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# AUSTRALIANA

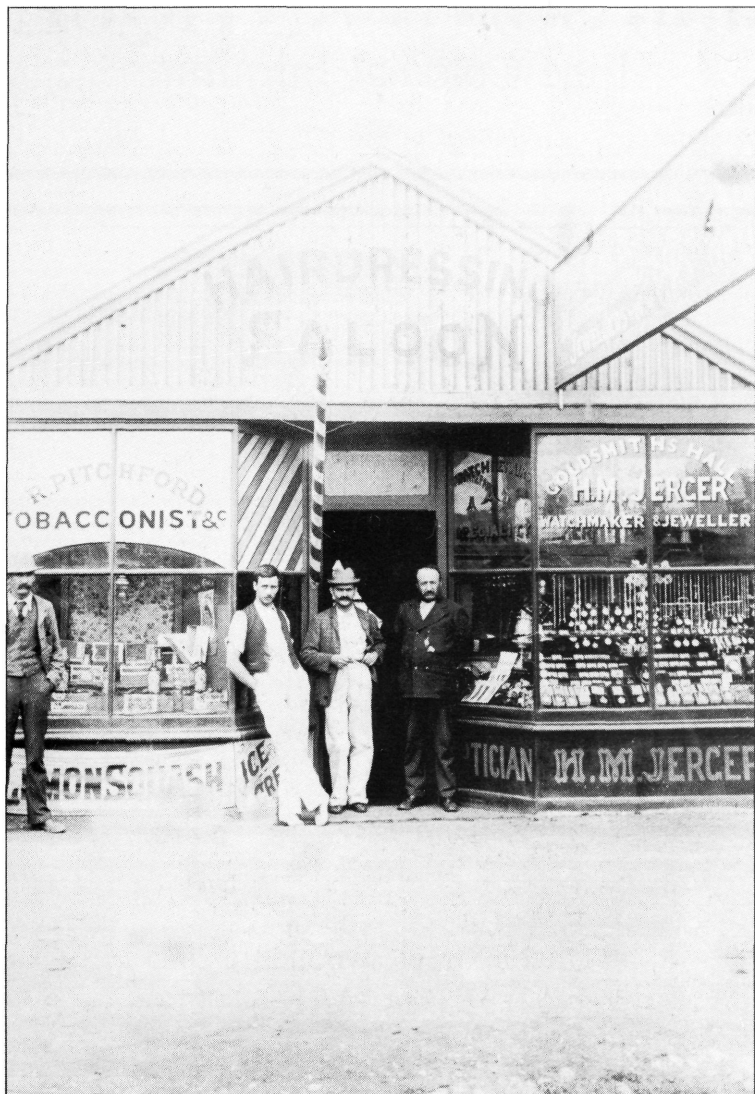
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AUGUST 1989

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Vol.11 No.3



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Editor: Kevin Fahy

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## SINGLE ADDRESS FOR ALL CORRESPONDENCE

Including Editorial, Advertising,  
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back issues etc., should be sent to:

The Hon. Secretary,  
Australiana Society,  
PO Box 288,  
Lindfield NSW 2070

To simplify the process of written  
communication with the Society the  
committee has agreed to maintain only a  
single address for all correspondence,  
including the submission of material for  
publication in *Australiana*.

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Committee 1988/9:

President: Kevin Fahy  
Vice-Presidents: Michel Reymond,  
John Houstone  
Secretary: Graham Cocks  
Treasurer: Ken Cavill  
Editor: Kevin Fahy  
Members: Mike Darlow,  
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David Bedford  
John Morris  
Les Carlisle

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Cover: Jerger's Goldsmith's Hall in Coolgardie c1895. Photo Courtesy Battye Library BL24365P.

# THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY INCORPORATED

## Financial Statements of Receipts and Expenditure

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1989

### GENERAL ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS	\$	EXPENDITURE	\$
Opening Balance 1.7.88	4,782.33	Insurance	268.28
Subscriptions	7,396.00	Corporate Affairs	20.00
Donations	20.00	Subscription R.A.H.S.	40.00
Bank Interest	198.99	Government Taxes	16.99
		Postage	619.77
		Stationery	555.24
<b>"Australiana Journal"</b>		<b>"Australiana Journal"</b>	
Sales of Back Issues	328.65	Production costs	9,928.00
Advertising	<u>2,196.00</u>		
	2,524.65		
<b>Excursions – Revenue</b>		<b>Excursions – Expenses</b>	
Canberra Trip	937.00	Canberra Trip	936.00
Elizabeth Bay House	<u>260.00</u>	Elizabeth Bay House	<u>49.47</u>
	1,197.00		985.47
		Historic Houses	
		Trust Donation	50.00
Auction Receipts	1,761.00	Auction Payments/Expenses	1,492.50
Annual Dinner	2,000.00	Annual Dinner Expenses	1,650.00
		Closing Balance 30.6.89	<u>4,253.72</u>
	<u>\$19,879.97</u>		<u>\$19,879.97</u>

### SYDNEY ACCOUNT

Opening Balance 1.7.88	505.34	Refreshments	63.00
Raffles	263.62	Rent – Glover Cottage Hall	600.00
Sponsors – Glover Cottage Hall		Government Taxes	2.80
Meetings	800.00		
Bank Interest	<u>24.47</u>	Closing Balance 30.6.89	<u>927.63</u>
	<u>\$1,593.43</u>		<u>\$1,593.43</u>

### INVESTMENT ACCOUNT

Opening Balance 1.7.88	3,455.64	Government Taxes	.09
Bank Interest	<u>337.98</u>	Closing Balance 30.6.89	<u>3,793.53</u>
	<u>\$3,793.62</u>		<u>\$3,793.62</u>

### CURRENT ASSETS AS AT 30.6.89

<b>CASH AT BANK</b>	General Account	\$4,253.72	
	Sydney Account	927.63	
	Investment Account	<u>3,793.53</u>	\$8,974.88
Deposit (Bond) Glover Cottage Hall			<u>100.00</u>
			<u>\$9,074.88</u>

G.W.K. Cavill  
Hon. Treasurer



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## President's Report

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The celebration of Australia's bicentenary and our own first decade has left us all somewhat exhausted, but enthusiastically ready to tackle the immediate years ahead towards Australia's Commonwealth centenary in 2001.

Apart from our regular meetings the Society held an enjoyable excursion to Canberra to visit the new Parliament House and the exhibition of Australian decorative arts at the National Gallery. A special visit was also organised to Elizabeth Bay House for members to view "Hearth & Home – Women's Decorative Arts and Crafts 1800 – 1930". Our Christmas Party celebrated the Society's 10th Birthday and members and friends who joined in our annual Australia Day dinner

were entertained with the reminiscences of our guest speaker, the Sydney antique dealer Len Barton.

I would like to thank all our advertisers, sponsors, guest speakers and contributors for their continued support of the Society.

Nominations for the Australiana Society committee 1989/90 were received from myself and L. Carlisle, J. Morris, G.W.K. Cavill, G. Cocks, M. Reymond, M. Darlow, D. Bedford, J. Houstone and R. Hutchinson. Office bearers will be announced in the next issue of *Australiana*. I would like to thank all members of the previous committee for their support and individual efforts for the Society.

*Kevin Fahy*

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## Secretary's Report

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As we embark on our second decade it is pleasing to report the appreciation and support received from our members for the Society's publication, *Australiana*.

This is reflected by the response to the appearance of the second index last February, when we received many requests for back issues. The quality of the research and information published during the last ten years is of obvious benefit to our members.

Whilst some members have not renewed their membership this year, it is evident that the regular members of the Society have now emerged as the hard core and their support to the Committees during this first ten years has made us all determined to maintain the high standard of our Journal, *Australiana*. They

recognise that its publication of research and information on Australiana is of paramount importance – it is our life blood and our main contact with our Interstate members.

Therefore to ensure that the Society remains strong with sufficient resources to guarantee that the Journal can be maintained and expanded, I would ask you to attend as many meetings and functions as possible, research and write articles, send letters to the Editor on various issues and most of all recruit new members. I personally thank all those Committee members and members of the Society who have assisted me during the past year with their support in many ways.

*Graham Cocks*

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## Treasurer's Report

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Again may I draw attention to the increase in the cost of production of the Society's Journal. Additionally there has been a decline in membership, although this decline is not apparent in subscription revenue for the financial year ending 30th June, 1989. It should be noted that subscriptions amounting to \$1,288 – paid from July, 1988 – appear in the current total of \$7,396, but represent late payments for the calendar year 1988. A considerable number of subscriptions have not been renewed for 1989.

Our additional revenue has been derived from the Annual Auction, the Anniversary Day and Excursions. To say the least, funding from the Auction and from the Excursions was disappointing. We are indebted to our sponsors for meeting the cost of renting Glover Cottage Hall – the venue for Sydney functions.

The Society's Committee is endeavouring to secure additional revenue – we greatly rely on your support.

*Ken Cavill*

# THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

PO BOX 288, LINDFIELD 2070



## 1989 PROGRAMME

### MEETINGS

**5 OCTOBER**

**GUEST SPEAKER –  
KEN MUGGLESTON**

*An illustrated lecture –  
Curiosities of Old Sydney  
Buildings, Places and People*

**7 DECEMBER**

**GUEST SPEAKER –  
GREGORY FORD**

*An illustrated lecture – Australian  
Cottage Furniture, followed by  
Christmas refreshments*

**EXCURSION**

*A visit to  
THE TANK STREAM  
Sunday 15th October at 2pm*

*Our Meetings are held at 7.30pm  
at The Glover Cottage Hall, 124 Kent Street, Sydney*

### CONTRIBUTIONS PLEASE

We require articles urgently for our  
Australiana journal.

We would appreciate if our members doing  
research into aspects of Australiana, "would  
put pen to paper and let us have the fruits of  
your labours for publication".

Please forward your submissions to  
The Editor  
Australiana  
P.O. Box 288 Lindfield NSW 2070



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# Nineteenth Century Silversmiths and Goldsmiths (Jewellers) of Western Australia

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*Dorothy Erickson*

## **Cinderella – The Gold Boom**

When the gold mining boom started circa 1892 the population of Western Australia rose rapidly and dramatically. Cities flowered almost overnight. The desert in a short time turned from shanty towns of miners shacks to cities with “fine wide streets, lit with electric light, (and) handsome buildings” which impressed travellers such as May Vivienne who in Coolgardie in 1902 experienced; “every elegance and comfort that could be suggested”. She was also impressed by the capital, finding; “Perth is beautifully situated, and one cannot fail to be charmed with its picturesque and lovely surroundings ... a handsome and prosperous city, with noble buildings on all sides, electric light, tram cars, beautiful parks around it, and yachts dancing on the broad waters of the Swan River”. The spotlight was on Western Australia.

Gold, the gleaming metal that transformed the Cinderella that had been Western Australia, brought not only gold diggers but also goldsmiths. The depressed years of the eighties in South Australia had seen a number of smiths wend their way west and by the eighteen nineties when Victoria experienced a severe depression this became a flood. Over one hundred new goldsmiths were settled enough to list themselves in the Post Office directories between 1890 – when self government was attained – and 1901 – when Western Australia joined the Commonwealth. This was five times more than the total number who had been known to work in the field since the founding of the colony. There were of course others who did not list themselves. These goldsmiths were to make work in the fashion of the time as well as special commemorative mementoes for mining magnates and miners’ sweethearts.

The most interesting of these commemorative pieces are small bar brooches incorporat-

ing mining implements or equipment. Many are both intriguing and also aesthetically satisfying. The fashion for commemorative jewellery using feats of engineering as motifs came into being in the middle years of the nineteenth century and continued for some decades. A report on page three of the *Victorian Express* (W.A.) of 24/7/1886 describes for the local readers, a royal presentation of this type. It was a bracelet presented to the Princess of Wales to commemorate the opening of the Mersey Tunnel. An adaptation of this fashion combined with an adaptation of another, that of presenting a name brooch to a bride were in Western Australia to combine to produce the phenomenon of the “W.A. Goldfields Brooch”. This spelt out the name of the mine or district in letters of gold above a cluster of mining implements or machinery. These differ markedly from the larger, earlier goldfields brooches of the eastern states which shared characteristics with much international work of the mid 19th century when technical virtuosity overwhelmed design and the commemorative gold field brooches with implements clustered in abandon were suitable only for “a flash colonial barmaid”.

Because the Western goldrushes were later in the century following the Aesthetic movement when ostentatious displays of jewellery were not so common most Western Australian work is smaller and simpler than its counterpart from the eastern rushes – more akin to the fashion of sporting jewellery common from the 1880s.

Many pieces sold in the eighteen nineties by George Richard Addis, Joseph Pearl, Donovan and Overland, Louis Boxhorn and others are of a style whilst not entirely confined to Western Australia are rarely found elsewhere. The small works are often curiously compelling and could be considered

"folk art" objects utilising as they do the imagery of mining equipment combined with a festive arch spelling out the name of the mine or town (Fig.1). A later piece in the collection of the Victorian National Gallery is more ambitious combining; windlass and golden hole with pic, shovel, bucket and glass phial of gold dust.

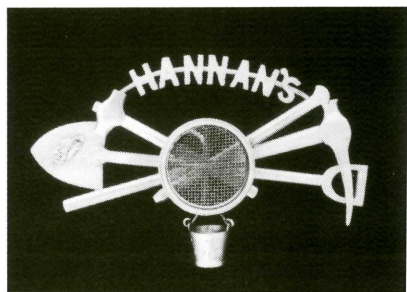


Fig.1 – Hannan's Brooch made by G.R. Addis c1894. Coll. WAM. Photograph Douglas Elford courtesy WAM.



Fig.2 – Silver spoons marked with G.R. Addis (one with the additional crown of an Adelaide maker). Won by J. Erickson at Broad Arrow at the turn of the century. Coll & Photo D. Erickson.

George Richard Addis who arrived in Hannans (later Kalgoorlie) in 1894 from Tasmania was to retail both his own work and that of wholesalers who made for him. He was supplied by Donovan and Overland and probably May and Pearl as well as Adelaide makers Schlank, Rettig, Basse or Wendt. (Fig. 2)

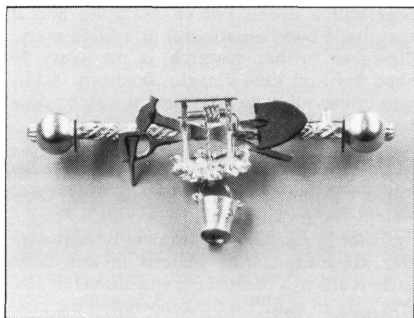
Addis was one of three sons of James and Mary Addis who migrated from Heywood in Herefordshire to South Australia. Addis senior was involved in transport on the Victorian goldfields and the family moved about. The boy was 8 years old when his father died in Castlemaine and the family returned to live in Gawler in South Australia. It is probable that he trained in Melbourne as 5 years later the family moved there. We next hear of him in Launceston, near where relatives were farming. At the 1891/2 exhibition he was "highly commended fore an exhibit of Jewellery in the process of manufacture". He enjoyed fossicking for gold and precious stones with Walter Knight a local photographer and no doubt continued this in Western Australia before he lost a leg in an accident on his farm at Tenterten in 1911. This prevented him from giving up metalsmithing to go on the land as had been his original intention. (Fig. 3) A well known character in Kalgoorlie he was reputed to have the largest collection of nuggets in W.A. These were displayed from time to time in his window. In 1933/4 Addis sold his shop to Caris Bros and retired to Perth where he died in 1937. (Fig. 4)



JEWELLER ADDIS

If in search of a bracelet or a ring  
When presents around you would fling.  
Keep this tip in your mind –  
The best you will find  
At Addis's – you would "spring".

Fig.3 – George Richard Addis as the *Bullfinch Budget* saw him 21.1.1911.



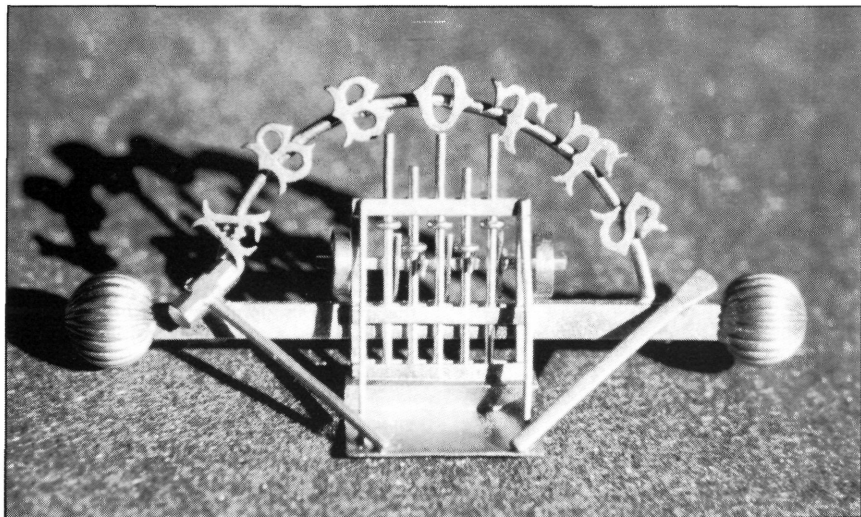
**Fig.4** – G.R. Addis Brooch featuring pic, shovel and windlass mounted on a barbers pole. Private Coll. Photo courtesy of WAM.

Probably the best known W.A. jeweller outside the state there are a considerable number of Addis pieces in public and private collections. His work is seen in a variety of styles. (See Ill. 6, p.101, *Australiana* Nov. 1988) Some are particularly fine. Some bear other makers' marks as well as his own. Some do not but are known to have been made by other hands. Other he fabricated himself and it would take a longer article to detail the ramifications of this. Suffice to say it became common practice from at least 1890 for the wholesalers to apply the retailers mark to multiple work which they also stamped with their own or other retailers

marks causing no end of confusion for later collectors and historians.

One man who almost certainly supplied Addis and others as well as retailing in Coolgardie and Perth was Joseph Pearl. The delightful "Abbotts" stamper brooch illustrated is the highlight of a series he made c1889-1910. (Fig. 5) Pearl – or a member of his staff – was one of the most accomplished modellers of mining equipment brooches seen in the state. These incorporate fretted arches of ornate letters contrasting with crisp modelling and in the case of the five head stamper, vertical lines – a small sculpture to wear or admire – symbol of the battle won.

He advertised as the sole maker of the "5 head Stamper and Windlass" brooches and to him can be attributed a wonderful collection of brooches bearing the names of Malcolm, Leonora, Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie. Each of these is stamped simply 18c (possibly 18ct as I have not sighted all personally and have had to rely on others to report the marks). Most have fluted ball finials. All have the curving 4 ended mattock type of pic combined with a shovel framing a windlass descending into a rectangular golden hole. At least six are known. One it appears was an engagement present from a Ballarat man to his fiancée. Perhaps he was working on the gold fields at the time. The jewel's box still contains the announcement. (Fig. 6)



**Fig.5** – 18ct gold brooch made by Joseph Pearl, attr. This features a five head stamper (battery) and particularly fine modelling of the piece. Private Coll. Photo D. Phillips.

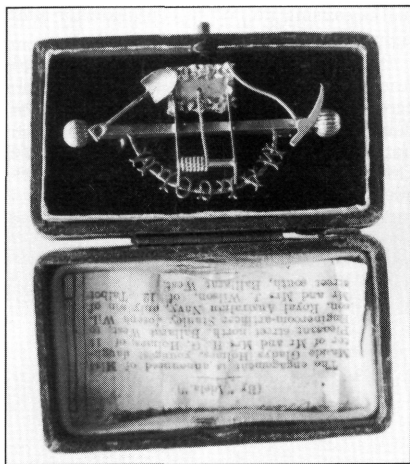


Fig.6 – Windlass brooch made by Josephy Pearl, attr. This brooch is in its original box with an engagement notice of a young Ballarat couple. Private Coll. Photo D. Phillips.

Joseph Pearl was a wholesale and retail jeweller working in Coolgardie around the turn of the century later moving to premises in Hay Street Perth. Pearl is most likely the same Joseph listed in Melbourne Directories 1887-9. In Coolgardie in 1899 he was in competition with Nesbit and Jerger, Stanley Caris and John Jerger who had been established for some time. This was the year of the International Exhibition in Coolgardie and a number of businesses were obviously attracted to the town for this event. Pearl was active in Coolgardie until 1905. After which he moved to Perth continuing in business until 1922.

Louis Boxhorn was also to retail some interesting pieces in a similar vein and there may be some link. His most interesting piece is a Queen Victoria 1897 jubilee brooch in a style akin to the mining brooches. (See Ill.1, p.99, *Australiana* Nov. 1988). According to his son he trained as a watchmaker and was probably only the retailer of the piece. However as they were estranged from an early age – the father making and losing a series of fortunes and moving around (according to the son) – further investigation is necessary before any accurate judgement can be made.

Between 1890 – when self determination was at last achieved – and the turn of the century some work appears marked with a Swan. This is still a curious puzzle and was probably connected with either self government or federation in some way. There are

only half a dozen known examples and it may have been an attempt at a State mark. However further research is necessary to shed light on this. Piaggio, Boxhorn, Addis and others all have a version of a swan on a few but not on all pieces.

Piaggio is an interesting example; he is first listed in Western Australia in Halford and Dixon's Commercial Directory for 1892. Only two pieces are known with his mark – Piaggio and Co. Perth. One is a miners brooch with the word Coolgardie pierced in one piece arched above a parallel pic and shovel. It also has a Swan mark on the brooch and the pendant bucket has Reg No 9 stamped on the base. The quality mark on the bucket is within an applied cartouche of three linked rhomboids. This method of marking the quality of the gold has been seen on two other pieces in Sydney which were minus the extra marks and suggests that the bucket may have been a finding available in Sydney from whence it is thought Piaggio came. Piaggio becomes Piaggio and McKinlay in the 1894/5 Pierssene W.A. Directory. In 1898 the firm advertised "beautifully manufactured Kalgoorlie quartz brooches, links and charms". In 1901 he modelled silver animals to be presented to the Duckess of York for her children – an emu, kangaroo, swan and dingo. Yet by 1904 he is no longer listed as a jeweller though he was known to continue living in the state.

This is a typical story of the men who came and went during the Gold rushes. They came, they saw, they disappeared. From about 1895 to 1905 hundreds came and tried their luck. Some stayed but most are just shadowy figures in Almanacks or names on odd pieces of jewellery. Of those who stayed a number were to lose their lives on the battlefields of the First World War.

One name which did not disappear was that of the Caris Brothers, John Dove and Stanley. Little is known of their early life but it is presumed they arrived from England in the mid 1890s. John Dove is first listed in Northam as a watchmaker. Stanley first appears in Coolgardie in 1894 as an importer of watches, travel bags, jewellery etc. and silver plate but by 1897 he is advertising as a 'practical Watchmaker, Jeweller and Optician. Gold manufactured into chains, rings, bracelets. Nuggets mounted as brooches etc. Engraving in Artistic style. Direct importer from the home markets'. Later boxes are marked Kalgoorlie, London and Perth. Caris work is stamped with the word Caris. Caris



brothers prospered becoming a large chain of jewellery shops around the state buying up shops as others retired (Fig.7). The firm suffered several changes of hands. The first known was in 1926 and the last being in 1986 when the last shop closed.

Early work is often in 9ct which was unusual in W.A. and often stone specimens are set in engraved gold caps. Silver manicure sets and silver mounted travelling bags were also part of their range. An interesting carnelian brooch and earrings made by Caris once belonged to Miss Louis Lochee Shenton. This is in a private collection in Perth.

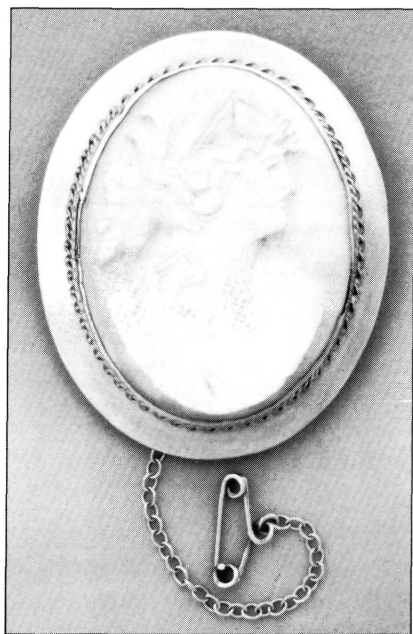


Fig.7 – Shell Cameo brooch c1905 marked Caris. Private Coll. Photo Douglas Elford courtesy WAM.

One family which was prominent for a while was the Jergers. There were a number of this South Australian family in Western Australia – many with similar names, some jnr some senior, Henry Jnr., Harry, Henry John, William Henry, Herman Mortlock, John, Mortlock, and it is impossible to sort them out. The first to arrive was in all probability the man who took over from Nesbit on his death to turn the firm into Nesbit and Jerger – presumably Henry Senior.

Their emporiums styled Goldsmiths Hall. That of Coolgardie looks rather more like a tin shed and it is not difficult to imagine it being burgled whilst the men were having their supper at eleven one night in 1895 as happened (Fig.8).



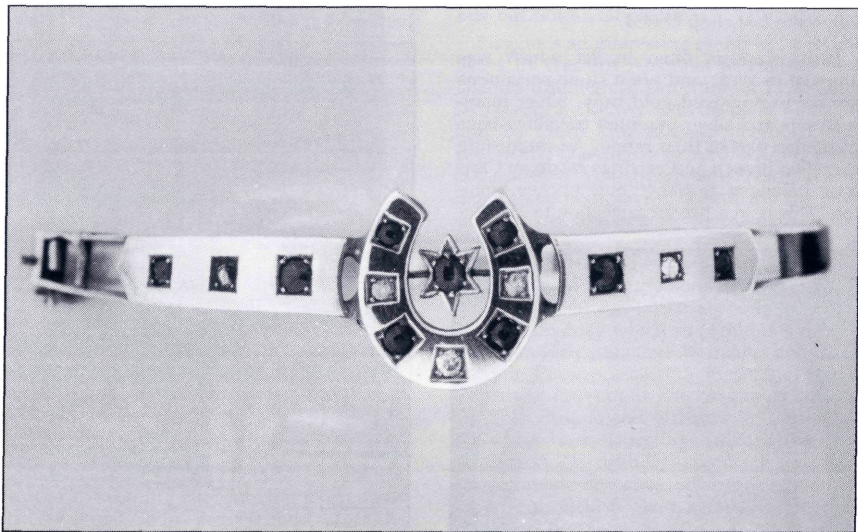
Fig.8 – Jerger's Goldsmith's Hall in Coolgardie c1895. Photo courtesy Battye Library BL 24365P.

John appears to have spent most of his time in Coolgardie, Herman in Kalgoorlie, Henry in Perth. The firm only marked the work with the carat as far as can be ascertained and worked in 15 or 18ct guaranteeing it to be Western Australian gold. John handled "Diamond Ruby, Sapphire and opal rings; brooches, medals, . . . manufactured on the premises . . . Nugget mounting a specialty".

Bernot Lindell is another maker known only by a few extant pieces. (see Ill.2, p.99 *Australiana* Nov. 1988) as is Charles Band, who was born and trained in Derby, England, moved first to New York then to Chicago, Fresno and Sydney before arriving in Western Australia in 1894 to work for Fouchard. He set up in Hannan Street Kalgoorlie in 1898. Here he made the gold bracelet which was given as a 21st birthday present to Ruby Constance Dickson on the 30/3/1907 (Fig.9).

Other smiths of interest were the Rettigs who specialised in masonic jewellery. The Levinsons who went on to become large manufacturers in W.A. The wholesale firm of

Donovan and Overland, Mazzuccelli and Downs, J.C. Taylor, A.O. Kopp and many others whose stories will have to wait for another day (Fig 10).



*Fig.9 – Ruby and Pearl horse shoe bracelet given to Ruby Constance Dickson in 1907. This was made by Charles Band, English trained, who arrived in 1894 to work for Fouchard's.*



*Fig.10 – Golden Arrow brooch commemorating an occasion at the Golden Arrow Mine managed by famous American Dr Carl Streich later associated with Mt Lyell in Tasmania. The symbols of the alluvial miner are no longer used as this was a large underground mine. Coll. WAM Photo Douglas Elford courtesy WAM.*



I hope the reader has enjoyed these brief notes culled from my Ph.D. research. If any errors are found, or assumptions prove false when further examples of work come to light, I trust you will pardon them and put it down to the trials of a jewellery historian.

As many of you are no doubt aware the major problem for the historian of precious metalwork is the intrinsic value of the raw materials which make the objects susceptible to the vicissitudes of fortune. Much has been melted over the centuries to make coin to pay for wars. Even more has been refashioned to suit the taste of the day. It is unfortunate that even in the enlightened twentieth century a great deal of historic interest has been wantonly destroyed. In difficult times such as the economic crises of the late nineteenth century and those of the nineteen thirties family relics were gathered from attics or store cupboards and sold for gold weight to bullion dealers. Probably the greatest destruction of nineteenth and early twentieth century jewellery occurred when the gold standard was abandoned, circa 1930 and the price of gold escalated alarmingly. Australia devalued the pound in 1931 and Britain followed suit but an enormous amount of material had already been destroyed. Again in 1980, when the price hit \$800US an oz and silver followed to unheard of levels, valuable antiques and items of historic interest were turned in for their metal content. Jewellers even cannibalised their stock to continue in business. The result is a greatly diminished amount available to study. This is particularly so of work that was unfashionable in the 1930s.

In conclusion let me state that an enormous amount of work was made in Western Australia in a ten year period from 1895-1905. After the brief and frantic flowering of the rushes production of gold jewellery declined in the west. Little is extant today and lucky is the owner of one of these rare pieces. Some of the reasons for this are listed above. The decline however was part of the diminution in manufacturing of any sort after federation and one of the sources of antagonism to the Commonwealth that resulted in two attempts at secession, one in the 1930s and one led by Lang Hancock more recently. When Western Australia reluctantly joined the Commonwealth her import duties were allowed to remain in place for a number of years but by 1910 these were phased out and the local industries were swamped by the cheaper larger volume goods from the more industrial east and gradually declined. The First World War also saw the end of a number of businesses. Many of the skilled artisans needed did not return from the conflict. Ever loyal to Britain, Western Australia sent more men per head of population to this conflict than the more populous states with a consequent snowballing effect on her nascent industries. Indeed despite the Bullfinch/Chaffinch Room of the 1830s with Claude De Bernales it was not until the 1950s that W.A. returned to the prosperity of 1910.

At the turn of the century however an Art School was set up and silversmithing was introduced by J.W.R. Linton. The family and students have continued the tradition started in 1904 of making fine silverware and the early Artist Craftsmen will be the subject of a further article.

## Dorothy Erickson

Dorothy Erickson was originally a teacher, who travelled frequently and extensively, living for some years in Europe and who upon returning to Australia was introduced to jewellery whilst studying painting at W.A.I.T. She graduated first with an Associateship in Art in 1973, and returned to do post graduate studies in jewellery in 1975. She became the first Resident Graduate Craftsman in 3D Design Jewellery and Silversmithing and was a visiting lecturer in 3D Design, Art History and Technology at W.A.I.T. from 1975 – 1980. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in Design in 1979 and works in a studio situation in Perth producing commission and exhibition pieces and supervising production of a range of multiples.

This is the fourth article in *Australiana* by Dorothy Erickson. They provide an important, definitive and originally researched study of a hitherto neglected aspect of Australian decorative arts.

# LAWSONS

AUCTIONEERS & VALUERS SINCE 1884



Australian brooch sold recently at Lawson's for \$20,000

For over 100 years Lawsons have been valuing and auctioning antiques and items of Fine Art. This delightful 15ct gold brooch decorated with an emu, a kangaroo and a swallow is just one of many items of Australian interest recently to come under the hammer at Lawsons.

The brooch, which was made by Lamborn & Wagner of Victoria in the 1870's, came complete with it's original case. Both the front & back feature photographic portraits on glass, one showing a Victorian gentleman and the other a little girl. It fetched \$20,000 in a recent auction of Fine Jewellery.

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# Kozminsky Bicentennial Exhibition Australian Silver, Gold & Jewellery – Melbourne 1988

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R.A. Phillips

Despite the hopes of many collectors in the field that a major institution would mount a bicentenary exhibition of Australian silver in 1988, it did not come about, and had it not been for Kozminsky of Melbourne the opportunity would have been missed. During May 1988 visitors to Melbourne were able to see at Kozminskys a spectacular gathering of gold and silverwork and jewellery, while at the National Gallery of Victoria, along with the bulk of the Altmann Collection, the William Smith O'Brien gold cup was on display. This outstanding cup was on loan as part of a travelling exhibition of Irish silver and gold from the National Museum of Ireland, and was illustrated and discussed by Kevin Fahy in the *Australian Antique Collector*, 21st edition, January-June 1981.

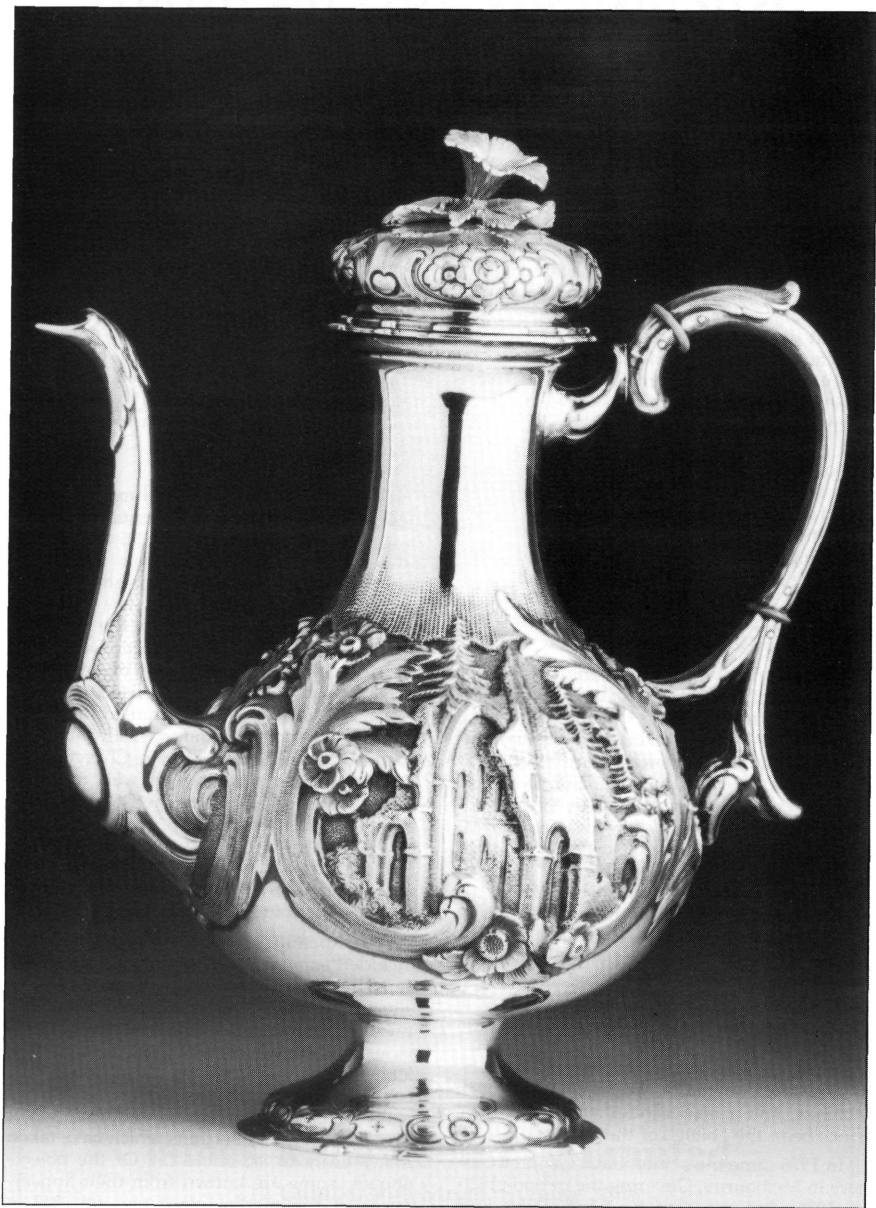
When Kurt Albrecht, of Kozminsky, wrote his book on 19th century Australian gold and silversmiths in 1969 it was the first in its field. Then in 1973 with the Lindesay exhibition mounted by the National Trust (NSW) and John Hawkins, came the first major showing. Until then collecting Australian silver had been the province of a few dealers, and a small band of like-minded collectors. Some had been attracted by the historical aspects, others by the features which branded it as distinctively Australian. Others still, it must be remembered, bought it because it so often sold at a discount compared with English silverware with its well regulated hallmarks. Not only did the Lindesay exhibition show a wide public for the first time the range of objects and styles produced in Australia last century, it also put into the hands of the public a well illustrated book describing the 191 exhibits, and a marks index which has ever since been the "bible" of the subject.

In 1976 came the exhibition at Georges Gallery in Melbourne. Covering the period c1820 to 1976, and mounted by Kozminskys and the N.G.V. Women's Association, the bulk of

the items shown belonged to the 19th century. Although it drew on some of the same holdings as the Lindesay showing, the Adelaide and Melbourne makers predominated. Sydney was represented by a few items, the other states by isolated examples, and early Tasmania not at all. Provincial Victoria came into its own with examples of Fischer and Hammerton of Geelong and Leviny of Castlemaine.

Since Georges in 1976 the Altmann Collection has been shown in its entirety at the N.G.V. (Sept. 2 – Nov. 1 1981), and at the Lindesay Antique Dealers' Fair in 1985 a major Melbourne collection was shown, and dispersed, by John Hawkins. The Altmann Collection, now belonging to the N.G.V., had earlier absorbed the collection of Barry Stern, and was the major group of Australian silver known. The Michell Collection, given to the Art Gallery of S.A., transformed that gallery's holdings. Although only about a third the size of the Altmann Collection, it was a carefully chosen and well rounded group, since added to by the Michells. The Morgan Collection, also shown at Lindesay in 1973, later found its way to the A.N.G. Hugh Morgan did not collect quantity, but for quality, rarity and historical interest. What he collected was unsurpassed.

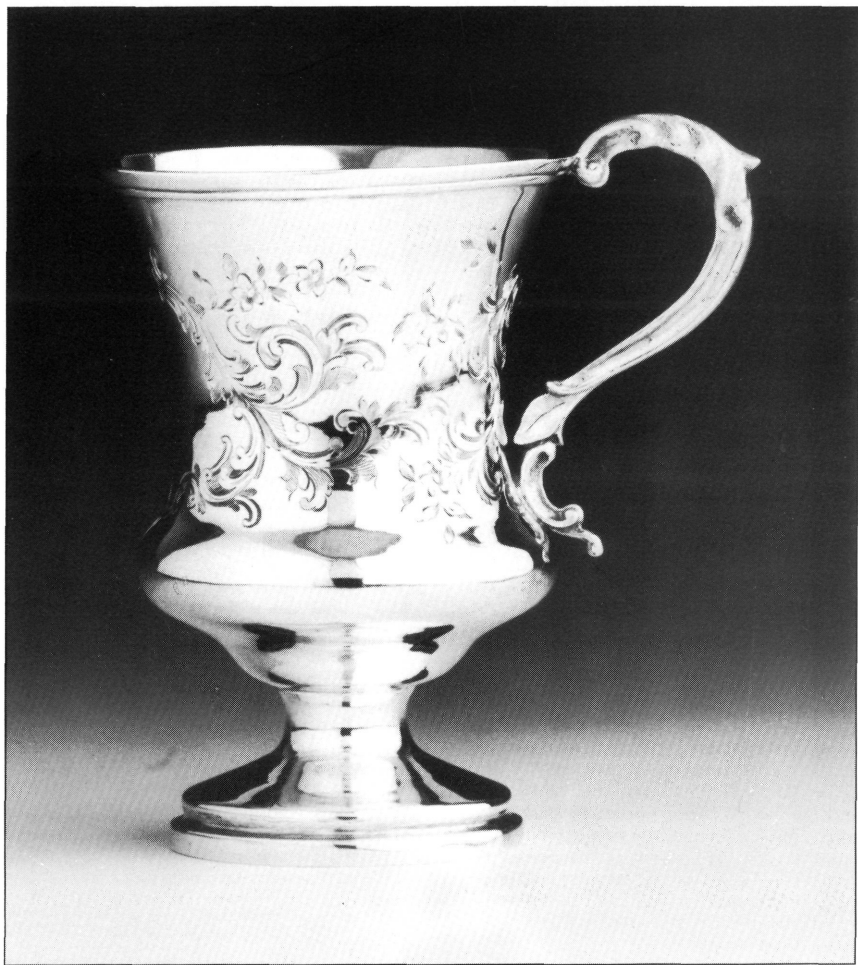
The Kozminsky Bicentennial Exhibition included some items from the 1973 showing, as well as some stunning pieces so far generally unknown. To quote from the catalogue preface, "The majority of items have not previously been exhibited either through galleries or other institutions ... Although this exhibition comprises one hundred and ninety eight items, much is represented from two of the large private collections which have taken many years to assemble ..." Of the objects shown, some are known from their appearances in the market place (eg. no. 243 at Georges in 1976 appeared at Phillips, Lon-



*Fig.1 (1) A larger German influenced coffee pot by H. Steiner. Circa 1875. Height 32cms. Weight 942gms.*

don, in June 1987, and crops up here as entry 10). A couple seem to be ring-ins (no. 50 appears to be a pair of Channel Island sugar tongs, and no. 111 – pair of ladles with emu crests – seem to be Scottish provincial). Some were absolute stunners, from the vault (the two Steiner gold cups), as pristine as when they were presented. The Fischer gold billiard trophy of 1878 was, on its own, worth a trip to Melbourne to see.

The output of Fischer of Geelong was illustrated by 13 pieces ranging from jewellery and silverwork to the gold billiard trophy presented to John Roberts (junior) in 1878 (item 71). About fifty pieces of jewellery were shown, including the gold landscape brooch attributed to Leviny (item 157), a shell cameo in Etruscan style gold mounts by Steiner (item 174), a "Bullfinch" goldfields brooch (item 150), a diamond and sapphire bangle by Denis (item 156) and a micro-mosaic brooch by Schafer (item 176).



*Fig.2 (107) An attractive christening mug by E. Burmeister. Circa 1890. Height 11cms. Weight 151gms.*



*Fig.3 (119) A magnificent five piece tea service by W. Edwards. Circa 1874. Height of coffee pot 31cms. All up weight 3,934gms.*

Apart from a small agricultural trophy cup of c1880 by Charles Brown of Brisbane (item 188), and some W.A. goldfields jewellery, there was no precious metalwork from before 1900 shown which was made outside of the three main states of S.A., Victoria, and N.S.W. This reflects the scarcity of early Queensland, Tasmanian, and W.A. silver and goldwork. Their products since 1900 were only represented by two exhibits by the Lintons (item 65 – a set of teaspoons, and item 190 – a set of coffee spoons) and one by Sargison (item 27 – a container in the form of a bed). Even early this century the situation, apart from a couple of makers, had not changed.

Other than those previously mentioned, some pieces of particular note included the two large Steiner coffee pots with their side hinged lids (item 1 and 31) (Fig. 1), a very neat 18 carat Kilpatrick trophy cup (item 34), and an unmarked emu egg cup, the body silver gilt and pierced in a foliate pattern showing a sharp contrast to the egg within (item 33). Another cup by Kilpatrick illustrated the arts and crafts/Japonoiserie influence on metalwork decoration in Australia with its engraved fan, butterfly and cockatiel (item 52). A presentation cup by H. Young was of particular interest for the inscription: "Made from the first silver from Barrier Ranges To Mrs Crespin from W. Marshall" (item 56).



Many other of the exhibits were worth individual mention, but the generosity of the N.G.V. should be noted. A Hardy Brothers gold cup and salver (items 120 and 108) and a Newman gold presentation cup, all presented to Madame Melba in 1911, were lent for the occasion by the N.G.V., not having been shown previously (the Newman cup – item 121). As noted – exhibitions of Australian silverwork are infrequent. Kozminsky's are to be congratulated for making the effort to ensure that in our bicentennial year the goldsmiths of our first century and the things they made were not passed by. Perhaps we can look forward – before too long – to seeing a comprehensive exhibition which includes the Sydney makers in full force.

Earliest of the exhibits at Kozminsky was item 98, a London made plate of 1668, attributed to the maker John Sutton. This dinner plate, with its gadrooned border, bore a presentation inscription to Lachlan Macquarie from Early Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, with a date of 11th July 1814. Next in date was a smaller plate, with reeded rim, made by John Hunt of Calcutta (item 41), but with an inscription to

Augustus Alt, Parramatta, 1819. Then came two pieces by Jacob Josephson – a ladle (item 42) with a coconut shell bowl joined to a turned ebony handle by silver ferrule, and a small circular lidded box (item 21) decorated with reeding and with an engraved border to the lid, and carrying an inscription to John Thomas Bigge "... in memory of a pleasant journey to Parramatta from E.W. Jan. 1821." Other early Sydney pieces included a pair of fiddle pattern table spoons by James Robertson (item 82), marked with a thistle, and a good heavy tablespoon of the same pattern by Dick (item 83). A small castor, unmarked but "possibly Sydney" and dated to the first quarter of the nineteenth century was also shown. It bore a crest of a kangaroo in front of a "tall boy" – otherwise a "black boy" bush (item 68).

Adelaide silver of the pre-gold rush period was represented by a set of six fiddle pattern table forks by Pace (item 54). The marks of these included the surname in full, a Maltese cross, and the number 11 (probably a fineness mark). The earliest marked pieces otherwise from Adelaide included item 103, a fine lidded Steiner standing cup dated by inscrip-

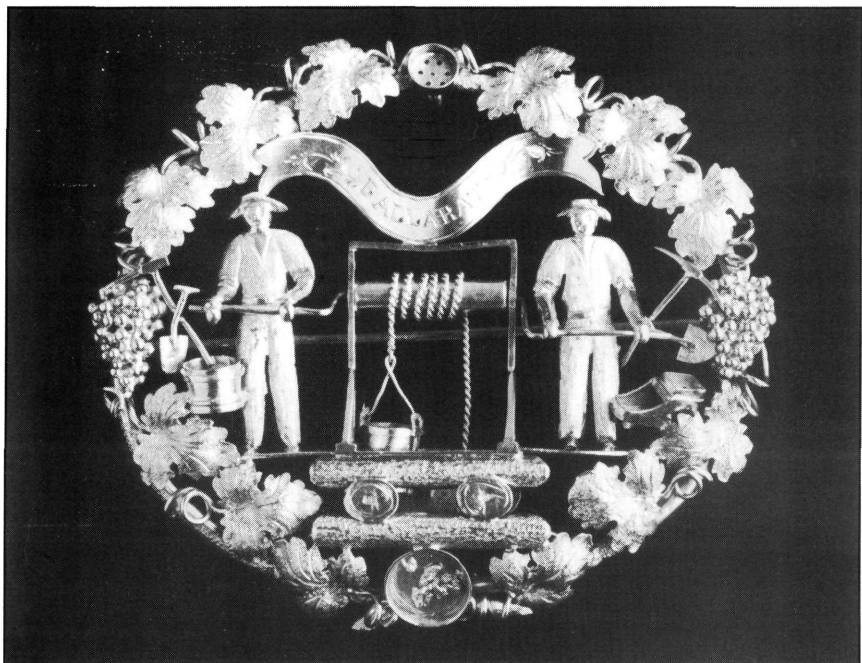


Fig.4 (158) A particularly fine goldfields brooch.



*Fig.5 (198) A highly important 20 carat gold ewer by H. Steiner. Circa 1870. Height 31.5cms. Weight 647gms.*



tion to 1885, but stylistically one of a small group of outstanding cups he is thought to have made c1865-1870. Item 73, the Wendt counterpart to the foregoing, was the tall lidded trophy cup he presented for the Duke of Edinburgh's Stakes of 1868. Of conventional form, this cup was outstanding for the brilliantly chased Royal coat of arms to the bowl and for the finely cast and chased racehorse finial. The Adelaide Hunt Club Cup of 1870 (item 198) (Fig.5) and the Adelaide Cup of 1879 (item 197), both large and well proportioned 20 carat gold ewers by Steiner showed the style of the Adelaide goldsmith at his best. The earlier ewer was described as "The Renaissance style gold jug with long curved lip, inverted pear shaped body, pellet border to the knop and spreading circular foot." The 1879 jug was "Plain tapering cylindrical body with short lip, waisted foot ... Straight handle with bifurcated upper and lower joints." This later jug pointing the way to the stylish Steiner and Brunkhorst claret jugs of the 1880s and 1890s. Both jugs were well engraved and in mint condition. The more elaborate side of the silversmith's production was shown by the "arboraceous centrepiece" with its two emus and three kangaroos, by Steiner c1875 (item 139).

The earliest of the Victorian exhibits was item 24, a 3cm long ladle with simple raised bowl and turned wooden handle, engraved "BENNETT MELBOURNE" underneath and

"Lamb Inn" within a scrolling cartouche to the front. The name of the inn was engraved in fine sharp script, and shows it to be a companion piece to the trivet in the collection of the A.N.G., and to date to c1840. A large biscuit or food box (item 48) – diameter 23.5cms – was engraved around the flat cylindrical side with a bushland scene with aboriginal hunters. Despite the presentation inscription for 1866, the makers' mark of W. & C. Bennett could date it to the decade of the forties. The 1850s were represented by a trowel of 1855 (item 39) signed by J. Bates, and presented to Charles LaTrobe. Once into the 1860s though, the burgeoning local silverware industry, largely due to the initiative of William Edwards, was shown by a shoal of exhibits, 19 by or attributed to Edwards c1860-c1870, with another eight or so with his marks dating later, including the massive five piece tea service (item 119) (Fig. 3) presented to Alexander Watson in 1874. Also dated to the mid 1870s was the large Brush & Drummond centrepiece (item 180) with its tree fern stem, aboriginal hunters, and plethora of fauna. A representative of the gold rush was the imposing Ballarat gold brooch (diam. 6.8cms, item 158) (Fig. 4) with its two diggers and their equipment surrounded by fruiting vines.

*Photographs courtesy of Kozminsky, Melbourne. Numbers within brackets refer to the published catalogue references.*



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# A History of Music in Australia

Early Period – New South Wales: 1827 – 1833

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James Lincoln Hall

During the years 1827-8 there was a temporary dearth of musical activity. Sydney had neither the population nor the financial strength to support any constant form of entertainment. A drought in the colony from 1827 to 1829, and a depression in England, played havoc with the financial stability of the settlement and for three years caused a decrease in the flow of free immigrants.

The lull in musical affairs came to a halt with the completion of Barnett Levey's 'Royal Hotel' in 1829. For in the *Assembly Rooms* attached to the hotel Levey held a series of concerts. Such a show of personal initiative got a cold reception from officialdom. In 1828, whilst the building was in the process of construction, the *Sydney Gazette* – directed from Government House – took a discouraging view. 'A Theatre has been spoken of for some months past, as likely to be set on foot in the town of Sydney. We very much question the policy of such a species of amusement being as yet introduced amongst us. However laudable and spirited it may be in individuals to contemplate and enter upon such a subject, yet we are decidedly of opinion – not that we are in any way desirous of affecting the interests of any party who may have embarked in such an undertaking – that the state of colonial society is as yet unfitted, and wholly unprepared, for the establishment of a Theatre . . . however Australia may be advanced in other respects, she is not prepared for the establishment of a Theatre'<sup>1</sup>.

However, a *Gazette* notice of the following month makes it clear that Levey did not lack public support. 'The Proprietor . . . returns his sincere Thanks to those Ladies and Gentlemen who have so handsomely stepped forward to engage Boxes, and have sent Play and Music Books to, and for the Use of, the Theatre . . . The Proprietor hopes, by a fair Trial, to meet with that Patronage which so eminently distinguishes the English, the Irish, and the Scotch'<sup>2</sup>.

The enterprising Mr. Levey finally overcame reactionary sentiment, although a concert hall took the place of the proposed theatre. A year later we learn of his success. 'That enterprising Colonist, Mr. Barnett

Levey, has just obtained from the Government a License to open, at his magnificent Hotel, a concert of vocal and instrumental music. He intends to commence business forthwith. The spacious hall intended for his theatre will be elegantly fitted up for the purpose, with orchestra, boxes, and every convenience required. Colonel Allan has obligingly given permission for the band of the 57th to assist Mr. Levey's first operations; and it is the determination of the proprietor to conduct his concern on the most respectable footing'<sup>3</sup>.

Levey now called for vocal assistance for his concerts from the general public. This indicates that by this time – owing to the efforts of our early teachers, and a steady flow of immigrants – a section of the musical public was fitted to respond to such a request.

'A Licence having been granted to the Proprietor of *The Royal Hotel* to hold and have Concerts, Balls, etc., at his House, and be considered as an Assembly Room, he thereby solicits such Vocal Talent, either with or without pay, to those who may please to step forward and lend their aid in this harmless amusement. In the mean time Boxes and Seats may be taken; families, etc., wishing so to do, may see a Plan by applying at the Bar of the Hotel, when every information will be given'.

'The Public may rest assured that the strictest attention will be paid to preserve good order, and that such Entertainment will only be produced, as will amuse and instruct'<sup>4</sup>.

Levey's first concert, which was 'numerously attended', was held on Thursday, 20th August, 1829. 'The vocalists as well as the instrumental performers acquitted themselves in very respectable style, making every allowance of course for a first night, and the audience appeared perfectly satisfied'. *The Monitor* continues in more detail. 'Mr Levey's Theatre was well filled on Thursday night. The sound of the Theatre is better than that of the School room in Castlereagh-street, where the former Concerts were held' . . . The Grand Overture in *Lodoiska*<sup>5</sup> was not so well

executed as could be wished; but the deficiency of stringed instruments being irremediable in this Colony, it is vain to regret the loss of them. The first song, by Miss Cooney, *O No! We never mention him!* displayed the clear and powerful voice of this young lady . . . We heard a thorough judge of vocal talent say, that this young lady only required lessons from the first masters, to become a first-rate singer, fit for the London stage . . . Master Josephson<sup>10</sup> accompanied Mr. Sippe on the pianoforte in performing a *Fantasia* with considerable taste and skill. Mr. Levey sang a comic song . . . Mr. Sippe conducted the band with his usual talent, and made the most of it.

'It has been suggested, that no refreshment should be allowed to pass out of the Saloon. Jellies and porter were profusely taken by the company in the boxes. Segars also were attempted to be smoked too near the boxes'<sup>11</sup>.

It would seem, from the *Monitor's* references to the capabilities of Miss Cooney and to 'the deficiency of stringed instruments', that Sydney was becoming aware of its local musical talent – and its musical shortcomings. A certain sense of pride is also implied.

The Concerts which followed introduced another lady vocalist, a Mrs. Edmonds – and Messrs. Aldis, Hall, and Davis. Comic songs were given by Levey in his 'own irresistible spirit of drollery'; and Messrs. Edwards and Sippe played violin duets. By this time the talented flautist 'Mr. Josephson, jun.', whose execution on that instrument is so well known that commendation were needless, had apparently made a name for himself. The singer Mr. Clarke was evidently appreciated, as he is spoken of as 'an old favourite at the Sydney Amateur Concerts'. As well as Mr. Sippe, the orchestra – which contained 'wind instruments and violins' – was conducted by Mr. Gee, Bandmaster of the 39th Regiment, who 'led and managed matters, we understand, in a manner creditable to himself and gratifying to the auditory'.

The two contemporary newspaper extracts which follow give an insight into the social feeling of that period. The first summarises, and probably represents, the general public reaction to the entertainment enjoyed at our first concert hall. It is permeated by a certain nostalgia for *our native land*<sup>12</sup>, and there is an awareness of the social value of such gatherings. The opening reference to 'some stern moralists' is typical of the times.

'Whatever objections may be raised by some stern moralists to amusements like that which we have noticed' (the Levey concerts), 'it must be admitted that they are productive of one good at least, particularly in this disjointed society, namely that of bringing the Colonists into more friendly intercourse with each other. For this reason of itself we are disposed to promote them. But there is still further reason, not less cogent, in the tendency to which such meetings have to excite a pleasing recollection of our native land. Separated as we are from much that is dear and precious to us, those innocent amusements are calculated to unite the woe stricken and the gay of the soul on looking back on the past with composure. The memory of departed enjoyments appear through that softening medium which, though it may dim their brightness, does not impair their attraction; while the shapes of past regrets, though they may be sad in their bearing, are no longer threatening in their aspect'<sup>13</sup>.

The second extract abruptly reminds us that New South Wales was still primarily a penal settlement. It comes unexpectedly in the midst of a review of one of Levey's concerts held on Monday, 19th October, 1829 – a 'Vocal and Instrumental Divertisement'<sup>14</sup>. 'We love the moral, edifying, and intellectual drama, and any approach towards that shall meet our countenance. But we forget Botany Bay is at the antipodes of refinement; and however they may patronise dog-fighting, cock-fighting and pigeoning, when set forward by *Honorable* names, it is not to follow that Botany Bay puritans . . . puritans aping to be *Honorable*, should countenance such carnal abominations as good moral plays. Never think of it'.

Before continuing further with Levey's important work, let us take a look at a party held at Government House in 1831. It is both instructive and amusing. Lieutenant C.F. Havelock<sup>15</sup> visited Sydney in September. He dined at Government House, 'where there was a ladies' party, which could boast of no beauty, some excruciating music, and a quadrille. An odiously conceited Captain A——, of the Indian Army, played the flute with such violence that I hope he has broken his wind'. The Lieutenant had first landed at Hobart on 4th August, 1831, on the convict ship *Proteus*. When his troops disembarked, the entire township turned out to admire the sight, 'the band of the 63rd dandying us through town'.

This was the first year of the governorship of Sir Richard Bourke,<sup>17</sup> who was one of Australia's most able Governors. He has been credited with having given a great stimulus to the social life of the Colony. His daughter was a cultured and talented musician, who afterwards became Lady Deas-Thomson.<sup>18</sup> This position gave her a good deal of influence, and she took a keen interest in all musical activity, encouraging and fostering Colonial talent of the early thirties. She was, in fact, Australia's first patron of music.

Two advertisements in the *Australian* of 9th December, 1831, tell us where some of the instruments came from which were used in the orchestras of Barnett Levey's Concerts.<sup>19</sup> The first is a pert little notice headed:

'VIOLINCELLO

THE Undersigned requests, that the party who borrowed a Violincello some twelve week's back, will immediately return it.  
G. & J. PAUL'

This somewhat enigmatic statement is explained by an advertisement on the same page. 'AT JOHN PAUL'S GENERAL WAREHOUSE George-Street. The following late additions to various other PROPERTY:- LOOKING GLASSES ... CUTLERY ... SHEFFIELD PLATE ... STATIONERY. MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

A beautiful tones and highly finished pedal harp, rose-wood cabinet pianoforte, two square ditto, double bass violin - cellos, tenor and other violins, flutes, a large assortment of printed music, very cheap.'

Another extract draws our attention to St. James' Church and its organ. This - Sydney's first real (pipe) organ<sup>20</sup> - had been recently installed, its first player being the pianoforte tuner, James Pearson. The extract is written in a confusing manner, as if the writer's intention was to 'dam with faint praise'. Perhaps he was as 'confused' as he sounds. 'A 'Mr Merritt has been induced into the duties of the organ loft at St. James'. He made his coup d'essai on Sunday last, from which we should not be at all disposed to infer that the muse has gained by the succession of this gentleman to Mr Pearson. A trumpet-stop recently arrived will add to the mellow base of this organ. Mr Merritt by no means belies his name, whoever (sic), for though stone blind, his faculties of locomotion, dexterity of finger, and fineness of ear are mediocrity.'<sup>21</sup> What the public thought of Mr Merritt we do not know. The next we learn of him is that he has left the Colony for Launceston on the *Bolina*.<sup>22</sup>

And now to return to Mr Barnett Levey. His 1829 venture did not prosper and only six concerts were given, but the ambition to have a theatre in Sydney still waxed strong within. In 1832, he tried to rouse interest in his ideal by holding a series of four *At Home* Concerts. As with his 1829 Concerts they were held at the Assembly Rooms of the Royal Hotel; the first on Monday, 10th September, 1832.

The very flattering applause of a respectable and numerous assembly on one occasion, has encouraged Barnett Levey to introduce himself with

HIS AT HOME

strengthened by the permission of the Authorities; and he will appear in two parts'. The two parts consisted of a farce cum musical comedy about a mail coach accident in which play action was interspersed with songs. Most of them were sung by Levey, such as *Mr Barney went one day to Limerick Fair and Tippetwitchet*. The entertainment was designed for popular appeal, as this interesting comment indicates: 'Miss Manglewurzel, a Dutch songstress, was a shus come to London to sing for the Enklisk peoples, vas gives so much money to forigners to sing vat the Enklisk know notink apont. Recitative and Air ... A professional Gentlemen will accompany the Songs, assisted with a Band of Music, which will introduce several English, Irish and Scotch airs ... Tickets:- 5s. each, to be had at B. Levey's, Park-street. Doors open at 7 o'clock, to commence at 8 precisely.

P.S. - On so arduous an undertaking, it is hoped that no repetition of the songs will be called for'.<sup>23</sup> The 'Band of Music' was that of the 17th Regiment, its bandmaster being Mr Lewis, 'a very excellent performer on the clarionet'.

Levey planned to open his theatre in Christmas week 1832, but because of the usual inevitable delays, the opening was postponed until late in the following year. However, 'a tasty stage was fitted up in the saloon of the Royal Hotel, and a tier of boxes erected, with the necessary seats, in the pit', and on 'Wednesday evening (26th December, 1832) the Comic Muse made her debut in this colony with a good grace'. A crowded house<sup>24</sup> witnessed 'the nautical melo-drama, in three acts, of *Black-Eyed Susan*, or *All in the Downs*', and 'the well known Comic Farce of *Monsieur Tousein*, which kept the house in a roar of laughter from beginning to end ... During the evening the band of the 17th Regiment,

kindly lent by Colonel Despart, performed several beautiful pieces by Rossini and Mozart in a masterly manner'.<sup>25</sup>

In the meantime, before the opening of the theatre proper, another important event took place in 1833. The first Sydney Philharmonic Society was formed.<sup>26</sup>

#### 'PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY OF SYDNEY

To the Editor of the Sydney Gazette

Sir,

As Sciences and Arts are so closely connected, I feel much pleasure in acquainting the public, through your respected journal, that a society of the above description has been formed in our town ... Messrs. Edwards, Sippe, Cavendish, F. Wilson, etc., are connected with the institution ... we congratulate the lovers of musical science upon this opportunity to improve the minds of our fellow citizens.

Dr J.L.<sup>27</sup>

In the next month music classes were organised under the supervision of 'certain members' of the 'Sydney Mechanics'<sup>28</sup> School of Arts.<sup>29</sup> The classes included instruction in mathematics and drawing, and were held 'in the Temporary Lecture Room of the Australian College'<sup>30</sup> (the Gallery of the Scots Church).<sup>31</sup>

On Saturday 20th July, 1833 a temporary theatre was opened at Nash's Long Room, Parramatta. It was under the management of Mr J. Meredith, who was one of Levey's chief actors. Two plays were given: Coleman's *Incle and Yarico*; and *The Spectre Bridegroom*. There was no music on this occasion but in October a concert was held there 'respectably attended, but not crowded, under the direction of Mr Lewis (with his Regimental Band). The much admired song of the *Cold Flinty Rock*, was sung by a gentleman of the name of G.F. Laurent, in a most masterly style, with great applause; Mr Meredith sang his comic Songs admirably; the whole of the performance went off with great satisfaction to the audience'.<sup>32</sup> This is the first definite evidence that music and its influence had penetrated beyond the outskirts of Sydney Town. Together with the Mechanics' music classes, it indicates the steady growth of musical activity.

At last, on 5th October, 1833, Levey's much talked of theatre<sup>33</sup> opened its portals. It was announced in the following grand manner:

#### 'THEATRE ROYAL, SYDNEY

It is with no small degree of pleasure that the undersigned (after much procrastination and many disappointments) is at length enabled to announce to his Friends and the Public the opening of the Sydney Theatre.

'The readiness with which His Excellency the Governor<sup>34</sup> has granted a License, and the kind attention with which He has treated every communication relative to the Establishment, call for the universal thanks of those connected therewith, and the gratitude of a discerning Public. The undersigned has more particularly to offer his acknowledgements, and trusts that his strenuous endeavours to please will be crowned with success...

'The Orchestra will be composed of men of high respectability<sup>35</sup> and of the first musical talent in the colony...

'On the rise of the curtain the National Anthem will be sung by the whole strength of the Company; immediately after which, an original Address, written expressly for the occasion, will be spoken by Mr Knowles.

'The dramatic performances<sup>36</sup> will commence with the highly popular molo-drama of *The Miller and his Men*; after which, the amusing farce of *The Irishmen in London*.<sup>37</sup>

The theatre was built on a large scale, accommodating about 1000 people. Its prices were: dress circle 5s., second tier 4s., pit 3s., and gallery 2s. Conrad Knowles, leading actor and Shakespearian player, was the Stage Manager; Edwards leader of the orchestra, and Sippe principal violincello. The Scenery by Messrs. Duddridge and Fitchett; Machinery by Messrs. Fitchett and Clarke; Decorations by Mr Allen; and Dresses by Mr Alfred.<sup>38</sup>

Knowles 'original Address' began thus:

'Patrons and Friends! (for by these names so dear  
We sure may call on all assembled here;)  
At length we view, and view with honest pride,  
A Pile, for which full many a heart hath sighed ...'<sup>39</sup>

The *Gazette*, whose reviewer was not present on the occasion, published 'the foregoing critique, which was handed to us by one of the audience on Saturday evening'. It was considered 'to be somewhat harsh in its tone'. 'The muster'<sup>40</sup> of heads at the opening was great, but the talent was limited - The chorus and songs<sup>41</sup> was drowned by the

orchestra. The music was not sufficiently full and was occasionally out of tune! The Band of the garrison would have made the walls vibrate, while in remote parts of the house, the phil-harmonic society's instruments were weak. There must be a stronger Band to give effect to the performances of the evening...

'The decorations of the theatre are tasteful, and the arrangement of the boxes, if preserved, will undoubtedly command the patronage of the higher classes...'<sup>42</sup>

The writer was no doubt accustomed to the loud playing of the military bands, which had been in the colony since the days of the First Fleet. It is likely that the playing of the Philharmonic Society's instrumentalists would have been more sensitive. A paragraph from the *Australian* must be added: 'The only thing which to us appeared incomprehensible was, the meaning of the Dress Circle, for a more heterogeneous assemblage of dresses can scarcely be imagined. Here were gentlemen with their hats on (one of whom had actually forgotten to take his pen out of his ear) and their ladies with infants at their breasts, - we hope to see this corrected'.<sup>43</sup>

On the 31st of the month the Governor caused a social stir by visiting the theatre for the first time. The *Monitor* sagely remarked that 'His Excellency considered it politic to patronize this intellectual, civilizing, and consequently, most useful and patriotic of all public amusements' ...<sup>44</sup> An impressive and respectful notice was published to fit the occasion:

THEATRE ROYAL, SYDNEY  
THURSDAY, 31st OCTOBER  
WILL BE PERFORMED,  
By Command of His Excellency the Governor,  
Who has expressed his intention of honouring the Theatre with his presence.  
COLEMAN'S FAVOURITE COMEDY,  
In 5 Acts, called  
THE HEIR AT LAW...  
AFTER WHICH  
(ALSO BY COMMAND)  
THE POPULOR FARCE OF  
HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS.  
In the course of the Piece, the Minuet de la Cour and Gavotte, by Mrs Love and Mr White. Doors open at half past six, to commence immediately on His Excellency's entering his Box...

Vivant Rex et Regina'<sup>25</sup>

The first account was given by the *Monitor*. 'The appearance of the House on the rising of the curtain, was very good; well lighted; neatly and commodiously fitted up; the boxes lined with red cloth or baize, studded with a good allowance of golden-headed nails; a capital orchestra, not greatly inferior to that of Sadler's Wells; and his Excellency's box adorned with a modest Canopy, as a mark of loyal and respectful distinction. On taking his seat, he was greeted with three distinct rounds of applause; which, as it ought to do, commenced with honest uproar among The Gods, and was continued with well-bred clappings and tappings of canes among the boxes, graced with elegant and well dressed females of rank and respectability'.<sup>46</sup>

However the most interesting description of this auspicious occasion appeared in the *Herald*. 'On Thursday night last, His Excellency the Governor, attended by several gentlemen and ladies of distinction, honored the Sydney Theatre with his presence, agreeably to announcement. The house was crowded to excess; from gallery to pit, and in the dress circle, could be recognized, a considerable portion of the beauty, rank, and fashion, in and about the metropolis ... His Excellency appeared much pleased with the performance ... The Chief Justice was also in attendance, and appeared to be gratified at the performance, as it proceeded. The music was chaste and harmonious - free from that jarring discord which on other occasions has offended our ears. The seraphine,<sup>47</sup> a delightful instrument in the chamber, was here introduced, but it certainly has not sufficient fulness of tone for a theatre; with that reservation, its strains were most harmonious,<sup>48</sup> and Mr Cavendish, who played upon it, displayed great execution and taste, accompanied by Mr Stubbs' flute, which commanded the admiration of the house, and was loudly applauded; a more exquisite specimen of taste and execution on that instrument is seldom to be met with in this Colony.

'Altogether this evening's amusement, was incalculable improvement on any former representation, and gave great satisfaction. The conduct of the whole of the audience, was most orderly and praiseworthy, no individual evincing the least disposition to give annoyance to the very respectable families which appeared in various parts of the house. His Excellency retired after the entertainment, and the animated scene which presented itself altogether, on the occasion, will



be long remembered by every one who had the pleasure of visiting the Sydney Theatre, on that evening.<sup>749</sup>

For some years afterwards music was invariably associated and featured with drama in New South Wales. It helped to make the programmes more substantial and varied, and also served as an agreeable interlude between dramatic works, and a relief from dramatic tension (and perhaps, at times, boredom). Australian musical taste was not yet well enough developed to sustain interest in continuous concert seasons of instrumental music. But gradually, as opera established itself after 1834, music assumed its rightful place in the theatre and the concert hall.

1. The comic singer of the 1826 concerts. See *'The Canon'*, April 1951, pp.421,424, 427.
2. Its approximate site is now occupied by Dymock's Book Arcade. The building was one of a set designed by the famous convict architect Francis Greenway (1777-1837), who in 1817 was appointed official Colonial Architect by Governor Macquarie. He designed many of Sydney's early buildings, including the Old St. Philip's Church, St. James' Church, and the Government Stables – now the State Conservatorium of Music. In 1819, requesting Lord Bathurst to increase Greenway's pay from 3s. to 5s. a day, Macquarie stressed his 'Scientific Skill, Judgment and superior taste'. For a most interesting and scholarly account of this outstanding artist, see *'Francis Greenway: His Life and Times'*, by M.H. Ellis (The Shepherd Press, Sydney, 1949).
3. *'Sydney Gazette'*, 30th April, 1828, p.2.
4. *'Sydney Gazette'*, 26th May, 1828, p.1.
5. *'Sydney Gazette'*, 20th June, 1829, p.2. In this issue there is also a notice referring to Sydney's first bookshop. 'We are pleased to see something like a bookseller's shop making its appearance in Sydney. Mr McGarvie, at the Australian Stationary Warehouse, has a pretty fair number of volumes on sale, amongst which are some works of the very first class'. It is interesting to recall that the first music shop was opened in 1824. (See *'The Canon'*, March 1951, p.374). The Australian Subscription Library was founded in 1826.
6. *'Sydney Gazette'*, 23rd June, 1829, p.1. The notice ends by adding: 'P.S. Moon-light Nights will be selected for the Concerts' –

reminding us that any form of street lighting was as yet unknown.

7. *'Sydney Gazette'*, 22nd August, 1829, p.2.
8. These were the 'Sydney Amateur Concerts' of 1829. See *'The Canon'*, April 1951, pp.421-427.
9. A Comedy in three acts. There are two versions; one by Cherubini (1760-1842), and another by Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766-1831). Both are based on the same story. They were given first performances within a month of each other in 1791.
10. The young flautist. See *'The Canon'*, April 1951, pp.421,428.
11. *'The Monitor'*, 22nd August, 1829, p.3.
12. Note that 'our native land' here refers to England.
13. *'Sydney Gazette'*, 19th September, 1829, p.3.
14. This Concert included four overtures – 'Grand and Favourite Overture – Der Freischutz, Weber'; 'Overture to the Salve – Bishop'; 'Overture to King Henry IV'; 'Overture to the Miller and his Men – Bishop'; and a 'Quartette – Norn, Basoon, and Clarionettes'.
15. *'The Australian'*, 21st October, 1829, p.3.
16. Havelock's name is written in pencil on the copy of the diary of an officer of the 16th Queen's Lancers. See *'The Early Thirties'*, by Professor Ernest Scott, *'The Argus'*, 2nd February, 1935.
17. Governor of New South Wales, 1831-38.
18. In 1833, Sir Edward Deas-Thomson (1800-79) was Colonial Secretary from 1837-56. A keen advocate of higher education, he was Chancellor of Sydney University from 1865-78, where his administrative experience proved invaluable.
19. See *'The Canon'*, May 1951.
20. Barrel-organs were brought to Sydney as early as 1815. See *'The Canon'*, February 1951, pp.336-7.
21. *'The Australian'*, 9th December, 1831, p.3.
22. He left Sydney on Monday, 27th April, 1835. See *'The Australian'*, 1st May, 1835, p.2.
23. *'Sydney Gazette'*, 4th September, 1832, p.1.
24. The Saloon of the Royal Hotel accommodated from 400 to 500 people.
25. *'Sydney Herald'*, 31st December, 1832, p.8. The performance was repeated on 27th, 29th, 31st December, 1832.
26. It was revived in 1854, but did not assume its present title, 'Royal Philharmonic Society', until 1885.
27. *'Sydney Gazette'*, 27th April, 1833, p.3.

28. A general term for skilled 'artisans' who, with the advent of the industrial revolution, required greater technical knowledge. It gradually acquired a social significance, resulting in the widespread establishment and development of 'Mechanics Institutes' – that is, 'institutions for the dissemination of knowledge among the working classes of society'.
29. The presence of Dr Lang's 'mechanics' (see footnote 34) gave rise to Governor Bourke's request for the Rev. H. Carmichael's 'opinion on the possibility and likelihood of the success of establishing a Mechanics' Institute in Sydney'. At first, meetings and (weekly) classes were held in apartments of the Surveyor-General's Office at Church Hill. Later it possessed a large library, reading room and lecture hall, and flourished well into the end of the century. Its success gave rise to the establishment of similar bodies throughout New South Wales and other States. Decadence set in soon after the turn of the century, and with the advent of the Free Library Movement, and especially the Library Act of 1945, State subsidized Municipal Libraries and their attendant activities have largely supplanted them, although a few still exist. However, their historic significance in our cultural development should not be overlooked.
30. It was finally opened in Jamieson Street in 1835 by Dr. John Dunmore Lang (1799-1878), an enthusiastic early Australian educationalist. He persuaded the Colonial Office to advance £3,500 for the building, the amount being decreased by the cost of transporting 100 Scotch 'mechanics' and their families, who arrived in Sydney with Lang on 13th October, 1831, by the 'Stirling Castle'. It was closed in 1854, due partly to over-expenditure but largely to the establishment of Sydney Grammar School.
31. 'Sydney Gazette', 4th May, 1833, p.3.
32. 'The Sydney Herald', 7th October, 1833, p.2.
33. Conveniently situated at the rear of the Royal Hotel.
34. Governor Bourke. See 'The Canon', May 1951, p.473.
35. The eighteenth century sense of the word is used here, meaning 'of some merit or importance'.
36. They are described in some detail in Paul McGuire's 'The Australian Theatre' (O.U.P., Melbourne, 1948), pp.20-21.
37. 'Sydney Gazette', 5th October, 1833, p.1.
38. 'The Sydney Herald', 3rd October, 1833, p.3.
39. The 'address' is rather lengthy. It is given in full in 'The Australian', 11th October, 1833, p.2. c.4-5.
40. An interesting word, recalling the musters of Macquarie's time when Sydney's entire population was accounted for. It was originally a military term.
41. Presumably referring to 'The Miller and his Men' which sometimes breaks into a secret, round and chorus. See footnote 8.
42. 'Sydney Gazette', 8th October, 1833, p.2.
43. 'The Australian', 11th October, 1833, p.2.
44. 'The Monitor', 2nd November, 1833, p.2.
45. 'The Australian', 28th October, 1833, p.3.
46. 'The Monitor', 2nd November, 1833, p.2.
47. A keyboard wind instrument of the reed-organ family, derived from the harmonium. It was a popular instrument of the period, but lacked the volume and total strength of the pipe organ.
48. 'The Australian' thought that 'though very beautiful, [it] is not at all adapted to a Theatre; but seems better suited for Church music'.
49. 'The Sydney Herald', 4th November, 1833, p.2.





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# Letters to the Editor

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Dear Editor,

I had not intended writing again, to comment on the two letters sent in by Paul Gregson, and in the current issue of *Australiana*, by Bruce McLeod, in reference to my article, or rather letter, on the dubious question of whether to conserve or not, old painted finishes in a very bad state of repair.

When I said that I revived old finishes, which I considered worth saving, with a mixture of boiled linseed oil, brown vinegar and methylated spirits in equal parts, I seem to have stirred up a hornets' nest! This recipe was given to me a few years ago, as a "French Polish Reviver". I have found it to be invaluable in cleaning, and removing scratches from old French polish. Late last year, I was offered a large Queensland maple wardrobe, at a very nominal figure, but in an extremely shabby condition. In fact, I was told that if I didn't make up my mind about it there and then, it would be sent to the strippers at 8 o'clock the following morning. As I knew that I would be able to revive the original finish, it seemed a terrible thing to allow it to be stripped. Using a piece of soft sheeting, I applied the polish with a very firm hand, rubbing it well in with a circular motion. As soon as I had finished each surface, I polished it off with a soft dry piece of cotton cloth. When I had finished the whole wardrobe, I repeated the process yet again. This took some hours, and was no ten minute job. Allowing the mixture to dry overnight, I then gave the wardrobe three applications of a soft, dark brown antique wax, made by Smith and Rodger, of Glasgow. I have been unable to obtain any more of this wax, anywhere. I wrote to the manufacturers, but received no reply. I allowed twenty-four hours between waxings. Paul Gregson assumed that I applied the wax directly over the polish mixture, without first letting it dry. I am extremely pleased with the final result of my work. The wardrobe looks as though it was never neglected, but kept well polished and looked after over many years. I have used the same method to restore an extremely old, and very battered cedar chest of drawers, and several other items.

I had hoped that my letter might have promoted some friendly discussion on the question of whether to save or not, old finishes

which, in my opinion, could not possibly be saved.

Yours faithfully,

*Juliet Cook*

Dear Editor,

I refer to a letter of your reader Bruce McLeod – June 1989 Edition.

Yes, I am knocking the use of a mixture of linseed oil, vinegar and meths (as outlined in *Australiana* August 1988). I made my comments, observations and recommendations with the intent of it being educational. Now, the recipe in question contained thirty three and one third percent methylated spirit and *is one* of the most common mixtures (apart from the linseed oil being the boiled variety) used by 'restorers'. Other common old recipes contain sulphuric acid, hydrochloric acid, acetic acid, paraffin oil, raw linseed oil, mineral turpentine, pure turpentine, water, ethyl alcohol, kieselsguhr, banana oil, butter of antimony (*not* ammonium chloride as described in one well referred modern publication), egg white, old beer, etc. etc. in various proportions. The very mention of these chemicals should not be construed that I advocate their use.

However, Mr McLeod proceeds to recite his popular popette (nothing to do with the concoction in question) – "the trusted recipe for generations" (his words – not mine). This mixture will only leave a deposit of linseed oil behind in the voids of the surface which will, after repeated coats become a tacky film and attract dust – it is *not* a recipe used by "conservators all over the world." It may be one used by some sections of the trade though to impart a temporary 'oil slick' gloss.

If Mr. McLeod knows nothing about the addition of methylated spirits in any polish revivers then I would suggest a little research by him would not be wasted. Methylated spirits would appear in *most* of the recipes devised over the last one hundred years or so.

Mr. McLeod is correct when he says that "meths" would be drastic on French Polish – I can't argue with that – which is why I wrote my first letter.

*Paul Gregson*

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# New Publications

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*Marion Fletcher with the assistance of Leigh Purdy*

(O.U.P., Melbourne 1989) R.R.P. \$49.95

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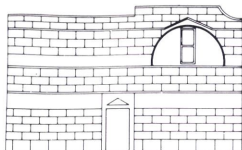
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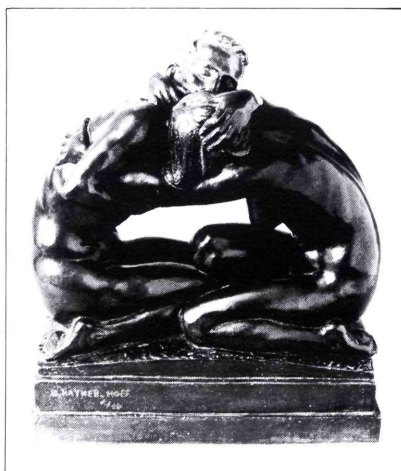
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