
AUSTRALIANA

AUGUST 1991

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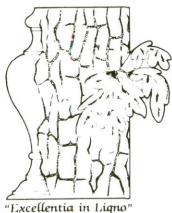


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AUSTRALIANA

AUGUST

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Editor: Kevin Fahy

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PO Box 322,
Roseville NSW 2069
Phone: 560 6022
Fax: 569 7246

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*.

Committee 1990/91:

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

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THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

PO BOX 322, ROSEVILLE 2069



SOCIETY PROGRAMME

MEETINGS

1991

THURSDAY,
3 OCTOBER

GUEST SPEAKER
ANNE SCHOFIELD

'Australian Jewellery'

Anne Schofield and Kevin Fahy are the authors of the recently published 'Australian Jewellery of the 19th and Early 20th Century'.

Members and friends are invited to bring along Australian jewellery for identification and discussion.

THURSDAY,
5 DECEMBER

AUSTRALIANA SHOWCASE

Members are invited to bring along items of Australian interest for general discussion.

Followed by a CHRISTMAS PARTY

HOUSE INSPECTIONS

SUNDAY, 2pm – 5pm Members and friends are invited to visit an important
22 SEPTEMBER

Victorian heritage listed house at Burwood and view its contents which include historic memorabilia of the Scott family of Glendon, Hunter River. An important member of the Scott family was David Scott Mitchell who established the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

Early furniture and artifacts including Australian postcards, ceramics and comics will be shown and discussed by several experts. Afternoon tea provided. Members \$12, Guests \$15. Numbers are limited, booking essential.

Society meetings are held at 7.30pm at the Glover Cottage Hall,
124 Kent Street, Sydney. Convenient street parking.

President's Report

Even the most retiring of members will have been aware that *Australiana* has been and remains in recession. During such times, people's focus turns to the necessities and inevitably neglects the niceties. We have seen a stabilisation, even a decline, in the monetary values of *Australiana*. However, our Society is concerned with intrinsic value, a value which increases with knowledge. Thus the more we know about an object, the greater its intrinsic value becomes.

Society membership gives more than just opportunities to increase one's knowledge. It catalyses contacts, friendships, and opportunities for discussion – and especially if one attends the bi-monthly meetings.

This past year has perhaps been one of marking time. Again at Dar-

ling Mills, the annual dinner was particularly successful. John Hawkins spoke to the subject of quality and it would be hard to find someone better fitted. Our regular meetings have on average been poorly attended. Your committee has been unable to determine why. The venue is central, cosy and parking is easy. The speakers have continued the tradition of high standards. Yet if attendances do not rise it will become increasingly difficult to attract speakers. Your committee therefore urges Sydney members to give greater support.

Your committee continues to try to arrange stimulating visits. That to Rouse Hill House was especially successful. The lack of interest in the proposed visit to leading con-

temporary glassworker Brian Hirst reconfirmed the disappointing lack of membership interest in more recent *Australiana*.

Australiana continues to be an outstanding publication. The change in page size is, I believe, a change for the better, and has reduced printing costs. A new index was produced and a special thank you is due to John Houston.

To conclude, I thank your committee for its splendid support during the past year; Ken Cavill, Graham Cocks, and Kevin Fahy have continued to be a tower of strength. Work is already in progress for the 1991-92 programme and we hope that it will meet with your approval and support.

Mike Darlow

Secretary's Report

There is no question that the recession is taking its toll on the membership of the Society. We have lost 20% of our 1989 membership during 1990-91.

However there is a bright side for which we have to thank our publisher, David Ell. A Society membership form inserted in David Ell publications resulted in a membership increase of 10% to offset the loss.

45% of Society membership is now interstate, which reflects

favourably on the quality of our journal *Australiana*, and in particular the efforts of our editor, Kevin Fahy, to locate new authors and material so as to maintain and improve the standard of our Society publication.

We thank the authors who have supported us during the past year and urge them to continue to put pen to paper on our behalf.

We thank our speakers for their contribution to our members'

knowledge and enjoyment for little reward. Their efforts are appreciated. To get through these difficult times the Society needs the full support of its members who, by attending meetings and excursions and enlisting new members, ensure the viability of the Society.

I would like to convey my sincere thanks to Committee members for their support during the past year.

Graham Cocks

Treasurer's Report

The cost of production of our journal, *Australiana*, has been held at a level comparable with that for 1990. The reduction in advertising revenue is not unexpected in the present climate. In part it has been

offset by the increase in subscription rates from January 1991.

The funding of our meetings at Glover Cottage Hall is still a problem. Donations towards the rent of the hall (\$600 p.a.) are urgently

sought. Once again I would thank our sponsors and advertisers for their continued support.

Overall the Society has suffered a small loss for the financial year.

Kenneth Cavill

The Australian Society Incorporated
Financial Statements of Receipts and Expenditure
for the Year Ended 30th June 1991

General Account

Receipts	\$	Expenditure	\$
Opening Balance 1.7.90	3,353.54	Insurance	135.00
		Subscription R.A.H.S.	50.00
Subscriptions	8,015.00	Government Taxes	12.00
Donation	27.00	Postage	1,160.76
Grant to the Society from allocation of funds to the R.A.H.S. by the Ministry for Arts, N.S.W.	300.00	Stationery	574.41
		Advertising	128.00
Bank Interest	97.74	Annual Dinner Expenses	2,500.00
Annual Dinner	2,600.00	Excursion Rouse Hill House Expenses	590.00
Excursion Rouse Hill House	870.00	Corporate Affairs Commission	20.00
Transfer of funds from State Maximiser Account	1,500.00	Cassette for Projector	30.00
		Presentations to Speakers	96.90
<i>Australiana Journal</i>			
Sales of Back Issues	410.00	<i>Australiana Journal</i>	
Advertising	2,025.00	Production Costs	9,660.67
	<u>19,198.28</u>	Closing Balance 30.6.91	4,240.54
			<u>19,198.28</u>

Sydney Account

Opening Balance 1.7.90	258.19	Rent	600.00
Donations	300.00	Government Taxes	3.40
Raffle / Annual Dinner	207.00	Refreshments / Raffle Prizes	88.21
Bank Interest	3.48	Closing Balance 30.6.91	77.06
	<u>768.67</u>		<u>768.67</u>

Investment Account – State Maximiser

Opening Balance	5,793.01	Government Taxes	.24
Bank Interest	486.08	Transfer of funds from General Acct	1,500.00
		Closing Balance 30.6.91	4,778.85
	<u>6,279.09</u>		<u>6,279.09</u>

Current Assets as at 30.6.91

Cash at Bank	General Account	4,240.54	
	Sydney Account	77.06	
	Investment Account	<u>4,778.85</u>	9,096.45
Deposit	Glover Cottage Hall (Bond)		<u>100.00</u>
			<u>9,196.45</u>

G.W.K. Cavill
Hon. Treasurer

"Don't Delay – Buy a Bottle To-day"

Patent Medicines in Australia

Marjorie Graham

When, in 1669, Henriette Marie died in France there was a shocked outcry. She was the widow of the beheaded Charles I of England; daughter, sister and aunt of Kings of France, and she had not attained sixty years of age. Monsieur Vallot, First Physician to Louis XIV, had prescribed a sleeping draught. The Queen, mindful of dire warnings in her English past, demurred; but later agreed to swallow the draught served up in the white of an egg. She did not wake up. Vallot lost much of his reputation but not his court appointment. The medication was opium-based; and, at that time awareness of the dangers of opium was not shared by all the medical profession; while the addictive powers had not even been thought of.

We are told that Nicolaus Myrepsus, a 13th century Byzantine, formulated "Requies Magna" ("The Great Sleep"), which was an opiate; and which, with variations, was being prescribed around the world up to the turn of the 18/19 century. Meanwhile, the 17th century English Doctor George Starkey had come up with his own pills of opium extract, and his formula was widely used as a sedative, and also for the treatment of mental illness. So for the affluent or noble patient, opium was hard to dodge. It was not until the mid-19th century, when more people were able to "see the doctor", and patent medicines began their highly successful run (for the manufacturers anyhow), that mixtures containing narcotics permeated the community at large.

It would be unfair to label the earliest doctors as "quacks". They, and the "chemists and druggists", as they called themselves, were in most cases honest, respectable

men, doing and prescribing the things they had been taught. With the mass selling of patent medicines, another less admirable philosophy came into play. But it was the 20th century before various governments took some action.

It was wrongly decided that derivatives of opium, such as morphine, posed no real threat, and this idea was adhered to; but not with unreserved support. "Cocaine" was a trade mark, first registered in the USA in 1895. A German-based firm made "Heroin", which was similarly registered in 1898. "Cocaine" pills, and "Heroin" medicine were freely available remedies bought over the counter; and, in country districts, at the local store. (Both these names are now generic.) All this was perfectly legal at a time when patent "cures" and nursing homes for addicts, were being advertised. (Backed up by a tear-jerking letter from a little girl, the Dr. Langston Institute in Mel-

bourne, sold a sure fire cure for just plain "drunkenness".)

Laudanum (alcoholic tincture of opium) was taken much as were A.P.C.s in modern times; and seemingly, mostly by women, who would drink sarsaparilla in genteel company. Taking of narcotics was regarded as a matter of personal choice – a bad habit maybe, but not something to be held up to public censure.

In Benjamin Britten's opera, *Peter Grimes*, based on a story of a 19th century village, the apothecary observes "If the old dear takes much more laudanum she'll one day find herself in Bedlam". Awareness was growing. The overall position which developed in Australia was much-of-a-muchness. In the matter of smoking opium, Australia was in line with America. The Chinese associations with this habit made it most unacceptable, not only in San Francisco and other American cities, but in Australia too. There

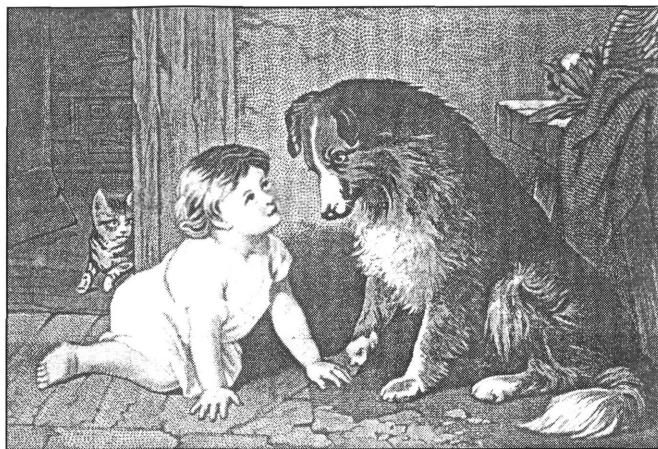


Figure 1. Coloured card for 'Dr. Jayne's Expectorant' – distributed in Tasmania, c. 1879-1880. The painting is titled 'Can't You Talk?': popular in America. The card was copied from this. The verso carries advertising.

exists a long poem, c.1800, narrating the enticement and degradation of a young girl in a "den" in Bourke Street, Melbourne. Written by a local, the poem was printed, and a copy was pasted in a scrap album made up by a girl in Pootilla, Victoria. The poem contained more than a germ of truth. And that was the blackest side of the uncontrolled selling of opium. On 24 September, 1888, the SMH shipping news referred to Catterthun (Eastern & Australian Co.) being anchored in Watson's Bay. Her cargo included "329 casks of opium". Nothing wrong with that; the market would absorb this, because that was the way it was. But the story of easy, and general availability of opium goes further back. And arsenic could be bought by ladies to whiten their complexions, by adding it to rinsing water.

On 17 October 1851, the SMH published advertisements for auctioneer John G. Cohen, and Ambrose Foss, a respected dispensing chemist established in 1820. Cohen offered a long list, not only of soap and toilet requisites, but such items as mercurial ointment, ground arsenic, murtate of morphia, and calomel. Mr. Foss recommended "Keating's Cough Lozenges", adding of their "freedom from any Opiate, or other injurious Anodyne, Medical Men being well aware of the deliterious effects of Opiates..." Addiction had still not entered the picture.

Now "Calomel" was not an opiate: it was mercurous chloride, and very popular in the nursery. Readers may recall that in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, published in 1847-8, the two faced Becky Sharp roundly condemns calomel when ingratiating herself with a young mother, then "butters up" the grandmother by singing its praises. Thackeray was something of a social reformer, as in the same story, he has another young woman refusing to give her child "Daffy's Elixer" – an invented name, reflecting the author's opinion of people who fed this sort of thing to

infants. In Australia, in the second half of the 19th century, these "elixers" had taken hold of nurseries. Some were American imports, some locally concocted.

In Adelaide, "Bickford's Cough Elixer" was advertised in 1877, as was an "elegant remedy" named "Pulmonic Cherry Cordial", which "bids fair to supersede anything of the kind yet introduced to the public". It was for "all Diseases of the Throat and Chest" – not just coughs (Bickford's claim), but right through to consumption – "entirely eradicating the Disease when not too far advanced". A nice promotion by J.C.Bock, chemist of Adelaide. He covered himself as the then readers should have noticed. What is "too far advanced"? In any case, the carriage trade may have better responded to an "elegant" remedy than an inelegant one – even if less exclusively sold by "all Storekeepers".

Australia cannot be shown to be squeaky clean, although the real Barnum and Bailey approach was firmly with the Americans, and was carried over to their product advertising in Australia. The American "push" and promotion was flamboyantly splendid – the pity was that the products mostly were not.

Can you imagine the impact on suffering Sydneysiders when the bottle came with a coloured label, and stated "Tuberculozyne Yonkerman. The ONLY Known Remedy for all forms of CONSUMPTION. Prepared and sold by The Derk P. Yonkerman Co. Ltd. 64 Pitt Street, Sydney, N.S.W.". And with the dapper man himself smiling out at you from the label. This was the sort of patent medicine which fell foul of Octavius Beale, Chairman of the Commonwealth's Royal Commission of 1907. Beale visited America, but flayed the whole industry; which he said, was "rooted and grounded in greed". The trade straightened up. In 1908 came the NSW Pure Food Act, and other states took action. It was a good start, but did not completely

HOOD & CO.
GEE'S LINCTUS
(LINCTUS SCILLAE OPIATUS B.P.C.)

DOSE—One teaspoonful (by measure) every four hours when required.

This preparation must not be given to children under six years of age, except under medical direction.

This mixture includes 8 MINIMS OF TINCTURE OF OPIUM PER OUNCE which equals 0.17% of MORPHINE and is labelled "POISON" in conformity with the Poisons Act, but if taken in strict accordance with prescribed dose is not dangerous.

HOOD & CO.
(S. J. BAIRD)
Pharmaceutical Chemists,
215 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.
Phone MU 4000.

Linseed, Liquorice and
Chlorodyne Pastilles

Allow to dissolve slowly in the mouth.

HOOD & CO., Chemists,
(S. J. BAIRD)
215 Elizabeth St., Melbourne.

Highly Medicinal for all Throat Affections
6d.
Per Box

DR. GREGORY'S
STOMACHIC POWDER

Dose—For Children, half a teaspoonful; for Adults, one or two teaspoonfuls should be taken once or twice a day in a wineglassful of water.

HOOD & CO.,
Pharmaceutical Chemists,
215 ELIZABETH STREET, MELBOURNE.
Phone MU 4000

TARTAR EMETIC.—POISON

HOOD & CO.,
(F. W. WHITE & S. BAIRD.)
PHARMACEUTICAL CHEMISTS,
215 ELIZABETH STREET, MELBOURNE.

CAUTION.—NOT TO BE TAKEN.

W. ALLAN'S
WOUND LOTION.

To be applied with a brush or feather twice a day.

SHAKE THE BOTTLE.
WILLIAM ALLAN,
Kirk's Bazaar,
Bourke Street, MELBOURNE.

Figure 2. Series of printed labels (early 20th century).

eliminate all abuses. Wider Commonwealth legislation came later. In America, the Food and Drugs Act of June 1906 made life hard for the patent medicine manufacturers, but didn't really stop them. This was done by the 1914 Harrison Narcotics Act, which stopped the free-for-all in narcotic-based goods being sold over the counter.

However, in Australia, children were still being fed paregoric (camphorated tincture of opium, flavoured with benzoic acid and aniseed), up to about W.W.I., and gleanings suggest this could have gone into the 1920s.

So-called "soothing syrups" were called to account by the American Medical Association, which also named "Dr. Jayne's Expectorant" (Fig. 1) as being responsible for the death of a child in 1908. Utterly condemned was "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" (est. late 1840s), and found to contain 2% of morphine. Both had worldwide sales, and both issued attractive cards to purchasers. A Winslow card shows a gentle mother gazing at her cherubic babe – presumably teething, but resting quietly and smiling. Would it have been a matter for wonder?

In 1910 Anthony Horderns offered its own brand of soothing

syrup. Horderns also offered "Easton Syrup" (sic). "Easton's Syrup" was an English patent medicine, which, around 1900 contained "phosphate of iron, with quinine and strychnine".

In *The Age*, 13 October 1880, Francis Longmore advertised his own "Everton Cough Remedy" and "Blood and Liver Pills". Readers may care to enquire around their families for the pre-W.W.II recollections of "Carter's Little Liver Pills", "Which do the work of calomel, without the danger of calomel ... (etc., etc.)", as radio listeners were told by a cheerful male voice. No prize is offered for filling in the rest of this advertising spiel, but some people can recite it by heart. That says much for the pervasive wording. The Carter firm started off in New York in the early 1870s, and was long lasting in Australia. Retailers gave out the "Nerve and Blood" cards – as usual, aimed at children (Fig. 3).

"Dr. Jayne's Expectorant" and other nostrums bearing his name, had a wonderful run in Australia. Chemists handed out finely lithographed cards, which had an additional "come on", as they were issued in sets – up to fifteen in one case – and just the thing for scrap



Figure 3. 'Carter's Little Nerve Pills'. This company made various pills for many years. The child is challenged to find animals hidden in the drawing. Printed in bright orange, it is just possible to see the hidden outlines. Verso carries advertising.



Figure 4. 'Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills'. American-printed as was usual; a 19th century version, pre the Indian logo.

albums. Around 1879-1880s, a Tasmanian family must have been a fairly frequent customer, and cards carry the name "H. W. Laws". Hammond Laws was a partner in Hatton and Laws which had several branches in Tasmania. He may, or may not have been a trained chemist. Dr. Jayne, M.D., was a real medico; who, by his own sayso, cured every one of his Asiatic cholera cases in New Jersey in 1852, by using his own "balsam".

Also sold by Hatton and Laws, was "Reuter's Life Syrup – Nos. 1 and 2". Both had their uses, and a card depicts a couple who between them, took a course of two bottles of No. 1 and eight of No. 2. The latter was claimed (dated New York, 9 January 1880) among other things, to be "a perfect specific for Syphilis in all its forms and stages". A Sydney chemist sold this mixture in 1879. The name is here omitted by the present writer. Lots of chemists sold it.

"Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills" from New York State, was another long lasting patent medicine in Australia (Fig. 4). As far as the present writer has gleaned, the product

was recalled as having an Indian's head on the package. These pills were on sale in Melbourne in the 1920s, so the logo was a far cry from the "childish" design of the 19th century.

"Warner's Safe Rheumatic Cure" was a big seller. The trade mark was a safe – the kind in which you place your valuables (Fig. 5). To-day, collectors seek the bottles of this cure which had an alcohol base most likely far in excess of that medically justified. Most of them did; as a card issued by "Parker's Tonic", carried the promise that it "invigorates without intoxicating" (Fig. 6). This one was made by Hiscox & Co., New York, which claimed its product as a cure for dysentery, chills, colic, malaria.... need we go on?

Apart from beauty preparations, complaints from the fair sex had the manufacturers lining up with remedies. In Australia there was "Dr. Boxwell's Silent Pill for Females" – but the name of 1903 registrant in Perth, was Martin & Company. John Simpson Abraham,



Figure 5. 'Warner's Safe Rheumatic Cure' – c. early 1880s. Part of the outer package is shown, and the daughter hold the bottle. (Coloured.)

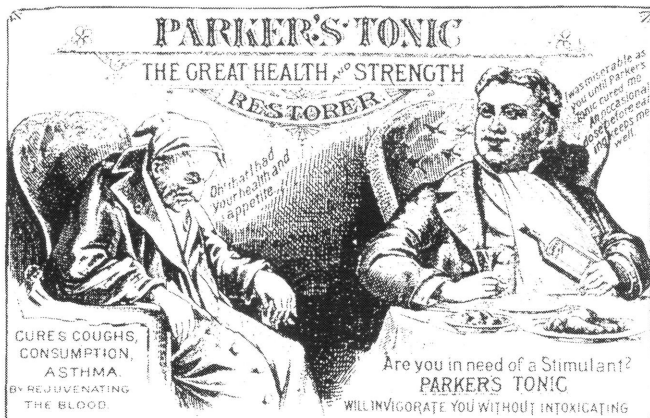


Figure 6. 'Parker's Tonic'; more advertising on verso. New York. (Coloured.)

born in England in 1847, died in Australia in 1912, was the man behind "Abrahams Pills" in Sydney. In the 1880s his advertising was not slanted at females, but by 1894 it had taken off along these lines, and the wording was more in the American style (Fig. 7).

Not all the preparations promoted and sold to women were harmless. An American card, c.1879-80, has a snowy scene on the front, and the back, covered in small print setting out all the benefits arising from taking this "vegetable compound". The small print gave you food for thought. A party, qualified to give an opinion, read, and at once named a drug well known to midwives of the Tudor period, or

earlier. With overdosing, this medicine could act as an abortifacient. It was correctly described as a "vegetable". All preparations of this type were bought under close scrutiny by Commissioner Beale in 1907.

It was quite in order for non-chemists to own a chemist shop, and in 1872 Caleb Soul went into business in Sydney, using his son's name, Washington H. Soul. This had a fine sound about it. Caleb was English, but with years of American experience; and, as an importer and dispenser of drugs, the business flourished. The shop was modelled on American lines, and there were two city addresses. The main shop, built in 1884, flew a house flag,

ABRAHAM'S PILLS,

A Safe Remedy for Ladies.

The reason is they are purely a vegetable composition of: Dandelion, and expressly suited to the constitution and requirements of women. This explains the great success and golden opinions which follow their use. Thousands say they save all trouble, effectually remove all impurities of the blood, beautify the complexion; no headaches, no pain, no flushing, no giddiness, no anxiety. They make work a pleasure and existence a joy. Superior to any other known remedy. Prepared only by

J. S. ABRAHAM.

Figure 7. Advertisement for 'Abraham's Pills' – 1894.

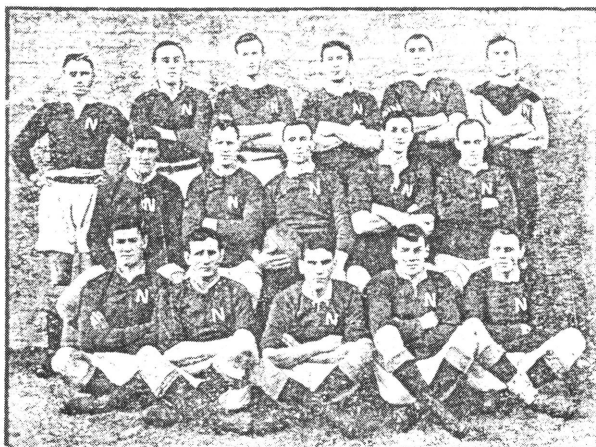
flanked by an Australian, and the Stars and Stripes. A drawing of the handsome shop appeared in an advertisement published in the Christmas, 1894, Australian Musical Album (Fig. 9). In 1928 the original Washington H. Soul died, aged 82. English chemist Lewy Pattinson opened his shop in Balmain in 1883. In 1899 Pattinson bought out Soul, and the name became "Washington H. Soul Pattinson & Co.". A public company was formed in 1902. It still flourishes.

Dr. Sheldon's (American) remedies were to be found all over Australia. His "New Discovery for Coughs, Colds and Consumption" was advertised on post card views of Fiji in 1907-8. But the same claims were still being made in Melbourne in 1923. Apparently retailers could stock and sell this medicine for coughs and colds – but consumption?

"Professor" Holloway's Ointment was what introduced him to Australia. Heart rending testimonials were printed as advertisements in the SMH in 1849, and compositors all over Australia came to know the Holloway style; and so did the public. The "professor" was London-based, and issued very good instructional cards. One set contained fifty. Now, at one card per tin of ointment... unless the kindly storekeeper would give your offspring an extra one, how many tins of ointment could the family use, before the cards ran out? Business boomed. In 1852 J.K. Heydon of Sydney was the "Sole Agent for the Australasian Colonies". A whole collection of Hollowayana could be put together, as copper tokens were issued as well as cards, and of course there are bottles to track down. In 1970 and 1971, tokens turned up, or were dug up, in Ghinni Ghinni and near New Angledool, NSW. These bore a portrait of the "professor" and were stated as dated 1857 and 1858. Token collectors may know these. It is said that in the 1870s Thomas

Holloway was spending £50,000 a year on advertising. When he died in 1883, his assets were valued at five million Pounds Sterling. The far-flung colonies certainly contributed to this achievement. The Holloway name and products lived on here until at least the 1920s.

Australia's best efforts seem to have been with the "rub it in" medications. Many were eucalyptus-based, or compounds of various gum leaf extracts, and treatments could have been quite satisfactory. As no narcotics were included the substances were not harmful, and



THE FAMOUS NEWTOWN R.U. FOOTBALL TEAM

Unbeaten Champions 1910 and 1911.

ALL THE TEAM PRAISE REXONA.

Dear Sir.—The whole of our Football Team are so pleased with the benefit we have derived from the use of Rexona, the Rapid Healer, that we have unanimously decided to give you a testimonial regarding the same. We have used it for numerous purposes in our training and after our matches both as an embrocation and as a healer for the various cuts and sores incidental to Football.

This has been a most successful year with us, and we certainly feel to a considerable extent that we owe our success to the great benefit which we have derived from the use of Rexona, the Rapid Healer.

A number of the boys have also used it for Chills, Sore Feet and Chapped Hands, and in every instance have found it to be an excellent Remedy. With best wishes for Rexona, Truly yours,

(Sgd.) ERNEST E. BOOTH,

Capt. Newtown R.U. Football Team.

Also signed by the other members of the Team.

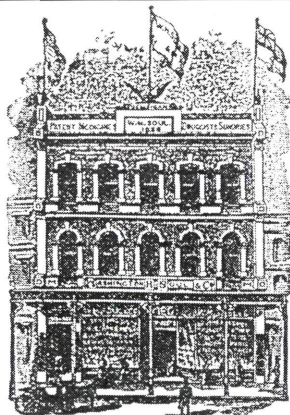
Football players everywhere will find Rexona of the greatest use in the training room. It is invaluable as a rub down for strained and tired muscles, and will rapidly heal all the many cuts and bruises acquired in the football field.

Rexona is obtainable everywhere in triangular pots at 1/6, or in larger pots holding nearly four times the quantity at 3/6.



Figure 8. 'Rexona' testimonial post card. The Newtown Rugby Union team won the First Grade Premiership in 1910 and 1911, and the Nash cup in 1908. (Card is black and white.)

158 Pitt Street, near King Street.



WASHINGTON H. SOUL & CO., FAMILY AND DISPENSING CHEMISTS, AND GENERAL DRUG IMPORTERS 158 & 268 PITT STREET, SYDNEY.

Proprietors of the renowned A. Soyer's Baking Powder. Guaranteed Pure. It aids indigestion by making pastry light and wholesome. 6d. per tin.

Thompson's Cough Linctus 1s. per bottle. Flavouring Culinary Essences, any size 1s. each.

TOILET REQUISITES IN GREAT VARIETY.

Alabaster Cream of Beauty for removing Freckles, &c., 2s. Swan Down Powders. Soap. Perfumery. Violet Powder, and all articles needed to complete a lady's toilet.

Price lists posted free upon application, and goods forwarded to all parts of this colony and intercolonial ports.

Figure 9. Advertisement for Washington H. Soul & Co., 1984. The building is dated 1884.

the proprietary line, "Rexona", is still with us. "Rexona" was fine for footballers' muscles and minor maimings, and the Newtown, NSW, R.U. Champions of 1910 and 1911 posed for a team photograph which was printed up as a post card (Fig. 8).

Around 1910, in Queensland, Joseph Marconi (some say his real name was Mahony) developed "Goanna Oil Linament". It was almost a "cottage industry", word of mouth spread the news, and the

product sold well. In 1983 the old firm changed hands. "Goanna" would go on to be part of the American battery of patent medication, as the USA authorities had approved. "Goanna" never claimed any more than that it relieved pain; no extravagant sales push was used; and, as the ointment did what it promised to do, people came back for more. The formula no longer contains goanna oil, but is a mixture of vegetable oils. The Americans must be liking it, and the col-

ourful, if rather bizarre, packages can now be readily seen on Australian supermarket shelves – pharmacies too. So it is that patent medicines have come the full circle. Their story is not all good to be sure, but it is part of our social history, when the high tech treatments we now take for granted, were years away from the trusting folk who paid their shillings and half-crowns to buy a bottle of patent medicine in hopes of health and well being.

Notices

Gold Digger Jewellery

Linda Young is working on a typology of Australian digger brooches, attempting to classify forms and relate them to international examples. She would be very grateful to hear from members with ideas on this subject.

Part of the project is to gather evidence of South African, Alaskan, New Zealand and Californian pieces. If you have such an item (or of course, any Australian pieces), she'd very much appreciate a photo or photocopy – just xerox it like a piece of paper, but without slamming the lid!

Linda Young's address is Cultural Heritage Management, University of Canberra, PO Box 1, Belconnen ACT 2616. Phone (06) 252 2079.

Colonial Furniture Exhibition for Hobart

From 12 September to 26 October this year, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, will stage an exhibition of Tasmanian colonial hardwood furniture. Its title will be "Heritage in Hardwood – Furniture in Van Diemen's Land" and the selection and documentation of the pieces to be included in the exhibition will be largely the

work of Tasmanian expert on colonial hardwood furniture, John Blaine.

Hardwood furniture, made from local timbers during the first half of the 19th century in Tasmania, is rare compared with furniture made from Australian softwoods such as cedar and Huon Pine. Some fine, interesting and very unusual examples however have been located and the generous support of local collectors in lending their valuable items for display at the Museum has made this exhibition possible.

Peter Mercer, Curator of History Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

F.W. Nissen

Queensland Manufacturing Jeweller & Watchmaker

Graham Cocks and Jack Grace

Frederick William Nissen emigrated as a young boy from Denmark in 1872 and when he was 14-16 years old was apprenticed as a jeweller to Henry L. Davis & Co. Ltd. Henry L. Davis commenced business in 1876 at 169 Queen Street, Brisbane and in 1884 he sold the manufacturing section of his business to C.D. Mossop, who in 1887 took a partner, the business becoming Mossop and Maxwell. Apparently the partnership broke up in 1891.

In 1892, F.W. Nissen commenced business on his own account, upstairs at 216 Queen Street, Brisbane. Henry L. Davis sold the retail section of his business to T. Knowles in 1894 and evidently left the retailing side of the jewellery trade.

In 1900 F.W. Nissen acquired Davis, Simpson & Co. (see plate 1) who were listed as manufacturing jewellers in 1898. In a directory for 1901 F.W. Nissen advertised that he was formerly H.L. Davis & Co.

In 1906 F.W. Nissen moved to 204 Queen Street, which he renovated extensively and constructed a manufacturing workshop at the rear of the premises capable of housing 40 workers. (See plate 2).

The *Brisbane Courier* of 6 December 1907 published a special supplement describing "Business Brisbane, the City Past & Present — with Sketches of some of the Captains of Commerce".

The editorial featuring F.W. Nissen is as follows:

"F.W. Nissen, Watchmaker and Jeweller

Mr. F.W. Nissen, whose business in Queen Street has shown such rapid expansion in recent

years, served his apprenticeship with the firm of Henry L. Davis and Co., Limited, and subsequently opened on his own account in the Oriental Chambers, where by his intimate and

practical knowledge of the trade, carefully and thoroughly acquired during the years of his apprenticeship, he soon established a large connection, which necessitated a move into more

77 BRISBANE ADVERTISEMENTS.

F. W. NISSEN,

LATE
DAVIS, SIMPSON & CO.,

Watchmaker,

Working Jeweller,

Gem Cutter,

DEALER IN —

OPALS, PEARLS AND
PRECIOUS STONES
of every description.

143, QUEEN STREET, BRISBANE
(Adjoining S. H. EAVES, Florist.)

THE BEST AND CHEAPEST HOUSE IN BRISBANE FOR . .


**Silver and Gold Watches,
Wedding and Engagement Rings,
And Every Description of Jewellery.**

Gold, Silver, Pearls, Opals, Tortoise Shell, Works of Art, Native Curios and
Antique China Purchased, taken in Exchange, or Sold on Commission.

OPAL AND GEM CUTTING
At Reduced Prices. Stones and Gems of every description Cut
and Polished by Skilled Lapidaries.

JEWELLERY MANUFACTURED ON THE PREMISES.
Old Jewellery bought, exchanged or re-made into fashionable designs.

ASSAYS OF MINERALS, METALS, &c., CAREFULLY MADE.

COUNTRY ORDERS RECEIVE PROMPT ATTENTION.

Watch and Jewellery Repairs a Speciality, and all Guaranteed.
Gold Albert Chains, &c., made for the Trade.
Public Invited to Inspect my Workshops.

DO NOT MISTAKE ADDRESS: **F. W. NISSEN,**
143, Queen Street near Finney, Isles & Co., **BRISBANE.**

Plate 1. Advertisement from *Wise O'Land Post Office Directory* 1900.



Plate 2. Cover of Nissen Catalogue of 1907.

spacious premises, and the employment of an increased staff. He purchased some years ago the stock and plant of Messrs. Davis and Simpson, and went in largely for the retail trade. His enterprise succeeded, and his up-to-date methods, coupled with an ability to manufacture his own goods, including the process of setting, engraving, chasing and gilding, led to a further expansion of the business, for which an outlet was

found about twelve months ago in the acquisition of a second shop in Queen Street. This additional accommodation, however, has had to be supplemented, and in order to meet the convenience and requirements of his customers, Mr. Nissen purchased quite recently the extensive premises in Queen Street, hitherto occupied by Rowney Bros. This shop has been remodelled and renovated, and a new window put in, which will serve to dis-

play in the most effective manner the large and varied stock which Mr. Nissen has now at his disposal. In the portion of the shop at the rear a new room has been constructed, and here the factory staff will work under most satisfactory conditions. There is ample accommodation for about forty hands, and a feature of the equipment (see plate 3) which deserved special mention is the excellent arrangement made for lighting the workroom.

The shop itself is also fitted up in the most modern style. The walls are covered with mirrors, and around the sides are five large cases and counters of black polished wood and glass (see plate 4). In the front window there is a fine display of watches, including several special lines, such as the "Nickel Perfecta" and "F.W. Nissen's Special," the latter a solid silver keyless lever, fully jewelled, fitted with compensation balance brequet, and guaranteed for ten years. In another part of the window the space is specially arranged for the display of silver plate. The articles for presentation purposes include some beautifully-chased silver caskets of pretty design, silver-plated belts, teapots, sugar basins on stands, cruets, ruby glass fruit stands etc. The jewellery comprises a fine and ornate collection of rings of all designs, mounted with gems, gold photo medallions, gold bangles and brooches and star pendants, (see plate 5) all of the latest designs and moderate in price. Amongst the gold brooches the fancy bar design with leaves and ribbon, bearing appropriate mottoes such as "Remember Me", "Forget me Not," &c. will attract considerable attention. There are also gold lace, pins, trinkets, gold muff chains and necklets in endless variety. The prices seem to suit all purses. For the Christmas season special inducements

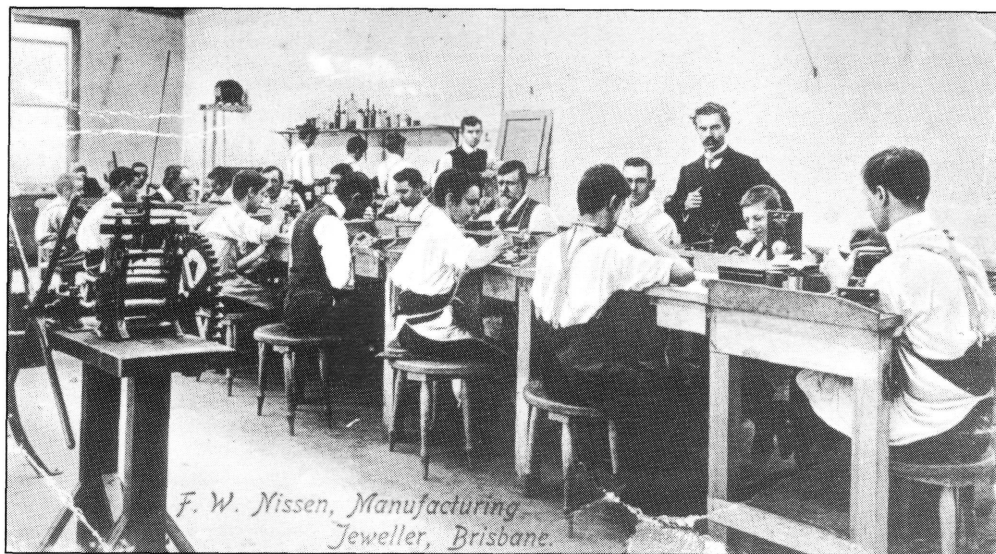


Plate 3. Photograph of Nissen Workroom, 1907. F.W. & L.W.R. Nissen standing, facing the camera.



Plate 4. Showroom and showcases, 204 Queen St.

are offered to purchasers of gifts for friends, and the assortment is so large and varied that every taste and requirement can be satisfied. The stock is new and specially selected, and Mr. Nissen's reputation for good workmanship is likely to find adequate opportunity for further display in the latest development of his business."

In addition to jewellery, F.W. Nissen also advertised presentation cups through its mail order catalogues. As re-printed below. (See plate 6).

**"WE ARE THE LEADING
CUP MANUFACTURERS IN
THE STATE.**

We are in the enviable position of being the only firm in Australia making these cups.

Some time ago we found a scarcity in the market for this style of goods, so we went to considerable expense in installing special machinery. Since then we have made Presentation Cups for most of Australia's Prominent Sporting Clubs, and hold unsolicited testimonials from them expressing great satisfaction with the work turned out. We invite Club

BANGLES
OF DELIGHTFUL BEAUTY.

The workmanship of which you'll appreciate. Made for solid service. These Charming Bangles are full of good wear. The prices are very low, quality can't be denied. We could not suggest anything nicer for a Present.

No. 374. Very Dainty Gold Bangle, with Pretty Amethyst Heart set in centre. Neat Gold Scroll and Beads at either side. 30/- each.

No. 375. Beautiful Gold Bangle of exquisite Design, with Real Amethyst or Q'and T'one Heart centre. Prettily Scrollled and set with Four Pearls. 35/- each.

No. 376. Very Pretty Gold Bangle. Two Crescents and a local Scroll Design. Set with Pearls and Sapphires. Very neat. 35/- each.

No. 377. Very Charming Gold Gem Bangle Strong and Neat. Pretty Scroll Design with Heart Centre, beautifully set with five Pearls. A Bangle that pleases. Only 5/- each.

No. 378. Very Strong Half-Round Bangle. Pretty Buckle Design. Set with one Diamond and Ruby. Real Stones. 15ct. Gold, 29/- each.

No. 379. Decidedly well made and Handsome Gold Bangle. Elaborately (based and splendidly finished. Strong Clasp and Chain. 60/- each.

No. 380. Very Heavy Gold (Up to 10/- each with Strong Fastener. 9ct. 44 1/2, 55.

No. 381. The Fashionable Bamboo Bangle Strong Joint. Clasp and Safety Chain. 9ct. Gold, 25/- each.

No. 382. Very attractive Gold Bangle. Strong Oval Shape, firmly set with one Pure White Diamond and Two Rubies or One Diamond and Two Sapphires. 15ct. 26 each.

No. 383. Very Neat Gold Bangle. Strong Flat Band. Neatly Graciously and Set with Diamonds and Rubies or Sapphires. 15ct., 44 1/2, each. 9ct. with Pearls and Rubies, 42 1/2 each.

No. 384. The very Latest in Gold Bangles. Very Strong, half round Fluted Design. The inside is flat to fit neatly on arm, and has a good joint and clasp. 40/- each.

No. 385. Heavy Gold Bangle, with Neat Fancy Scroll and Bead Design. Very Strong and well made. 5/- each.

No. 386. Unique Gold Bangle. Very Pretty Crescent centre firmly set with five Diamonds and Four Emeralds. The Design is uncommon, one that will prove an appreciated present. 15ct., 48 1/2, each.

F. W. NISSEN, JEWELLERY SPECIALIST 204 Queen Street, Brisbane.

Plate 5. Pendants – Paste and Seed Pearls, marked 9ct F.W.N.

Secretaries to write stating their wants – we absolutely guarantee to please both as regards quality and price.”

It is not known what the cups were made from. It is highly likely they would have been cast in Britannia Metal.

Nissen's workshops undertook to re-model old jewellery into 'charming new styles'. (See plate 7). An excerpt from Nissen's catalogue is reprinted below.

“Nissen's will Re-model your Old Jewellery into charming New Styles

Every mail brings all manner of old-fashioned and broken Jewellery to Nissen's to be remodelled into charming, modern styles. Remodelling is a specialty with us. You will be very pleased with both the finished article and our extremely low charge. Send YOUR old Jewellery to Nissen's. Remember, the price quoted places you under no obligation. We shall be pleased to suggest suitable designs if you have nothing in mind”.

Coinciding with Leslie William Robert Nissen (son of Frederick

William) joining the firm in 1913, a branch was opened in Bundaberg the same year. Vida Irene Nissen and Wilhemina Ivy, sisters of Leslie William joined the firm in 1916 and 1923 respectively. The Bundaberg shop closed in 1924. In 1925 the founder, William Frederick Nissen, died and a new era started when Leslie William Robert Nissen assumed control. Extracts from Leslie William Nissen's work notebook (plate 8) describe materials used for making 9ct gold alloys from sovereigns for use in the manufacture of jewellery such as the Championship medal of 1917. (See plate 9). FWN marks used since inception are shown. (See plate 10).

The building at 216 Queen Street was purchased in 1924 and the business expanded to approximately 50 employees. A branch was located at 191 Wickham Street, Valley. 216-218 Queen Street became the headquarters of Nissen's in the 1930s (see plate 11) and prior to World War II most of the precious jewellery retained, was manufactured in the F.W. Nissen workshop (see plates 12A & B).

Mail Order catalogues which had been produced since the early 1900s became more flamboyant in the 1930s (see plate 13), when the mail order department was a very important section of the Nissen's business.

Leaf pattern jewellery in the 'Wager' style was an important segment of the Nissen's production as it was popular right up until World War II. (See plate 14). Best selling items included opal rings, gemstone pendants, cameo brooches and a variety of other brooches etc.

Leslie Nissen was also a committed member of the Queensland Manufacturing Jewellers' Association and belonged to the Federated Retail Jewellers' Association of the Commonwealth. (See plate 15).

Colin Edgar Nissen, son of Leslie William, joined the business in 1939 and saw war service in the Air

PRESENTATION CUPS that Please.

We are in the enviable position of being the only firm in Australia making these cups. Some time ago we found a scarcity in the market for this style of goods, so we went to considerable expense in installing special machinery. Since then we have made Presentation Cups for most of Australia's Prominent Sporting Clubs, and hold unsolicited testimonials from them expressing great satisfaction with the work turned out.

We invite Club Secretaries to write stating their wants—we absolutely guarantee to please both as regards quality and price.



No. 853. Very Pretty Sporting Cup, Best Electro Silver Plate, Charmingly Designed and Prettily Engraved, Gilt Lined, Neat Handles and Lid, with any Figure on top. 16 inches high, Marvellous Value.

£7 10s. each.
Without Lid, £5 5s.



No. 854. Magnificent Designed Sporting Trophy, Elaborately Chased, Richly Carved Handles, Gilt Lined, Beautifully Finished. Made only in Solid Sterling Silver. 20 inch high and Decidedly Handsome.

£25 each.



No. 855. Very Choice Best Quality, Silver Plated Prize Cup, Favourite Fluted Design, Strongly Made, Gilt Lined and Beautifully Finished.

7 inches high, 21/- each.
8½ " " and wider, 42/-
10 " " £4 4s. each.



No. 856. Very Massive Silver Plated Sporting Cup, Very Handsome Embossed Design, Gilt Lined, Very Strong Handles. 17½ inch high without Stand and Beautifully Finished. We have this Cup, with any Figure required on top. A Beautiful Ebony Stand supplied with this Cup.

£12 10s. each.



No. 857. Very Unique Designed Prize Cup, Beautifully Chased, Nicely Carved Handles, Gilt Lined and Highly Finished, made only in Sterling Silver.

7 inch high, £6 10s. each.
8½ " " £8 10s. "
10 " " £12 "



No. 858. Very Handsome Prize Cup, Best Quality Electro Silver Plate, Beautifully Engraved, Strongly Made, Gilt Lined, with Lid and Handles. Exceptional Good Value.

£6 10s. each.

F. W. NISSEN, 204 Queen Street, Brisbane.

Nissen's will Re-model your Old Jewellery into charming New Styles

Every mail brings all manner of old-fashioned and broken Jewellery to Nissen's to be remodelled into charming, modern styles. Remodelling is a specialty with us. You will be very pleased with both the finished article and our extremely low charge. Send **YOUR** old Jewellery to Nissen's. Remember, the price quoted places you under no obligation. We shall be pleased to suggest suitable designs if you have nothing definite in mind.



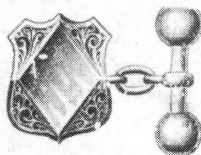
As Nissen's received this old Ring.



As it was returned to a highly pleased customer.



We were sent this broken piece of watch-chain



—it was made into a pair of distinctive Sleeve links.



The above old Brooch



—was re-made into a lovely brooch for Baby.



This out-of-date Ring was made



—into this charming design.



This old-fashioned Wedding Ring



was re-modelled into this fashionable design.



Nissen's re-made this old relic



—into a beautiful Brooch

Plate 7. Catalogue advertisement of 1907 showing jewellery of the period.

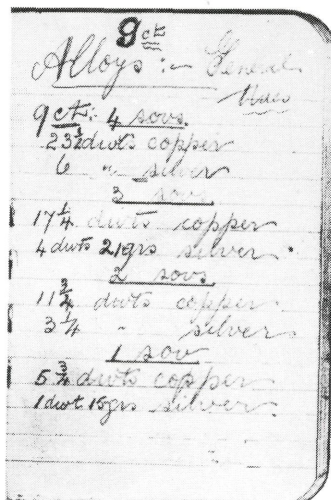


Plate 8. Extract from L.W.R. Nissen notebook, 1917.



Plate 9. Medal design from L.W.R. Nissen notebook.

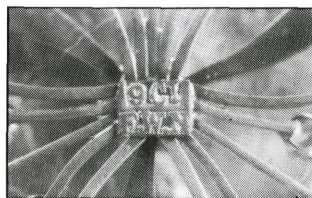


Plate 10. Marks used on Nissen jewellery since inception.

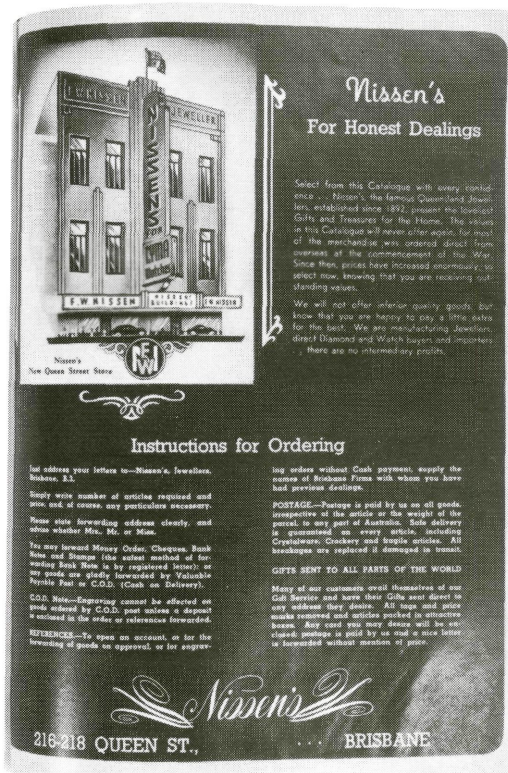


Plate 11. Nissen building c. 1935.



Plate 13. Cover Nissen catalogue c. 1936.

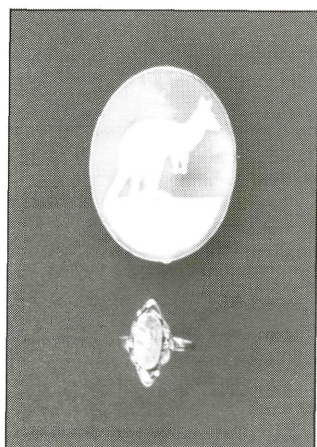


Plate 12A. Cameo brooch and leaf design opal ring.

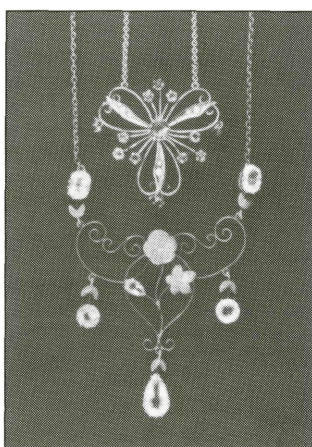


Plate 12B. 9ct gold pendants set with paste.

Force. With the advent of World War II, manufacture ceased by virtue of Government decree. After the war, the manufacturing section produced mainly special commission pieces and carried out repair work.

Other items for stock were obtained from specialised makers, who used precious gems supplied by F.W. Nissen. General jewellery was obtained from all leading Australian manufacturers and suppliers. Many jewellery items were imported, mainly from England and Europe.

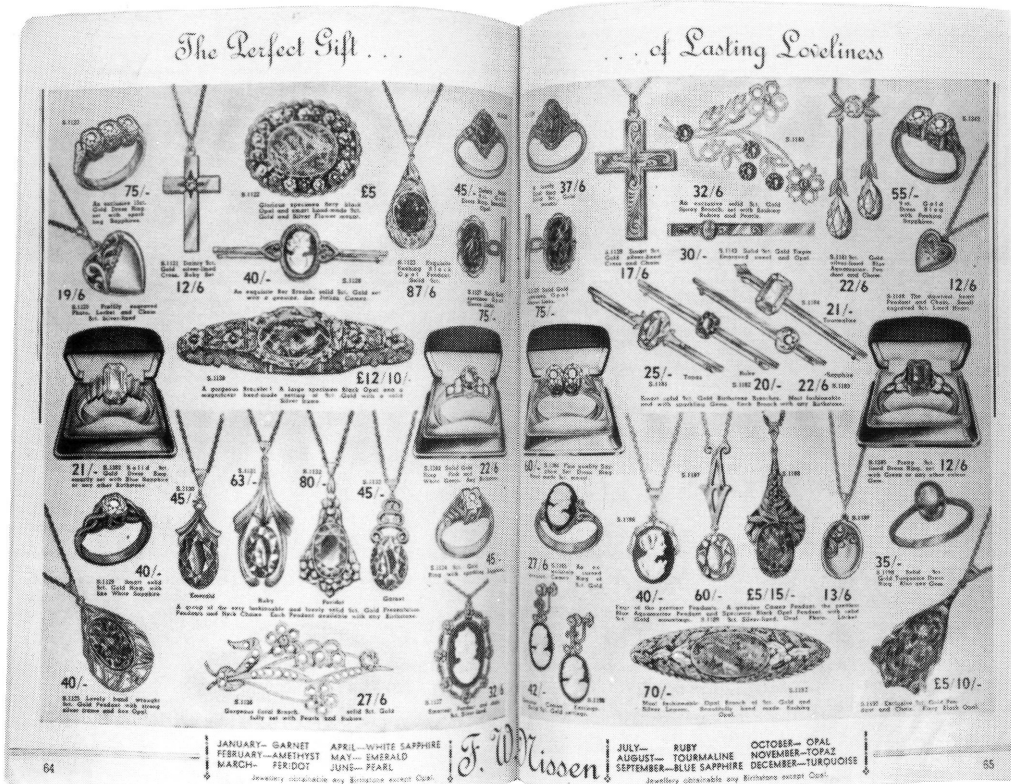


Plate 14. Nissen catalogue of 1938.

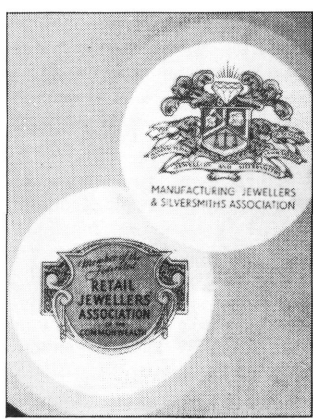


Plate 15. Trade emblems of Queensland Trade Associations.

Vida Irene Nissen died in 1956. Colin Nissen assumed control of the business in 1966, and his father remained active until his retirement in 1975. L.W.R. Nissen died in 1984.

In 1975 the property at 216 Queen St. was sold. Colin Nissen and his aunt, Wilhelmina Ivy then conducted a small specialised jewellery business at 117 Queen St. until they retired in 1984 and F.W. Nissen ceased trading.

References

1. The Aldine History of Queensland, Vol.2. (1888). The Aldine Publishing Company, Sydney.

2. Wise's Queensland Post Office Directory.

Acknowledgements

1. Our gratitude to Colin Nissen for his assistance and co-operation in providing printed material and information from his family archives.
2. The Courier Mail for permission to reprint the article, "Nissen, Watchmaker and Jeweller" from the *Brisbane Courier*, 6th December, 1907.

Business Histories

Henry L Davis & Co. Ltd

H.L. Davis & Co. Ltd

F.W. Nissen

1876 Henry L. Davis commenced business at 169 Queen St Brisbane

1876

→ **1877** Maxwell worked for Henry L. Davis

→ F.W. Nissen apprenticed to H.L. Davis

→ **1884** Maxwell became foreman for H.L. Davis
C.D. Mossop purchased manufacturing sections of H.L. Davis & Co. Ltd

1886 Henry L. Davis at 169 Queen St

F.W. Nissen commenced business 216 Queen St Brisbane

→ **1886** Became Mossop & Maxwell at 125 Queen St

→ **1891** Partnership broke up

1894 Henry L. Davis purchased by T. Knowles and became Davis & Knowles

1892

→ **1898** Davis Simpson & Co. listed

1895 became T Knowles (H.L. Davis & Co.)

→ **1900** F.W. Nissen took over Davis Simpson & Co. at 143 Queen St Brisbane

1912-19 Advertised as Samuel Knowles 188 Queen St (next to Customs House)

→ **1901** F.W. Nissen advertised (formerly H.L. Davis & Co.)

→ **1901** 216-218 Queen St Brisbane

→ **1903** 322 Brunswick St Valley

→ **1906** Renovated 204 Queen St factory

→ **1912** Leslie William Robert Nissen joined business

→ **1913** 204 Queen St Brisbane
Bourbon St Bundaberg

1921 S. Knowles & Son Ltd 184 Queen St (established 1878)

→ **1916** Vida Irene Nissen joined business

→ **1923** Wilhimina Ivy Nissen joined business

→ **1924** Bourbon St Bundaberg

→ **1924** 216-218 Queen St Brisbane

→ **1925** Frederick William Nissen died

→ **1927** 216-218 Queen St Brisbane and 191 Wickham St Valley

1930 S. Knowles & Son Ltd 11 Brisbane Arcade

→ **1939** Colin Edgar Nissen joined business

1945 S. Knowles & Son Pty Ltd 11 Brisbane Arcade

→ **1956** Vida Irene Nissen died

→ **1966** Colin Edgar Nissen became Managing Director

1974 Robert White Pty Ltd purchased S. Knowles & Son Pty Ltd

→ **1975** L.W.R. Nissen retired

→ **1975** 216-218 Queen St sold

→ **1975** 117 Queen St opened

→ **1984** Wilhimina Ivy Nissen retired
L.W.R. Nissen died

1991 Robert White Pty Ltd Incorporating S. Knowles & Sons established 1878 11 Brisbane Arcade

→ **1984** Colin Nissen retired

BUSINESS CLOSED

A Jimmy Possum Chair

Acquired for the Tasmanian State Collection

Peter Mercer

Recently the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery purchased a Jimmy Possum chair for its collection and it is an excellent example of its type. In September 1978 this particular chair, which belonged to a Hobart collector, featured prominently in a fascinating exhibition of chairs and stools made by Tasmanian bush carpenters late last century and the early years of this century. The exhibition was held in what was then the Fine Arts Gallery of the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education at Mount Nelson, Hobart and a photograph of this chair appears on page 10 of the catalogue of the exhibition.

The name "Jimmy Possum" applies not as much to a person but more to a particular style of basic and very sturdy stick-back chairs that were fashioned out of local timbers and sticks. Although bush-carpenter built chairs have been made in many other parts of Australia, Jimmy Possum chairs, with their distinctive and durable method of construction, come from the Deloraine district of Northern Tasmania.

Mystery and a considerable amount of folklore surround the background to these rather ingenious rural Tasmanian bush chairs. The first question would have to be, who was Jimmy Possum? The fact is that no one really has any idea of what his proper name was or, for that matter, where he lived and made his furniture. Many years ago someone described him, truthfully or not, as an old man with a long white beard who lived in a bush dwelling either made of, or joined to, a hollow log or tree. Where exactly this was nobody knows but here he is supposed to have made chairs and also stools and clothes

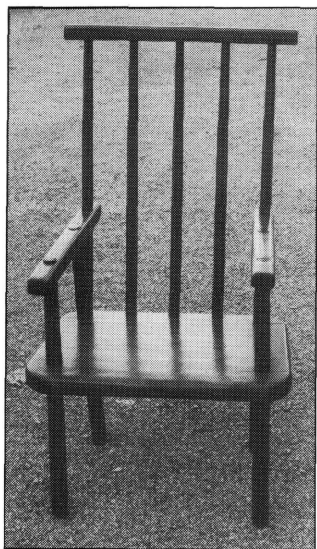
pegs with the simplest of equipment such as an axe, adze, draw-knife, spokeshave, pen-knife and try-plane and Jimmy Possum furniture bears witness to this. With nearly all examples the rounded stick components have been skilfully and painstakingly fashioned without the use of a lathe. In some examples the holes for the sticks in the seats, arm-rests and top-rail are believed to have been burnt in with a hot iron rather than bored with an auger. The finished chairs were usually painted either grey or green and were sold for 2s/6d. Between two to three hundred Jimmy Possum chairs are thought to exist and this is quite a large output considering the way that they were made if only one person was involved.

As a practical craft, rustic chair and stool making has been practised in the Western World for centuries when the demand was there and the raw materials and skills to make them were available. In England the woodlands of High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire were once frequented in the summer months by skilled craftsmen locally known as bodgers. There they camped on location in suitable beech thickets and there they cut green saplings which they turned on pole lathes to produce legs and stretchers for chairs. These were in turn put together by other craftsmen called framers who had their workshops in the nearby villages. This time honoured craft lasted from the 17th century through to the late 1950s and their product became known as a Windsor chair. By the late 18th century the craft had also spread to colonial North America.

Windsor chairs have sub-frames of legs and stretchers fitted into holes bored into the under-side of

slab seat which is usually saddled. The upper -frame consisting of the back, with sometimes arms, is secured to the upper side back part of the seat in a similar manner. Jimmy Possum chairs, apart from not having turned components, are also quite different in design and the essential elements that they have that make them so distinctive were in all probability a local idea. Their construction makes them much stronger than Windsor chairs and subsequently more durable with the passage of time. Strength is achieved by the sticks that support the arm-rests also being the legs. The configuration of the components is cleverly thought out and although they look primitive because of the way that they are made, there is nothing at all faulty with their design. Windsor chairs tend to come apart with age as they dry out but Jimmy Possum chairs do not and cannot because of the way that they are constructed. With the weight of the sitter the seats settle more firmly on the legs and this is because each leg is tapered so that it gradually widens towards the base and the legs are splayed. No stretchers to support them are needed because these chairs are strong enough without them. This is, of course, a bonus to their appearance.

The tapered sticks used for the legs would probably have been jammed up through the holes in the seat to set the seat in position. The maker would have then to cut off the legs accurately to make the seat level. The back of a Jimmy Possum chair, being straight instead of being curved like a Windsor chair, makes it rather uncomfortable to sit back against. But this inconvenience is more than compensated by



the fact that it is structurally much stronger. This is because the two outside sticks pass through the back of the arm-rests bracing them and the top rail firmly to the legs. The back of the arm-rest extends beyond the back of the chair sufficiently far to avoid any danger of splitting.

With the chair belonging to the Museum the five back sticks protrude through the top-rail. Similarly, the extended parts of the legs protrude through the arm-rests and these are tightened in their sockets with wooden wedges. The legs and back sticks are blackwood and the arm-rests and back rail are of swamp gum. The slab seat is of pine which is unusual because most examples are usually made from local hardwood. The arm-rests, back-rail and seat have a planed and sanded finish but the sticks have been beautifully and skilfully shaped with a knife. All the extra materials needed to hold it together are eight nails and the four wooden wedges in the arm-rests. Four nails hold the seat to the legs and four secure the ends of the top rail and the arm-rests to the outside sticks. They

appear to be part of the original construction and not added later for additional strength.

Whether a character such as Jimmy Possum even existed is a matter of conjecture for there is a story of a traveller, some eighty years ago in the Deloraine district who, on noticing one of these bush chairs neglected and weathering under a tree, asked the owner if he could buy it. He was told quite firmly no, it was Jimmy's and he eats off it. "Who is Jimmy?" the man asked. "He is a possum", the owner said, "and he lives in the tree and comes down at night to eat his food from the chair".

Bush furniture, particularly chairs and stools, are a product pioneering subsistence living when making do with whatever was available and free was necessary. It is therefore more than likely that from late last century through to the end of the depression years of the late 1930s there were several pioneer farmers and bushmen carpenters in the Deloraine district making furniture to this distinctive design for themselves and to sell to their friends and neighbours. The design and skill involved in the making of the chairs could well have come from an old man nicknamed Jimmy Possum but, like in subsistence based economy com-

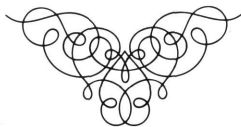
munities, experience quickly came in learning from each other. Brothers William and Samuel Larcombe of Reedy Marsh near Deloraine were apparently making Jimmy Possum chairs from about 1890 until after the First World War. Sydney Higgs and George Upson are others who are also credited with making Jimmy Possum style chairs in the Deloraine district and there was also Michael Cook of Nyetta. The origin of many of them is difficult to identify. Even the experts have trouble in accurately telling the difference between a chair attributed to the Larcombe brothers and a Jimmy Possum chair.

Perhaps one day much more will be known about these cleverly constructed bush chairs from Deloraine.

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Members of the Society will be saddened to hear of the recent death of James Lincoln Hall who had contributed a number of articles on 'A History of Music in Australia' to *Australiana*. The Society extends its deepest sympathy to his wife Marjorie and family.



A History of Music in Australia

Mrs. Chester from Drury Lane – 1835

James Lincoln Hall

An increasing flow of music from abroad is indicated by two Sydney Gazette advertisements of August and September 1835. The first advertisement made known the establishment of another music shop, at 81 George Street:

'NEW MUSIC

W.H. TYRER begs leave to notify the Arrival of his NEW MUSIC, which will be found to contain a selection of the most approved Overtures, Solos, &c., of the most celebrated Composers; amongst which will be found Gustavus 3rd; Robert le Diable ¹; Revolt of the Harem; Le pre aux Clerics ²; Guillaume Tell ³, &c. &c.; together with a variety of New Quadrilles and Songs, for Pianoforte, Guitar, Harp, Violin, and Flute.

ALSO

A few Spanish Guitars, with Patent Heads, in cases complete ⁴.

'NEW MUSIC

JUST received by the undersigned direct from London, a choice Selection of MODERN MUSIC, from the latest Operas, among which are the Songs, Duets, &c. from the New Opera of the Bravo or Red Mask. Also, several beautiful Ballads as sung by Mrs. Chester at the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, New and Second-hand Pianofortes constantly on Sale and Hire.

F. ELLARD ⁵.

Early in September, at a benefit concert for Mr. Simmons, the Huntsman's Chorus from Weber's *Der Freischutz* was given – 'By the Entire Vocal Strength of the Company'. It is interesting to note that Levey was preparing the full opera for performance at the Theatre Royal when he relinquished his position as manager in

April ⁷. It was only fourteen years since the first performances of *Der Freischutz* ⁸.

There were two other interesting benefits given in September; one on Tuesday 17 for Mr. Knowles, and the other on Monday 21 for Mrs. Taylor. In the former, Knowles, who was apparently quite a distinguished Shakespearian actor ⁹, took the part of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. The Gazette reviewer seemed a little disconcerted about the songs that were introduced into the play. 'The two solos from Mrs. Taylor (Jessica) and Mr. Simmons (Lorenzo), and a duet from the same parties were introduced with great effect, although not in strict accordance with the plan intended by Shakespear' ¹⁰.

'Mrs. Taylor's benefit took place on Monday, on which occasion she deservedly obtained an overflowing bumper. The comic operatic piece, *John of Paris*, commenced the evening's amusement, in which Mrs. Taylor's Olivia and Mr. Simmons's Pedigro Potts were the chief attractions. The rest of the performance was very mediocre ... Captain Piper ¹¹ was to have attended, having signified his intention of patronizing Mrs. Taylor, but the gallant gentleman did not arrive in town' ¹².

Another noteworthy musical event took place in September. 'The Roman Catholic Bishop, Dr. Polding, was inaugurated on Sunday last 20th at St. Mary's Church, with episcopal ceremony. The musical department was conducted on a grand scale, Mr. Cavendish presiding at the seraphine, and Mrs. Chester and several superior vocalists assisting in the choir' ¹³. Although we were aware of the

existence of the 'Roman Catholic Choir' ¹⁴ this is the first reference to an actual musical performance at St. Mary's.

It is interesting to remember that when Cavendish first played the seraphine in public in October 1833, one observer commented that, owing to its rather thin, reedy tone, it seemed 'better suited for Church music' ¹⁵. Yet another musical piece performed in September was – 'the laughable Musical Extravaganza of BOMBASTES FURIOSO, by the Juvenile Company' ¹⁶ – on September 26.

A second and really important overseas artist graced our shores in 1835. She was dramatically announced in the grandiloquence of the day:

'THE THEATRE ROYAL, SYDNEY,

THE Manager, respectfully informs his friends and the public in general that in order to meet with their wishes, and to prove that the Lessees spare no expense in procuring all the Talent they possibly can obtain, have engaged

MRS. CHESTER,

From the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and she will make her first appearance on THURSDAY, OCT. 1, 1835, In the Celebrated Opera of the MAID OF MILAN.

Clari, by Mrs. Chester,

In which she will introduce several Songs, from the most popular Operas of the Day.

Vespina, by Mrs. Taylor, Her first appearance in that character, in which she will introduce several favourite Songs.

Jacoby, by Mr. Simmons,

His first appearance in that Character, and in which he will sing Two Duets with Mrs. Taylor' ¹⁷.

The historical significance of the announcement captured even Brewer's imagination. Describing the feeling of excitement which it must have caused, he wrote: 'No little stir was created by the announcement ... The very fact of seeing either an actor or actress who had trodden the stage of that histrionic theatre was sufficient to attract a large audience. "From the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane!" There was magic in those six words; and on the night of Mrs. Chester's debut in Sydney expectancy had reached its highest point'.¹⁸

Brewer's statement is borne out in the following Gazette description of the occasion. It will again be observed that, as with the first performances in Sydney of *The Maid of Milan* in October and November 1834, Bishop's music was not played – although *Home, Sweet Home* was sung, and it is quite likely that the orchestra played the overture. At this performance, as the notice states, several ballads were introduced'... As a vocalist of superior ability, power, and taste, Mrs. Chester confessedly ranks here first in her profession ... This lady sang *Home, sweet home*, with a chasteness of expression and style we have seldom heard equalled and never surpassed.

'In Rossini's difficult song of *Tyrant* soon I'll burst thy chains, she shewed the powerful addition which highly cultivated art had given her as a vocalist of natural ability. Her cadences evinced much command and taste, and her execution of them was very effective. Mrs. Chester was encored in this song, as she was likewise in that beautiful ballad, *O say not woman's heart is bought*. But we must confess that the song which we most admired was, *Come where the aspens quiver*, which Mrs. Chester sang with the most delightful softness and expression of tone.'

Here the reviewer makes an interesting and gentlemanly comparison with Mrs. Taylor. 'It would

perhaps be esteemed unjust to draw a full length comparison between the two first rate performers on the Sydney stage, but we cannot help saying, that if on the present occasion we yield the preference to Mrs. Chester as a vocalist, indebted more to art than to nature for her superiority over Mrs. Taylor; yet, as an actress of prepossessing appearance, and fascinating manner, we should unquestionably acknowledge the superiority of the latter over the former lady ...

'By the bye, before we quit this theatrical topic, a word or two with those sluggish gentlemen, the members of the orchestra. We have before told them of their merits, and of their exertions, but they appear to have quite forgotten our lecture. They are, we know, most liberally – liberally to a fault, paid for their services ... We were taught to expect very great things from the highly talented gentlemen who were to comprise the orchestra upon its present formation, but we rather surmise that the proprietors and the public have been most miserably disappointed in this particular. We need only to advert to the worse than wretched accompaniment to Mrs. Chester on Thursday evening ... Mrs. Chester, was in point of fact, the leader of the band; and in being so, it was pretty generally acknowledged that she displayed more musical judgement than the united phalanx of the orchestral body'.²⁰

On Saturday October 3, 1835 'the favourite Opera of *JOHN IN PARIS*'²¹ was again presented. Mrs. Chester took Mrs. Taylor's former role as Olivia and sung several ballads. On the 6th both *The Maid of Milan* and *John of Paris* were performed. The announcement stated that it was the 'Last night of Mrs. Chester's engagement, on which occasion, Mrs. Chester and Mrs. Taylor will both play in two pieces'.²²

In describing Mrs. Chester's 'Last Night' in Sydney the Sydney

Herald reviewer gave us our first piece of technical criticism. He, also, severely reprimanded the orchestra. 'It is with some degree of gratification that we witness persons of respectability and science joining our infantile Corps dramatique, and lending their talents for the rational amusement of the community ... As a vocalist, Mrs. Chester is superior to any on the boards. Her voice is a full round-toned Soprano, not so powerful as Mrs. Taylor's, but of a more pleasing mellow quality. Mrs. Chester's upper notes, – say above G in Alt., appeared laboured, but this might have originated from a slight affection of the lungs at this particular season of the year. Her runs, cadences, and shakes, were executed with neatness and taste, although the latter we thought, in some of her songs, were used too frequently, – but perhaps Mrs. Chester merely wished to let us know what she could perform, rather than exhibit the real beauty of the composition in question'.²³

'As a ballad singer, we have no doubt Mrs. Chester will be unrivalled on the Sydney boards, for some time to come; and as an actress, in a general line of business, (although we would say light Comedy is her forte) her services will be invaluable ... we must not ... close without depreciating the miserable attempt that was made in the Orchestra to accompany Mrs. Chester. Had there been no rehearsals? If the orchestra is weak, it is no excuse for being imperfect. In the plaintive song of *Home, Sweet Home*, we never heard such tuneless, unfeeling, discordant, strumming, – the musicians, we perceived, played "from ear", and a fertile imagination they displayed! We hope, better things of the orchestra in the future'.²⁴

Sydney gave Mrs. Chester a most enthusiastic reception. As a result, on October 8, the following announcement appeared in the Gazette:

'THEATRE ROYAL,
SYDNEY

THE Manager respectfully informs his Friends and the Public in general, that, in consequence of the great approbation that has been bestowed and the rapturous applause that

MRS. CHESTER'S

performance and singing has excited, during the three nights of her Engagement by crowded and fashionable audiences, induces him to RE-ENGAGE that Lady for

SIX NIGHTS

more, during which period she will appear in some of her most favourite characters'.²⁵

The following Saturday Mrs. Chester took a leading part in 'the favourite Comic Operatic Drama of ABON HASSON; or, the LIVING DEAD ... In which she will sing an entire New Song, written expressly for her at the London Theatres, Meet me in the Willow Glen. - A. Lee'.²⁶ Her performance was greeted 'with abundant applause'. On the same day another advertisement from Tyrer's music shop appeared in the Gazette:

'W. H. TYRER

HAS just received by the latest arrivals, an excellent selection of MUSIC, consisting of OVER-

TURES, QUADRILLES, DUETTS, SONGS, &c., from the celebrated Operas of

LESTOCQ, or the Fete of the Hermitage

RED MASK, or the Council of Three

NOURJAHAD, Mountain Sylph

GUSTAVUS the 3rd, or the Mask Ball

LE PRE AUX CLERICS, ALSO

SEVERAL PIANOFORTES AND GUITARS. W.H.T. has also on sale, an assortment of Violin, Pianoforte, and Guitar Strings'.²⁸

There was certainly no delay in 'new music' reaching Sydney. Auber's²⁹ Lestocq was first pro-

duced in English at Covent Garden on February 21, less than eight months previously. The Mountain Sylph, too, was only given its first performance at the Lyceum Theatre in August 1834. This ready flow of music from England and the Continent was a stimulating factor in the Colony's steadily increasing music development.

On October 24 Mrs. Chester took Mrs. Taylor's customary role as the Don in Giovanni in London.³⁰ In describing the performance the Gazette made a further interesting comparison between the two artists. 'The singing of Mrs. Chester was managed with her customary success, and the Dashing White Sergeant which she introduced in piece was an unique in style and execution. The after piece was Giovanni in London, but it was certainly not the Giovanni of Mrs. Taylor. Mrs. Chester's style of singing proves her to be mistress of her art; but the Don wanted the fascinating powers, and volatile gaiety always thrown into the character by Mrs. Taylor. Mrs. Chester's singing wanted Mrs. Taylor's acting, and then the performance would have been complete'.³¹

Footnotes

1. An Opera by Meyerbeer (1791-1864); first produced at the Paris Opera in 1831.
2. A comic opera by Herold (1791-1833); first produced at the Paris Opera-Comique in 1832.
3. Better known in English as *William Tell* - an opera by Rossini (1792-1868) - first produced at Paris in 1829.
4. *Sydney Gazette*, August 11, 1835, p. 3.
5. *Sydney Gazette*, September 22, 1835, p. 2.
6. *Sydney Gazette*, September 8, 1835, p. 3.
7. *Sydney Gazette*, April 2, 1835, p. 2; April 9, 1835, p. 1.
8. At Berlin in 1821.
9. *The Cannon*, June 1951, p. 521.
10. *Sydney Gazette*, September 22, 1835, p. 2.

11. *The Cannon*, February 1951, p. 335, footnote 9.
12. *Sydney Gazette*, September 24, 1835, p. 2.
13. *Sydney Gazette*, September 22, 1835, p. 2.
14. *The Cannon*, August 1951, p. 3.
15. *The Cannon*, June 1951, pp.523-4; footnotes 29, 30.
16. *Sydney Gazette*, September 22, 1835, p. 3.
17. *Sydney Gazette*, September 29, 1835, p. 3.
18. Frances Brewer, *The Drama and Music in New South Wales* (Sydney, Government Printer, 1892), p. 9. See also *The Cannon*, July 1951, p.568, footnote 19.
19. *The Cannon*, July 1951, p. 567.
20. *Sydney Gazette*, October 3, 1835, p.2.
21. *Jean de Paris* was a very successful light opera by the brilliant French composer, Francois Adrien Boieldieu (1775-1834). It was first produced at Paris in 1812.
22. *Sydney Gazette*, October 6, 1835, p. 3.
23. This is an interesting period criticism; The writer obviously not intending to sound unfavourable. Note also the reference to the then commonly held opinion that music was a science. When the word 'art' was used it meant training and application rather than 'art' in the artistic sense.
24. *Sydney Herald*, October 8, 1835, p. 3.
25. *Sydney Gazette*, October 8, 1835, p. 3.
26. *Sydney Gazette*, October 10, 1835, p. 3. The composer of the song was probably George Alexander Lee (1802-51), a prominent London composer and theatre manager. He wrote the popular song 'Come where the aspens quiver', which Mrs. Chester sang at her first appearance in Sydney.
27. An opera composed by John Barnett (1802-90) to a libretto by J.T. Thackeray. Now forgotten, it is important historically as it was the first 'musical through' English opera since Arne's *Artaxerxes*.
28. *Sydney Gazette*, October 10, 1835, p. 1.
29. *Gustave III* was aslo by Auber (1782-1871).
30. *The Cannon*, July 1951, p. 566.
31. *Sydney Gazette*, October 31, 1835, p. 2.



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