suggest that both parties used the English words 'shell necklace', thereby confirming them as European in concept.

This may be confirmed by the writings of Dr Joseph Milligan, who arrived in Tasmania in 1831 as a medical officer in the service of the Van Diemen's Land Company. In February 1844, he became Surgeon-Superintendent at Flinders Island for a period in excess of two years. In January 1856, Milligan wrote to the Colonial Secretary with regard to the publication of his *Vocabulary of the Aborigines of Tasmania*, which was published in 1857. Milligan lists some 870 meanings for Aboriginal words in his vocabulary but not one word for necklace, shell or otherwise. Considering Milligan had exhibited Tasmanian shell necklaces at the 1851 Exhibition in

London, this must be considered remarkable and, I suggest, further confirms an English word usage. Bearing in mind the frequency with which the subject crops up, either in terms of construction, trade, or barter, the virtual non-use of an Aboriginal word to describe a series of shells strung together (be these as a necklace or a crown of shells) confirms that the tradition of necklace-making does not predate Cook's distribution of bead necklaces at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island in 1777.

The Westlake Papers<sup>99</sup> are a record of interviews taken in the 20th century between Ernest Westlake and those who had knowledge of the 'last' of the Tasmanian Aborigines, either by descent or personal contact. From these notes, I have extracted Westlake's observations on the history of necklace-making among Tasmanian Aborigines and their descendants.

Mrs Benbow, born 9 November 1843, aged 66 when interviewed on the 27 January 1897 had seen the natives at Oyster Cove...she was about 4 years old when they arrived...had a photo of Aborigines...put shells [for necklaces] in vinegar all night; rub in fat and then a blackwood (ping brush or dog tree) which gives a very fine ground charcoal. Would make a hole in shell with anything sharp pointed. Merena the blue shells for necklets.<sup>50</sup>

Westlake visited Flinders Island where he interviewed Mr and Mrs Alfred Collis, a farmer and his wife. From 1871, Alfred's father, Henry, had been a schoolmaster on Badger Island.<sup>51</sup> His wife noted, 'Necklaces? -preparation of Marina shells by half castes, pick off weed one by one and let flies blow them and maggots eat the fish out, clean with spirit of salts, pierce with awl, some half castes pierce with teeth.'<sup>52</sup>

Truganini is mentioned as piercing shells with her front tooth. 'Trug would make holes in shells with her front tooth to thread them - only saw Trug do this - tooth may have been peculiar.'<sup>53</sup> Backhouse also noted the use of teeth for piercing shells so, although this sounds improbable,

it must be considered a possibility.

John Cook, Inspector of Police in Hobart, told Westlake that Truganini had given a necklace to Mrs Robinson<sup>54</sup>, and one which had belonged to Queen Flora was given to Mrs Meredith. Mrs Meredith also described shell necklaces:

A pretty little white Columbella, common here, used to be much collected by the female aborigines, for making necklaces; some of which were several yards long, formed of these little shells neatly bored, and strung closely on kangaroo sinews, and were worn by their sable owners twisted many times round the neck, and hanging low over the breast.<sup>55</sup>

Miss Maynard, probably a daughter of the sealer John Maynard, was interviewed on Flinders Island by Westlake: 'Her father was then aged 76 and his daughter's age was not given. The daughter, a half caste recalled that a Werener [was a] large Trochus & [a] mariner green small ones, used for necklaces, large ones are called King Mariners used for watch chains and hat pins.'<sup>56</sup>

Tasmanian Aboriginal material was shown in London at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Four Aboriginal items are mentioned in the exhibition catalogue, of which 'Exhibit Number 194' is described as:

Necklaces of shells as worn by the aborigines of Tasmania. The shell composing these necklaces seems to be closely allied to the Phasianella. It is very abundant in the various bays and sinuosities of the island. It possesses a nacreous brilliant lustre, which is disclosed by the removal of the cuticle and this the Aborigines effect by soaking in vinegar and using friction. Various tints black, blue and green are afterwards given by boiling with tea charcoal etc.<sup>57</sup>

This source, seemingly unquoted in full previously, indicates the Europeanisation of shell necklace manufacture on Flinders Island.

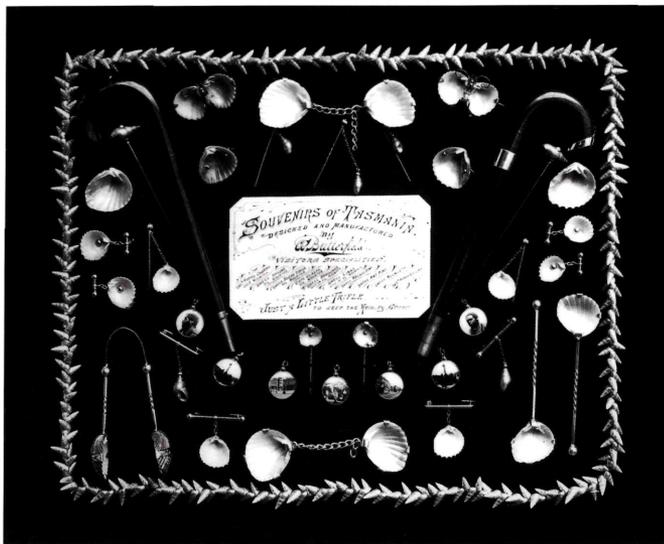


Plate 15: This collage of objects, advertised by Butterfield of Hobart, c. 1910, links together a Hobart shell necklace, depictions of the last of the Tasmanian Aborigines and European gold mounted charms, single shell tie pins, hatpins and brooches. JB Hawkins Antiques photographic library

Dr Joseph Milligan was responsible for removing the Aborigines from Flinders Island to Oyster Cove in October 1847. As the exhibitor, the footnote to 'Exhibit Number 194' would have been supplied by Milligan himself. Vinegar, tea and charcoal, cited as being used in the production and colouring of necklaces, are European commodities. Ling Roth<sup>38</sup> records that Brough Smyth<sup>39</sup> had in his possession a necklace consisting of 565 *Elenchus bellulus* shells and 89 inches in length. In the Tasmanian Museum, Hobart, there are two necklaces; one of light coloured shells and the other of a dark lustrous green measuring 6 feet 4 inches doubled, ie. 12 feet 8 inches in length. These extremely long necklaces were apparently exclusive to Hobart.

G.A. Robinson did not round up all the Aboriginal women living with sealers on the islands to the north of Tasmania. Various writers have documented the sealers and their wives, recording their names and family connections.<sup>40</sup> On 15 October 1847, when the 44 full and half blood Aborigines were removed from Wybalenna on Flinders Island to Oyster Cove, south of Hobart, the community was split into two distinct groups – the full blood population was now at Oyster Cove while their descendants remained on the islands to the North of Tasmania. Cape Barren Island had the largest group of Aboriginal women living with sealers

and the descendants of this community survive to the present day. In fact, at least two pure blood Aboriginal women died after Trucanini in 1876.<sup>41</sup> The art of necklace making from small shells continues within that community to this day. (plate 14)

'Strings Across Time' was the pioneer exhibition curated by Glenda King at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston, in which 19th-century and modern Tasmanian Aboriginal shell necklaces were displayed together. The 40 necklaces on show charted the evolution of this cultural practice with particular emphasis on the work of contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal women of Islander descent. The necklaces of Corrie Fullard, Lola Greeno, her mother Dulcie Greeno and Muriel Maynard are a testament to their skill and understanding of this complex art.

The tradition of necklace-making at Oyster Cove, in Southern Tasmania, appears to be centred around Fanny Cochrane Smith and her family. The 'Hobart' necklaces are long and made from larger shells (plate 15). Access to shells of a traditional type was difficult, and by 1910, the apple seed had supplanted the shell in necklace-making. The Tasman Peninsula and the Huon Valley apple industry virtually adjoin Oyster Cove and apple seed would have been in ready supply.<sup>42</sup>

The Tasmanian apple evaporating and drying industry resulted from an outbreak of Black Spot in the Huon Valley orchards, south of Hobart, in the 1890s. Due to their poor appearance, the apples could no longer be exported as fresh eating apples, yet they still ate well. By 1908, the Huon apple factories had introduced the American Kilner Evaporator, which revolutionised the industry by increasing the production of dried apples through a high degree of mechanisation. This process of mechanisation included coring the apple, providing a ready source of seeds for use in place mats or necklaces which required a considerable quantity of pips.

It is possible that this art form was employed as a method of raising money for women of Aboriginal descent in the Huon Valley, who had no access to shells but possessed the tradition of necklace-making. A peak period of production seems to have been between 1930 and 1960, and I suggest that the earliest pip necklaces were threaded onto cotton which broke easily. The introduction of nylon in the 1940s provided a far more durable thread for stringing, and many of these necklaces survive (plate 14A&B).

#### Appendix A: Surviving 19th-century Tasmanian Aboriginal necklaces:

Most of the surviving Aboriginal necklaces with 19th-century provenance are to be found in British collections. N.J.B. Plomley states that necklets said to have been made by the Tasmanian Aborigines are fairly common in British collections: 'Most of them are strings of small shells; and in all those seen the shells are strung on a machine-twisted thread, which may either signify restringing, or that they were made after European contacts had been made. Many of the latter must have been made by the captive Aborigines on Flinders Island.'

Plomley's listing follows.<sup>63</sup>

#### British Museum

Ten necklets of shells in the collections. Two of these were presented by J. Edge-Partington and were obtained by him in Hobart; another was given by Dr Joseph Milligan in 1851. This may be one of the necklaces exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition by Milligan (Exhibit Number 194), others are marked as coming from Flinders Island.

#### Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford)

There are at least five necklets in this museum, four of which are strings of small shells.

The other necklet is labelled: 'Necklet of native string worn by both sexes. Tasmanian aborigines; dd. Dr Barnard Davis 1868' [Presumably ex G.A. Robinson] This consists of several coils of string, the loops about 20cm long, several of them bound together here and there with a whipping of a 2-ply twist over a distance of about 1cm. This necklet has been illustrated by Ling Roth (1899, p. 131)

#### Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (Cambridge)

A necklace of the shells of *Calliostoma* sp., about one metre in length overall, is labelled 'Tasmanian. Dr Webster. 1906'

#### Royal Albert Memorial Museum (Exeter)

A shell necklace and a bracelet in the collection is reputed to have belonged to Truganini (donor Miss C.E. Wright, 1905)

#### Royal Scottish Museum

Two Tasmanian shell necklets in the collections are labelled:

'Necklace of shells made by natives. Presented by the Tasmanian Commission, International Exhibitions 1862'

'Necklace of small shells (*Truncatella marginata*) and a few *Elenchus* shells strung on thread. Cape Barren Island, Bass Straits.'

Another necklace of *Elenchus* shells is labelled as Australian and thought to be Tasmanian.

#### Hunterian Museum (Glasgow)

There is one necklace of shells from the Bass Straits.

#### Fuller Collection (Chicago, USA)

One necklace obtained in Tasmania before 1834 by John Merrimen. This may be of kangaroo sinew as it is covered with a red incrustation. The principal source for red ochre in Tasmania is the Magog Range, north of Chudleigh, near Deloraine. This appears to be the only surviving Tasmanian ochre-coloured necklace.

#### Giglioli Collections, Museo Nazionale (Rome, Italy)

An unknown number of Tasmanian shell necklaces are held.

#### Museum of Victoria (Melbourne, Vic.)

Fifteen string bundles, which may or may not have been necklaces, have a G.A. Robinson provenance but some of these may have been collected in Victoria.<sup>64</sup> Most appear to be 'Sinews from a Macropod tail, tip spun into string,' some are two ply, some three.

#### Queen Victoria Museum (Launceston, Tas.)

A coloured shell necklace, on display in the 'Strings Across Time' exhibition, has a G.A. Robinson provenance.

#### Appendix B: Shell Types.

An 1882 Royal Commission into Fisheries<sup>65</sup> provides relevant contemporary information about necklace-making but omits reference to the early shells of the *Phasianella australis* family which were depicted in the work of Petit and Leseur.

It may also be recorded here that for necklaces, ear pendants and other ornamental purposes, some of our shells are most highly prized. The following are largely collected and prepared by the half-castes on the Barren and Badger islands, and obtain fair prices, viz:-

Trigonia Margaretacea.....Pearly  
Trigonia pendants and necklaces.  
Elenchus badius ..... }  
" bellulus .....} Blue and  
green pearly necklace shells.  
" irisodontes .....}  
" nitidulus.....}  
Margarita Tasmanica .....}  
Truncatella scalarina .....}  
" Tasmanica .....}  
" marginata .....}Rice-shell  
necklaces

" micra .....}  
Marinula pellucida..... Tooth  
shell necklaces  
Columbella semi-convexa .....}  
" Lincolnensis .....}Oat-shell  
necklaces  
" irrorata .....}  
Nerita atrata ..... Rosary  
shell necklaces and bracelets.

The black rosary shell necklaces became popular after the death of Prince Albert and later Queen Victoria, stimulating a demand for mourning jewellery.

#### Appendix C: List of items taken by the French for purposes of barter to the South Seas:

Nicholas Baudin's journal provides the following list of items carried by the French expedition in 1802 for barter in the South Seas. The items underlined (by me) have a particular association with the future creation of a necklace industry in a primitive society.

Articles for barter on the *Géographe*. NB: a similar list is supplied for the *Naturaliste*

25 lengths of broad silk ribbon  
silk ribbon  
approx. 15 thousand assorted pins  
approx. 15 thousand assorted needles  
1,000 assorted fish-hooks  
50 no. 1 combs  
25 lengths narrow silk ribbon  
50 lengths of broad cotton ribbon  
50 lengths of narrow cotton ribbon  
25 no. 2 combs  
100 no. 3 combs  
25 no. 4 combs  
50lbs of Breton linen thread in bundles  
50 ells of silver braid  
50 ells of gold braid  
25 ells of silver fringe  
25 ells of gold fringe  
25 ells of silver lace  
25 ells of gold lace  
100 assorted boxes  
50 boxes covered in tin-plated iron  
50 covered in box-wood  
50 covered in metal  
125 3 to 4 inch mirrors

125 German mirrors  
 25 10-inch mirrors framed in painted wood  
 150 papier mâché snuff-boxes  
 50 plumes  
 50 hinged snuff-boxes  
 500 wooden-handled knives  
 100 sheath-knives  
 200 horn-handled knives  
100 pairs of scissors  
42 gross of buttons  
1500 awls  
300 awl-handles  
 500 paint-brushes  
 50 brushes  
 100 pairs of coloured pearl earrings  
100 coloured necklaces  
 100 pairs of gilded filigree earrings  
 100 pairs of expanding bracelets  
 100 rings for feet  
 500 rings for the fingers

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Mr Tony Brown, Curator of Indigenous Cultures at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, contests that Europeans were responsible for the introduction of the concept of a shell necklace into Tasmania. The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery would not allow the use of their Alfred Bock watercolours.<sup>66</sup>

Photographs of 19th-century Aborigines wearing shell necklaces have been obtained from other sources. My thanks to Mark Cabouret for providing the photograph of Truganini by H.H. Bailey; Jane Lennon, Hobart, for plate 13; and Tim McCormick for plate 11.

I look forward to a response to my article by the museum authorities, for it is only by the cut and thrust of debate that knowledge can be further enhanced.

### NOTES

- 1 Cook distributed his Adventure Medal (one of which was discovered on the island in 1914) and glass bead necklaces, the small beads presumably threaded on cotton, to the Bruny Islanders.
- 2 James Cook, *Interview with the Natives in Adventure Bay, Bruny Island*. A contemporary drawing by an unknown artist. Library of the Naval Historical Branch, Ministry of Defence, London. Illustrated Lyndall Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, p. 52.
- 3 Third Voyage Bk. 1. ch. vi.
- 4 As shown in Webber's 1777 portrait,

- 'A Man of New Holland', depicted in the Cook *Atlas*.
- 5 Brian Plomley & Josiane Piard-Bernier. *The General, The Visits of the Expedition led by Bruny D'Entrecasteaux to Tasmanian Waters in 1792-3*, Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston 1993.
  - 6 *Ibid.* p 282.
  - 7 *Ibid.* p 285.
  - 8 *Ibid.* pp 288 & 289.
  - 9 Edward Duyker, *Citizen Labillardière*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne 2003. pp 110-111. Probably *Pimelea nivea* of the Thymelaraceae family, sometimes called Bushman's Bootlace from the tough stringy bark which can be stripped from the branches, endemic to Tasmania.
  - 10 *Ibid.* p 338.
  - 11 *Ibid.* p 300.
  - 12 *Ibid.* p 317.
  - 13 *Atlas pour servir à la relation du voyage à la recherche de La Pérouse* Paris, 2nd edition, 1817
  - 14 Christine Cornell, *The Journal of Post Captain Nicholas Baudin*, Adelaide, Libraries Board 1974.
  - 15 A pencil drawing by Lesueur (Le Havre 18010) probably done soon after the acquisition by Leschenault of a shell necklace. The drawing does not indicate any knots between the shells in the fibrous many-stranded threading material, the shells would therefore be likely to dethread. A finished watercolour, also by Lesueur on blue tinted paper (Le Havre 720590) illustrates one of these *Phasianella* shells picked up at North-West Bay, an anchorage used by the expedition in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel SE Tasmania.
  - 16 *Voyage of Discovery to Southern Lands* by Francois Peron by Louis Freycinet, 2nd edition, 1824 translated from the French by Christine Cornell 2006, pp. 220-224.
  - 17 *Baudin in Australian Waters. The artwork of the French Voyage of Discovery to the Southern Lands 1800-1804*, edited by Bonnemans Forsyth and Bernard Smith. An illustrated descriptive catalogue of the drawings and paintings of Australian subjects; now held in the Lesueur Collection at the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle Le Havre. The relevant images to this paper are identified by number as used in this publication, p 120, plate 18010. A pencil drawing of a 24 shell necklace with thymy plaited thread drawn by C A Lesueur.
  - 18 *Ibid.*, 20019.1, p 150.
  - 19 *Ibid.*, 20019.2, p 151.
  - 20 Appearing not to eat scaled fish, only women dived for crustaceans, as a result they had neither discovered nor needed a fishing line.
  - 21 *Ibid.*, p 121, plate 18011. The number of shells shown as 15 with no knots.
  - 22 Bass and Flinders visited the Furneaux Island to rescue the survivors of the wrecked *Sydney Cove* in 1798. When they returned to Sydney they reported the presence of vast numbers of seals, thereby attracting large numbers of men and sealers to the islands, some of whom remained as residents.
  - 23 James E. Calder, (1875) *Some account ... Native Tribes of Tasmania* 1875, pp 92-103 describes from a contemporary source such an expedition.
  - 24 Interpreted superbly by N.J.B. Plomley, 1966 in his book *Friendly Mission. The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson 1829-1834*. Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Hobart and its sequel *Weep in Silence*
  - 25 N.J.B. Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, the sequel to *Friendly Mission* covering Flinders Island.
  - 26 N.J.B. Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, p 181
  - 27 *ibid.*, p 197
  - 28 *ibid.*, p 272
  - 29 *ibid.*, p 619
  - 30 *ibid.*, p 722
  - 31 Plomley N.J.B. 'A List of Tasmanian Aboriginal Material in Collections in Europe' *Records of the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston*. New Series, No 15, 1962. Barnard Davis's collections were dispersed before and after his death in 1881. The skeletal material was bought by the Royal College of Surgeons in 1880, and his library was sold at Sotheby's in January/February 1883. What happened to the ethnographical collection has not been discovered. In a letter which he wrote afterwards to Mrs Robinson, Barnard Davis remarked that 'Dr Milligan has returned to England ... from what he tells me, it seems that almost all the objects I had from you are Australian and not Tasmanian, except the portraits. I always thought this was the case, because Mrs Robinson was disposed to confuse the two races together, and call the whole Australian.' (Letter dated 13 October 1867, in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.)
  - 32 N.J.B. Plomley, 'Relics of the Dead', *Records of the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston* 1962. A List of Tasmanian Aboriginal Material in Collections in Europe. The term 'relics of the dead' is used here as a designation for objects of human origin carried or used by the Tasmanians as

- mementoes of the dead, or as charms against or cures for sickness or injury. There seems to have been two varieties of these objects, (a) bones, fragments of bone or dried parts of the body which were either enclosed in a cover or, for example kangaroo skin, or tied round with a cord of sinew, by which they were also suspended, and (b) gatherings from cremation sites contained in a wrapping. Robinson's journal for 25 May 1838 refers to a native woman called 'Ellen' who wore 'an amulet a parcel of ashes hung round her throat to alleviate the pain.' Robinson had previously seen her with a human bone suspended on her back and had asked her for it, but was refused, Ellen pointing out that he already had one in his office. Ellen died on 13 June and Robinson might well have obtained the 'amulet' on 26 June. All Barnard Davis' bone 'relics' were bound with kangaroo sinew. The 'relics' used by the Aborigines at the Flinders Island settlement had either been brought there by them or were prepared at the settlement. Bundles of ashes, if they were to contain human material, could not have been prepared later than 17 October 1835 when Robinson arrived to take charge. The same would apply for most other types of 'relics', for after Robinson arrived all bodies were buried. Even in Robinson's time however, some 'relics' were prepared by mothers from the heads of their infants dying soon after birth.
- 33 *Aborigines of Tasmania*, 2nd edition, 1899, p. 131
- 34 James Backhouse, *A narrative of a visit to the Australian Colonies*, 1843
- 35 N.J.B. Plomley, *Weep in Silence*.
- 36 *Thomas Bock: Convict Engraver, Society Portraitist Exhibition Catalogue*, 1991, p.36
- 37 James Backhouse, *A narrative of a visit to the Australian Colonies*, 1843, p.84.
- 38 GA Robinson, see list of his Collections, by Barnard Davis. This list does not include a shell necklace.
- 39 N.J.B. Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, p. 262
- 40 *ibid*, p. 317
- 41 *ibid*, p.750, see list of GA Robinson Collections by Barnard Davis, box of wasted and other work.'
- 42 Two of these women were Flora, Ben Lomond tribe, a sealer's woman, who lived with John Brown and Daphne, a Swan Port native.
- 43 John Glover, *The Van Diemen's Land Sketchbook*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart 2003, Folio 20.
- 44 James E. Calder, *Some Account of the Native Tribes of Tasmania*, 1875, pages 109-115.
- 45 W.E. Crowther, *The Final Phase of the Extinct Tasmanian Race, 1847-1876*. Records of the Queen Victoria Museum, No 49, 1972, p. 3. Oyster Cove Reserve and Elsewhere, December, 1847 - 6th July, 1855. Crowther's grandfather, W.L. Crowther, F.R.C.S. Eng. was the chief medical officer for Hobart and he was responsible for the removal of Lanney's head on his death, now believed to be in Edinburgh University. Lanney was the 'last' male Aboriginal in Tasmania.
- 46 Dr Joseph Milligan was appointed surgeon to the Van Diemen's Land Company in 1831 and was stationed on the North-West Coast, an appointment which gave him opportunities for observing the Aborigines. Milligan was for a brief period Superintendent at Flinders Island (appointed on 5 December 1843) and in October, 1847 he brought his charges to the Oyster Cove Reserve by the schooner *Sisters*. Dr Milligan was favourably known to Sir John Franklin, the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, who promptly selected him as Inspector of convict discipline and later Superintendent and Medical Officer of the Aborigines and Commandant of Flinders Island.
- 47 Quoted by Nicholas Cree in Oyster Cove as being taken from James Bonwick. *The Last of the Tasmanians*, 1870, chapters 8-19. *The Lost Tasmanian Race*, chapters 8-9.
- 48 N.J.B. Plomley, *A Word List of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Languages*, necklace page 326.
- 49 The Westlake Papers, records of interviews in Tasmania by Ernest Westlake 1908 - 1910 edited by N.J.B. Plomley. Ernest Westlake was in Tasmania from December 1908 until June 1910, visiting many parts of the northern, eastern and southern regions and making a trip to the Furneaux Islands. During these excursions he interviewed several people of mixed blood, several old settlers who had known the Aborigines at Oyster Cove and a few whose parents and other relations had had contact with the Aboriginal people in the 1830s and 1840s. Westlake's enquiries from people in mainland Tasmania largely concerned the fullbloods removed to the Aboriginal settlement, originally located on Flinders Island but moved to Oyster Cove on D'Entrecasteaux Channel in November 1847. Although these fullbloods were some of the original Aboriginal people of Tasmania, the information about them which Westlake reported has the defect that it relates to people long dead, whereas the halfcastes of the Furneaux Islands (and their European associates) gave him information at first hand.
- 50 Westlake Papers, p.11.
- 51 Badger, as in Wombat so named by the sealers.
- 52 Live shell glistens, whereas the dead shell is dulled as found on the sea shore. Necklaces were made from shells gathered live.
- 53 Westlake papers, Mrs Nowell, page 46, daughter of J.S. Prout, the artist.
- 54 A shell necklace with a provenance to GA Robinson was exhibited at Launceston in the *Strings Across Time* exhibition at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery 2003/4.
- 55 Westlake Papers, Mrs Meredith, p. 146.
- 56 Westlake Papers, p.18.
- 57 *Great Exhibition 1851, Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, Part IV, Colonies and Foreign States Division I, Van Diemens Land Exhibit No 194, Milligan J., Argyll Street, Hobart Town. Necklaces of Shells as worn by the Aborigines of Tasmania. One of which is now in the British Museum.
- 58 H.Ling Roth, *The Aborigines of Tasmania*. 1st ed. 1890 & 2nd ed. 1899.
- 59 R. Brough Smyth, , *The Aborigines of Tasmania, in The Aborigines of Victoria*, vol 2 R. Brough Smyth, John Ferres, Govt. Printer, Melbourne, 1878.
- 60 Norman B Tindale, *Growth of a People: Formation and Development of a Hybrid Aboriginal and White Stock on the Islands of Bass Strait, Tasmania 1815-1849*. Records of the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, 1949.
- Brian Plomley and Kirsten Anne Henley, 'The Sealers of Bass Strait and the Cape Barren Island Community', *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Journal*, Vol 37, 1990.
- 61 *Weep in Silence*, p. 679
- 62 An apple coring machine in operation is illustrated in the *Tasmanian Mail*, 25/4/1912.
- 63 N.J.B. Plomley, *A List of Tasmanian Aboriginal Material in Collections in Europe*. Records of the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston. New Series, No.15, Published 1962, p.12.
- 64 Alan L. West. *Aboriginal String Bags Nets and Cordage*, published by Museum Victoria, 1999
- 65 Report No.132, Tasmanian House of Assembly. *Fisheries of Tasmania: report of Royal Commission October 31, 1882*
- 66 For a full history of these watercolours see N.J.B. Plomley, Records of the Queens Victoria Museum, Launceston. New Series No. 18, 1965. N.J.B. Plomley, *Thomas Bock's Portraits of Aborigines and Australiana* May 1992, pp.141-43

# Caressa Linda Crouch

24/8/1954–7/12/2007

Australiana Society members have been greatly saddened by the death of their fellow member, Caressa Crouch. Caressa was a long-standing member of the Society with an outstanding reputation for hard work and loyalty. She worked on the committee and in her position as Treasurer for over 20 years, demonstrating that she was reliable, trustworthy and diligent. During her time with the Australiana Society she saw the membership more than double its numbers – much of that success brought about by her own enthusiasm and her never-tiring quest to inspire new members to join.



Caressa's lifetime partner was Carl, whom she met when only 15 and with whom she shared her whole adult life – nearly 40 years together. I only ever heard her speak of him with tenderness and she always looked on him as her soul mate. They had two children – aptly named after themselves – and everyone who knows the family will be familiar with switching between the names of 'big' and 'little' Caressa and Carl. From time to time other versions such as 'young' or 'old' could be heard, but by and large the original format prevailed. Caressa was a loving mother and wife with her family always at the centre of her life. Not that her many and varied friends were forgotten – we all loved her and are mourning her death.

If I were asked to describe her in only a few words, I would say that she was first and foremost an Australian, passionate about her country, its history, its present, its politics and its future.

If I were asked what she meant to me as a friend, I would say that she is irreplaceable. I miss her sense of humour, her intelligence, fearlessness and courage, the many discussions we had about history, and the never-ending fascination we shared for antiques. Above all I miss the sound of her footsteps coming down the path, which would surely mean that we would sit down and have tea on the old green sofa and chat till it was dark – as old friends do.

She is mourned by her surviving family: her husband Carl and her children Carl and Caressa, and to them and her wider family, we in the Australiana Society extend our sympathy and condolences. All of us who lament her passing and untimely death will find comfort in the thought that hers was a worthy life, well lived and much enjoyed.

**Vale, vale, dear Caressa.**

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## Lesley Garrett

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All of us who knew Caressa well respected her for her honesty and fairness. In addition to these admirable qualities, she possessed a remarkable spirit of excitement and fascination for all things Australian that had either an artistic or historic context to them. She was a born collector – erudite, persistent and quite undaunted in her pursuit of any item that was of interest to her. Her husband Carl, just as well known to the membership as she was, was equally enthusiastic in their shared interest. Together they made an invincible partnership as collectors.

Caressa grew up in the close vicinity of the Hawkesbury River and Pittwater in northern Sydney, destined to live her life and earn a living on and around these stretches of water. She and Carl ran their business as boat builders from the Gonsalves family boatshed at Palm Beach. The waterways and location of Palm

Beach were always a delight to her and she defended their pristine beauty vigorously through her role as treasurer of the Palm Beach Association for close on 20 years. She gave freely of her time and energy as an indefatigable grass roots campaigner to stop inappropriate development in the area.

Following her graduation from the University of NSW, she developed and honed her knowledge of Australian antiques and, together with Carl, started to accumulate what was to become a noted collection of marine and whaling artifacts as well as early Australian furniture. She appeared on the ABC-TV Collectors program, showing her collection of kangaroos, last June.

Her second home was Tasmania, where she and Carl based themselves aboard their classic yacht *Van Diemen* for some time. She quite simply loved Tasmania and would always welcome the opportunity to slip away there, to visit friends, attend auctions or learn more about Australian history.

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(1867 – 1943)

Still life, Nasturtiums  
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Signed John K. Blogg, 1915

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**3. A Group Of Three Carved Emu Egg Cameo Brooches And A Pendant**  
Circa 1850 – 1860

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# Australiana Members Survey 2006

A survey of members in 2006 was timely because of the influx of new members over the last few years. The results will aid the committee in setting the directions and priorities for the Society's activities.

Michael Lech

There is a cynical political axiom that says the only questions you should ask in a survey are those for which you already know the answers. It is fortunate then that those of us who formulated the questions in a survey of Australiana members were innocent of political machinations, and those who responded provided a raft of welcome and unexpected responses.

Long-time member, Professor Ken Cavill, first raised the idea of conducting a survey of Australiana members at a previous Annual General Meeting. The society was almost 30 years of age and had changed considerably since its foundation. So what now interests the approximately 500 members of the society, what would they like to get out of the society and how can they contribute to its well-being and longevity?

About 10% of members completed the survey with respondents coming from every state of Australia. Some of the quantitative results are listed below and they include the fact that *Australiana* magazine is the most appreciated aspect of the society and that its in-depth articles are the highlight. The most preferred event is the viewing of a private collection or house and that members living outside Sydney (where events are usually staged) overwhelmingly stated that they would attend an event if one were held in their locality.

However, it was the qualitative responses, where respondents took the time to contribute a written answer, which proved to be most revealing. Suggestions by members on possible contributions to *Australiana* magazine or for new events exposed the fact that membership was composed of a diverse

array of collectors with very different expectations. While long-established collectors were especially interested in the latest research, new collectors were curious about how to care for their collection.

The *Australiana* magazine is definitely the flagship of the society, yet just 23.7% of respondents had contributed in any form. Perhaps this is a sign that the society has a large percentage of new members. In any case, involvement in the society will continue to be encouraged in all forms. After all, the success of a not for profit organisation like the Australiana

Society is only possible with the participation and goodwill of its members.

All of the answers provided by members have proven to be very helpful and suggestions and offers of assistance will continue to be acted upon. The results of the survey have already affected changes: *Australiana* magazine has a new books section when possible, a 'show & tell' event will be held on a more regular basis, there will be a greater emphasis on viewings of little seen collections: private, corporate and/or public and finally, with the help of members, more events outside Sydney will be organised.

## Survey results

### What do you enjoy most about being a member of the Australiana Society?

<i>Voted interesting or most interesting</i>	
Australiana magazine	100%
events, talks	21.1%
Australiana website	18.4%

### How often do you attend Australiana Society events, excursions or talks?

once or more per year	52.6%
never	47.4%

*Of those who have never attended an Australiana Society event, 83% live outside Sydney and do not have easy access to the events program.*

### What kind of events do you prefer?

<i>Voted interesting or most interesting</i>	
viewing a private collection	76.3%
talk or seminar	57.9%
excursion to historic house	57.9%
excursion to exhibition or gallery	42.1%
show and tell	42.1%
full day or weekend workshop	26.3%
social function only	13.1%

### Which parts of Australiana magazine do you find most interesting?

<i>Voted interesting or most interesting</i>	
in-depth articles	92.1%
short articles	73.7%
design, layout, pics, etc	63.2%
book reviews	42.1%
show and tell	39.5%
chat and gossip	18.4%

### Have you ever written an article (short or long) for Australiana?

no	76.3%
yes	23.7%

### How often do you use the Australiana Society website?

once a month	7.9%
less than once a month	55.3%
never	23.7%



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## David Tulluch



*Gold Diggings of Victoria, 1852*

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A rare set of five hand coloured lithographs and frontispiece by David Tulluch for his *Gold Diggings of Victoria*, issued in 1852. These images are among the earliest known views of colonial diggings.

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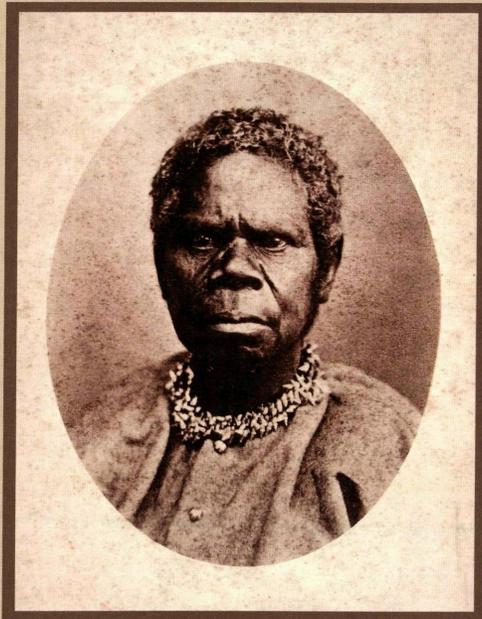
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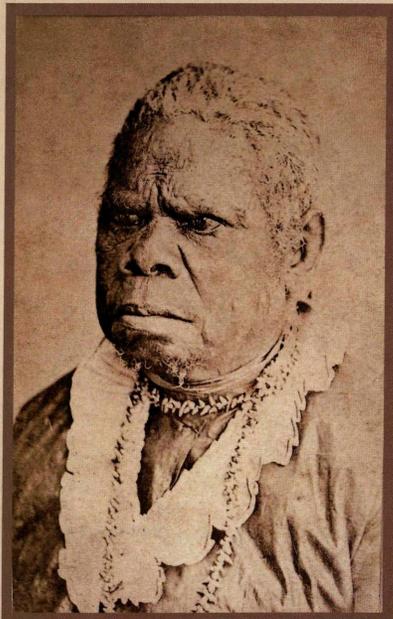
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Original photo by Charles A. Woolley (1834 - 1922)  
 Truganini photographed 1866, aged 65. This photo exhibited Melbourne  
 Intercolonial. Exhibition 1866 as Lalla Rookh, Catalogue No. 544



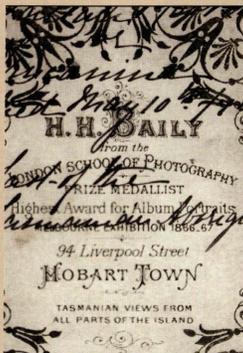
Original photo of Truganini by H.H. Bailey, circa 1875,  
 taken just before her death on May 10th 1876.  
 Inscribed 'Last of the Tasmanian Aborigines'

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LALLA ROOKH.

" Go where we will, this hand in thine,  
 " Those eyes before me smiling thus,  
 " Through good and ill, through storm and shine,  
 " The world's a world of love for us !  
 " On some calm, blessed shore we'll dwell,  
 " Where 'tis no crime to love too well ; —  
 " Where thus to worship tenderly  
 " An erring child of light like thee

*Lalla Rookh a novel of Oriental  
 Romance by Thomas More,  
 7th Edition 1818.*



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LALLA ROOKH.

He saw, in the wreaths she would playfully snatch  
 From the hedges, a glory his crown could not match,  
 And prefer'd in his heart the least ringlet that curl'd  
 Down her exquisite neck to the throne of the world !

These excerpts are annotated in a contemporary hand  
 and are photographed from my copy purchased in  
 Tasmania. G.A. Robinson who became attached to the  
 19 year old Truganini on Bruny Island in 1829 named  
 her Lalla Rookh when she accompanied him on his  
 Mission of Reconciliation, 1830 - 1835.



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