Victorian Historical Journal

VICTORIAN

HISTORICAL

JOURNAL

ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

The *Victorian Historical Journal* has been published continuously by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria since 1911. It is a double-blind refereed journal issuing original and previously unpublished scholarly articles on Victorian history, or occasionally on Australian history where it illuminates Victorian history. It is published twice yearly by the Publications Committee, overseen by an Editorial Board, and indexed by Scopus and the Web of Science. It is available in digital and hard copy.

https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/publications/victorian-historical-journal/

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EDITORS

Richard Broome and Judith Smart

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To honour John D. Adams (1935–2015) FRHSV, Councillor (1966–2005), and to use his bequest of $10,000 to the RHSV in an appropriate manner, the RHSV has created a biennial prize. Since John Adams, a lecturer in Librarianship at RMIT for 27 years, was also the honorary indexer of the *Victorian Historical Journal*, indexing it for the years 1954–2013, the prize will be for the best article or historical note in the journal over a two-year period, commencing with Issues 287–290 (2017 and 2018).

The following terms apply to the prize:

- This biennial prize will be awarded for the best article or historical note on Victorian history in the four *VHJ* issues over two calendar years, beginning 2017–18.
- The prize will be awarded for an article or historical note that illuminates a significant element of Victoria's history, is clearly and succinctly written, and is researched from original material.
- Members of the RHSV Publications Committee are ineligible for the award.
- The prize offered from the Adams bequest is $300 and three years' free membership of the RHSV, which includes hard copies of the *VHJ*.
- A short list of five articles will be compiled by the *VHJ* editors active in the prize period.
- Short-listing will occur at the end of each two-year period, beginning in December 2018.
- Two judges will be chosen by the Publications Committee from academic and community historians and will report to the Committee by the following April.
- The John Adams Prize will be presented biennially at the RHSV AGM following its judging and will be announced in the ensuing June issues of the *VHJ* and *History News*.

Richard Broome, Chair, RHSV Publications Committee

John Adams Prize Winners

2017–2018

Nicola Cousen, 'The Legend of Lalor's Arm: Eureka Myths and Colonial Surgery',

Victorian Historical Journal, vol. 88, no. 2, November 2017, pp. 212–34

2019–2020

Charles Fahey, 'Happy Valley Road and the Victoria Hill District:
A Microhistory of a Victorian Gold-rush Mining Community,
1854–1913',

Victorian Historical Journal, vol. 90, no. 2, December 2019, pp. 271–300

2021–2022

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Front cover: 'Johnny Crook. Native name Yunbai from Illawarra'. E.D. Barlow. 1844 print. Probably the work of William Nicholas (Courtesy Rex Nankivell Collection, National Library of Australia)

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Judith Smart and Richard Broome

This issue of the *Victorian Historical Journal* is a bumper one and is indicative of the rising number and quality of the submissions we are receiving as readers increasingly recognise the value of the research the RHSV fosters and publishes. There are seven articles in this issue, two of them key annual lectures recently delivered at the society. In addition, we have three extended historical notes and a comment and response relating to a note published in the last issue of the *VHJ*. We also continue our new series 'Interpreting an Image' and welcome the many well-considered reviews of recent books relating to Victoria's rich history. Sadly, however, we must farewell and pay tribute in this issue to two luminaries of Victorian (and Australian) history—Stuart Macintyre and Michael Cannon—whose contribution to an understanding of the forces moulding our society and culture is immeasurable.

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The articles and notes in this issue of the *VHJ* range in focus from the relationship between history and literature to social, professional and political subjects, and from the colonial period to the 1990s. The nineteenth-century contributions deal with poor and dispossessed women, the part played by Indigenous workers from NSW during settlement, the developing clerks-of-court profession, and the life and work of a forgotten early sculptor on the one hand and a civil engineer on the other. Three of the other pieces examine different aspects of urban history—the planning and development of a middle-class estate in the late nineteenth century, the significance of the Australian Knitting Mills site in Richmond as part of our twentieth-century industrial heritage, and the role of citizen activism in defending community institutions. Another focuses on an aspect of the Holocaust of particular interest to the Melbourne Holocaust Museum.

We have seen a gradual return to face-to-face events in 2022 and were able to welcome people back to RHSV headquarters in the A'Beckett

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Street Drill Hall (History House), but, given the continuing prevalence of the Omicron variant of COVID 19, we will retain some hybrid formats for the foreseeable future. This provides flexibility, allowing for members who prefer attending in person but also acknowledging the convenience of on-line access for those living in the regions or with ongoing concerns about their health and safety. But, as noted previously, the limitations on movement have had little impact on the *Victorian Historical Journal*, and indeed circulation has increased along with growth in the society's membership.

The 2022 Weston Bate Oration was delivered at the RHSV Annual General Meeting in May by eminent historian and former RHSV president, Dr Andrew Lemon AM, FRHSV. Titled 'Australian Literature as History, Australian History as Literature', it provided a wide-ranging survey of Australia's best historical novelists, as well as discussing the few novelists who have written conventional history books, and the challenge of writing history that is not only balanced, clear and set in context but also 'sings'. Drawing on his recently published novel, *The Pebbled Beach at Pentecost*, Lemon revealed what a novel can do for explanation and understanding that conventional history, with its insistence on evidence and meticulous documentation, cannot. He very generously agreed to publication of the lecture in this journal.

Emeritus Professor Janet McCalman was the RHSV Women's History Month lecturer for 2022, and her lecture, 'Unprotected: Aboriginal, Convict and Poor Women in Colonial Victoria: Or How Everything Bad Was Made Worse by Being Female' drew on her three wide-ranging historical prosopographies of the past twenty years: the mothers and babies from the 'Melbourne Lying-In Hospital Birth Cohort' 1857–1900; the Aboriginal population of Victoria 1855–1920; and the 'Ships Project' from 'Founders and Survivors', in particular the Vandemonians in colonial Victoria. She argued convincingly that, before government welfare programs and regulation, a woman without a 'reliable, effective and respectable male protector as breadwinner' would suffer the consequences of poverty, destitution and violence, including early death, to a much greater extent 'than women who enjoyed respectable male protection'.

In 'A Superior Brand of Men': Regional Clerks of Courts and the Rocky Road to a Respectable Profession', Elizabeth Wade examines the emerging role of the resident clerk of courts. Her analysis focuses on the experiences of some of the men appointed to these positions in regional

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Victoria 'before regulation of recruitment and career structure for staff of the magistrates' courts established conditions conducive to the growth of a respectable profession'.

The focus of Allan Willingham's article is the identification of the patternmaker associated with the remarkable cast iron balcony verandah on the Austin mansion at 'Barwon Park', Winchelsea. Titled '"His Talent is Undeniable": Benjamin Brain (1816–77): The Tragic Life of Australia's Forgotten Architectural Sculptor and Carver', the article traces the life and considerable achievements in Australia of English architectural sculptor and stone carver Benjamin Brain. In the research process, Willingham was able to link Brain to members of his estranged family who had also settled in Victoria. The article concludes with Brain's lonely suicide in Ballarat.

'On the Street Where I Live: Walking the Windsor Park Estate' is the product of renowned urban historian Graeme Davison's COVID 19–inspired daily exercise walking around the streets of the Mont Albert estate on which he has lived for nearly four decades. Reflecting that being restricted to the local provided the prompt to consider 'what is remarkable in our taken-for-granted suburban surroundings', he took the opportunity to investigate the history of the Windsor Park Estate. Featuring 'crescents, mature deciduous street trees, deep setbacks, wide grassy verges and irregular garden allotments', Windsor Park typifies the *rus in urbe* ideal of the late nineteenth century 'romantic suburb'. Its planning also reveals the complex coexistence of religious and domestic idealism with material avarice and corruption among a group of leading landboomers.

A very different feature of Melbourne's urban history is uncovered in Chris McConville's remarkable analysis of 'Industrial Heritage, Modernity and Nationalism at Australian Knitting Mills, Richmond, 1910–55'. Headed by the contemporary advertising slogan, 'Loyally Made for Loyal Australians', the article 'traces an interplay between nationalism and modernity reflected in the mills' material form, a link easily overlooked in heritage rankings'. It examines the history of this industrial complex, arguing that its social and political heritage significance can best be ascertained through historical narrative.

The final article in this issue, 'A Band of Energetic Citizens: The Preston-Reservoir Progress Association Fights Back against Kennett's Neo-liberal Reforms', by Karin Derkley, takes us into more recent urban history and political activism. Derkley shows us how, in the face of the Kennett government's 'hardline economic rationalist approach', the

Preston-Reservoir Progress Association 'used the tools of democracy' to resist the destruction of community services they had fought so hard to build.

The three 'Historical Notes' cover fascinating issues. The first is an analysis by John Daniels of the role of Aboriginal men from south-coast NSW in the early years of European occupation of the Port Phillip District. The second, by Ian D. Rae, examines nineteenth-century engineer Godfrey Praagst's 'transformation of local materials into commercial products—lighting gas from gum leaves, and soap and candles from animal fats'. The last, by Simon Holloway, reassesses the role of the infamous Wannsee Meeting of 1942 in the planning of the Final Solution, arguing the meeting's significance in Holocaust history, so important to Melbourne's Jewish population, has been misconceived. This section also includes a 'Comment' by Martin Williams on Lawrie Hall's note in the last issue of the journal, 'Henry Johnson: The First Identified European Settler in the Upper Goulburn River District?', together with a 'Response' by Lawrie Hall. This exchange is now closed.

Our new section, 'Interpreting an Image', continues with Bruce Pennay's 'Picturing Sound and Song at the Murray River Crossing Place', examining an ink sketch drawn by Protector George Robinson of stock being swum across the newly designated official crossing place at the Murray River on 25 April 1840. Using documentary material, including Robinson's journal and a letter written by Lady Jane Franklin twelve months earlier, Pennay argues for the heritage significance of both the crossing and the site of the police hut overlooking the crossing as a 'contact zone' and a 'place of evocation' marking the beginning of 'ongoing relations' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the region.

This issue of the journal also includes nine book reviews with particular significance for Victorian history, covering biographies (individual and collective), the historical significance of particular skills such as needlework and automotive design, the history of women sex workers in nineteenth-century Melbourne, and the repressed history of Victoria's substantial ex-convict population from Van Diemens' Land. The extent and diversity of the published works under review here are evidence of the ongoing and highly productive research work on Victoria's history, as is the variety of the articles published in this issue of the *VHJ*.

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Stuart Forbes Macintyre AO, FAHA, FASSA (1947–2021)

Stuart Macintyre in lecturing mode (Courtesy Andrew May)

Australian History has lost one of its brightest stars. The RHSV Council at its December 2021 meeting expressed its gratitude for his contribution to the society and its sympathy to the family for this great loss.

Stuart was a renaissance man, both scholar and sportsman. Richard Broome first met him at the Melbourne–La Trobe History Departments annual cricket match in 1980. Richard recalls:

Most of us were a rag-tag bunch in shorts and coloured shirts, with some Americans on staff having no experience of cricket whatsoever. Stuart came in cricketing whites, the only one of us so attired, and he clearly

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knew what he was doing. Stuart later became a keen distance runner, running with a Sunday morning group to the end, and competing in half marathons and at least one marathon in his retirement.

Charles Sowerwine, now RHSV Heritage Committee chair, was a young lecturer at Melbourne University when Stuart arrived. Their first encounter was also marked by Stuart's instinctive sense of style:

> I first met Stuart at morning tea. In an era when younger staff tended to dress casually, Stuart stood out; he was casual but always smart. I was, initially, a bit daunted by his style and by his achievements, for he had already published two fine books of English labour history: *Little Moscows: Communism and Working-class Militancy in Inter-war Britain* and *A Proletarian Science: Marxism in Britain, 1917–1933* (both published 1980!). But I soon found in him a solid friend. He was always ready to share his encyclopaedic knowledge and equally receptive to the knowledge of others, though it was hard to find a topic on which he was not incredibly well read. Over the 1980s, we became colleagues and then friends. Beneath a cool exterior, Stuart was extremely supportive of those around him.

Stuart Forbes Macintyre was born on 21 April 1947 in Kew, Victoria. He graduated from the University of Melbourne with a BA (Hons) in 1968, an MA in history from Monash University (1971), and a PhD from Cambridge University (1975), where he was a research fellow before returning to Australia in 1979 as a lecturer in history at Murdoch University in Perth. The following year, he took up a lectureship in history at the University of Melbourne. In 1991, he was appointed to the Ernest Scott Chair of History at Melbourne, in recognition of his great achievements. He chaired the School of History during much of the 1990s and was dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1999 to 2006. In these roles he did much to maintain academic integrity and morale in the face of managerial incursions and budget cuts.

Stuart's academic career was among the most distinguished of his peers. He was editor of Australian Historical Studies and on its board and the boards of *Overland, Labour History* and *The New Federalist*. He was a visiting fellow at Griffith University, the University of Canterbury, the University of Western Australia, the Australian National University, the University of Otago and Harvard University. He also held many distinguished positions: president of the Australian Historical Association (1996–98); president of the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences

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(2007–09); president of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History; and board member of the State Library Victoria (1989–98).

Of particular interest to the RHSV was his tenure as chair of the Heritage Council of Victoria, to which he was named in 2015 and from which he resigned in 2020 following his diagnosis with serious illness. Stuart led in the reinvigoration of the council, which had been much neglected by the previous government. His sound advice to government was of great importance in improving heritage outcomes. And, in this capacity, as in so many others, he was a great friend of the RHSV and of its Heritage Committee.

Stuart was a consummate historian and author of over 40 books, including studies in labour and political history, several general histories of Australia and as co-editor of *The Oxford Companion to Australian History* (1998). While many in the profession turned to specialisations, sometimes less accessible to the public, Stuart always aimed to produce history for the citizen and the worker. His books won a series of prizes, including: the Victorian Premier's Prize 1987 for the *Oxford History of Australia*, Volume 4; the *Age* Book of the Year (1998) for *The Reds. The Communist Party of Australia from Origins to Illegality*; the NSW and Queensland Australian History Prizes (2004) for *The History Wars*, with Anna Clark. His much-admired *Australia's Boldest Experiment: War and Reconstruction in the 1940s* (2016) won the New South Wales Premier's and the history profession's Ernest Scott prizes. In his last days Stuart held in his hands an advanced copy of his final book, *The Party* (2022), the second volume of his history of the Communist Party in Australia. For his growing body of historical work he was awarded the Centenary Medal (2002) and an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Murdoch University (2007), and was appointed an Officer in the Order of Australia (AO) (2011).

Stuart was prominent in education policy beyond the university. He was appointed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority to co-author, with Tony Taylor, the first Australian History Curriculum. His historical interest in progressive left politics led to attacks from conservative politicians. However, RHSV Councillor Rosalie Triolo, president of the History Teachers' Association of Victoria at the time, recalls:

> He did not allow detractors nor a gruelling writing, consulting, reviewing and travelling schedule to affect what he saw as powerful,

positive outcomes of the process—curriculum documents that were as nuanced and embracing of diverse perspectives as was possible and that would enrich students' and teachers' school history experiences.

Stuart remained ever the competitive sportsman in his struggle with declining health. A week before he died, Charles Sowerwine walked around the zoo with him. Stuart was clear-headed about his illness but determined to keep fit, even as hope for a miracle evaporated. His appetite for encounter with the physical world was as great as his voracious reading and studying. Perhaps this combination made him the ideal advocate for heritage as well as for history.

Richard Broome, Judith Smart & Charles Sowerwine
RHSV Councillors

Michael Montague Cannon
(1929–2022)

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Michael Cannon at work at Melbourne University Press, 1967 (Courtesy the Cannon Family)

Asked about the unusual badge in his lapel, Michael Cannon used to joke that it was presented to him by the Australia Council as an Emeritus Award for wasting time writing and publishing more than 30 historical books, instead of doing something useful with his life.

Cannon, who died on 24 February aged 92, was only half joking. All his life he was conscious of uncommon good fortune in being able to devote his best years to the writing of popular history. With little formal education and no academic qualifications, Cannon said he felt that history 'should be mostly about people—not politics or sociology'.

Born in Brisbane in 1929 and raised in a Victorian country newspaper office, he managed to impress historians of all persuasions with the depth and breadth of his research into Australian history. In 1966 his first bestseller *The Land Boomers* exposed well-known individuals and families who led the speculative boom of the 1880s. Some even

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profited from the savage depression that followed. His 1995 book *Perilous Voyages to the New Land* dealt not only with immigration theory but with the extraordinary experiences of individuals who dared to leave their homelands in search of better lives in Australia.

Michael Montague Cannon came from a prominent newspaper family. His great-grandmother, Jessie Grover, was one of Australia's first women journalists during the 1880s. His grandfather Montague ('Monty') Grover introduced modern pictorial techniques as editor of successful *Sun* newspapers in Melbourne and Sydney. His mother Dorothy ('Dolly') Cannon remained a working journalist from the 1920s to the 1990s.

Michael was educated at Cobden and Camperdown High Schools, and Geelong College. At the end of World War II, he began working as a copyboy on the Melbourne *Argus*, then as a cadet journalist on the *Herald*. In 1948 he sailed to England to work on the London staff of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. After studying the operations of the fledgling BBC television service, he wrote a book-length series for the *Radio Times* on the glowing future of television.

After his return to Melbourne Cannon worked as a senior reporter on the *Age*. In later decades he wrote many articles and book reviews for the paper. In the meantime, Cannon turned to the publication of monthly magazines and, in 1955, became founding editor of the Australian edition of *Family Circle*, based on the popular American original.

Early in 1959 he sold his magazine interests and spent the proceeds on a news magazine called *Newsday* (not to be confused with the *Age*'s later evening newspaper). His first wife Susan tragically died towards the end of that year, and *Newsday* ceased publication.

In 1960 Cannon was appointed associate editor of the Sydney *Sunday Mirror*, assisting his close friend Cyril Pearl in an attempt to change the brash tabloid into a 'quality newspaper'. The result was severe loss of circulation, and, after a dispute with its proprietor, Cannon returned to Melbourne.

During the 1960s he began a new career researching his first book as well as working as a bookshop manager and associate director of Melbourne University Press under Peter Ryan. One of several people writing as 'The Melbourne Spy', he also contributed frequently to the Sydney journal *Nation*.

In 1969 the Sydney political activist Gordon Barton attempted to break into the media world by backing Melbourne's first professional

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Sunday newspaper the *Sunday Observer*. Cannon was appointed founding editor and also founded the Sunday Review, precursor of *Nation Review*. Both papers lasted for some years, but, when the radical push of the anti-Vietnam crusades died away and Barton's funds were exhausted, each paper changed ownership or ceased publication.

Meanwhile, Cannon had also returned to historical writing, producing a flood of popular original works and facsimile books. All told, he wrote twenty books under his own name and edited another fifteen. His most successful book in terms of sales was *The Exploration of Australia* (1987—70,000 copies in three hardback editions). *The Land Boomers* has sold more than 40,000 copies in various editions and is still in print. A Bicentennial work, *Australia, Spirit of a Nation: A Bicentenary Album*, went through three hardback editions totalling more than 30,000 copies.

Cannon's 300,000-word survey, *Australia in the Victorian Age*, was issued in several versions. Professor Manning Clark wrote that this massive work consolidated Cannon's reputation 'as one of the liveliest and most illuminating writers of history in Australia'. The volumes won the first Barbara Ramsden Award for writing, and for the editing by Sue Ebury.

In 1978 Cannon was commissioned by the Public Record Office Victoria to begin research into the early years of European settlement in Victoria. This culminated in the publication of the unique nine-volume *Historical Records of Victoria* between 1981 and 2002.

In recognition of his years of writing and publishing, Cannon was presented with the Australia Council's Emeritus award by Prime Minister Paul Keating in 1996. Two years later Cannon completed his last major work, the 'inside story' of law firm Slater and Gordon. He then bought a farm near Foster in South Gippsland, where he spent ten years planting thousands of trees and restoring the environment to its original bushland, before retiring to Inverloch at age 80.

Cannon's personal papers are held in the National Library of Australia, Canberra, and his research papers are at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

He is survived by four children, Paul, Sarah, James and Patrick, numerous grandchildren and his sister, Dina Monks, who was editor of the *Frankston Standard*. His brother-in-law, John Monks, also a noted journalist, died in 2014.

The Cannon Family

ARTICLES

Australian History as Literature, Australian Literature as History:
The 2022 Weston Bate Oration[1]

Andrew Lemon

This is rightly called the Weston Bate Oration. Sovereign Hill open-air museum honours Weston annually with its own Weston Bate Memorial Lecture—Weston's researches into the history of Ballarat helped ensure the authenticity and liveliness of Sovereign Hill as it developed into Australia's pre-eminent heritage park. But we at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria have our Weston Bate Oration, honouring him as a most dynamic past president. Weston Bate (1924–2017) as a historian did not lecture; Weston orated. Orator: a public speaker, eloquent and skilled; one who can affect the listener's beliefs and feelings. Weston, besides being a historian, was certainly a poet: a poet in the formal sense—in 2006 he published his book *Haphazard Quilts*—and a poet in his historical writing. 'Poet' is harder to define than 'Orator'. One who writes poetry, of course; in prose it means one who writes with imagination and clarity, concision, someone with a gift for words. A poet puts into words those things we know or feel but cannot properly express. A poet makes the language sing. Weston's university lectures, his talks to historical societies, at the RHSV, and I am told his school classes, were performances. Even a question or comment from the floor, at other people's lectures, could be a cameo.

Thinking of historians as writers and storytellers was the germ of the idea to speak tonight about Australian history as literature and, on the other side of the page, literature as history.

There was a second inspiration. This was a chance not exactly for shameless self-promotion but rather to reflect on what I have just done as a professional historian, producing my own first work of fiction, albeit historical fiction based on a true story, using historical sources. At last I can truly say, in the words of Miss Prism, 'Do not speak slightly of

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the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days'. After more than four decades of researching and writing history books, I have produced a three-volume novel (published as one), *The Pebbled Beach at Pentecost*. Written in earlier days? It was certainly conceived, researched and started 30 years ago. A few parts that I wrote back then have survived barely altered; but thank goodness the novel rested unfinished. It is much improved, in the author's view, by the delay, by the progress of my work as a historian and by the opening up of source material. Now it is done. Three books in one, with a short coda called Book Four, where fiction moves to reportage: colour to black and white, or perhaps the other way round. A selection of conflicting newspaper reports of the death of my protagonist is followed by a personal memoir of my visit to Pentecost Island, Vanuatu, with my young son in 1993 in the quest for answers. That coda illuminates the sequence of events related in the novel. But essentially a three-volume novel it is.

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Let us start with historical novels, ubiquitous in Australia. Many take their historical settings very seriously indeed—so much so that the authors become our quasi historians. Their names are legion, from Marcus Clarke, Henry Handel Richardson, Miles Franklin (writing as 'Brent of Bin Bin'), Ernestine Hill and Eleanor Dark through to contemporary novelists such as Thomas Kenneally, Robert Drewe, Kate Grenville and now Hannah Kent. Martin Boyd in *The Cardboard Crown* and *Lucinda Brayford* was a historical novelist. Patrick White was too, with soaring flights of imagination, in novels such as *The Tree of Man* and *A Fringe of Leaves.* Peter Carey has long used history as a canvas for his dark satire.

Historian John Hirst (1942–2016), a provocative, first-class writer, was asked fifteen years ago to nominate 'The Best Australian History Books' for *The Monthly* magazine. He began: 'Are the finest guides to Australian history always those written by historians? Asked to name the best history books on Australia, I find my mind wanders to works that are not history proper'.[2]

Not even John Hirst could have read everything in Australian historical literature. He called his article, with a nod to our obsession with sporting culture, 'The First Eleven'. His first pick is Henry Handel (Ethel) Richardson's trilogy *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. Another is

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Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia.* A third is Katharine Susannah Prichard's *Coonardoo: The Well in the Shadow.* Three out of eleven of Hirst's 'Best Australian History Books' are novels, the most recent of them published in 1939.

Manning Clark, in the fifth volume of his *A History of Australia*, wrote of Rolf Boldrewood, author of the classic *Robbery Under Arms: A Story of Life and Adventure in the Bush and in the Goldfields of Australia:* 'Boldrewood became one of the main sources from which the English and Australian reading public derived its knowledge of Australia'.[3]

It is fair comment. *Robbery Under Arms* (originally published as a three-volume novel in 1888) has never been out of print. Its author said he took his history carefully. 'Boldrewood', a fiction, was the *nom-de-plume* of Thomas Browne (1826–1915). In his introduction, Browne wrote these words:

> though presented in the guise of fiction, this chronicle of the Marston family must not be set down by the reader as wholly fanciful or exaggerated. Much of the narrative is literally true, as can be verified by official records.[4]

Similarly, Marcus Clarke (1846–81); he is described in his *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry as journalist, columnist, novelist, magazine or journal owner and editor, playwright, librarian and public servant, but not as historian. He wrote his most famous work *His Natural Life* in magazine instalments in Melbourne between 1870 and 1872. George Robertson published it in book form two years later; the author was still not 30. Like *Robbery Under Arms*, it has never been out of print, usually under its longer title *For the Term of His Natural Life*. Clarke dedicated the novel, in a preface, to the Irish nationalist and local politician, briefly premier of Victoria, Sir Charles Gavan Duffy (1816–1903)—a man of letters, a recognised historian, and a mentor of the mercurial author.[5]

This is what Clarke wrote:

> Your critical faculty will doubtless find, in the construction and artistic working of this book, many faults. I do not think, however, that you will discover any exaggerations. Some of the events narrated are doubtless tragic and terrible; but I hold it needful to my purpose to record them, for they are events which have actually occurred, and which, if the blunders which produced them be repeated, must infallibly occur again.[6]

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Interestingly this edition includes an appendix citing primary sources including parliamentary reports, correspondence and published memoirs. The novel throughout its numerous editions has been presented to the public both as a popular work and as an Australian classic. It is melodrama in the way of Victor Hugo and Dickens, and it still sings. Chapter 1 opens: 'In the breathless stillness of a tropical afternoon, when the air was hot and heavy, and the sky brazen and cloudless, the shadow of the *Malabar* lay solitary on the surface of the glittering sea'.

Whether historically accurate or not, *His Natural Life* is seared into our historical consciousness. A movie version was made as early as 1908, another in 1911 and a successful full-length silent feature film in 1927. Its cast included Marion, one of Clarke's real-life daughters. In the 1980s the book was on the screen again, adapted into a big budget television series featuring Colin Friels as Rufus Dawes, with Anthony Perkins and Diane Cilento in the cast. Largely through Clarke, Port Arthur itself became a character in Australian history, reasserting its brutal place in our consciousness with a deranged mass shooting there in April 1996.

So Marcus Clarke, novelist, made his mark on the public understanding of Australian history. Tom Griffiths, in his 2016 book *The Art of Time Travel: Historians and their Craft*, makes the same claim for novelist Eleanor Dark (1901–85) and her 1941 book *The Timeless Land*. He nominates her as 'probably Australia's most influential historical writer of the twentieth century'; her book held its place for years on the secondary school syllabus. The setting is the first colonial settlement in Sydney, and like *His Natural Life* her novel gained ground with a television series. Tom Griffiths follows Dark to see 'how such an influential novelist set about her historical task'. He continues,

> I agree with the novelist James Bradley that we mustn't value fiction for its non-fiction: we mustn't "make research the thing that matters about fiction". But it is significant that for Dark in *The Timeless Land*, facts were her foundation and she wanted to imagine into and within the known past.[7]

Griffiths adds that Dark 'never claimed to be a historian but she took the craft of history very seriously'. He goes on to mention many other prominent Australian novelists who take the craft of history more or less seriously, and I won't repeat his roll call here. He devotes one chapter to Judith Wright (1915–2000), whom we think of primarily as a poet.

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How do you characterise her 1959 book *The Generations of Men?* Not a novel, not a history: more a deep reflection on her family history. It too reached the high school syllabus and was widely read. The publisher's blurb described it this way:

> The names, dates and events are factual and are based on diaries, letters and personal reminiscences. Wright has taken this factual material and with her poet's imagination turned it into a reconstruction of a past era; people, places and even moods … Judith Wright's elegant chronicle is fascinating both as a historical document and a personal meditation.[8]

Griffiths also devotes a chapter to historian Inga Clendinnen (1934–2016). This becomes a three-way conversation, because in 2006 Clendinnen had written a *Quarterly Essay* called 'The History Question: Who Owns the Past?'.[9] That essay had been sparked by novelist Kate Grenville's approach to historical fiction in her book *The Secret River* (2005). Clendinnen, an original and brilliant writer, had not long before published her own book *Dancing with Strangers* (2003)—not fiction but allowing for an informed historian's imagination. Both books dealt with the culture shock of the first European colonists interacting with the Indigenous people of New South Wales. It was literary territory shared with *The Timeless Land*. I commend Tom Griffiths's analysis of this whole discussion, which he characterises as 'the intriguing dance between history and fiction'.[10]

Dancing with Strangers equally earned a baggy green cap in Hirst's First Eleven, but not *The Secret River*. Guess which one was a runaway best seller? More often than not the non-historians, when writing history, outsell those who claim 'historian' as their profession. I won't wander further into the Clendinnen–Grenville debate except to note that the topic recently re-emerged with the release of Kate Grenville's historical novel about Elizabeth Macarthur and, just now, by her edition of Mrs Macarthur's actual letters. By editing the letters, Kate Grenville becomes a historian. She reconsiders how far she got her fictional Mrs Macarthur right. 'As I edited the letters', she says, 'my understanding of Elizabeth Macarthur shifted again, in the way your knowledge of a friend deepens and complicates over time'.[11]

Like John Hirst, not even Tom Griffiths can include everyone. His book does not mention Brian Matthews's *Louisa*, which 35 years ago provoked controversy about the boundaries between biography and

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fiction. The book intentionally played with and twisted the biographical form. A promotional blurb reads: '*Louisa* moves with the pace of a thriller … [it] undermines all the certainties of biographical narrative, deftly drawing the reader into the whole strange business of one person unravelling the life of another'.[12]

As a biographer more than once, I can sympathise with Brian Matthews's dismay as he set out to write a book about Louisa Lawson, pioneer feminist, mother of Henry Lawson. His first and biggest challenge in writing her biography, he said, was a shortage of material, a paucity of hard evidence.[13] I daresay he would have found the opposite problem equally as daunting, had it presented itself: huge heaps of source material. His second challenge was how to break out of the structural bonds of conventional biography. His solution was to invent an alternative narrator who could pose questions and hypotheticals—and allow a bit of vaudeville along the way. The whole book could be read as a postmodern experiment, though I see it as the product of a playful mind refusing to be bored witless by the grind of endless years researching and writing a full conventional biography that only the most dedicated, the most personally involved, might want to read. *Louisa* did much better than that, working wonders for the author's career. It won the Australian Literature Society Gold Medal and glittering prizes for literary non-fiction. Soon after, Brian Matthews became chairman of the Literature Board of the Australia Council.[14]

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From the historical novelists, I want to turn to a handful of novelists who wrote history books in the more conventional sense. Kylie Tennant (1912–88) is renowned as a novelist. She made her reputation in 1935 with her gritty social-realist novel *Tiburon*. It won the inaugural S.H. Prior Memorial Literary Prize. She followed with other successes. Best remembered today would be *Ride on Stranger* (1943), which became a television series in 1979 starring Noni Hazlehurst. Tennant's quirky but grim memoir *The Missing Heir* (1986) explains there were times when personally and financially she needed employment. She worked as a publisher's reader and book editor and served on the Commonwealth Literary Fund Advisory Board.

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It was the economic imperative that led her to write *Australia: Her Story* for Macmillan, the British publisher for whom she worked. It appeared in 1953 to mixed response. The *Argus* reviewer complained that she had 'tizzied up existing authoritative works and employed a slick, radio-script style to over-dramatise our nation's story'. The *Herald*, sympathetic but condescending, said her book was full of dash, vigour, colour and caprice.

> She has taken some measure of a novelist's licence, and, being an engaging writer with a dramatic sense, has produced a pungently readable selection of episodes from our horrifying early days. These are especially designed not to be quoted from by sentimental after-dinner speakers on the bonds of Empire.[15]

The *Herald* further observed that *Australia: Her Story* discarded all forms of explanation—no sources, no footnotes, no bibliography. Tennant's light tone makes her a spiritual predecessor of current popular humourists such as David Hunt writing sardonically on Australia's history.

Another novelist-turned-historian was the Queenslander, David Denholm (1924–1997). He first gained literary success in his 30s, writing as David Forrest. His war novel *The Last Blue Sea* won the inaugural Mary Gilmore Award for fiction in 1959.[16] It was clearly based on his own Second World War experiences. Denholm had been a gangly eighteen-year-old when called up for military service in 1942. Four years in the army included two full years in the gruelling Papua New Guinea campaign against the Japanese.[17] He knew of what he wrote. This was not a historical novel, rather one that becomes history. The £200 prize money was worth having but hardly a fortune.

When David Forrest followed with humorous fiction, *The Hollow Wood Heap* (1962), based on his postwar life working in a bank, he found himself humiliated by literary critic Rohan Rivett in the *Canberra Times*.[18] 'Forrest's writing is remote, ponderous and irritating', said Rivett, seizing on 'numerous infelicities' including the choice of wrong words and bad punctuation. 'Certainly, he would be well advised to return to more serious writing, like *The Deep Blue Sea*.' Getting the earlier book's name wrong must have been a final blow to the novelist's ego, even if the communist paper *The Tribune* found the new one 'deliciously humorous'.[19] *The Last Blue Sea* was republished in a Penguin edition in 1985, but no further David Forrest novels appeared.[20] No mini-series either. You

will find *The Last Blue Sea* currently recommended on a website called 'Neglected Books'.[21]

Abandoning Forrest, Denholm turned to the study of history as a mature-age student, completing his doctorate at the Australian National University and then lecturing at Charles Sturt University at Wagga Wagga. In 1979 his book *The Colonial Australians* won the Fellowship of Australian Writers' ANA Literature Award 'for a work of sustained quality with an Australian theme'. Years later it earned a place in John Hirst's First Eleven.

A different case is that of the literary duo, Flora Eldershaw (1897–1956) and Marjorie Barnard (1897–1987), who moved between fiction and conventional history. They first met at the University of Sydney and became friends and writing collaborators. Barnard graduated with first class honours, winning the university medal for history. Eldershaw went on to work as a teacher and later as a Commonwealth public servant, Barnard as a librarian. Barnard also published stories, novels and histories under her own name. The collaboration 'M. Barnard Eldershaw' produced five novels and four book-length histories between 1928 and 1947.[22]

Not all their novels were historical. I fear they have lost their audience today.[23] Their first and best known, *A House is Built*, has a period feel to it, more like the period in which it was written rather than the mid-nineteenth century Sydney in which it is painstakingly set, but it repays reading. George Eliot seems a clear influence. It places the experience of women front and centre; its sharp observation of character and family interaction is its strength. It shared the 1928 *Bulletin* fiction prize with *Coonardoo*, the Prichard novel about inter-racial love that John Hirst recommended. Publishers Curry O'Neill reissued *A House is Built* in their Australian Classics series in 1972, and a new edition in 1982, but it has not been reprinted since. Barnard outlived Eldershaw by 30 years. Late in her lifetime she was rediscovered. When she was 86 she received the Patrick White Award for 'a writer who has been highly creative over a long period but who has not received adequate recognition'. Three years later, Sydney University awarded Marjorie Barnard an honorary doctorate.

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The Barnard and Eldershaw partnership was about the only precedent I could find for a practising Australian historian writing historical novels.

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There is certainly no shortage of Australian historians who write history with the verve and creative imagination that is too often assumed to be the sole preserve of novelists. A great compliment to historians seems to be that their book is 'readable'. This is like telling a chef that the food is 'edible'. A well-written history is delicious and demands from the writer as much care over every word and sentence as any work of prose. Novelists do not need to footnote. I want to turn to what the concept of good writing in history might mean.

'Everyone who sets out to write history must be free to decide how he will do it', says historian Don Watson.[24] But Watson is savage about those who write badly. He gave the old coinage 'weasel words' a new currency and whimsically called his 2003 book *Death Sentence: The Decay of Public Language.* His campaign against bad writing has proven futile, as he would have gloomily expected. His book resonated, but sound rarely moves anything unaided. Watson had as much practical effect as all previous crusaders for clarity in the written word. Jargon burgeons. Clichés rule. Historians are not exempt.

Good writing does not mean uniformity or conventionality. It means using words carefully, making meaning clear. Words are our tools of trade. The problem is that these tools are not immutable. A hammer never wakes up the next day transformed into a chisel, but words change their meaning while you watch. In argument, words can become blunt instruments. 'Words can never hurt you' was the schoolyard retort, but we find them causing havoc at literal and metaphorical battle fronts. Watson has written extensively about the craft of history. He says, 'I am not a poet, sadly, or a novelist, just as sadly. I write novels in my head but can't take myself seriously when I write them down'. Elsewhere he says:

> Anyone writing history … has to sift and select evidence, find a structure, a voice, a tone … Anyone telling a story has first to decide what the story is going to be, and then how to tell it. All storytellers worth their salt know that if you try to tell everything you will wind up telling nothing.[25]

It is worth contemplating the contrasting styles of the two biggest names in the writing of Australian history in our lifetimes, Geoffrey Blainey and Manning Clark (1915—1991). Their styles are masterful but opposite: not so much chalk and cheese as crisp celery and ripe Stilton. Both had clergymen as fathers; both learned their craft of language at the foot of the pulpit, but the difference in denomination shows. Blainey's

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father was Methodist, Clark's was Anglican. Methodists can do emotion, use homely images, enjoy a rousing hymn, build a story to a climax. Anglicans revel in the beauty of language, even if the meaning is not always clear, carry an awareness of sin without being captive to it, are open to reason but yearn for certainty. Both writers were graduates of the famous Melbourne University school of history under Max Crawford, but of different generations; Clark was a lecturer there when Blainey was an undergraduate.[26] But generational difference does not explain everything. Clark graduated BA Honours in history from Melbourne in 1938, the same year as Alan Shaw, Margaret Kiddle and Rohan Rivett—outstanding all, but so different in style.

Blainey in his memoir *Before I Forget* says that his most potent literary mentor was Arthur (A.A.) Phillips, certainly not a Methodist, the English master in the schoolboy's senior years boarding at Wesley College from 1944. Phillips taught Blainey to shun affectation and superfluous adjectives, to hunt out the essential point.[27] Clark was at Melbourne Grammar, uncomfortably. For both of them the rhetoric of their headmasters, great authority figures in their day, also made a mark. Blainey's headmaster at Wesley was the austere, brilliant Australian Neil McNeil, who had lost his strong Presbyterian faith at the horrendous Battle of Loos early in the First World War.[28] Clarke's headmaster was the classically educated, athletic Englishman Richard Franklin, who as the young headmaster at MGS enlisted in the AIF at the start of 1917 but, unlike McNeil, never saw battle.[29]

Blainey, first practising as a commissioned or freelance historian, perfected the art of writing tightly, meeting deadlines, observing word lengths and moving briskly from one historical topic to another, adding always to his overview. Clark was diverted first to school teaching, then to university lecturing. Mark McKenna, his biographer, draws attention to Clark's memo to himself as a lecturer: '[If Australian] history is not interesting, make the events romantic'.[30] Blainey exemplified the conviction that history, Australian history, *was* interesting. Just go looking. Mines and banks, local history and school history could be interesting in his hands. He had eleven books published before the end of the 1960s, including two that made his name, *The Rush That Never Ended* and *The Tyranny of Distance*.

How we might wish that Manning Clark could have been subjected at an early age to the tutelage of A.A. Phillips or more ruthless editors.

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Oh, the repetition, the modelling of the high style of Macaulay's *History of England*, the sprays of Shakespeare, the King James Bible, Browning, Yeats and all—yet such editing might have killed his genius. Michael Cathcart, a skilled historian and communicator on air or online, tried his best at the behest of Melbourne University Press to abridge Clark's six-volume *A History of Australia* (1997). A hot air balloon deflated after an emergency landing in the streets of Melbourne cannot be compared with the majestic panoply of six noble balloons aloft, illuminated by the morning sun, floating out of reach of mere mortals. I cannot help seeing Clark's master work that way.

How interesting it is to compare Manning Clark with his contemporary Margaret Kiddle, whose *Men of Yesterday* was published posthumously, with the imprimatur of Professor Crawford, in 1961, three years after her early death. Where Clark can at times abandon his detachment and weep with pity, Kiddle in her big social history shows compassion throughout but never without balance: compassion to squatters, shepherds and wool-washers, Aboriginal peoples, ex-convicts, pioneer women and their children, remittance men, compassion even to the landscape, the introduced sheep, cattle and horses, the native flora and fauna. Sixty years later it stands fresh, an impressive work by a great Australian writer.

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While I was wrestling with this big topic—Australian history as literature, literature as history—and while I was wondering whether aspiring historians should be taught literary technique, or whether jargon has prevailed in the academic teaching and writing of history, or what we historians can do about myth and generalisations prevailing over accuracy … while I was wrestling with all of that, serendipity (the great friend of historians) led me to Richard Weatherly's luminous book *A Brush with Birds.*

I recommend it. Weatherly has been honoured for service to the visual arts and to conservation and the environment. He was born in 1945 and raised on a beautiful historic property near Mortlake in the heart of Margaret Kiddle's Western District of Victoria. During his long career he has been a practical farmer, land conservationist, and a practising artist exhibiting successfully in Australia and internationally. In his art, his

special subject and passion is birds and their environment. He says he is neither an ornithologist nor a trained scientist, but his knowledge of birds and his powers of observation are acute, and his art is something different from scientific portraiture. He does not work from photographs, but his grasp of detail is forensic. His field work took him to remote parts of Australia, Papua New Guinea, Mexico and the United States, and Antarctica. An eight-year project with botanist and ornithologist Richard Schodde was to find, sketch and then paint for book publication every variety of the Fairy-wren, the *Maluridae*—to paint them in their habitat, from the Kimberley to the Kokoda Trail.[31] This is what he wrote, and I am sure you can see how it applies to our discussion of history, creative history and fiction.

> In the art establishment, there are brilliant artists responding to the environment in ways that science finds uncomfortable. In scientific illustration, we have extraordinary artisans who are increasingly obsessed with technique, but who have little to say artistically. Here is the dichotomy between art and science at its extreme. Illustrative wildlife art is not accepted by the art establishment. Art is not admired by the scientific community. One aspect of learning to paint wildlife is the inherently schizophrenic necessity to be two incompatible intellects simultaneously: one an artist, the other a scientist, a battle between two sides of the brain. However in both painting and science, is not the intention to add to the sum of knowledge of the subject, to inform or show character, as in a good portrait: to reveal some greater truth?[32]

Extrapolating: in history and fiction, is not the intention the same? Are historians scientists or artists, literalist or creative? We deal with facts and causation, with what actually happened and how, with the when and where and who. If we fail or are careless, we are rightly criticised. At the same time we need to be storytellers if we want to communicate. History works upon us; we react creatively. Are we two incompatible intellects simultaneously? We face a similar dilemma. Detailed history is not welcomed by the literary establishment. Fictionalised history or history by journalists or creative history that sometimes seems too creative often sells well but is not generally welcomed by academic historians. The worst of it is execrable, but the best of it soars. Historians, territorial, looking for the errors, have too often been reluctant to give full credit to the literary power of outstanding writers of history such as Alan Moorhead, Michael Cannon, Patsy Adam-Smith and Les Carlyon.

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This train of thought leads me to Graeme Davison's invaluable book, *The Use and Abuse of History in Australia* (2000). He reminds us that history is produced for a multitude of motives, some noble, some not. The writer who mines history for material for best sellers stands a mile apart from the explorer who compiles careful chronologies and seeks patterns, linkages and explanations. There are undergraduates and academics who choose a topic as a stepping stone in their careers. Professional historians seek to write a history on commission for a client while hoping to maintain an independent viewpoint. Some historians act as advocates for causes, maybe political, maybe their own, maybe those of someone who pays them, as a barrister acts for an accused. There remains an ideal: the historian who seeks balance, context, and can I provocatively say, truth. Tom Griffiths goes so far as to say that 'novelists are free to "pillage" the past, but it is the historian's civic and moral duty to insist on context'.[33] Paradoxically, when I turned to historical fiction it was because I felt some historians pillaged the past, and maybe it was in the novel that I could insist on context.

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Can I explain? It would be possible from his letters and shreds of evidence to construe the young protagonist of my book, Vernon Lee Walker, as a privileged, predatory, racist colonialist, contaminated by the illegal, immoral and murderous Kanaka trade, who brought his death at Pentecost Island upon himself. It is possible because it has been done, in a 1999 book called *Bad Colonists: The South Seas Letters of Vernon Lee Walker and Louis Becke*.[34] Here is the publisher's blurb:

> In *Bad Colonists* Nicholas Thomas and Richard Eves provide a window into the fantasies and realities of colonial life by presenting separate sets of letters by two late-nineteenth-century British colonists of the South Pacific: Vernon Lee Walker and Louis Becke. Thomas and Eves frame the letters—addressed mostly to the colonists' mothers—with commentary that explores colonial degeneration in the South Pacific. Using critical anthropology and theories of history-making to view the letter as artefact and autobiography, they examine the process whereby men and women unravelled in the hot, violent, uncivil colonial milieu.[35]

What Nicholas Thomas and Richard Eves did not ask was: what would it have been like to be Vernon Lee Walker?

I did, and my considered view was different, having read and transcribed all of Walker's surviving correspondence, letters written with decreasing frequency between the ages of 18 and 30 from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, New Caledonia and ultimately the New Hebrides, chiefly to his mother in Wolverhampton. I had read them all, not just the South Seas letters, for a commissioned history that came to nothing. The correspondence is one-sided. Nothing written to him has survived. Vernon was a nobody, although he mixed with a few somebodies. I could research the somebodies and find the bones of his family. I began imagining the rest.

I read him not as 'a colonist', but as a teenage boy leaving his home and widowed mother forever, coming to a new country (the leap of faith symbolised by the front cover image), trying to find his way, soon being exploited by an odious older brother, dealing stoically and sometimes courageously with daunting circumstances, being killed for reasons beyond his control. That story moved me. I found not contempt but compassion.

He was coming first to an Australia where his compatriots, the British, asserted ownership but had been present for less than a century in a land inhabited by others for tens of thousands of years. Even I am shocked by the insouciance with which Vernon and his new friends felt free to range in their holidays from the city to shoot countless possums, wallabies and koalas—bears to him, 'but not so big as a bear'—and birds, sitting ducks all. To them this was an unused game park. Significantly, over seven years from 1876 based first in Melbourne and then Sydney, travelling occasionally to the regions, Vernon never once met an Indigenous Australian. When fate takes him to the Pacific, that is a very different story. I say he did not unravel in a hot, violent, uncivil colonial milieu. I say he fell under the spell of the Pacific. Things went wrong, but he came close to finding himself. I found a person beyond the stereotype.

Mine is a saga with a storyline, an arc, a trajectory. It is no secret, from the opening sentence, that Vernon will be killed on a pebbled beach at Pentecost. The question is how and why and even where? There are explanations whose threads are gathered as the book progresses, and you should resist reading the last chapter first. I am always intrigued by the net of circumstances, events that slowly draw together until only one result is possible. Vernon Lee Walker's death in 1887 would not have happened

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if other happenings far from his control or knowledge had not occurred. I begin the book with that thought.

All this could have been dealt with by me as a historian, even if it came to making informed guesses about the gaps in the story. But I knew 30 years ago it would have to be a novel. An English literary historian, Laura Asche, has written about the twelfth-century origins of fiction. She describes fiction well as

> a mode of writing in which both author and reader are aware—and know that the other is aware—that the events described cannot be *known* to have happened. *That is not to say that they or something very like them might not have happened*: fiction … gives an account of something unverifiable and which does not ask to be believed, only to be thought about; it is a contract between author and reader.

She adds: 'one thing is genuinely unknowable and it is the supreme matter of fiction. That is, what is going on in anyone else's mind?'[36]

I discovered it was not just a case of seeking to get inside Vernon's mind, or to write imaginative fiction about a 'young man from home'. The alarming fact was that, through research and imagination, Vernon Lee Walker somehow got into *my* head. He had been killed once on Pentecost; he had been killed again by the book *Bad Colonists*. He sat reproaching me for years from a wire basket near my writing desk. Historical fiction let him out.

Barnard and Eldershaw place their characters in real parts of colonial Sydney among real events, using contemporary sources. I go a step further, quoting liberally from the actual letters of Vernon Lee Walker as my anchors to authenticity. His encounters with the likes of wealthy William Kerr Thomson, King Cakobau in Fiji and journalists 'The Vagabond' and George Syme, brother of David, are actual. The conversations I invent are informed by views found in print, but again that is one side of the story. The other side had to be fiction.

Fiction allows to me to simplify reality, to engage in point and counterpoint. With fiction I can sharpen distinctions. Fiction lets me dramatise conflict, as theatre can do, to act out complexity. It is a commonplace for novelists to shelter behind the disclaimer that their characters are fictional and that any resemblance between persons living or dead is entirely coincidental. My characters are, mostly, historical,

and any resemblance to persons living or dead makes me feel that I have done my work well.

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Some concluding thoughts. I wish that jargon would loosen its hold on academic history. Say what you mean, historians! The RHSV occupies border lands between academic history and community history, and its publications must always model high standards of clear, accessible writing. Jargon is insidious; it is not always meaningless, but it is often impenetrable.

I wish that our best historians would receive better recognition in the Australian literary world as writers. I wish more of our mainstream publishers would publish and promote good history books. When historians are published, too few are offered the services of top-rate book editors, and it shows.

I wish more histories were properly reviewed in whatever survives of the mainstream press. There is a lot about lifestyle, sport, arts and real estate—and even novels—in papers and online; major history books too often pass unnoticed, and local or specialist works are totally ignored except here at the RHSV. We have managed to foster the Victorian Community History Awards, and our bookshop is unique in its support of history publishing. We should be natural partners with such bodies as Creative Victoria, Melbourne City of Literature, the Wheeler Centre and the Melbourne Writers Festival.

What makes history literature? A succession of good historical minds have been clambering around this question forever. Former ANU professor of history, Ann Curthoys, combined with John Docker to write a book called *Is History Fiction?* (2005). With Ann McGrath she edited a volume called *How to Write History that People Want to Read* (2009). In 2015 she contributed to a website collection of essays called 'Fictional Histories and Historical Fictions: Writing History in the Twenty-first Century'. In her essay, Ann Curthoys rightly says that, of the vast number of historical texts available to us, 'only a few acquire a reputation as being particularly well written, as being in themselves a form of literature'. Her paper is about E.P. Thompson, not any Australian historian.[37] Her formulation, her words, are that history has 'a double character', that it operates in 'an unstable space', and this is the secret of its 'cunning as a

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continuing practice, an inventive, self-transforming discipline'. I think I know what she is saying.

My view is that history, properly considered, is not fiction. It is not fact either, reliable fact, though it ought to try. Written history should learn its lessons from the best literature. Fiction can use and benefit from history. My book is fiction, based on history. I called it 'a novel' as its subtitle, just to be clear.

I prefer the artist Richard Weatherly's formulation. Whatever novelists might do, the historian needs to be two incompatible intellects simultaneously: one an artist, the other a scientist, a balance rather than a battle between two sides of the brain. Is it not the intention to add to the sum of knowledge of the subject, to inform or show character, as in a good portrait: to reveal some greater truth?

I think the bird man said it best.

Notes

1   Delivered at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria Annual General Meeting, 17 May 2022.

2   John Hirst, 'The First XI', *The Monthly*, October 2006.

3   C.M.H. Clark, *A History of Australia*, Vol. 5, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1981, p. 19.

4   Quoted in *Leader*, 28 September 1889, p. 7.

5   The 1882 edition published in Melbourne by George Robertson and in London by Richard Bently and Son used the longer title. Joy Parnaby, 'Sir Charles Gavan Duffy (1816–1903)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (*ADB*), Vol. 4, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1974; Brian Elliott, 'Marcus Clarke (1846–1881)', *ADB*, Vol. 3, 1969.

6   Marcus Clarke, *For the Term of His Natural Life*, 1882, preface, at https://www.gutenberg. org/files/3424/3424-h/3424-h.htm#link2H_4_0001.

7   Tom Griffiths, *The Art of Time Travel: Historians and their Craft*, Melbourne, Black Inc., 2016, p. 19.

8   Judith Wright, *The Generations of Men, Melbourne*, Oxford University Press, 1959.

9   See also Brian Crozier, 'History, Fiction and Extended Memory: A Response to Inga Clendinnen', *History Australi*a, vol. 5, no. 1, 2008, pp. 13.1–13.5, at https://www.tandfonline. com/doi/abs/10.2104/ha080013.

10   Griffiths, p. 248.

11   Kate Grenville, 'I Hijacked Elizabeth Macarthur's Story for *A Room Made of Leaves:* Now, through her letters, she speaks for herself', *Guardian*, 12 April 2022.

12   https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/5994586-louisa.

13   Brian Matthews, *Louisa*, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1968.

14   Chairman 1990–92. *Louisa* won the Victorian Premier's Literary Prize for Non-Fiction and shared the one-off 1988 John Hetherington Bicentennial Biography Prize.

15   Lawrence Kerr, *Argus*, 11 July 1953; *Herald*, Melbourne, 18 July 1953.

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16 Awarded by the Australasian Book Society 1959. The Dame Mary Gilmore Prize was later for poetry only.

17 Series B883 (Second AIF Personnel Dossiers, 1939–1947), item no. 4930193: Denholm, D.D., National Archives of Australia (NAA).

18 R.R., 'Plodding Humour of an Angry Young Man', *Canberra Times*, 11 August 1962. R.R. is understood to be Rohan Rivett, author of the 1947 prisoner-of-war memoir *Behind Bamboo*.

19 *Tribune*, 12 September 1962.

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Unprotected: Aboriginal, Convict and Poor Women in Colonial Victoria:
Or How Everything Bad Was Made Worse by Being Female*

Janet McCalman

Abstract

Protection of body and soul in colonial Victoria depended on race and class but also gender. A woman without a reliable, effective and respectable male protector as breadwinner—a father, a husband or a blood relative—would die younger; lose more of her children; have smaller babies at birth; suffer more infertility; risk or suffer destitution; be afflicted by addiction; commit suicide or be murdered than women who enjoyed respectable male protection. There was a hierarchy of entitlement to safety, with convicted women on the second bottom rung along with non-British women such as Chinese, while, at the bottom, utterly vulnerable, were Aboriginal women and girls. The fates of all these groups were the penalties of gender rather than the wages of sin.

Eliza Clements (*Hindostan*1839) had cut a dash in her youth, with flaming red hair and a rich vocabulary in her tirades from the dock. Like others around the Vandemonian haunt of Romeo Lane in Melbourne, she was born in Bloomsbury, London, and was tried at the Old Bailey with a mysterious and brilliant youth called variously John/Charles Chapman or Edward Edwards, who hailed from Bedford and may have been a gypsy. The court reporter called him a genius; Eliza was only a little less impressive:

> What am I here for, my lord? Am I to be sacrificed because I happen to be passing by the Mansion-house when the boy was at the bar? I was never afore a magistrate in my life until this blessed minute.

But that was not true, and she and the boy were sentenced to ten years.[1]

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* This is an edited version of the paper given by Professor Janet McCalman on 10 March 2022 for Women's History Month at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

In Melbourne, as 'Carotty Liz', 'a furious red-headed virago', she let out a stream of abuse in high tones in court in 1855 until she was sentenced to merely three months: 'Is that all? I think I have got off very easily', whereupon 'she was removed in a humour changed from the furious to the jolly'.[2] But, within a few years, the convictions for drunkenness and obscene language had ceased to be colourful. Her appearance deteriorated. By 1875 she was a 'half-clad, unshod, and dissipated looking creature', who wandered the town and claimed she lived by washing in Collingwood. She was still alive in 1899, now homeless around North Melbourne, unable to care for herself. The Benevolent Asylum refused to take her, so the police remanded her from week to week, to give her somewhere to sleep until, they hoped, the Bendigo Benevolent Asylum would oblige.[3]

Sixty years before, Eliza Clements' mother Charlotte had come to London to say goodbye before the *Hindostan* sailed. Just over a year later, the Chartist *Northern Star* reported a recent case of begging that had come before Alderman Kelly at the Guildhall. It was Charlotte Clements: 'Well, if I did beg, is it not better to beg than to steal? One or the other I must do, or I must starve. I have not a bit to eat'. She cried, and her voice rang out through the court.

> "Look at my body", said she, raising her arms, which were each thrust into an old stocking leg, and turning herself around in the dock, exhibiting her breast and her back, covered only with a piece of ragged linen—"no dress, no shoes, no anything".
> "Now tell me", said she with great vehemence, the tears streaming down her cheeks, "what am I to do? I could sell little things, but they must be bought; and if I go and beg the money, I am seized and sent to prison" …

She had no one in the world now. Eliza was her only living child out of thirteen, she claimed. The court sent her to Bridewell for a few days to be fed and clothed.[4] As with her daughter, only the gaols would care for her. Both women died as unrecorded paupers.

Eliza and her mother were two generations of inherited destitution as unprotected women. In a world made for men, women who were born without money or property either had to find a husband who could bring in the bacon or had to support themselves in an economy that little valued them and, at the same time, preserve their only claim to social respect, their virtue.

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This Women's History Month comes after a year of unparalleled questioning of the rights of women in this country: not just their political, economic, or industrial rights, but their fundamental human right to safety and respect. This includes being believed when assaulted or insulted, and not have their right to justice sabotaged by the besmirching of their character. In this lecture I want to reflect on 'unprotected women' and use the findings of three of the historical prosopographies that I have worked on over the past twenty years: the mothers and babies from the 'Melbourne Lying-In Hospital Birth Cohort' from 1857 to 1900; the Aboriginal population of Victoria from 1855 to 1920; and, last, the 'Ships Project' from 'Founders and Survivors', in particular the Vandemonians in colonial Victoria.[5] What have these 'damned whores' to say to us in 2022?

I also want to use Amartya Sen's concept of 'entitlement'—whether it refers to care, or food or respect—as a way of understanding the meaning of being 'protected'.[6] To give a contemporary example: the former MP Julia Banks reported that while she was at a meeting in the prime minister's suite a senior cabinet minister ran his hand up her leg under her skirt. She knew it was a display of raw masculine power to put her in her place, and that even the prime minister's office was not a safe place for a woman. The last thing she could do was to protest.[7] If this were a royal visit with the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, would the same cabinet minister do the same to Kate? No, she is untouchable because of her rank. Such an assault would destroy that cabinet minister's career and private life and shame the nation, maybe even bring down the government. It might even land the cabinet minister in gaol. But Julia Banks's humiliation and violation remains unpunished, and, while she has spoken about the incident since, she cannot reveal his identity. He has got away with it; her entitlement is limited.

This last twelve months we have also grieved, as we have to every year, for women who have been killed, almost weekly, by their partners. Some of these crimes are executed with horrific violence. It is an ancient crime, except that until quite recent time police were reluctant to intervene in 'domestics' because of the widely accepted view that what happened between man and wife, short of homicide, was private. Likewise, it has been a battle for the law to recognise that rape can occur in a marriage. Women and girls and other vulnerable people like gays, and especially transwomen, have still not been able to reclaim the night. And, when a nicely dressed young man raped six-year-old Mary Cray in

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1866, he received just two years gaol; the child's mother ran a brothel in East Ballarat, was a Vandemonian, and the six-year-old was no longer intact anyway.[8]

Eliza Clements was a woman without protection, apart from that afforded by gaol and the workhouse. And each of those criminalised her, even the workhouse after the 1834 Second Poor Law, which overrode the Old Poor Law of lifelong entitlement to being relieved of poverty by your natal parish. Her mother Charlotte was at the Guildhall in London in 1841, not as a charged person but as a supplicant for alms to provide clothing and funds so she could return to Leeds, her natal place, where she could still claim her entitlements to relief. She was refused; she was considered an incorrigible beggar and therefore undeserving. She was sent to gaol.

Eliza, aged almost twenty, illiterate and very short, had been a woman 'on the town' for three years. That was code for street prostitute and really meant that you were a 'public woman' of 'no fixed address', or certainly without a protective household, either as a family member or as a servant. Prostitution was not a crime, but it was almost unavoidable if you were destitute. Around 40 per cent of convict women were recorded as having been 'on the town' and were predominantly convicted of theft from the person: the theft where sex was the lure and alcohol the means. Once oblivious, a victim would be stripped of saleable items or cash and often left trouserless. The perpetrators banked on their victim being too embarrassed to go to the police. Other convicts had been in the sex trade but not homeless and 'on the town', instead being kept by a lover or patron, or employed by a madam as a 'dressed prostitute' from premises. As a 'public woman' you were 'fair game', and, if you went about without a hat, you were seen as the most accessible of all. We know from the boasts of Walter in *My Secret Life* that poor girls, especially in places away from surveillance, were picked up without compunction.[9] Whether any were quite as compliant as 'Walter' claimed is unlikely, but some 'saw a chance' of being taken up by a man with means, getting nice clothes and good food. Many of the convict women had clearly fallen foul of seducers, who had taken them far from home only to abandon them.

The children of the poor expected to be touched up, assaulted, even raped, and the less respectable their connections, the less likely there would be repercussions. Convict women often displayed the heightened vigilance of formerly abused children who had been powerless and

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helpless against their abusers. And, like Grace Tame, who was ordered to keep quiet by her teacher abuser, in adult life they roared. Eliza Clements's only defence were her words: rich, foul, and furious. Even if someone took pity on her to give her a position, her language and demeanour disqualified her from service of any kind. Furthermore, like most very poor young women, she would have had few domestic skills; you cannot learn to cook or brew beer or sew if you do not have a home, just as mill girls worked such long hours that they never became domesticated. Many women convicts were declared 'useless' by their assigned mistresses in Van Diemen's Land and sent back to the Female Factory, where, for all the hard work at the wash tubs and the discipline, at night, when they were locked in, they had fun—or at least the be-ribboned, violent, and lascivious 'flash mob' did.

Eliza Clements was therefore not very employable. All she had to defend herself in the world were her words. It is fashionable to celebrate such convict women as 'feisty' and tough rebels. They were also desperate and utterly vulnerable. Eliza had lost her womanhood, that is her sexual purity, and with that went any entitlement to respect and protection.

The testimony of the unprotected, however, comes from their bodies. These people rarely speak in the historical record, except in court and under duress, but their bodies are eloquent. The penal system, especially in the most closed and carefully surveilled regime in Van Diemen's Land, embodied many of the values and responsibilities of the Old Poor Law. It assumed responsibility for education, training and a structured path to redemption and release. And it provided food, shelter, clothing and even medical care. Under sentence, men and women were no different in their death rates, but, as soon as convicts were 'cut free' from the penal system, the women began to die. If men survived their sentence, they were to live as long in the Australian colonies as all men in England and Wales, therefore longer than their impoverished peers. Transportation biologically was good for men. Not so for women. And especially not so for those who had been 'on the town' before sentence.[10] Figure 1 shows the average ages of death of Tasmanian men and women, arrived bond or free, and of women who had been on the town.

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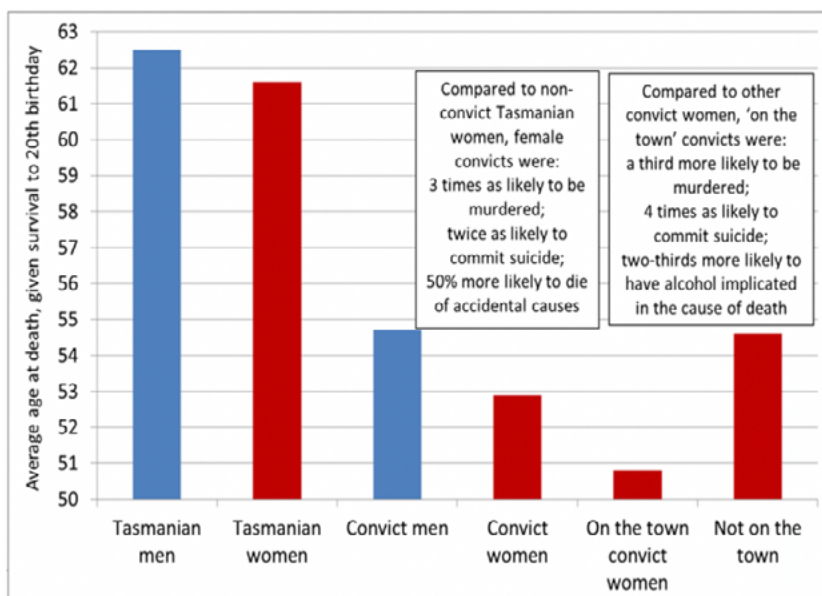
Figure 1: Average age to death given survival to 20th birthday within Tasmania and among those who arrived bond: penalties of gender/wages of sin (Source: Founders and Survivors Ships Project)

The penalties of class, gender and character (the wages of sin) were stark. Convict women had shorter lives than men: the marker then and now of extreme discrimination and vulnerability. That difference meant that, compared to non-convict Tasmanian women, female convicts over their lifetimes were:

- Three times as likely to be murdered;
- Twice as likely to commit suicide;
- 50 per cent more likely to die of accidental causes, like being burnt to death from clothes catching fire, or drowning in water holes or abandoned gold shafts while drunk.

Even worse, within the female convict population over their lifetimes, compared to other convict women, those who had been 'on the town' like Eliza Clements were:

- A third more likely to be murdered;
- Four times as likely to commit suicide;
- Two-thirds more likely to have alcohol implicated in the cause of death.

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If we look not just at death and manner of death but also estimate risk by applying that ingenious measure of years of life lost by selected risk factors, we can see a powerful story about gender, mental illness, sex, drink and desperation (Figure 2).

Men:

1. Being Irish lost you two years of life span compared to simply being English;

2. Being born in an industrial, smoky urban environment robbed you of just over two years of life compared to a man born in a village;

3. Being born in a port city, like Liverpool, Glasgow, Bristol, Southampton, Portsmouth, Glasgow, Edinburgh, the East End of London, Dublin, or Belfast, shortened your life even more: two and a half years compared to someone born in an agricultural village;

4. Next came alcohol-related offences while under sentence when drinking was forbidden. Those who persisted in drinking despite punishment, and logged up more than ten such offences, lost three and half years;

5. And, of the insults inflicted by penal punishments, flogging did not shorten men's lives, but solitary confinement did. Punishment of the mind killed.

Women:

1. The biological penalty of having been 'on the town' before transportation robbed women of almost three years of life;

2. But more than ten alcohol-related offences under sentence inflicted the worst penalty of all and double all the other penalties of both men and women: seven and a quarter years;

3. And the unruly women—those who have fascinated so many historians—lost almost four years of life.

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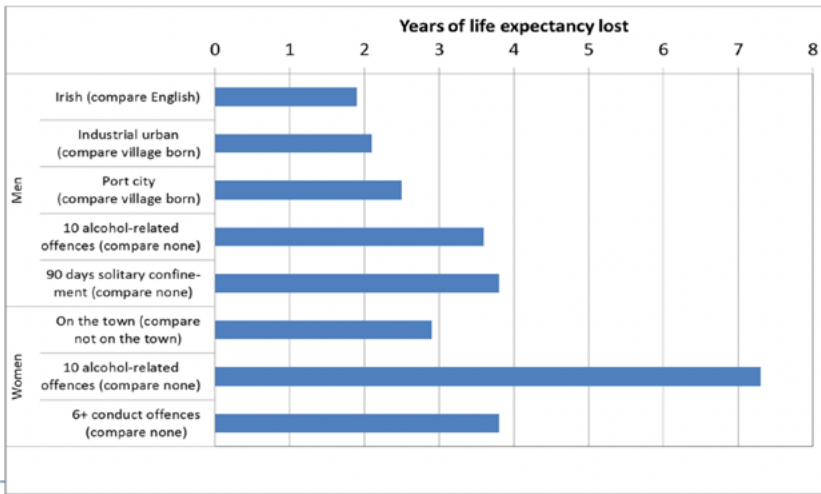
Figure 2: Years of life lost by selected risk factors, men and women (Source: Founders and Survivors Ships Project)

The added risk of being born in a port city for men connects us to the fate of women, because port cities—full of sailors, travellers, unsettled men in transit or working in an economy servicing the port, thieves, and standover men—were terrible places for women and girls. The only safe work was domestic service in merchants' town houses. There was no industry; it was all pubs and brothels and, with the pubs and brothels, came violence and alcohol and abuse. It was said that women and children lived in 'drunken savagery' around the docks and under the arches in Liverpool, which had the highest female conviction rate in the British Isles, higher even than the rate for males. Port cities were therefore dangerous not just for young convict women but also for the mothers of both male and female convicts. From the womb to the tomb, these lives were scarred by toxic stress that we now know shrinks babies' and young children's brain growth and exposes them to a withering lifetime of arousal of stress hormones. Even today, such childhoods of neglect, together with exposure to substance abuse *in utero* and then in parental relationships, are the drivers of alcohol and drug abuse to quieten inner demons, as well as the roots of chronic anxiety, PTSD, and inability to learn both at school and at work. The case histories of serious offenders

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in our higher courts daily testify to the damage inflicted in early life on people—especially young men who bash and kill women and children. Criminal and abusive behaviour is too often learned from experience and passed down the generations, including those stemming from the post-sentence Vandemonians whose new families' lives were as frail and fractured as their own.

If the convict women were intended to be founding mothers of the Australian colonies, they proved a poor investment for the British government. Family formation and fertility were the second biological test of the quality of their lives, and the capacity to form a family that can do well enough to form a second generation is a test mostly of the economy and society that enfolds you. However, the benefits of family formation that gave men extra years of life for every surviving child did not reach women until they had grandchildren—their first-generation descendants were as damaged as they had been themselves.

If we look at women who were transported to Van Diemen's Land between the ages of 20 and 24 years (1820–53), then married after transportation and lived to the age of 50, a startling picture emerges of what is called secondary infertility: infertility caused mostly by disease but also by birth trauma. That disease is largely sexually transmitted, causing pelvic inflammatory disease that blocks the fallopian tubes: gonorrhoea and chlamydia predominantly (syphilis is more likely to result in stillbirth or congenital disease in the newborn). There was such a surfeit of men that nearly all convict women married, but even these young women were already damaged, with 31 per cent of English women and 25 per cent of Irish women who had been on the town being childless. For those who had not been prostitutes, just 17 per cent of the English and 8 per cent of the Irish had no children. At the other end of the story, almost 18 per cent of both English and Irish never on the town had at least eight children, with 13 per cent of the English and 20 per cent of the Irish who had never been on the town having big families. It is from this end of the fertility table that our descendants of convicts have come (Figure 3).[11]

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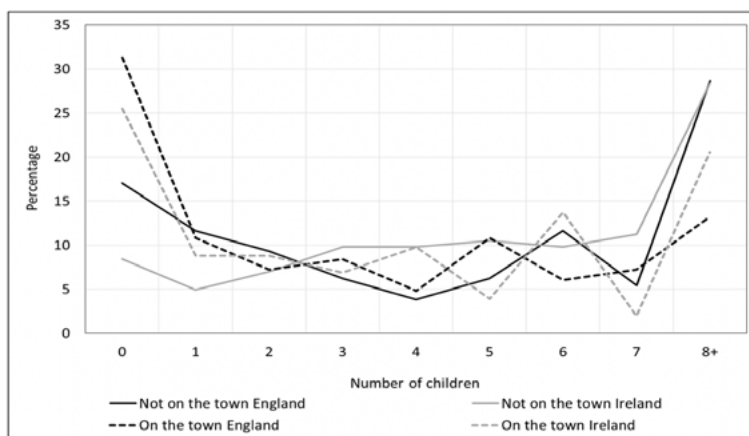
Figure 3: Distribution of number of children (completed fertility), sample of convict women transported to Tasmania aged 20–24 years, 1820–53, who married after transportation and survived to age 50 years, by country of birth and 'on the town' status (n=599) (Source: Founders and Survivors Ships Project)

Loss of years and low fertility among many convict women on the town was the consequence of being unprotected. Those convict women who did become mothers of the nation tended to be country girls who married while under sentence, often then being assigned to their own husbands as servants. They started their childbearing early and settled down. It is this not uncommon story in our early convict history that has led criminologists now to look back on the assignment system as a better practice for rehabilitation than programs we have today; well-behaved and hard-working convicts scarcely saw the inside of a gaol from the time they arrived.

If rough convict women and emancipists were so vulnerable, Aboriginal women in Victoria were even more so, and their family formation was remarkably similar to that of the convicts born into the fetid alleys of Liverpool and Dublin. If we look at the family sizes of Aboriginal women compared to the Victorian population as a whole, we see a similar pattern of more than a third being childless, and, while white women participated in the fertility transition and chose smaller families, Aboriginal women had small families forced upon them by racism and poverty. That 23 per cent who had more than eight children were the mothers of the dominant families in today's Victorian Aboriginal communities (Figure 4).

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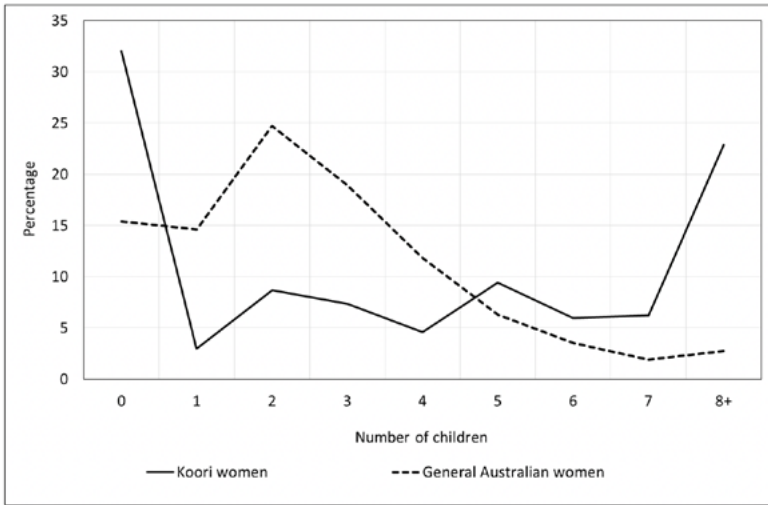
Figure 4: Distribution of number of children (completed fertility), sample of Koori women born 1900–29 (n=171), and general Australian women born 1900–29 (Source: Rebecca Kippen calculations using data from the Koori Health Research Database, and 'Women by age of children ever born', special tabulation of the 1981 Australian Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, 1999)

The Victorian government has just announced a landmark reparation package for children stolen from their families by the state before 1977.

The gap between Indigenous health and white health was reflected in the life expectancy of women in the poorest, most insecure part of the working class and rural poor. Of those born in what is now the Royal Women's Hospital between 1857 and 1900, very poor women were likely to die earlier than their men before the age of 40 into the 1930s, but those above the poverty line outlived men thereafter. Much of this premature death was the result of domestic violence. Those born illegitimate, if they survived to adulthood (and for the 1880s babies, that was only 20 per cent of them), were marked for life by their unprotected birth and childhood. But, in a time when men died relatively young, lives were scarred by parental loss, even those in the First AIF being more likely to die in battle.[12]

The issue is not just about women and their gendered vulnerability, it is also about mothers and their children and therefore about boys and

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the men they become. As the women's union song from the Massachusetts' mills, 'Bread and Roses', says:

> As we go marching, marching, we battle too for men,
> For they are women's children, and we mother them again.

We can look at this with an intersectionality lens, noting that social historians have been doing that long before the social theorists discovered it. What makes most sense to me is the concept of 'structural violence', a term coined by the Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung in 1969[13] and employed powerfully in Haiti by the great infectious diseases doctor and medical anthropologist, Paul Farmer, who recently, and tragically, died at 60. Structural violence originates and is preserved in social structures and social institutions. It intersects with direct violence—war, police violence, racial violence, sexual violence, hate crimes, and domestic violence—but its power and its persistence reside in deeper social structures and institutions. Its close relation, 'structural racism', is a savage flashpoint in the United States today in school and university curricula, where conservative whites perceive such an analysis as a direct attack on their own identity.

Galtung argued that 'structural violence' is 'avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs', which means that certain groups of people are denied their entitlements to the essentials of human flourishing. Structural violence, therefore, needs to be tackled at a structural level, not merely at a cultural or normative level. Marches and demonstrations are fine, but union mobilisation that changes work conditions and wages is what makes the difference. For International Women's Day, ABC iview is screening 'Women of Steel', a powerful account of the 'Jobs for Women' campaign in Wollongong from 1980 to 1994, where organised women, mostly migrants, took on BHP to employ women in the steel works. It is a story of courage, persistence and solidarity.[14] It is also a great Australian multicultural story and demonstrates how we must not overlook the role of the trade union movement in building multicultural Australia from the grass roots and fighting for an inclusive society that defends human rights and social justice. But, as one of the leaders says at the end, they could not have fought that battle and won it without the operation of the *Anti-Discrimination Act* 1977 in NSW and above all, legal aid. They needed laws and institutions of the state, as well as their own industrial mobilisation and the support of male unionists, to win against the then

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biggest and most powerful company in Australia. Unprotected people need the right laws in the first place.

We must, however, go back to London of the 1840s. The first precondition of Eliza and Charlotte Clements's fearful plight was that they had no protective household or domestic economy to house, feed and clothe them. Their entitlements went no further than the prison, their character and loss of virtue excluding them from compassionate charity. The assumption over time of collective responsibility for the welfare of all has come only with struggle, much of it dragged from the wealthy and powerful under duress. Today, as finally we begin to deal with intimate violence and its aftermath in the lives of so many, we need to work from basic concepts about entitlement to life. And we need to acknowledge that protection of women and children requires the equal entitlement of men and boys to freedom from poverty and to human dignity, because their lives intertwine.

An early version of the welfare state, first put into operation in England through the Old Poor Law, has been shown by extensive archival research to have done well to protect the people against famine and the effects of plague in the terrible seventeenth century. And, by investing in human capital with literacy and apprenticeships, England's industrial revolution took off before all its rivals because of the skill and capacity of the nation's working people. England's failure to maintain that investment in its people during the nineteenth century, preferring to plunder the empire for resources and cheap labour, meant that the seeds of decline were sown by the time it reached its zenith. But the creativity and solidarity of the common people did not die. From the Rochdale Pioneers, the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Chartists and, by extension, the working people and radicals who came to the Australian colonies, especially for the gold, brought ideas and habits of community building that began to redress some of the effects of structural violence against the poor.

The miners in the gold districts tried to recreate something of the parish of the Old Poor Law. Every mining town had a voluntary hospital, paid for by subscription, and the larger ones also had benevolent asylums for the aged poor and the disabled that did not criminalise poverty. Men formed friendly societies to insure against sickness, injury, and death. Benevolent asylums in the gold towns often gave outdoor relief. Women formed ladies benevolent societies. Communities were empowered from 1856 by the vote for men. And miners and other immigrants established

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mechanics' institutes everywhere they went to spread education and reading.

Most important of all, many argue, was the 'miner's right'. For a guinea a year you could hold a miner's right to a piece of mining land, but you could also hold a town right, where on a quarter-acre block you could build a house, run animals, grow fruit and vegetables.[15] What mattered most in the long run was that deserted wives, widows, children and grandchildren could inherit the right of occupation. Families stayed in those homes for more than a century in towns like Maryborough, Castlemaine, Ballarat, and Bendigo. If a woman lost her breadwinner, she kept her home, and it remained cheap. She could make money by taking in lodgers. She could support her children. She had a permanent safe refuge so that she and her dependants could survive. It is this entitlement that the state government is struggling to build in Victoria today for victims of domestic violence, against local opposition to public housing being too close to their backyard. It is said that the miner's town right, as social housing, saved the gold towns, providing a secure workforce that could transition to textiles, pottery and light engineering. But, above all, it saved women and children. It gave them the most important protection of all, shelter. Take the case of Lydia Ford, born in the Strand in London, and transported aged seventeen on the *Royal Admiral* in 1842 for larceny as a servant. In Ballarat East her husband deserted her, returning in 1865 in a rage, trying to beat the door down and shoot her. But she had the home, so took in lodgers, raised four children, and lived there until she died at 84.[16] She has very proud descendants.

In planning Britain's second welfare state, Lord Beveridge vowed that its purpose was to abolish what he called 'five giant evils': want, disease, ignorance, squalor, and idleness. May I suggest that in the 21st century two more giant evils be added to that list: profligacy in the destruction of the planet, and contempt embodied in the continuing cruelty inflicted on people because of their 'difference' and/or their poverty. This renewed social contract takes life on earth as a total package, where no one is safe unless we are all safe. It rests on the conviction that we should celebrate, not deny, that we depend on each other, that we do better as teams, that many minds are far more effective than one.

The protection of women and children is the foundation of a safe and healthy society, but we have a long way to go, even in a rich, democratic country like ours. If we are to close the great gaps between Indigenous

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and White Australia—in schooling, in mental health, in housing, in family stability, in the divide between regional and urban Australians, in job security, incomes, life chances—and then survive amidst the climate emergency, we must tackle the whole package, not apply band aids. Everything is intertwined and connected. In celebrating women's history for International Women's Month, it is time to think deeply about the basics of human existence: nurturing not damaging new life; supporting households, however they are composed, to be able to do their best; observing a duty of care to each other through the life cycle. But we need to get to first base. Good intentions are just good intentions. People and their households need security of income and shelter, but not of the temporary and coercive kind Eliza and Charlotte Clements were only been able to find in gaol.

Notes

1 *London Evening Standard*, 4 March 1839, p. 7.

2 *Argus*, 30 January 1855, p. 5.

3 *Telegraph (*Prahran), 28 June 1875, p. 3; *North Melbourne Courier*, 9 February 1900, p. 3.

4 *Northern Star*, 31 July 1841, p. 16; *London Evening Standard*, 12 November 1841, p. 4.

5 Janet McCalman, 'Building Longitudinal Datasets from Diverse Historical Data in Australia', *Historical Life Course Studies*, vol. 11, 2021, pp. 1–19.

6 Amartya Sen, 'Rights and Capabilities', in Amartya Sen (ed.), *Resources, Values and Development*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1984, pp. 307–24.

7 Julia Banks, *Power Play*, Melbourne, Hardie Grant, 2021.

8 *Herald,* 15 February 1866, p. 2.

9 'Walter' (Henry Spencer Ashbee), *My Secret Life* (11 vols), first published privately as limited edition, London, 1888.

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11 See also: Janet McCalman and Rebecca Kippen, '"A Wise Provision of Nature for the Prevention of Too Many Children": Evidence from the Australian Colonies', in Simon Szreter (ed.), *The Hidden Affliction: Sexually Transmitted Infections and Infertility in History*, New York, University of Rochester Press, 2019, pp. 279–302; and Janet McCalman, Len Smith, Sandra Silcot, Rebecca Kippen, 'Origins of "The Gap": Perspectives on the Historical Demography of Aboriginal Victorians', *Journal of Population Research*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2021, pp. 53–69.

12 Janet McCalman and Ruth Morley, 'Inequalities of Gender and Health 1857–1985: A Long-run Perspective from the Melbourne Lying-In Hospital Birth Cohort', *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* vol. 43, no. 1, 2008, pp. 29–44.

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13 Johan Galtung, 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1969, pp. 167–91; Paul Farmer, 'On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below', *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* (special issue: 'Race and the Global Politics of Health Equity'), vol. 3, no. 1, Autumn 2009, pp. 11–28.

14 See https://www.womenofsteelfilm.com/about/.

15 Alan Mayne with Charles Fahey, Heather Holst and Sara Martin, 'A Miner's Right: Making Homes and Communities on the Victorian Goldfields', in Alan Mayne (ed.), *Eureka: Reappraising an Australian Legend*, Perth, Network Books, 2006.

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'A Superior Brand of Men': Regional Clerks of Courts and the Rocky Road to a Respectable Profession

Elizabeth Wade

Abstract

Amidst the unruly turmoil of colonial Port Phillip, the local courthouse became for many country towns a symbol of permanence, with the resident clerk of courts a trusted conduit to a multiplicity of services. Yet this was a role with rocky beginnings. Drawn from a small population, early government appointees varied in their quality and character; standards were yet to be established for their skills, knowledge and conduct or their working conditions. This article explores the eccentric period before regulation of recruitment and career structure for staff of the magistrates' courts established conditions conducive to the growth of a respectable profession.

Court administrators are the human face of our justice system. They create the first impression many people will form of courts, especially in the magistrates' jurisdiction, where, in Victoria, more than 90 per cent of all cases are heard. Prior to 1989, clerks of courts (as they were known prior to that date) were relatively low-level public servants, and few in number.[1] The role is probably less well known today than it was 40 years ago, and, although clerks of courts were distributed across city, suburbs and the country, they were particularly prominent in regional areas.

The local courthouse—often today little more than a historical curiosity in small country towns—was customarily a community hub. The resident clerks' networks of contacts, access to legal knowledge, and expertise in court processes made them useful to know and afforded access to a range of formal and informal powers. Their services often extended significantly beyond running the court and processing court business. Conducting marriages, providing monetary relief for the needy, and advising victims of domestic violence were some of their lesser-known formal roles. Many clerks—especially in regional areas—were also active in many aspects of their communities, taking on leadership roles in sports management, fundraising and charity.

'Poor man's lawyers', as clerks were sometimes called, were not expected to be legally qualified (though some did obtain law degrees), but their knowledge of state and Commonwealth legislation relating to their jurisdiction was extensive. Insight developed in working daily with the law and court process placed clerks in a position of trust and respect within the community, and, until 1984, a career as a clerk of courts was the primary path to becoming a magistrate. In court and at the counter of the court office, and now increasingly online, court administrators perform their interesting work largely under the radar in comparison to the glare of publicity under which lawyers and members of the judiciary and police force operate.

Information about the history of the clerks is not easily accessible, particularly for the period from the mid-1830s to the 1930s. An unpublished history of the Melbourne Magistrates' Court by former clerk and magistrate William Cuthill details the initial stages of formal justice administration in the colony.[2] Otherwise, data concerning nineteenth-century clerks and their doings must be gleaned by oblique means from court registers and other archival material, memoirs, newspaper reports, the clerks' professional journal (*Chronicle: Journal of the Clerks of Courts,* 1933–), genealogy websites, and incidental mentions in histories. Drawing upon these sources, this article offers new research and perspective on the beginnings of our justice system.

Rudimentary Beginnings

Colonial Australians craved not only economic prosperity but a sense of security and stability. The reality they faced was that chaotic goldfields and hamlets often evaporated as quickly as they were formed.[3] Vulnerable to the depredations of the ill-intentioned, the disordered and the dispossessed, citizens in the early outposts often had recourse to none but the most rudimentary justice.

In the beginning, sly grog tents might exist before public houses, and short-term money lenders shadow banks; in the absence of suitable infrastructure, government too could be shoddily housed and peripatetic. The first courthouse in Melbourne was a hasty creation of wattle and reeds, but court could be held anywhere, even in the open air, as long as there were officials to run proceedings. Sometimes the legal remedy prescribed was ahead of arrangements to effect it.[4] The *dramatis personae*

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were the police magistrate, his police constables, lay justices, and the clerk of courts, also known as the 'Clerk to the Bench' or the 'Clerk of Petty Sessions' (CPS); sometimes a scourger; and of course, the public.

The *Offenders Punishment and Summary Jurisdiction Act 1832* (NSW) defined the scope and powers of the first courts; the justice system of Victoria derived from that of New South Wales and evolved along parallel lines.[5] Courts of Petty Sessions dealt only with criminal matters at first: charges against convicts or cases where the law required a hearing before a bench of magistrates. Under the establishing legislation, convictions could be made for theft, drunkenness, disobedience of orders, neglect of or running away from work, use of abusive language to a master, or other disorderly or dishonest conduct.

Justices of the peace (JPs) initially outnumbered professional magistrates. They were not civil servants but part-time, unpaid community members.[6] Qualifications and background in the law were mandated for neither police magistrates nor JPs in this early period, but police magistrates were likely to have some understanding of the law.[7] Police magistrates were civil servants like their clerks, but JPs tended to be appointed under patronage, often that of politicians, to 'keep the peace' by adjudicating on summary benches.[8] In the regions, many of these men were land owners adjudicating from within their home territories. As they were unpaid, this helped to conserve government resources.[9] Both police magistrates and justices could be referred to as magistrates and were entitled to command a staff of police officers.[10]

Although a clerk (if astute and confident) might attempt to guide and advise, JPs—two or more of whom could sit on a bench in lieu of a police magistrate—exerted their power with little by way of supervision or accountability. Their powerful mother-country counterparts, lay part-time justices in England and Wales, had justices' clerks and experienced clerical staff to provide authoritative advice, both legal and procedural. Some of these staff also practised as solicitors.[11] Little thought seems to have been given to setting up a similar support system in the antipodes; legally qualified candidates were, at any rate, expensive and scarce. This deficit and consequent liabilities were pointed out in a government-commissioned review of the Victorian civil service in 1859:

> The competency of these clerks is of the more importance, since their inefficiency, when it exists, is less likely to be discovered by those magistrates to whom their assistance is indispensable than by those

who are able to act satisfactorily independently of it. An inefficient clerk and an unskilful or careless bench of unpaid magistrates may, together, perpetrate acts of the grossest folly and injustice, against which there is practically no protection beyond the capricious expression of public opinion.[12]

The recruitment criteria for the appointment of a clerk at each designated location were minimal and nonspecific. Captain Lonsdale's 'General Instructions' for the selection of his assistant merely stipulated 'a clerk from either the Military or on the Station, or any competent free person whom he might find on the spot'.[13] Competence was not defined, and nor was there any reference to character—there was simply the Act's smudgy rule of thumb 'fit and proper person'; male gender and British citizenship were assumed.[14] Character and competence, however, were to prove crucial for the effective operation of courts, the sustainability of the service, and institutional reputation.

Government jobs were often combined, so an appointee could be, for instance, both clerk to the bench and postmaster, running from one job to another or operating from the family abode. The clerk's job comprised official and unofficial roles. Depending on capability, he would help establish new courts, convene benches, provide advice to adjudicating lay justices about statute law and legal process, keep track of convicts, pen court orders and other legal documents, manage the office, swear in witnesses, record statements and court proceedings, and keep the court register. He would also advertise hearings in the local press, receipt moneys, manage the court accounts, draft correspondence and compile statistics. Some magistrates used their clerk as an *aide-de-camp* to run messages and accompany them on expeditions inspecting the territory, conducting investigations or rounding up renegades.

Irregularities in recruitment practices and a high level of 'churn' are evident amongst the earliest employees of the court. This must have impacted on the wellbeing of the communities served by the justice system and would certainly have affected public opinion. It is perhaps not surprising that Port Phillip's first clerk of courts, Edward J. Foster, who commenced in February 1837 on five shillings per day, lasted barely six months.[15] No fewer than eleven clerks moved through the office of clerk to the Bench of Magistrates at Melbourne between 1837 and 1843.[16]

The Dignity of the Law Imperilled

In the stories that follow, it becomes clear that clerks of courts were routinely assigned roles for which scarcely any of them were trained, prepared or resourced, despite the need for a properly functioning court. Assurances of good character (that were, evidently, not always reliable) and an ability to write passably well seemed all that was initially sought in recruits. Untrained and inexperienced clerks in the colonies could not but compare unfavourably with their counterparts in Britain.17 In addition, clerks' salaries were insufficient to sustain the position they were expected to occupy in society. Like the magistrate, a clerk of courts was expected to embody the dignity of the law in the eyes of the populace, but most clerks received less than half of a magistrate's salary; until at least 1860, their remuneration was comparable to that of third-class workers engaged in rote tasks.[18]

As the colony burst its barely legal boundaries and expanded into remoter locations, the law followed, albeit haphazardly. In regional Victoria, appointments of court administrators at first replicated the Melbourne pattern of quick turnovers. Opportunism, ill health and misconduct all played their part in this. Expectations that an antipodean clerk of courts would mimic his British counterparts proved impossible to satisfy since, if a person with appropriate legal knowledge and skills could be found, they would not stay in such a poorly paid job. Additionally, British clerks were not given extra roles like managing the post office, keeping track of convicts or apprehending escapees. They lived in conventional housing, had established courts to work in, and did not have to ride many rugged miles to get to work or pay inflated prices for life's necessities.

Court officers in country locations inevitably operated beyond the gaze of the executive in Sydney and Melbourne, and much depended upon relationships between magistrates and their clerks. Although distanced from the key locus of power, these clerks played a singular and sometimes controversial role in the administration of justice and the growth of a new society. Once important local public figures, they are now largely forgotten, yet their story not only enriches local histories but contains the germ of today's justice system.

Regional Context

Country towns often began as nuclei nourished on niche economic activity. Gold towns in Victoria attracted vast floating populations hoping to make quick fortunes so that they could establish themselves in the new colony or return wealthy to their home country. Far-flung graziers and squatters also relied on the presence of some larger, not-too-distant hub where services could be sourced and goods traded. Evolution of these early settlements into organised communities depended on diversification of economic activity (public houses, shops, market gardens and other food producers, the theatre, and cottage industries such as tailoring, smithies and saddleries). This, together with the presence of some acceptable form of authority, rendered life sustainable and worth living. The courthouse was often a portal to other government services, and when the magistrate was not in town the clerk of courts would be the most senior government representative present. It is not difficult to imagine all eyes upon these newcomers to a settlement, and that a mixture of hope and resentment anticipated their arrival.

'An ornament to his profession': The First Clerk and his Public Downfall

The first person to be employed as a clerk of courts outside the capital was Charles Henry Seymour Wentworth. Born in Oxford, England, in 1817, he reached Sydney in 1837, sailing from there to Melbourne by coastal steamer (the *James Watt*). Although like his father he was a doctor by profession, he took up a position as the first clerk to the bench at the police court in Geelong, the second 'town district' in Port Phillip. His work commenced alongside a district constable and two ordinary constables; the magistrate, Foster ('Flogger') Fyans, and the four other government officials were all appointed on the same day.[19] Unfortunately, Wentworth's career was dogged by scandal, and he was obliged to resign only six months after his arrival in the fledgling town. His undoing was the premature issue of a publican's licence and enjoyment of the fruits thereof.

Granting and renewal of licences—a large part of the clerk's work—demanded a knowledge of the enabling legislation, regulations and fees. The clerk of courts was usually the receiver of revenue in respect of applications and the granting of these, thus supporting economic growth and the regulation of commercial activity as well as law and order.[20] The

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public house or hotel was both social hub and a refuge from the privations of colonial life, providing sustenance, refreshments, entertainment and accommodation. It could be most profitable for the holder of the relevant licences.

The (retrospective) *Licensed Publicans Act 1838* (NSW) enjoined any person wanting to obtain or renew a licence for keeping a hotel 'before the first Tuesday of the month of June in every year [to] deliver a notice in writing to the Clerk of the Bench' together with a reference 'signed by three or more respectable housekeepers [keepers of public houses]'.[21] The clerk would issue a notice in the *Gazette* to announce the holding of a 'General Annual Licensing Meeting' for these purposes; a police magistrate or justices would preside over the hearing (Figure 1). Licensing services were understandably very much in the public eye and subject to criticism via the press.

Police Magistrate Fyans had entrusted his clerk with the issue of a publican's licence in April 1839. It was to be activated the following morning, but Wentworth, hurrying on horseback to the establishment, persuaded the publican that he could legally operate the evening before. Undeterred by a visit from one of his police colleagues at 11 p.m., Wentworth enjoyed himself in the parlour until 1 o'clock. At the court hearing, the publican blamed him for the whole affair.[22]

ANNUAL LICENSING MEETING.

TAKE NOTICE, that an Annual Licensing Meeting of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace, in and for the District of Port Phillip, will be held at the Police Office, in the Town of Melbourne, on Tuesday the Twenty-first day of April next, for the special purpose of taking into consideration Applications of all Persons requiring Licenses within the said District, under and according to an Act of the Governor and Council, passed in the second year of the reign of Queen Victoria, 1838, "*Intituled an Act for consolidating and amending the Laws relating to the Licensing of Public Houses, and for further regulating the Sale and consumption of Fermented and Spirituous Liquors in New South Wales.*"

RICHARD O'COCK,
Clerk of the Bench

Dated at Melbourne,
7th February, 1840.

Figure 1: Notice of Annual General Licensing Meeting for the District of Port Phillip (Source *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 4 March 1840, p. 206)

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After his forced resignation, which he took very badly, and what could only have been a very public humiliation, he was replaced by Alfred Eyre. Wentworth worked in 1841 and 1846 as a census taker for the colony, a process that was described in one paper as 'slovenly' (although to be fair, he was only one of several census takers).[23] A year or so later, one morning in the streets of Melbourne, he was allegedly knifed by an assailant (a Mr Sharp!) who had seen him and his friends trying to force their way into a 'house of ill fame'.[24] History pins him again, in 1844, in connection with a very strange allegation of conspiracy to defraud; a newspaper report ironically described Wentworth as 'that ornament of the medical profession'.[25] The following year he was brought up on a charge of vagrancy, having been arrested at the theatre in a fracas with a woman 'said to be his wife', both being 'in a very forward state of beer'. Described by the chronicler 'Garryowen' as 'a broken-down swell' and known about town as 'The Doctor', he was able to conduct himself in court with eloquence sufficient to escape conviction.[26] Sadly, he died aged only 35 in his usual habitat, a public house, the coroner ruling that his demise was due to 'disease induced by habits of intemperancy'.[27]

Resilience and the Regional Clerk

Success might elude a clerk of courts if he were physically or psychologically incapable of holding down what could be a demanding and energetic job. In August 1840 Daniel Primrose arrived at Portland Bay to take up his duties as clerk to the bench alongside the newly appointed police magistrate James Blair.[28] Primrose also performed the roles of customs officer and postmaster (the post office was established in January 1841). The population was small but growing and known to be lawless; Portland was notorious for frontier violence, and there were rumours of outrages against the Aboriginal population.[29] Conditions were primitive, and Blair's reputation today (similar to that of Fyans) is as a harsh and autocratic man.[30] These circumstances may have contributed to the brevity of Primrose's career there, but he gave his health as the reason for quitting after little more than a year in the job. He rode back to Melbourne—a long and arduous trip—with the message that he was too sick to work.[31]

Robert McPherson, a Cambridge graduate from Scotland, accepted a country posting in the belief that the fresh air might benefit his health.[32]

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His story shows how difficult life could be for a clerk in the early regional magistrates' courts. McPherson's first appointment was in late 1853 as clerk of petty sessions at Barrow's Inn (northern Victoria, on the Campaspe River); in 1855 he took up a position at Swan Hill. According to local historian Arthur Feldtmann, the only accommodation available at the settlement for McPherson and his wife was 'a miserable hut' (there being only eight houses in Swan Hill at the time). Life in country Victoria was costly owing to the difficulty and expense of transporting goods to remote areas.[33] For the privilege of taking up a role as CPS, McPherson had been obliged to pay two sureties of £500; the salary was just £300.[34]

When McPherson was asked to service the court at Kerang once a month in addition to his duties at Swan Hill, he was obliged to hire a horse at one sovereign per day (police troop horses could not be spared) and pay for accommodation at the public house, a cost of £7 for the three-day exercise (at least £84 per year). He complained to the minister that he could not make ends meet, but support from the authorities in Melbourne was not forthcoming; he was told that a change to his salary could only be made by parliamentary vote. One day in April 1859, when he was 32 years old, he collapsed as he was dismounting his expensive rented horse and died shortly afterwards. His obituary appeared in the local press:

> Mr. McPherson has for the last five years filled the office of Clerk of Petty Sessions, and Registrar in this district, and the exact and conscientious manner, in which he discharged his duties, has given the utmost satisfaction to all interested parties. Mr. McPherson was but recently married, and we regret to say leaves behind him a young widow to mourn his loss, while his urbanity of manner, and gentlemanly demeanor in private life, had drawn around him a numerous circle of admiring friends, by whom his early death will be long and sincerely regretted. His remains will be interred on Sunday, the 3rd, in the New Cemetery, which he marked out himself, and which is not yet fenced in.[35]

Complaints of government 'meanness' (a term used by clerk George Dunderdale, who is featured below) were not limited to the treatment of clerks. A newspaper in Geelong was prompted by the resignation of the local gaoler in 1852 to comment that it was 'disheartening and disgusting to the public mind, that the very men in whom they have been induced to place confidence, are driven from their stations by Government neglect and parsimony'.[36] It is not known if McPherson's surety of £500 was returned to his widow.

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Young Men of Mettle

It would be unjust to convey the impression that an early court administrator in Victoria was likely to be a larrikin, a lush, a theatre lout or just plain unfit for the job. Evidently, respectable and talented men did find their way into the courts; the McPherson panegyric above is but one of many examples published in newspapers upon the transfer, retirement or death of an esteemed clerk.

The subject of another was Benalla's first CPS, Robert Garnsey Meade, by all accounts a man of excellent reputation and good family; his path to the role of CPS was paved by letters of introduction to Governor La Trobe. He showed courage and a good deal of resourcefulness in his work both inside and beyond the courts. After pioneering the role of clerk at Benalla, he went on to establish the magistrates' court at Swan Hill, then quit his low-paid job to be a gold buyer. Meade became locally famous for his pursuit and apprehension of bushrangers and escaped felons on three occasions, and was later offered a role as a police lieutenant. He worked as an electoral commissioner, and retired to become a grazier and councillor of the Shire of Euroa.[37]

Figure 2: Robert Garnsey Meade (Courtesy Frank Whitcombe. 'Victoria's Country Towns: Their Rise and Development. No. II—History of Euroa', *Weekly Times*, 4 August 1925, p. 4)

Indeed, despite some recruitment failures and mishaps, the role of clerk of courts in this court-founding era seems to have appealed to young men of mettle; abundant energies and a desire for adventure characterised some early officers. Frederick Marsden, 'handsome as an Apollo', a highly respected clerk of petty sessions at Wangaratta and talented sportsman, travelled down country by train for nine miles to assist authorities at the

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siege of Glenrowan. While there, he was asked by police to mind Ned Kelly's gun.[38] Another, Frank Hasleham at Buninyong, had been a reporter at the Eureka Stockade and was wounded there by a trooper.[39] John Martin Ardlie, the first CPS at Kilmore (1850), had previously imported sugar, camels and Burmese ponies into Australia as a merchant seaman on his vessel *Ganges*.[40] Maurice Frederick Ximenes, clerk at Wangaratta Court from 1853, had been wounded in the Carlist revolution in Spain and was later a lieutenant in the police force at Eureka.[41] Even Charles Wentworth had accompanied Foster Fyans on a sea-going expedition to apprehend a gang of bushrangers.[42]

A Touch of Hubris

Some early clerks were quite conscious of the importance of their role and not inclined to take a back seat. In 1848 Australian-born Alfred John Eyre (1815–56), who replaced Charles Wentworth at Geelong, is reported to have refused in open court a solicitor's request for copies of witness statements because he had 'too much to do to write out fresh depositions'. Eyre had been eight years in the job and appears to have been a most self-assured individual, according to newspaper accounts detailing his assertiveness in court. The solicitor was kept waiting until close of business and then refused again by the magistrate, Mr Addis. Eyre was soon to be promoted as an acting police magistrate himself and was probably the first clerk to achieve this feat.[43]

Perhaps the most controversial young hero was Arthur Purssell Akehurst (1836–1902), who at the age of eighteen rode out in a contingent of other volunteer government employees to assist police and the military in putting down the Eureka rebellion at Ballarat (Figure 3). Somehow, amidst the fracas, Akehurst became the prime suspect in the murder of Henry Powell, an innocent bystander; during the week he lay dying, Powell had given evidence to a magistrate that implicated the clerk. Some other witness accounts were inconsistent with this and with each other. Akehurst was suspended from duty and at inquest was held responsible for Powell's demise.

Figure 3: 'Le Beau Sabreur of Ballarat': a journalistic impression of Arthur Akehurst exerting his authority. 'He did not regard himself as a hireling of despotism, but as a figure of romance, heroic as he was resplendent.' (Courtesy *Smith's Weekly*, 5 October 1935, p. 17)[44]

Escaping committal for murder through what was regarded by some as a technicality (judicial qualms about the admissibility of the dying man's evidence), he was transferred to Geelong, Wentworth's and Eyre's old haunt, to resume his career in the courts. Faring much in the manner of Eyre, he was promoted to the bench, although only 29 years old. After a successful career in the public sector, he secured in 1890 the plum job of secretary to the Law Department, where he ruled with a firm—some say despotic—hand. His early exploits, however, repeatedly haunted him over decades as old grievances were reignited in letters to the press and accusations in parliament.[45]

Another early clerk, George Dunderdale (1822–1903), comes across as competent and comfortably experienced. He too worked in the Western District, as CPS at Colac from 1857. His memoirs show that a country clerk far removed from the strictures of the capital city could enjoy freedom from bureaucratic and even legal constraint. He writes,

> Our courts were small, but our jurisdiction was wide, extending half way to Warrnambool, half way to Geelong, half way to Ballarat or Buninyong, through the forests to Apollo Bay, Cape Otway, and the Southern Ocean ... The civil service was not then encumbered with oppressive regulations, and in those happy days we administered justice with little law and with absolutely no lawyers.[46]

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There was little recourse to the Law Department on matters legal; the crown solicitor was reluctant to advise magistrates as it was believed they should be seen to adjudicate on the information before them without excessive delay.[47] As we have seen, it was the clerk who was responsible for advising the bench of lay magistrates, most of whom had no legal training or qualifications on matters of law and legal process. Dunderdale describes the breezy confidence of the veteran career clerk in providing legal and almost any other kind of advice. He relates being approached by a senior policeman to ascertain the jurisdiction of a perplexing issue: 'He wanted me to advise him, and give my opinion on the matter … as by this time my vast experience of Justices' law entitled me to give an opinion on any imaginable subject'.[48]

Dunderdale's next assignment after twelve pleasant years was to Port Albert in Gippsland where, in contrast to poor Robert McPherson, he appears to have had barely enough to do. This entailed a different kind of discomfort:

> Although I had to attend at three courts on three days of each week, my duties were very light, and quite insufficient to keep me out of mischief … the majority of the officials condemned to live in the dreary townships [of Palmerston, Alberton and Tarraville], tried to alleviate their misery by drinking and gambling. The Police Magistrate, the Surveyor, the Solicitor, the Receiver of Revenue, the Police Inspector, and the Clerk of Courts, together with one or two settlers, formed a little society for the promotion of poker, euchre, and other little games, interspersed with whiskies. It is sad to recall to mind the untimely end at which most of them arrived.[49]

Dunderdale himself robustly survived these dispiriting experiences to write several informative and entertaining books.

Numbers also Tell a Tale

The 1859 review of the civil service identified the 'inferior' position of clerk of courts as one to which 'a very superior class of men' could be recruited under a proper system of pay and promotion.[50] Yet a parallel argument was gaining momentum; the public service was overstaffed and overly costly to run. A hint of this tension is seen in the story of Robert McPherson whose job, but not his salary, was expanded beyond his capacity to sustain the work. The commissioners acknowledged an

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intensifying political reality when they opined: 'The cause of much error regarding the cost of the Civil Service seems to be the assumption that the public expenditure consists mainly, if not entirely, in the remuneration of the public servants.'[51] Capital and operational, rather than administrative, costs comprised in fact the bulk of public sector expenditure. Even with the expected expansion of Victoria's population, they suggested, the actual numbers of staff need not increase substantially over the next few years if more efficient work practices and staffing systems were implemented.[52] They argued that the public service establishment was, if anything, understaffed.

The table below shows the number of clerks employed across Victoria at various decadal points over the first 40 years compared with the number of locations at which they worked (Table 1). Very few of these appointments were in Melbourne. The advent of the gold rush put pressure on the authorities to increase the number of clerks and other governmental representatives in the regions, but, as gold rush exuberance ebbed, the demand from conservative quarters for administrative economies became more insistent. It will be seen that the growth of the number of sitting locations increased at a rate well beyond that of the clerk contingent over the decade between 1850 and 1860, and again between 1860 and 1880, and that, contrary to what might have been expected, the number of clerks substantially *decreased* in this twenty-year period.

Year	Number of magistrates' court clerks	Number of sitting locations	Historical context
1840	3	3	Commencement of justice system in Port Phillip
1850	17	14	Establishment of new regional courts
1860	121	118	Post–gold rush proliferation of town locations; population expansion and mobility
1880	69	235	Rationalisation of the public sector, but continued population growth and demand for justice services

Table 1: Indicative Comparison of Numbers of Clerks and Registrars with Sitting Locations (Sources: Victorian 'Blue' books and Yearbooks; editions of *Chronicle: Journal of the Clerks of Courts*, 1933–)

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The need to take cognisance of a disparate, dispersed and unwieldy workforce (as the foregoing account by George Dunderdale describes), and to marshal a better organised and regulated public service, came increasingly into focus as the frenetic economic activity of the gold rush cooled. Well before the Depression of the 1890s, a definitive, if primarily symbolic, swing of the pendulum occurred when on 8 January 1878 ('Black Wednesday') the Victorian government summarily dismissed a swathe of senior public servants.[53] A twentieth-century echo of this, accompanied by a similar chorus of protest, was experienced in 1989 when the government proposed a major rationalisation that involved closure of no fewer than 41 regional and suburban courthouses (Figure 5).[54]

Figure 4: Court House, Oke Street, Ouyen, built 1914, now the Historical Resource Centre (Courtesy Richard Broome)[55]

This small structure was both workplace and home for generations of clerks until the 1950s. Clerks who lived there were called 'Hell's Heroes' on account of the extreme summer heat.

Reflections on the Stories of Early Clerks of Courts

Until a series of government reviews confirmed the need for greater attention to sourcing 'fit and proper persons', recruitment remained a haphazard process dependent on referrals, connections and patronage.[56] It was not until the 1883 iteration of the *Public Service Act* (Vic) that many of the issues identified in foregoing governmental inquiries were redressed by increasing the transparency of appointments and comparability of pay levels, establishing an entrance standard for clerks of petty sessions and other administrative staff, and introducing an incentivised career structure.[57] In time, a larger contingent of officers with home-grown knowledge and experience in the unique brand of government work that regional courts entailed, together with the expected levels of resilience and resourcefulness, would be increasingly available. The arrival of skilled new immigrants augmented the talent pool. Consequently, there would be more competition for these jobs and more specific criteria for selecting appointees.

Personal character and pure happenstance played their part in these disparate tales of the early court administrators, but other layers of interest are also evident. Distance from the seat of government allowed some freedoms but increased the isolation and social and physical vulnerability of early regional clerks, exposing them to poverty, privation and personal danger despite the reassuring trappings of their formal role. The difficulties experienced in recruiting and retaining suitable clerks in the regional courts must have put the already stretched and shallow resources of government under considerable pressure. At the same time, community opinion as relayed in the local press played a significant part in defining and refining expectations, forcing the hand of government in taking a more active interest in this scattered but significant workforce. Regional clerks continued to be accountable to and vitally engaged with their local communities, while the power balances with their distant employer shifted over time.

In 2016, Victoria's courts were separated from the public service and are now structurally independent of executive government. Many courts in smaller towns have closed, and others have been transformed into large, purpose-designed, multi-functional hubs. Clerks of courts are now court registrars, and less visible than in the past. Although professionally credentialled, well trained and better paid, they are no longer magistrates

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in training. They remain dedicated to the justice needs of court users and the courts' operational requirements but must now navigate a more complex, regulated and nuanced sphere of service.

This story of the early clerks, albeit incomplete, recalls some of the near-forgotten personalities who helped form the character and capabilities of the justice system in our regions. Some tales are of failure, some are close to farce; others, perhaps an unsung majority, mark valuable contributions lost under layers of history. These micro-histories are more than just interesting anecdotes. They throw new light upon the fraught and chaotic period when courts of justice were being established with little in the way of governmental direction and support.

Notes

1   Until 1989, the cohort was never larger than 350.

2   William Cuthill, 'The Magistrates' Court Melbourne—An Historical Outline', Letter to the Clerk of Courts (at Nhill, in this case), 7 May 1973, unpublished manuscript, Magistrates' Court of Victoria, at https://www.mcv.vic.gov.au/news-and-resources/publications/magistrates-court-melbourne-historical-outline.

3   The town of Dunolly, for example, swelled and shrank along with successive waves of gold fever. 'After each exodus the place was left as a few deserted shacks in a wasteland of mullock heaps, broken glass and tin cans.' Michael Challinger, *Historic Court Houses of Victoria*, Melbourne, Palisade Press, 2001, p. 18.

4   'Alberton was gazetted as a place for holding Courts of Petty Sessions, and Messrs John Reeve and John King were appointed Justices of the Peace for the new district. Then Michael Shannon met James Reading on the Port Albert Road, robbed him of two orders for money and a certificate of freedom, and made his way to Melbourne. There he was arrested and remanded by the bench to the new court at Alberton. But there was no court there, no lock-up, and no police; and Mr. Latrobe, with tears in his eyes, said he had no cash whatever to spend on Michael Shannon.' George Dunderdale, 'How Government Came to Gippsland', in George Dunderdale, *Book of the Bush*, London, Ward, Lock, 1870 (no pagination).

5   S 26. See John Lowndes, 'The Australian Magistracy: From Justices of the Peace to Judges and Beyond', *Australian Law Journal*, vol. 74, no. 8, 2000, pp. 509–612, at 512.

6   Chief Justice William a'Beckett delivered a vote of encouragement to the JPs, but also identified the likelihood of justices making errors in the absence of 'all access to books or professional assistance, especially in the country districts'. William a'Beckett, *The Magistrates' Manual for the Colony of Victoria: Containing Practical Directions to the Justices of the Peace in the Performance of their Duties*, Melbourne, Melbourne Morning Herald, 1852.

7   'To arm him with the legal knowledge necessary to undertake his role as sole governmental representative, the Colonial Secretary in Sydney sent Lonsdale a set of *Government Gazettes*, assuring him that a set of the *Acts of Council,* from 1825 to July 1835, would be sent once they were printed. The Colonial Secretary also sent Lonsdale a copy of Plunkett's

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Australian Magistrate. This was the magistrate's key text.' J.T.I. Rangelov, 'The Port Phillip Magistrates 1835–1851', PhD thesis, Victoria University, 2005, p. 206; J.H. Plunkett, *An Australian Magistrate; or, a Guide to the Duties of a Justice of the Peace for the Colony of New South Wales. Also a Brief Summary of the Law of Landlord and Tenant*, Sydney, James Tegg, 1835. Plunkett was the first Irish Catholic to be appointed to high civil office in the new colony, and his formative publication 'had great importance in effecting uniformity in the procedure of the inferior courts'. T.H. Suttor, 'Plunkett, John Hubert (1802–1869)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 2, Australian National University, 1967, also at http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/plunkett-john-hubert-2556. We do not know how widely the text was distributed amongst the magistracy or how conscientiously they might have read it. However comprehensive, this could hardly have substituted for the lack of ready assistance from clerks with legal and procedural knowledge.

8   In NSW, where a parallel system operated, Premier Cowper was accused of 'politicising and corrupting the magistracy by appointing unsuitable hacks and toadies'. Hilary Golder, *High and Responsible Office*, Melbourne, Sydney University in association with Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 71.

9   'Magistrates controlled the local police just as their English counterparts did. Their power to direct and deploy the police—often close to their own properties—provided them with a small force of private retainers at government expense.' David Neal, 'Law and Authority: The Magistracy in New South Wales, 1788–1840', *Law Context: A Socio-Legal Journal*, vol. 3, 1985, pp. 45–74, at 69.

10   Neal, p. 51.

11   See Golder. This practice was still causing disquiet in England more than a century later: 'whereas justices are entrusted with the duty of deciding points of law, all technical knowledge is possessed by their servant, on whose advice they must therefore rely. If legal argument takes place in court, the argument is addressed to the justices who may hardly follow a word of it; in reality, however, it is intended for the ears of the clerk'. See Glanville Llewelyn Williams, *The Proof of Guilt: A Study of the English Criminal Trial*, 3rd edition, London, Stevens, 1963, p. 360.

12   Civil Service Commission, *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into and Report upon the Civil Service of the Colony*, Melbourne, John Ferres, Government Printer, 1859, p. 94, at http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/papers/govpub/VPARL1859-60No19p1-50.pdf. Accessed 4 June 2018.

13   Cuthill, p. 31.

14   S17, ss 32, 33.

15   Cuthill.

16   They were Edward J. Foster (resigned under duress), James Hill (3 months: temporary), Benjamin Baxter (10 months: resigned), James Smith (3 months: temporary), Horatio Nelson Carrington (less than one month: resigned), another clerk, perhaps James Montgomery (two months: extra duties), Richard O'Cock (17 months: left to concentrate on his solicitor's practice), Kenneth M. Kirkland (just under six months), George P. McKelvey (four months: resigned), John McLauren (7 months: dismissed), George Wise (10 months: dismissed), William Redmond Belcher (18 years). Sources: *New South Wales Returns of the Colony*, State Records Authority of New South Wales; *New South Wales Government Gazette* and *Victoria Government Gazette*, 1837 and 1838. Note that clerks who served only in the Supreme Court, the Court of Requests or Quarter Sessions are not counted in this number, since their jobs were quite different.

17   Golder.

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18 A contemporary government review commented, 'we would observe that [the clerks' salaries] are not sufficient at the present rate, to enable their recipients to maintain their stations as gentlemen', Civil Service Commission, *Report of the Commissioners*.

19 Patrick McKeever, Owen Finnegan and Joshua Clark.

20 The Act *3 Wm IV, No. 8* (June 1833) provided for General Annual Licensing Meetings of justices to be called in June each year for the special purpose of considering all applications for licences for public houses. The certificates issued and the associated fee were then to be lodged with the office of the collector of internal revenue (colonial treasurer, New South Wales), who upon receipt would issue and register the licences. See 'Licensing Courts', *Research Data Australia*, Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), at https://researchdata. edu.au/licensing-courts/491725#_=_. Accessed 7 January 2022.

21 *2 Vic. No. 18*, 1838.

22 Ken McNaughton, 'Andrew Macnaughton—Geelong's First Publican', Port Phillip Pioneers Group, at http://www.clanmacnaughton.net/docs_articles/ANDREW_ MACNAUGHTON.pdf; https://portphillippioneersgroup.org.au/pppg5gw.htm. Accessed 13 January 2022, no pagination; see also 'Communications, Trade and Transport 1836– 1839: Part III The Liquor Trade', in Michael Cannon and Ian MacFarlane (eds), *Historic Records of Victoria*, *Foundation Series*, Vol. 4, Melbourne, Victorian Government Printing Office, 1985.

23 'Local Intelligence: The Census', *Port Phillip Patriot and Morning Advertiser*, 3 May 1841, p. 2; W.R. Belcher, 'Census: County of Bourke', *Port Phillip Patriot and Morning Advertiser*, 26 February 1846, p. 2.

24 *Port Phillip Gazette*, 19 March 1842, p. 3. The defendant was found not guilty. It was noted that the gentlemen may have been a little 'excited' by having drunk some wine.

25 Mr Thurlow, an attorney, had been asked to draw up a will for client Mr Halbert, a watchmaker. One Mr Grant had been nominated as trustee, but Thurlow had somehow persuaded the testator to have Charles Wentworth's name inserted instead, and Wentworth had signed. Wentworth had in his possession 'the best gold watch' of the man's shop, retained, it was claimed, as a surety; the watchmaker sued to have the watch returned and his preferred trustee reinstated. 'Domestic Intelligence', *Melbourne Weekly Courier*, 28 September 1844, p. 2.

26 'Garryowen' (Edmund Finn), *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne, 1835 to 1852: Historical, Anecdotal and Personal*, Melbourne, Ferguson and Mitchell, 1888, at http://arrow.latrobe. edu.au/store/3/4/4/7/9/public/B12604185V1.pdf. Accessed 19 July 2018.

27 'Domestic Intelligence', *Argus*, 17 February 1851, p. 2; 'Death From Excessive Use of Ardent Spirits', *Melbourne Daily News*, 5 February 1851, p. 2. Thanks also to family historian Michelle Dennis (Michelle Dennis Family History, Wordpress) for some of this new information. Accessed 20 December 2021.

28 *New South Wales Government Gazette*, no. 54, 2 September 1840, p. 841. Foster Fyans had been appointed magistrate at Portland Bay in 1840, but Blair was probably the first police magistrate to hold sittings there. See https://researchdata.ands.org.au/police-magistrate- portland-bay/492210. Accessed 16 July 2018. 'Blair was regarded as a hard man except by the Irish': Jan Hanslow, 'Portland: "The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Anything but the Truth"', 2001, at http://www.portphillippioneersgroup.org.au/pppg5ew.htm. Accessed 12 January 2022.

29 Tyers, in his survey of 1839, had estimated it to comprise about 290 people. Charles J. Tyers, 'Plan of the Town of Portland at Portland Bay', 1840, PROV, at https://www.glenelg. vic.gov.au/files/Planning/HO165_Portland_Heritage_Precinct.pdf, accessed 12 January

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2022; Golder; see also Thomas James Rogers, *The Civilisation of Port Phillip*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2018.

30   Challinger, p. 156. A man of old-fashioned methods, Blair had stocks erected in Cliff Street, Portland, at the location of the courthouse as late as 1854, but they were soon removed on orders from Melbourne.

31   Colonial Secretary's Office, 'Returns of the Colony New South Wales', Colonial Secretary's Office & Archives Authority of New South Wales, Pascoe, 1822–1857, www.ancestry.com. au, 1841, p. 270; Hanslow. Primrose was replaced by James Allison on 1 December 1841.

32   Arthur Feldtmann, *Swan Hill*, Adelaide, Rigby, 1973.

33   See also *Research Directory of the Swan Hill Genealogical & Historical Society*, 2007, p. 20.

34   A surety was payable by higher level government employees upon taking up office to guarantee correct performance of duties and discourage defection. Although this seems an extraordinary impost in the light of the relatively low civil service salaries, it shows what men were prepared to do to secure a government position.

35   'Swan Hill', *Bendigo Advertiser*, 2 October 1859, p. 2.

36   'Geelong', *Argus*, 6 February 1852, p. 2.

37   'Death of a Pioneer. Interesting Reminiscences of his Life. The Late Mr. R.G. Meade', *Euroa Advertiser*, 19 March 1897, p. 2; Frank Whitcombe, 'Victoria's Country Towns: Their Rise and Development: History of Benalla', *Weekly Times*, 1 September 1928, p. 5. An interesting side note: according to his daughter Mrs Potts, Meade (1824–97) had a functional relationship with Ned Kelly, who advised him to take a different route on one occasion to avoid being held up on the road by the Kelly Gang. His gold was safe on the morning train by the time of the famous bank hold-up at Euroa. 'Potts of Hawkesbury. Force Still Active. Wife's Romantic Associations', *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 3 August 1923, p. 2.

38   'he possessed physically all those signs not only of robust health, but of more than common vitality. In fact, until quite recent years he took an active part in all manly sports, being the life and soul of the once-redoubtable "Wangaratta Cricket Club"', 'Death of Mr Marsden', *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 3 November 1888, p. 8; *Argus*, 26 July 1881, p. 10. Geelong-born Marsden (1850–88) died young of tuberculosis.

39   His appointment in 1856 was part of a hasty and ill-conceived government compensation package. Hasleham was dismissed within three months owing to mismanagement of the court's accounts. He had no book-keeping knowledge and had not even been supplied with a cash box; neither had he received any pay since commencing in the role! See Challinger, p. 49.

40   RVB and ASK, 'Pastoral Pioneers', *Australasian*, 13 March 1937, p. 4; Alexander Romanov-Hughes, 'Captain John Martin Ardlie, H.E.I.C.S. & his Camels', n/k. Thanks to his eponymous descendant John Ardlie, also a former clerk of courts, for insights and previously unpublished material.

41   *Riot at Ballaarat: Report of the Board Appointed to Enquire into Circumstances Connected with the Late Disturbance at Ballaarat*, Melbourne, Government Printer, John Ferres, 12 January 2022. Ximenes testified about the insurrection and the firing of the Eureka Hotel. See https://eurekapedia.org/Maurice_Ximenes.

42   'Foster Fyans to Col. Sec., 23 March 1838', PROV, in Michael Cannon (ed.), *Historical Records of Victoria*, *Foundation Series*, Vol. 3, Melbourne, Victorian Government Printing Office, 1984, p. 291. The expedition also included two constables, two volunteer convicts and two gentlemen. The group received the 'approbation' of the governor for their conduct.

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43   *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, 23 December 1851, p. 2. Eyre was given the role of acting police magistrate and assistant commissioner for crown lands at Ballarat and Buninyong in 1851. See *Victoria Government Gazette 1851*, No. 25, 24 December, p. 880. The following year he was justice of the peace at Geelong, and then deputy sheriff at Buninyong in 1853. See *Victoria Government Gazette 1852*, No. 5, 4 February, p. 123; *Victoria Government Gazette 1853*, No. 13, 9 March, p. 365.

44   The Man in the Mask, 'The Beau Sabreur of Ballarat', *Smith's Weekly*, 5 October 1935, p. 17. Cartoon (unattributed) probably by Frank Dunne.

45   David Dunstan, 'Akehurst, Arthur Purssell (1836–1902)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, at http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/akehurst-arthur-purssell-12769/text23033. See also Raffaelo Carboni, *The Eureka Stockade*, Melbourne, J.P. Atkinson, 1855. Akehurst's past was publicly revived in the 1860s when he responded to fresh accusations and was invited to submit fresh proof of his innocence in the murder of Powell: see W.B. Withers, 'Letter to the Editor', *Star*, 14 July 1860, p. 3; in the 1870s (when he was accused anew in parliament and had to be defended by the attorney-general: see *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 23 July 1874, p. 4) and again in the 1890s (see Mrs F. Powell-Drew, 'Letter to the Editor', *Ballarat Star*, 8 October 1895, p. 3).

46   George Dunderdale, 'The Law and the Land', *Camperdown Chronicle*, 10 November 1896, p. 2.

47   Law Department, 'Circular to Benches of Magistrates: Cases for Opinion', 28 April 1856. This circular was reprinted in the *Instructions to Clerks of Courts* (their manual) up to and including the 1915 edition.

48   George Dunderdale, 'A Valiant Police-Sergeant', 1870, no pagination. For details on the colourful life of George Dunderdale (1822–1903), schoolteacher, gold miner, historian, and clerk of courts from 1857 to 1886, see Patrick Morgan, 'A Gippsland Writer: George Dunderdale (1822–1903)', *MARGIN: Monash Australiana Research Group Informal Notes*, no. 55, 2001, pp. 4–9, Australian Public Affairs—Full Text. See also Dunderdale, *The Book of the Bush*, at http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/e00014.html, accessed 12 January 2022. It contains a wealth of reminiscences, including a sardonic description of the impact of governmental 'meanness' with respect to its employees that resonates with the treatment given to Robert McPherson.

49   George Dunderdale, 'Government Officers in the Bush', 1870, no pagination. This was no glib sally, as he continues: 'Mr. D. was found dead on the main road; Mr. E. shot himself through the head; Mr. F. fell asleep in the bush and never woke; and Mr. G. was drowned in a waterhole'. Another colleague allegedly embezzled more than £400 in government revenue.

50   Civil Service Commission, *Report of the Commissioners*, p. 94.

51   Civil Service Commission, *Report of the Commissioners*, p. 7.

52   Civil Service Commission, *Report of the Commissioners*, pp. 93, 4.

53   Alfred Deakin, *The Crisis in Victorian Politics, 1879–1881* (edited by J.A. La Nauze and R.M. Crawford), Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1957; Paul Strangio, 'Black Wednesday', in *eMelbourne*, at http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00200b.htm. Accessed 18 January 2022. Most of the approximately 400 public servants dismissed at this time were eventually reinstated.

54   Chamberlain, *Victorian Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 1989, p. 744.

55   Architect: S.E. Bindley—see Challinger, p. 151; 'Hell's Heroes', Elizabeth Wade, research interviews, 2017.

56 Another such inquiry was carried out in 1873 (T.T. a'Beckett, *Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Enquire into the State of the Public Service and Working of the Civil Service Act*, Melbourne, John Ferres, Government Printer, 1873).

57 Applicants were required to pass a generic public service examination and would then enter the fifth class of the Clerical Division.

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'His Talent is Undeniable':
Benjamin Brain (1816–77): The Tragic Life of Australia's Forgotten Architectural Sculptor and Carver[1]

Allan Willingham

Abstract

Recently, in the course of writing about the Austin family of 'Barwon Park', Winchelsea, I reviewed two of my earlier publications concerning the 'Barwon Park' mansion and the architecture of Alexander Davidson and George Henderson. This time, I quickly identified the basalt lion's head grotesque in the entry keystone at 'Barwon Park' as being the work of sculptor Benjamin Brain, but found identifying 'Mr Dyson', the patternmaker associated with the 'Barwon Park' cast iron balcony verandah in 1870, to be problematic. It is now my contention that 'Mr Dyson' was the former Southampton sculptor Benjamin Brain, who came from Sydney to Geelong in 1869 under the auspices of Thomas Austin's architects and worked for the Vulcan Foundry on the 'Barwon Park' project under a pseudonym, seemingly to protect his reputation. The lonely intemperate life of Benjamin Brain, as well as his personal tragedies and haphazard career as a sculptor in England and Australia, has now been thoroughly investigated, my research ending with his tragic suicide at Ballarat in September 1877. This is Brain's story.

Benjamin Brain is truly Australia's forgotten architectural sculptor and stone carver, and any reputation he earned whilst engaged in the same discipline in Somerset and Hampshire in mid-nineteenth-century England faded when he left England in 1865 to come to Melbourne. Subsequently, a number of the monuments he created in the Southampton locality were wantonly destroyed by uncaring public officials or defaced by indifferent property owners. Sadly Benjamin Brain's work in New South Wales and Victoria failed to attract the attention of both Graeme Sturgeon when he prepared his informative tome, *The Development of Australian Sculpture 1788–1975*, in 1978[2] and Ken Scarlett, with his later publication

Australian Sculptors in 1980.[3] As well, this forgotten sculptor's life remains unrecorded in any national or local dictionary of biography, including the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and the *Geelong and District Database* (www.zades.com.au). Clearly this is a significant oversight.

Until now Brain's sculptural endeavours in Australia have been very largely uncharted, save for a three-page article written by Sydney art historian Jane Lennon and published in *Australiana* in May 1996 under the banner 'Benjamin Brain: A Forgotten Australian Sculptor'.[4] In this short, highly focused essay, Lennon identified and discussed one of Sydney modeller Antonio Caproni's terracotta-coloured plaster casts of Brain's bust of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, then held in a private collection. She also traced the provenance of Brain's large sandstone bust of Lord Nelson and, in the process, speculated that this portrait bust may have been 'the lost bust of Nelson once owned by the former harbour master, Thomas Watson, and displayed along with busts of other naval heroes at Watson's Trafalgar Hotel in Castlereagh Street'.[5] This speculation has now been confirmed by a contemporary press article, originally published in the Sydney *Empire* in late November 1867 and repeated *verbatim* in the Maitland press two days later, to read:

> **BUSTS OF COOK AND NELSON—**
> Mr Benjamin Brain, sculptor, of Albion street, Paddington, has just completed two busts in stone, of the famous circumnavigator Captain Cook, and the hero of Trafalgar, Lord Nelson. As works of art they display much artistic skill. They are now in Captain Watson's possession, and will probably occupy some conspicuous place on the arrival of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh—*Empire*, Nov. 28.[6]

My interest in the work of the Geelong sculptor known to me for many years only as Samuel Brain stems from the mid-1970s, when I first embarked on a long-in-gestation, part-time postgraduate research project at the University of Melbourne to document the joint and separate careers of Scots-born architects Alexander Davidson and George Henderson, who worked first in Edinburgh and then at Rokewood and Geelong, Victoria.

During a visit to Scotland in 1972, a chance follow-up to a footnote in Margaret Loch Kiddle's seminal and authoritative social history of the Western District *Men of Yesterday*[7] led to my gaining access to architect George Henderson's papers in Edinburgh. This extensive collection of

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letters, drawings and mint-condition photographs, then in the care of his elderly daughter, Mrs E.S. Phillipps of 'Merchiston Cottage', Colinton, related to the careers of the architects Alexander Davidson (1839–1908) and George Henderson (1846–1905), in partnership in Australia, and also to the earlier practice of the noted Edinburgh architect John Henderson (1804–62), father of George and mentor to both as articled pupils.

Included in the collection were 115 letters, written by George Henderson to his widowed mother Hannah in the period 1867–77 whilst working at Rokewood and Geelong. These monthly epistles provide a unique and extremely frank account of an architectural practice in Western Victoria in the nineteenth century. Archival copies of Henderson's lengthy letters, which have a distinct architectural bias, formed the basis of both my comprehensive historic structures report on Thomas Austin's great country house 'Barwon Park' at Winchelsea in 1980 (Figure 1) and my postgraduate architectural history thesis 'Two Scots in Victoria: The Architecture of Davidson and Henderson' at the University of Melbourne, 1983.[8] Davidson and Henderson not only designed and oversaw construction of the Austin mansion, stables, and garden layout at 'Barwon Park' between 1869 and 1871, they also configured Thomas Austin's ornamental French Medieval Gothic style tomb and a memorial tablet following his death in December 1871 (Figures 2(a) and 2(b)).

Figure 1: 'The Mansion' at 'Barwon Park', Winchelsea. Photographer Allan Willingham, 21 November 2015 (Courtesy Allan Willingham)

'His Talent is Undeniable': Benjamin Brain (1816–77): The Tragic Life of Australia's Forgotten Architectural Sculptor and Carver. —— Allan Willingham

Figures 2(a) and 2(b): Thomas Austin's tomb (a), and detail of stone carving on tomb (b), at the Eastern Cemetery, Geelong. Photographer Allan Willingham, 16 November 2021 (Courtesy Allan Willingham)

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In both aforementioned productions I confidently, yet erroneously, held that 'Samuel Brain, a carver employed by Nathaniel Brown, monumental mason, executed the tomb as well as the memorial tablet in the Winchelsea Church'. Before me, and many years earlier, P.L. Brown and W.R. Brownhill, both noted Geelong historians, had made the same mistake.[9] It is now well established that Samuel Brain (1813–85) was a gardener from Geelong West who died in 1885,[10] and not our Benjamin Brain, the architectural sculptor and stone carver who worked with Nathaniel Brown (1815–1906) and the firm of Davidson and Henderson at Geelong in the period 1869–77. Further genealogical research confirms that Benjamin and Samuel were not related.

A new, stand-alone extensively researched biography for Benjamin Brain, architectural sculptor and carver, of Bath, Southampton, Sydney, Melbourne and Geelong, was prepared in the course of my writing a lengthy new account of the architectural history of the Austin family mansion, 'Barwon Park', near Winchelsea in the depths of COVID isolation in 2021. This new account, which is proposed for inclusion in a wider publication by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) to mark the sesquicentenary of completion of the Austin's pastoral stronghold in June 1871, contains only the briefest of summaries of Benjamin Brain's tragic life in England and Australia.[11]

My recent renewed interest in the architecture of Davidson and Henderson and further research into the cultural and architectural history of 'Barwon Park' has now facilitated a better understanding of the role the many artisans and sub-contractors from Geelong and Ballarat played in the creation of Thomas and Elizabeth Austin's formidable basalt seat on

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the Barwon River near Winchelsea. New research has also exposed the critical role Benjamin Brain played as patternmaker in the production of the unique ornamental cast iron balcony verandah gracing the east façade of the mansion, as well as in the carving of the lion's head grotesque in the basalt keystone at the front door. Henderson's letters record that this intricate verandah was considered to be the most important single feature in the mansion design, and the architects went to considerable trouble to ensure it was included in the works, initially in the first round of tenders and then, after representations to Austin's solicitors, as a separate contract. The imposing cast iron balcony verandah with flanking wings is, in fact, a saving grace, as the mansion otherwise presents in the round as a sombre grey basalt pile with little prominent external architectural relief. The ornate French Medieval interior, however, is another matter.

Tenders for the casting and erection of 'over 240 feet' (later given as 250 feet or around 76 metres) of cast iron verandah were called in November 1869, and William Humble and Ward Nicholson, as proprietors of the Vulcan Foundry in Little Malop Street, Geelong, won the contract to cast all of the original verandah and internal staircase components.[12] It was an enormous project of great originality and one that could not be successfully completed by the foundry without the assistance of a specialist carver-cum-patternmaker. The ever-inquisitive Geelong press noted in March 1870 that:

> Some excellent specimens of colonial castings can now be seen at Messrs Humble and Co.'s Vulcan foundry. They will form portions of the verandah intended for the new mansion now in course of erection for Thomas Austin, Esq., of Barwon Park, from plans drawn by Messrs Davidson and Henderson. The frieze and pillars moulded in the early English style are very handsome. *The carvings on the wood from which the moulds were cast, were executed by Mr Dyson, who was specially engaged for the purpose, and the workmanship displayed by him is something quite out of the usual line*. It is satisfactory also to be able to report that Mr Humble has now so many orders on hand that he will be able to engage this skilful workman permanently.[13]

Whilst 'Mr Dyson' evidently produced the complex Kauri timber patterns for casting the Winchelsea mansion verandah components, it is clear that Alex Davidson used illustrations of ironwork in E.E. Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire Raisonnée de L'Architecture Française*, Tomes 1–8 (1854–62) in the design process and made large-scale paper drawings as templates

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to guide the patternmaker in his work. He did the same to guide J.S. Mackennal's modelling for the intricate and exotic plasterwork in the mansion interior. Davidson was a very accomplished draftsman, and surviving examples of his penmanship, including his wonderful drawing of the Scott Monument in Edinburgh (drawn in 1864) and the Rokewood Presbyterian Church perspective (drawn in 1865), are testament to his skill in this regard.

Despite near exhaustive investigations into the genealogical depths of Ancestry and FamilySearch and the digital maze of Trove, the identity of this phantom patternmaker 'Mr Dyson' has not been established. But it is certain that, despite William Humble's offer of permanent employment, 'Mr Dyson' did not continue to work at the Vulcan Foundry after the timber patterns for the cast iron work at 'Barwon Park' were completed. Significantly, there is only one other reference to 'Mr Dyson' in the Geelong press in that era; it occurs in August 1870 in a brief article concerning another local project placed in the hands of Davidson and Henderson.[14] In June 1870, George Henderson confided to his mother that the firm had got the job to add a stage to the Mechanics' Institute in Ryrie Street,[15] and in August 1870 it was reported that:

> The addition to the hall of the Mechanics' Institute has been walled and covered in, the new stage completed, *and the wooden capitals beautifully carved by Mr Dyson*. Standing on the old platform, an old *habitue* will be surprised at the great amount of accommodation afforded by the new stage, which looks a great deal more extensive than one could have imagined it would be.[16]

Benjamin Brain's skill as a woodcarver was not concealed for long, for the Geelong press reported in October 1870 that:

> Mr Brain, the sculptor, has shown us two specimens of his skill in wood-carving. They represent the figures "faith," and "resignation." The material is Kaurie [*sic*] pine, and the use to which they are to be put is no greater than to ornament a new vehicle to be used by Messrs Jenkins and Bennett, undertakers, in their business. It is seldom, however, that such beautiful work has been so humbly applied. Mr Brain is a thorough artist, and in these figures he has shown the hand of a thorough artist. The figures are admirably drawn, the drapery is extremely well managed, and there is a grace in them which could not have been expected from the ungenial nature of the material employed.[17]

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It is now my clear contention that 'Mr Dyson', the phantom ironwork patternmaker at the Vulcan Foundry, was in fact Benjamin Brain, who worked in Geelong as a woodcarver on just two occasions in 1870 under this deceptive pseudonym. Brain adopted this strategy both to protect his superior reputation as an architectural sculptor and carver in stone and to otherwise dissociate himself from the business of his sometime employer, the popular and very capable businessman Nathaniel Brown. Benjamin Brain, a 'man of considerable culture',[18] went on to carve other timber patterns for Davidson and Henderson in 1871, when the firm registered additional designs for cast iron components in Victoria. A large range of their designs, as cast at the Vulcan Foundry, was shown at the Geelong Spring Show in October 1872.[19]

Davidson and Henderson took advantage of the Victorian government's recent protective legislation, and on 18 July 1870 they registered their designs for all the columns, brackets, friezes, spandrels and balustrade panels used at 'Barwon Park'. They were one of the first to do so, and, as required, they had the identification 'Davidson and Henderson Registered July 18th 1870' cast in high relief on the balustrade panels (verso). The design of the iron entrance balcony at 'Barwon Park' repeats the Venetian motif (otherwise known as a Palladian or Serlian motif) elsewhere apparent in the mansion fenestration, with the wide principal opening of a semicircular arched form flanked on either side by lower arches.

The spandrel panels of the flanking arches contain the arms and mottos of both the Austin (Austen) and Harding (Hardinge) families with the numerals '1869' included in the panels above the four sets of grouped columns that support the balcony verandah at ground level. A report prepared in April 1976 by J.P. Brooke-Little (1927–2006), then the Richmond Herald of Arms at the College of Arms, London, identified the origins of these armorial bearings.[20] The arms on the southern or left-hand spandrel panel, consisting of a chevron and birds, have been identified as those of the family of Austen of Shalford, County Surrey, and formerly of Guildford and Chiddingfold, both County Surrey, and of Toddington, St Albans, County Hertford (Figure 3). The arms on the northern or right-hand spandrel have similarly been determined as an obvious fabrication. The crest is that first granted to Robert Hardinge, citizen and alderman of London, in the late sixteenth century. The arms below bear no resemblance to those associated with the Hardinge crest.

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The motto *Ne Quid Nimis* under the Austin arms translates as 'nothing in excess', whilst the motto *Nec Timeo Nec Sperno* under the Hardinge arms asserts that 'I neither fear nor despise' (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Austen Coat of Arms as adopted by Thomas and Elizabeth Austin in 1869. Photographer Allan Willingham, 20 February 2022 (Courtesy Allan Willingham)

Figure 4: Hardinge Coat of Arms as adopted by Thomas and Elizabeth Austin in 1869. Photographer Allan Willingham, 20 February 2022 (Courtesy Allan Willingham)

In his well-documented report, J.P. Brooke-Little concludes that both coats of arms are inventions, adopted without authority, and otherwise are 'some sort of Victorian fantasy'. It can be safely deduced from this examination of the heraldic records that Thomas and Elizabeth Austin discovered and adopted these coats of arms during their visit to England, 1869–70. Their new heraldry was illuminated to the order of Smith and Company of Bristol,[21] and copies of these adopted arms were sent to their architects in Geelong to facilitate the incorporation of these designs as spandrel panels in the 'Barwon Park' verandah. Evidently, the verandah components had been cast well before the Austin family returned to Winchelsea in March 1870 to include the two heraldic panels located either side of the principal arch.[22] In summary, these two panels are exemplars of the iron founder's art and, additionally, the 'Barwon Park' verandah can now be seen for the first time as vivid testament to Benjamin Brain's skill as a patternmaker and carver in wood.

Benjamin Brain (1816–77): A New Biography and Appraisal of his Work

Benjamin Brain was born at Siston in Gloucestershire, England, and baptised on 20 October 1816, son of Joseph Braine (Brain), a collier, and Amy Batt. He trained as a stonemason at Bristol and Bath and married Jane Ferres (1816–47) at Swainswick, near Bath, on 11 November 1838. They had issue three children, Robert Smith (born 1840), Elisa (born and died in December 1840), and John Henry (born 1844). Jane Brain died at Bath on 26 December 1847, and her two young sons went to live with Ferres family relatives at Bath. In April 1848, several members of this same family, led by the matriarch Esther Ferres (née Chancellor) and including the adopted Brain brothers, came to settle in Melbourne as bounty scheme immigrants, sailing from Plymouth aboard the barque *Cornwall* and arriving at Hobson's Bay in August 1848. Their story has been charted by Ferres family descendants in Australia and published in 1988 as *Bath and Beyond: Two Hundred Years of Ferres Family History*. However, nothing of the life of Benjamin Brain is set out in this admirable family history other than a reference to the fact that, as far as family emigration was concerned, 'Benjamin Brain(e) a sculptor by profession, remained behind in England'.[23] Contact with one of the authors of *Bath and Beyond* failed to identify any family papers or other documents concerning Benjamin Brain, nor is there a photograph of our subject sculptor to hand.

Whilst Benjamin Brain, seemingly estranged from the Ferres family and his two young sons, initially opted to remain in Bath and work as a stonemason, his brother-in-law John Ferres, who had trained as a printer and shorthand reporter with Samuel Gibbs, wound up his struggling printing business known as the General Publication Office in Bath and headed for Australia. On 17 August 1848 he too sailed from Plymouth aboard another emigrant clipper, *Aurora*, to arrive off Point Henry, Geelong, on 7 December 1848. Within a few weeks of his arrival, John Ferres had 'obtained permanent employment' as a printer on the *Melbourne Herald*. He then secured a posting as a sub-overseer and 'in the course of a few months succeeded to the position of manager'. Ferres then revolutionised the nascent printing industry in the colony with the introduction of a steam-powered printing machine into the *Herald* office, a device that facilitated the publishing of the first eight-page newspaper in Victoria.[24]

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In October 1851, and following Separation, Ferres was induced to leave the *Herald* and take up the position of government printer. In a career that extended from 1851 to 1888 (save for three years when he was controversially dismissed on 'Black Thursday', 1878) John Ferres created a large and powerful government printing bureaucracy, which held sway in Victorian government circles long after his retirement. Prophetically, and following his official appointment, Ferres introduced his eleven-year-old nephew, Robert Smith Brain, into the office of the government printer. In a career that extended over more than 50 years, Benjamin Brain's elder son rose rapidly through the ranks of the public service to survive charges of nepotism against Ferres in 1883 and finally assume the title of Victorian government printer following the retirement of his uncle in August 1887.

By early 1851 the widowed sculptor Benjamin Brain had moved from Bath to Southampton in Hampshire, where, on his own account, he undertook commissions to carve commemorative stone tablets, baptismal fonts, heraldic plaques, busts, gargoyles, grotesques and allied monumental carvings for masonry projects largely sponsored by 'the Nobility, Clergy and Gentry'. One such sponsor was Philip Brannon (1817–90), a multi-talented Southampton architect, engineer, artist, writer, engraver, printer and publisher who, around 1855, introduced Benjamin Brain to his client, ex–Indian Army officer Colonel William Petrie Waugh (1812–80) of Branksea Island, in Poole Harbour, Dorset.

Waugh, a notorious spendthrift, had purchased the uninhabited island in 1852 for £13,000 and, in a period of less than six years, borrowed heavily from the London and Eastern Banking Company (of which he was a director) to establish a pottery clay works, build a parish church on the island, and otherwise initiate major alterations and additions to the old fortified Henrician castle or device fort known as 'Branksea Castle'. Waugh also undertook the reclamation of a large tract of land from the sea, entertained lavishly, capitalised on his Indian Army connections and exploits and, with his wife and profligate stepdaughter in tow, lived well beyond his means. Waugh faced bankruptcy proceedings and other charges in 1857, with the British press salivating over the fact that he had obtained advances of £237,000 against a meagre mortgage over Branksea Island. Waugh's misdeeds were recounted at length, with even the distant Scottish press noting that:

> It is stated that Colonel Waugh, of Branksea Castle, one of the directors of the London and Eastern Bank who obtained advances from that

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concern to the extent of £237,000, has retired with his family to the continent. The inhabitants of Poole, in Dorsetshire, will lose about £10,000 through the failure of Colonel Waugh.[25]

It is now evident that Benjamin Brain was responsible for all of the sculpture and architectural carving at 'Branksea Castle' in works actually undertaken for Colonel Waugh between 1854 and 1857 and that he executed the 'central composition emblematical of Indian warfare' from an exotic design prepared by Philip Brannon. Whilst Brain completed this large sculpture, Waugh never paid for it and it was not installed as intended on a roof platform above the central bay window in the two-storey Tudor Gothic–style façade facing the seafront. Both Philip Brannon's steel engraving captioned as 'Branksea Island Poole Harbour' and a similar image published in the *Illustrated News of the World* in May 1858 show this heroic piece in place above the central bay windows. The sculpture in fact remained with Benjamin Brain in his yard at Shirley for many years before he advertised in July 1863 that the work, entitled 'A Military Trophy' was for sale. This military fantasy in Portland stone was beautifully illustrated in Brain's advertisement (Figure 5) with advice that it was considered 'suitable for any Indian Officer' and that it 'was thrown upon the Sculptor's hands at the time of Col Waugh's Bankruptcy'.[26]

Figure 5: 'For Sale, a Military Trophy' (Courtesy *The Builder*, London, 25 July 1863, p. viii)

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In December 1857, Brain had moved his 'marble and stone business' to Shirley, a village on the outskirts of Southampton.[27] At this time he worked on the Royal South Hants Infirmary Chapel at Southampton, where 'the carving of the mouldings and ornaments was entrusted to the now generally acknowledged skill of Mr. Benjamin Brain'.[28]

After completing an attractive stone monument to Sampson Payne (1800–56), the mayor of Southampton, Brain was commissioned to sculpt an above-life-size stone statue to be mounted on top of a massive public monument to the memory of Alderman Richard Andrews (1798–1859) (Figure 6). The Andrews Monument, surely the most outrageously elaborate drinking fountain in Great Britain, was long in gestation, and it took Benjamin Brain nigh on eighteen months to complete his contract. The Southampton press published a flattering report on Brain's towering work as well as a testimonial from Sir John Simeon (1815–70) regarding the merit of Brain's speculative plaster statuettes of Richard Andrews. Despite Simeon's testimony, Brain's gilded statuettes did not sell, and he still had twenty in his possession three years later.

Figure 6: The Richard Andrews Monument at Southampton, 1860–62 (Courtesy Allan Willingham Collection)

Benjamin Brain's second marriage, on 19 September 1863, was to Catherine Frances Blenkhorne (1832–66), daughter of a London

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policeman. They had issue one daughter, Eliza Charlotte, who was born at Shirley and baptised there on 24 April 1865. A few days later, on 9 May 1865, Southampton auctioneer J.R. Weston put the contents of Brain's sculpture studio at Shirley up for sale by public auction.[29] Included was the exotic 'Military Trophy' Brain had produced for ex–Indian Army officer Colonel William Petrie Waugh but retained at his studio when Waugh went bankrupt and fled England. On the same day as the auction, 'Benj. Baine', a 47-year-old single male 'lab' (labourer born in 1815–16) boarded the Black Ball Line's 1137-ton cargo packet *Malakoff* as one of only twelve passengers, all in steerage, to sail down the Thames, bound for Melbourne.[30] Two months after his departure, Brain's house and stonemason's yard at Shirley were also put up for sale in accordance with a mortgagee's power of sale.

It is not yet clear if Benjamin Brain, long a 'struggling artist', abandoned his second wife and new-born daughter and fled England to avoid crippling financial debts, or if he otherwise came to work with colleagues in Sydney, with the intention of later bringing Catherine Brain to the Australian colonies to benefit her ailing health. After an eventful and extended passage, the *Malakoff* tied up at the Railway Pier in Melbourne on 28 August 1865, and Brain disembarked, likely with all his stone-cutting saws, axes, mallets and chisels in his care. His immediate movements are not known, but it is very likely he renewed contact with his two estranged sons and the Ferres family in Melbourne. Robert Smith Brain, his elder son, had married Louisa Powell (1840–1902) in 1861, and by the end of 1865 they had issue four children and lived in Fitzroy, whilst John Henry Brain lived as a bachelor with his aunt Anna Wilton (née Ferres) and her husband William Wilton on their farmstead at Alberton in Gippsland.

Benjamin Brain moved to Sydney late in 1865 or early 1866 and first found lodgings in Paddington with an old friend Enos Williams (1822–74), a stonemason he knew from Bath, who, with wife Charlotte (née Cooksley), came to Australia as a bounty immigrant in February 1853. Brain's introduction to Edmund T. Blacket, Sydney's leading ecclesiastical architect, took him to West Maitland in early 1866 to work on two of Blacket's major projects. At the first site, Brain was responsible for carving seven keystone grotesques and other ornamental mouldings for the three-storey Ravensfield stone façade of David Cohen & Co.'s new stores (Figure 7).[31]

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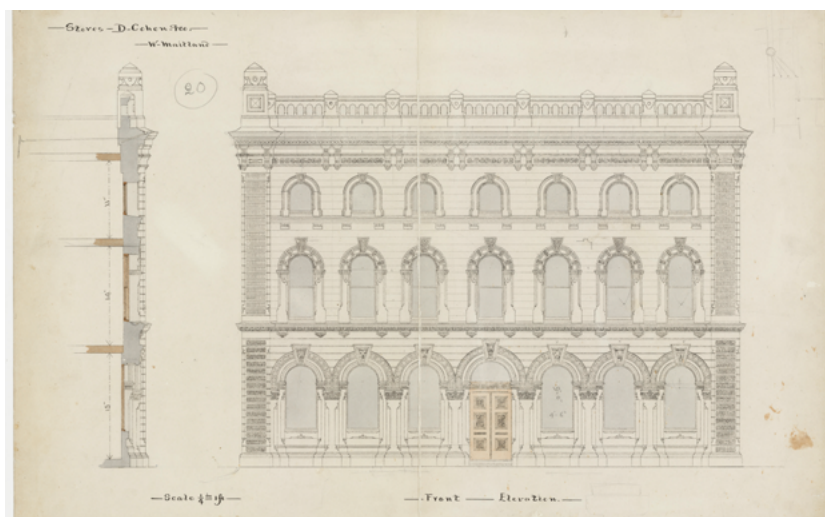
Figure 7: 'Front Elevation, Stores, D. Cohen & Co., West Maitland', E.T. Blacket, architect, 1865 (Courtesy State Library of New South Wales FL 13090387)

This work was largely completed by the end of May 1866,[32] at which time Brain returned to Sydney to work with Enos Williams on his contract to build masonry additions and a new façade to the Presbyterian Church in Phillip Street, Sydney.[33] Press reports confirm that Benjamin Brain was responsible for carving all of the ornamental stonework on the new arcaded Romanesque façade, making this the earliest known work undertaken by him whilst living and working as an architectural sculptor in Sydney.[34] This project was evidently completed in time for a General Assembly of the Australian Presbyterian Church in October 1866.

Brain's second marriage was again short-lived, as his wife, suffering from phthisis (pulmonary tuberculosis), died in London on 19 October 1866. Prior to the death of her mother, Eliza Charlotte Brain, an infant, went to the care of her aunt Mary Hill (née Blenkhorne), wife of Richard Thomas Hill (1826–95) a licensed London victualler. In turn, they adopted her as their own.

In late 1866, Benjamin Brain returned to West Maitland, where he was engaged to work as an architectural sculptor at St Mary's Anglican Church carving decorative bosses and window tracery in accordance with rather stolid English Decorated Gothic details transcribed by Edmund Blacket from his own pattern book collection. At St Mary's Church, Brain

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was also the sculptor of the finely crafted Ravensfield stone font, using Blacket's very schematic pencilled design diagrams as his only guide.

Following Brain's return to Enos Williams' household in Albion Street in Paddington, Blacket entrusted him with the execution of another octagonal stone font, this time at St Andrew's Anglican Cathedral in Sydney.[35] In November 1867, upon completion of the Oamaru limestone font, Brain's effort was described as being 'one of the most appropriate and best pieces of workmanship of its kind to be found in any cathedral, even in the mother country'.[36] At the same time, Benjamin Brain was also preoccupied with carving substantial busts of Admiral Lord Nelson (Figure 8) and Captain James Cook, likely for Captain Thomas Watson, a Sydney publican and maritime aficionado. Watson evidently put them on display at his Trafalgar Hotel in Castlereagh Street, Sydney, in late 1867.

Favourable publicity led to a further commission in early 1868 from the prominent Irish bookseller and stationer, Jeremiah J. Moore, proprietor of the Australian Book Mart in George Street.[37] In this work, Brain had to carve busts of Virgil, Homer and Shakespeare for mounting in carved first-floor window pediments in the elaborate stone façade of Moore's three-storey bookstore and residence. Whilst Moore's new premises were described and depicted in the *Illustrated Sydney News* in May 1870, to show Brain's three literary emblems to effect, his involvement in this project passed without notice in this near full-page article.[38]

Brain also carved a cabinet-size bust of H.R.H. Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh (1844–1900), the second son of Queen Victoria, following the unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the duke at Clontarf in Sydney on 12 March 1868 (Figure 9). This incident, which came close to the end of Prince Alfred's first royal tour of the Australian colonies, led to waves of public indignation, sectarian conflict, and overt expressions of loyalty to the distant monarch. A sentimental and patriotic bust was in order and, when completed in May 1868, it attracted widespread publicity, with one correspondent noting that:

> **BUST OF THE PRINCE.—**
> Mr. B. Brain, a sculptor residing in this city—obviously possessed of a great natural talent which deserves to be appreciated and patronised has modelled a bust of Our Sailor Prince the Duke of Edinburgh, which is not only a faithful likeness, but valuable as a work of art. The bust is what is called three-quarter face, and cabinet size, and the expression of the features extremely pleasing. His Royal Highness's fondness for flowers

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is recalled to the memory of the spectator by the well-known rose in the button-hole of the surtout [great coat or frock coat]. The bust has been cast in plaster of paris, from Mr. Brain's carefully-finished model, by Signor A. Caproni, an Italian plaster figure maker, whose shop is at 233, Castlereagh-street, near the intersection of that thoroughfare with Market-street East. Mr. Brain, the modeller of this bust, is an Englishman.[39]

Copies of Benjamin Brain's bust of the duke were advertised for sale by subscription in the Sydney press with the imprimatur that the imagery had been 'approved previous to completion, and patronised by his Excellency the Earl of Belmore, and his Worship the Mayor of Sydney', the earl being the governor of New South Wales.[40] Brain evidently relied on the sale of these replica busts as income, for there is no record of him being employed on any major masonry project in Sydney after May 1868.

Figure 8: Bust of Admiral Lord Nelson, 1867. Photographer Naval Photographic Unit, Sydney, n.d. (Courtesy *Australiana*, vol. 18, no. 2, May 1996, p. 35)

Figure 9: Bust of 'Our Sailor Prince the Duke of Edinburgh' (Courtesy *Australiana*, vol. 18, no. 2, May 1996, p. 34)

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It is not until March 1869, that Benjamin Brain's name appears again, this time in the Melbourne and Victorian press, when it was widely reported that his stone bust of the Duke of Edinburgh was on display in the window of Wilkie and Webster's Music Warehouse at 15 Collins Street East, Melbourne.[41] Wilkie and Webster (established in 1850) regularly displayed works of art and architecture in their window, and it is likely that Davidson and Henderson first befriended Benjamin Brain at this store in early March 1869, soon after Thomas Austin had decided to proceed with construction of the new mansion at Winchelsea. In 1875, with the death of both Wilkie and Webster, the business became the powerful music publishing empire of Allan & Co., under the direction of G.L. Allan, a former junior partner.[42]

Brain's celebrated stone bust of Prince Alfred was put on display in Collins Street in the same week that the duke visited Thomas and Elizabeth Austin at their old Barwon Park homestead for the second time. The following week, the Austin family headed for England. Whilst Brain's stone sculpture of the duke was reportedly purchased by 'Mr. Murray', a storekeeper of Jerilderie, in New South Wales, with the intention of presenting it to the municipality of Deniliquin for display in their town hall, plaster casts of the work were otherwise available in Melbourne.[43] Brain's bust won the following review in the Melbourne *Argus*: 'There was exhibited at Messrs. Wilkie and Webster's, Collins-street yesterday, an extremely well-executed bust of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, carved out of stone by Mr. Benjamin Brain. The resemblance is very good'.[44]

In 1868, in Sydney, there was evidently little available work on offer for architectural sculptors and stone carvers, forcing Benjamin Brain to quit his financially troubled friend Enos Williams' household in Paddington to move to Melbourne in late 1868 or early 1869. Williams was declared insolvent on several occasions in the 1860s, and his wife Charlotte sustained the family by taking in boarders. In mid-1871, the Williams family also moved to Melbourne, where Enos found work as a mason with Overend and Robb, builders of the E.S.&A. Bank in Hawthorn. He left a trail of debts in Sydney and at least one incomplete project.[45]

In Melbourne, as well as searching for work, Brain renewed contact with his elder son Robert Smith Brain and his family, who likely then resided at 10 King William Street, Fitzroy. It is also possible that Brain,

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like Enos Williams after him, fled Sydney to avoid detection by creditors in New South Wales, if a sole advertisement in the Melbourne press in May 1869 is any indication: 'BENJAMIN BRAIN, sculptor,—Mr. West, of Sydney, is in Melbourne, and wishes to see you, at 38 Gertrude-Street, Collingwood'.[46]

The identity of this 'Mr West' has not yet been established, nor has his relationship with the enigmatic 'S. Kaye, watch and clockmaker', the occupant of 38 Gertrude Street, Collingwood (now Fitzroy) in 1869, been deduced, but it is possible that Brain had defaulted on loans made by Joseph West, a moneylender, of Sydney. In any case, Brain was evidently still in Melbourne in May 1869 and largely dependent on income he derived from the sale of plaster casts of his bust of the Duke of Edinburgh.

George Henderson, in his letters of 22 May and 19 June 1869, records that he went with Davidson and his family to spend the Queen's Birthday holiday weekend in Melbourne (Saturday 22 to Monday 24 May), and, whilst 'they had bad weather all the time nearly', George and Alexander spent their time contacting manufacturers and suppliers of building materials and equipment, inspecting new houses and 'getting hold of all sorts of information' for the 'Barwon Park' project.[47] Davidson and Henderson evidently made further contact with Benjamin Brain during this extended visit and thereafter arranged for him to come to Geelong to work as an architectural sculptor and stone carver, as well as a silent patternmaker on their 'big job' at Winchelsea.

At Geelong, Brain went to work at the yard of Nathaniel Brown (1815–1906), a marble and monumental mason in Ryrie Street, in an arrangement that allowed him to work on commissions as an independent architectural sculptor as well undertake monumental masonry work directly for Nathaniel Brown. Early on, at Geelong, Brain made his name as a fine sculptor with his rendition of the draped female figure of 'Science', a life-size allegorical sculpture in Barrabool Hills sandstone undertaken 'more for "the cause" than for profit' and installed in a niche in the first-floor level façade of the Geelong Mechanics' Institute in early May 1870 (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Geelong Mechanics' Institute *c.* 1882. Photographer Frederick Kruger (Courtesy State Library Victoria H39614/52)

In July 1870, by way of promotion, Benjamin Brain put on display at his Ryrie Street studio another large new bust of the Duke of Edinburgh carved from a block of Tasmanian freestone, which at the time was observed to be 'considerably coarser in the grain than the Barrabool Hills stone'.[48] A few months later it was reported that Brain's regal bust, 'after exposure to last winter's rains', had suffered so much erosion that it had to be retouched and the outlines refreshed.[49]

A rigorous search of the Geelong press reveals that, in the period from mid-1869 to early 1877, Benjamin Brain undertook a number of important carving commissions for Davidson and Henderson's clients, including Thomas and Elizabeth Austin at Winchelsea, Dr David Boswell Reid at 'Belleville', Geelong, the Geelong Mechanics' Institute Committee, the Presbyterian Church elders at Ceres and Skipton, John Dixon Wyselaskie at Wickliffe, the Erskine Church elders at Carlton, the Dr Geddie Memorial Committee, Excell, Lonargan and Co. in Geelong, John Austin at Yeo, James Robertson at Coragulac, and George Synnot in Geelong. In fact, Davidson and Henderson effectively kept sculptor Brain in work with regular orders for architectural carvings and French sculptural imagery largely derived from their favourite work of reference, E.E. Viollet-le-Duc's much-thumbed *Dictionnaire*. Of particular interest

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are the 'leaping' French gargoyles (*gargouilles*) Brain carved for the flèche tower at the Skipton Presbyterian Church in 1871 (Figure 11) and the exotic French Medieval ornamentation in Waurn Ponds limestone at Excell, Lonargan and Co.'s warehouse in Moorabool Street, Geelong, in 1873. At the latter site, Davidson and Henderson used the same iron columns and brackets as found at 'Barwon Park' with a new frieze on the single-storey street verandah fronting the two-storey warehouse.

Figure 11: Gargoyles at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Skipton, architects Davidson and Henderson, erected 1871. Photographer Allan Willingham (Courtesy Allan Willingham, 'Two Scots in Victoria: The Architecture of Davidson and Henderson', M.Arch. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1983, p. 287)

Whilst there is no attribution to Brain in any press reports concerning the architecture of the Austin's mansion at Winchelsea, the 'Barwon Park' keystone grotesque is virtually identical to those later carved by Benjamin Brain at Dr David Boswell Reid's two-storey brick villa 'Belleville' in Ryrie Street, Geelong, at J.D. Wyselaskie's French Gothic folly 'Narrapumelap' at Wickliffe, and on a variety of commercial and

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industrial projects in Geelong designed by Davidson and Henderson. In effect, the lion's head grotesque became the architects' signature image and can even be found on the raised backboard of a finely carved basalt water trough at Titanga near Lismore, no doubt from Brain's hand (Figure 12).[50] Davidson continued to use the same motif after George Henderson returned to Edinburgh in March 1877, with a notable application to be found at the Grand Pacific Hotel at Lorne (1879).

Figure 12: Lion's head grotesque on basalt water trough, Titanga,
***c.* 1871. Photographer Allan Willingham, 7 November 2021**
(Courtesy Allan Willingham)

By way of confirmation, Davidson and Henderson's call for tenders to build Dr Reid's villa was advertised in October 1870, and in late March 1871 the 'handsomest villa in Geelong' was approaching completion. At this time the Geelong press commented that at 'Belleville' there is 'in the key-stone a lion's mask, which is particularly deserving of notice, being admirably carved by Mr Brain, sculptor'.[51] The near identical 'Barwon Park' and 'Belleville' grotesques, one in basalt, the other in Waurn Ponds freestone, both include the oval eyes of man instead of the round cat-like eye, giving the mask a human countenance.

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Nathaniel Brown, a prominent monumental mason in Geelong, took advantage of Brain's skill as a figurative sculptor to produce a number of notable tombs and funerary monuments in both the Eastern and Western cemeteries at Geelong, as well as some ecclesiastical furniture, including a finely crafted font for the Church of England at St Arnaud (November 1872). Benjamin Brain was also much involved in the trials of local Waurn Ponds limestone and Barrabool Hills sandstone for monumental, building and sculptural works. In April 1871, Brain and Brown fashioned a very impressive monument for the tomb of Captain Foster Fyans (1790–1870), using large blocks of superior Barrabool stone for the purpose. Brain was responsible for intricately carving the Fyans family crest and heraldic shields on this monument (Figures 13(a) and 13(b)), which rose to a height of 'ten feet' in the Eastern Cemetery, Geelong.[52] In 1872, Brain and Brown combined to create the raised 'Continental style' tomb for Thomas Austin from designs by Davidson and Henderson, an exemplar of polychromatic monumental masonry that is virtually without equal in Victoria (Figure 2(a)).

Figures 13(a) and 13(b): Monument to Captain Foster Fyans (1790–1870), Nathaniel Brown, Monumental Mason, erected 1871, Eastern Cemetery, Geelong (Church of England, Old Section A, 807–453). Heraldic Shield by Benjamin Brain. Photographer Allan Willingham (Courtesy Allan Willingham)

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Benjamin Brain also undertook a number of small sculpture commissions on his own account, including an elaborate sundial (July 1870), a small gorilla 'in the act of springing' (May 1873) and a white marble tablet carving of 'Faith' for the grave of the near eight-year-old Emma Mary Le Sueur in the Western Cemetery, Geelong (1870). Brain, an exceedingly quiet man, who 'had a happy knack of putting away more grog in an hour than most men consume in twenty-four,'[53] evidently lived on his own in Skene Street, Newtown, for three years or more before a lull in building activity in Geelong in late 1873 saw him moving to Melbourne to take a room in his friend Charlotte Williams' boarding house, then at 41 Greville Street, Prahran. He thereafter undertook work as an architectural sculptor on several Melbourne projects including at the site of the new Scots' Church in Collins Street in 1873–74, where he worked as a specialty sculptor for builder David Mitchell and the architects Reed and Barnes. There, Brain's involvement included the carving of the imposing Oamaru (Kakanui) limestone pulpit and the stone arcading to the apse, all from designs by Reed and Barnes. In late September 1877, the *Weekly Times* gossip columnist 'John Peerybingle' observed that it was Brain 'who sculptured the pulpit of the Scots Church in Collins street, and very shabbily the authorities of that institution treated him'.[54] Clearly, another story.

In April 1876, at the Industrial and Fine Arts Exhibition at Geelong, Brain exhibited stone busts of 'famous heroes Collingwood and Nelson and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh besides a variety of grotesque-looking heads'.[55] Soon after he displayed the same sculpture group at the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute Fine Arts Exhibition in June 1876.[56] Perhaps the last work Benjamin Brain undertook at Geelong was to carve the delicate mouldings on the 32-feet-high monument to the late South Seas missionary Dr John Geddie (1815–72), a great shaft fashioned in 1876–77 and erected in 1878 in the Eastern Cemetery by Nathaniel Brown from French Gothic designs by Davidson and Henderson.[57] Whilst there is no record of Benjamin Brain obtaining work as an architectural sculptor or carver at Ballarat in 1876 and 1877, it is clear that he was much attracted by the profits to be made in gold-mining speculations at the Ballarat Mining Exchange, and he regularly visited this burgeoning city.

Around the end of June 1877 Brain moved again from Charlotte Williams' roost in Prahran to Ballarat to join the speculators and jobbers at the Unicorn Hotel in Sturt Street, otherwise known locally as 'The

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Corner' (Figure 14). On what proved to be his last visit to Ballarat in September 1877, he found accommodation with George Cooper, former hotelier, sometime sharebroker and a prominent mining speculator, at his residence in Armstrong Street. Sadly, Brain evidently lost a lot of money in speculative share purchases, and, after a somewhat bitter dispute with Cooper concerning the fate of his Black Horse mining shares, Brain moved to lodgings in Joseph Gundry's Unicorn Hotel.

SPECULATORS ON THE "CORNER," BALLARAT.

Figure 14: 'Speculators on the "Corner," Ballarat', c. 1886, hand-coloured engraving. William Thomas Smedley (1858–1920), delineator (Courtesy Allan Willingham)

Two days later, on 23 September 1877, Benjamin Brain, 'a short stout man of about fifty-five years of age', ended his troubled life by a revolver shot to his head. At an inquest held before the coroner, Dr Thomas Le Gay Holthouse, next day, a twelve-man jury conscripted from the anxious crowd of mining speculators in front of the Unicorn Hotel found that Benjamin Brain died by his own hand 'whilst in a fit of temporary insanity'.[58] Evidence was gathered from several witnesses, including the shady George Cooper (who purloined most of Brain's mining share portfolio), publican Joseph Gundry, and Charlotte Williams, a matron residing at Prahran. In her testimony, Williams submitted that:

> I have known deceased Benjamin Brain for the last 10 years, he boarded with me, he was a carver and sculptor and followed his trade in Melbourne, he was a very quiet man, but when he was troubled in his mind he would take to drink, he left my house last Wednesday week to come to Ballarat, he was then quite sober but rather despondent in his mind. I never heard him threaten to take his life, & he seemed to me always to be quite sane only very quiet, he told me he had lost a great deal in mining shares, but he always paid his way along, deceased was a widower & had two sons grown up, but no daughter, for the last four years deceased boarded with me, that is to say he always paid for his room, before he came to me he lived for about 3 years in Geelong, before that he lived in Sydney, where he likewise boarded with me. I know he was possessed of a pistol.[59]

Benjamin Brain's death was widely reported in the Australian press, save for there being no specific mention of his demise in the Geelong press. He was interred in an unmarked grave in the Ballarat New Cemetery on 26 September 1877.[60] Despite being gainfully employed in the 1870s, Brain died with just £38 in assets. His estate was administered by the curator of deceased estates in Victoria, largely on account of the fact that Robert Smith Brain, then a leading public servant, refused to take the grant of administration of his late father's estate.[61]

Benjamin Brain's notable legacy as an architectural sculptor and stone carver can be found in the Eastern Cemetery at Geelong, where Thomas Austin's tomb, Foster Fyans's monument and the memorial to Dr John Geddie are the most distinctive examples of his work in monumental masonry. His skill as an accomplished sculptor and patternmaker in wood is demonstrated to great effect in the unique cast iron balcony verandah at 'Barwon Park' near Winchelsea. Whilst the timber patterns

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for these cast iron components have long been attributed to 'Mr Dyson', it is now clear they are all by the hand of Benjamin Brain. His intricate architectural sculpture is found in the exotic French Medieval Revival work of architects Davidson and Henderson in Geelong and elsewhere in Western Victoria, at the Scots' Church in Collins Street, Melbourne, and, to a much lesser extent, at Southampton in England. His lion's head stone grotesques, which characterise much of Davidson and Henderson's work in the 1870s, are exemplars of Benjamin Brain's work as a figurative sculptor.

Brain, a 'clever man and good-hearted',[62] was evidently also a lonely, intemperate and very reserved man who suffered from several devastating personal tragedies in his life. He seemingly did not get involved in community activities or the affairs of monumental masons and sculptors in New South Wales or Victoria, or otherwise seek publicity. As an architectural sculptor, he was clearly as talented and skilled in the craft as many of his contemporaries and a more comprehensive study of his work in England and Australia is warranted. A task for another day.

Notes

1   'TOWN TALK. We have repeatedly had to allude to Mr Brain's talent as a sculptor, and those who have noticed the statute of "Science," in front of the Mechanics Institute, will admit that his talent is undeniable'. *Geelong Advertiser*, 23 November 1871, p. 2.

2   Graeme Sturgeon, *The Development of Australian Sculpture 1788–1975*, London, Thames and Hudson, *c*. 1978.

3   Ken Scarlett, *Australian Sculptors*, Melbourne, Nelson, 1980.

4   Jane Lennon, 'Benjamin Brain: A Forgotten Australian Sculptor', *Australiana*, May 1996, pp. 34–6. This author, an art historian, should not be confused with my friend, former Victorian Dr Jane Louise Lennon AM, landscape heritage specialist, now of Hamilton, Queensland.

5   Lennon, pp. 35–6.

6   *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 30 November 1867, p. 4.

7   Margaret Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday: A Social History of the Western District of Victoria, 1834–1890*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1961, n. 27, p. 541, which reads, *inter alia*: 'Information from Henderson's daughter, Mrs Phillips [*sic*] of Edinburgh, who has his letters, but refused to allow me to see them'.

8   See Allan Willingham, 'Barwon Park, Winchelsea, Victoria: Historic Structures Report', National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1980 [National Estate Program Grant 613]; and Allan Willingham, 'Two Scots in Victoria: The Architecture of Davidson and Henderson', M.Arch. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1983. George Henderson's archive was destroyed by Estelle Phillipps's irresponsible carers before she died.

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9   Walter Randolph Brownhill, *The History of Geelong and Corio Bay*, Melbourne, Wilke & Co., 1955, pp. 339–40, which reads: 'Samuel Brain, sculptor, used Nathaniel Brown's monumental yards as his place of business also. His work won for him a high reputation'.

10   *Geelong Advertiser*, 19 March 1885, p. 2.

11   See Allan Willingham, '"Something Good on the Tapis": An Architectural History of 'The Mansion' at Barwon Park, Winchelsea', unpublished paper, for the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), September 2021, pp. 31–6.

12   *Geelong Advertiser*, 22 November 1869, p. 4.

13   *Geelong Advertiser*, 24 March 1870, p. 2 (my emphasis).

14   Whilst James Dyson (1861–1939) was an 'engineer and architectural pattern-maker' who worked in this field at Geelong for many years, he was only nine years old when the 'Barwon Park' verandah patterns were carved. No family connection between the two patternmakers named 'Dyson' has been established to date and it is clear that James Dyson's father, Eli Dyson, a blacksmith, was not his son's trade mentor. The identity of 'Mr Dyson' is not further revealed by Robin Vowels in his encyclopedic three-volume publication, *Victoria's Iron Lacework: The Founders*, Parkville, R.A. Vowels, 2012–15. Therein, Vowels relies on my post-graduate thesis and the article published in the *Geelong Advertiser* on 24 March 1870, in his discussion of the 'Barwon Park' verandah, as well as ruminating, erroneously, in a footnote, that 'Mr Dyson' was likely the father of James Dyson of Chilwell.

15   Letter of George Henderson to his mother, 15 June 1870.

16   *Geelong Advertiser*, 22 August 1870, p. 2 (my emphasis).

17   *Geelong Advertiser*, 20 October 1870, p. 2.

18   'Determined Suicide', *Ballarat Star*, 24 September 1877, p. 3.

19   *Argus*, 19 October 1872, p. 6.

20   E.W. Gault (Edward Woodall) and Alan Lucas, in the preparation of their centenary history of the Austin Hospital for the Incurables at Heidelberg (as erected in 1882), sought the advice of J.P. Brooke-Little regarding the heraldic origins of both the Austen [Austin] and Hardinge [Harding] family armorial bearings as adopted by Thomas and Elizabeth Austin in 1869. See E.W. Gault and Alan Lucas, *A Century of Compassion: A History of the Austin Hospital*, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1982, and my historic structures report for 'Barwon Park' (1980) for quotations from Brooke-Little's 1976 report to Gault and Lucas.

21   Whilst in England in 1869–70, Thomas and Elizabeth Austin journeyed to Bristol with the express purpose of selecting furniture for their new mansion. An invoice marked 'Xmas 1869' and issued by 'Smith and Co., Manufacturing Cabinet Makers, Carpet Warehousemen and General House Furnishers, of 13 St Augustine's Parade, Bristol' and made out to 'Thomas Austin Esq Barwon Park Geelong' lists all of their purchases, which tallied £2,317 odd. A charge of £6 5s was made for 'Illuminating Crests & Coat of Arms' with an additional charge of £12 5s for carving crests on selected furniture (see Willingham, 'Barwon Park, Historic Structures Report', pp. 56–61, for a copy of this invoice dated 7 January 1870, together with a full list of all of the furniture and household effects that came out to Geelong in 1870 in a chartered ship).

22   *Geelong Advertiser*, 24 March 1870, p. 2.

23   Ferres Family (eds), *Bath and Beyond: Two Hundred Years of Ferres Family History*, Melbourne, Victoria College Press, 1988, pp. 3, 10, 143, 153. I am very grateful for the invaluable assistance of Graham and Susan Ferres of Doncaster, who provided a rare copy of this extensive family history and took time to discuss my research with me. Extensive, very detailed biographies for Benjamin Brain's two sons, Robert Smith Brain and John

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Henry Brain, are included in this family history together with cameo biographies for all of their numerous respective children (18 in number). Contact with direct descendants of Benjamin Brain, including the authors of *Bath and Beyond*, has failed to unearth any revealing documentary evidence or family photographs of Benjamin Brain to date, but the search continues.

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24 *Australasian*, 27 August 1898, p. 36.

25 *Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser*, 7 April 1857, p. 4.

26 *The Builder*, London, 25 July 1863, p. viii.

27 *Hampshire Advertiser*, 5 December 1857, p. 4.

28 *Hampshire Advertiser*, 6 February 1858, p. 6.

29 *Hampshire Advertiser*, 6 May 1865, p. 4.

30 *Morning Herald*, London, 11 May 1865, p. 8.

31 The old stores of David Cohen and Company were destroyed by fire on 14 March 1865 ('Terrible and Disastrous Fire', *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 16 March 1865, p. 2). Sydney architect Edmund T. Blacket called for tenders to rebuild their stores at West Maitland in June 1865 (*Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 1 June 1865, p. 1), and the new premises were re-opened in August 1866. Benjamin Brain's work in carving several animal head grotesques in the window arch keystones and other ornamental mouldings was not mentioned in any article concerning the new stores published in 1866, but his involvement was recorded in a report concerning Brain's busts of Cook and Nelson, published in the Maitland press in November 1867, wherein it was noted that: 'This Mr Brain will be known to our Maitland readers as the sculptor who executed the grotesques on the key-stones of the arches of the windows of Messrs D. Cohen and Co's new premises, and the font and other ornamental stone work in St Mary's new church'. (*Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 30 November 1867, p. 4).

32 *Sydney Mail*, 26 May 1866, p. 3.

33 Tenders for additions to the Presbyterian Church, Phillip Street, were advertised in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 March 1866, p. 1, the works undertaken by Enos Williams were completed by mid-February 1867, and Benjamin Brain's involvement in the project was first indicated in an article in the *Illustrated Sydney News*, 20 January 1872, p. 5. Therein it was recorded that the 'bold archivolt mouldings and handsome carved caps' (capitals) were 'the work of Mr. Brain, a sculptor, who is now established at Geelong'.

34 *Illustrated Sydney News*, 20 January 1872, p. 5.

35 See *Illustrated Sydney News*, 28 December 1868, p. 8, for artist's impression.

36 *Empire*, 28 November 1867, p. 5.

37 In October 1867, Moore called for tenders from builders for mason's, bricklayer's and carpenter's works in building a new shop and dwelling house on a site located opposite St Andrew's Cathedral in George Street. The architect for the new building was listed as Michael Golden, of Glebe Point (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 October 1867, p. 1). Both Jeremiah John Moore (1818–83) and Michael Golden (Golding) (1816–72) were born in Ireland and came to Australia as bounty (assisted) immigrants in 1840. They were both prominent Irish Catholics and established successful careers as a bookseller and stationer, and a builder-cum-architect, respectively, in the 1840s and 1850s. See Kevin Molloy, '"Cheap Reading for the People": Jeremiah Moore and the Development of the New South Wales Book Trade, 1840–1883', *Script & Print*, vol. 34, no. 4, 2010, pp. 216–39.

38 'Moore's Australian Book Mart, George Street', *Illustrated Sydney News*, 11 May 1870, p. 4.

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39 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 May 1868, p. 4.

40 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 May 1868, p. 9.

41 *Advocate*, 13 March 1869, p. 12.

42 See Alexander Sutherland (ed), *Victoria and Its Metropolis*, Volume 2, Melbourne, McCarron Bird, 1888, p. 585.

43 *Empire*, 17 March 1869, p. 2.

44 *Argus*, Tuesday 9 March 1869, p. 4.

45 'Notice', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 August 1871, p. 1, regarding Enos Williams's failure to complete a building contract. In Melbourne, Enos and Charlotte Williams, with their son Enos Charles Williams (1854–1928), went to live in a small villa in Henry Street, Hawthorn. Enos Williams senior died on 11 April 1874 and was interred in the St Kilda Cemetery. Charlotte Williams later moved to a villa in Greville Street, Prahran, and set up again as a boarding house proprietor. Her son worked in the Victorian Titles Office in the 1870s, and in the 1880s he was secretary of the Operative Masons' Society, based in the Trades Hall at Carlton. Charlotte Williams died on 1 June 1895 and was interred in an unmarked family grave at St Kilda (Plot CE0242).

46 'Missing Friends, Messages, &c.', *Argus*, 8 May 1869, p. 1.

47 George Henderson to his mother, 19 June 1869.

48 *Geelong Advertiser*, 2 July 1870, p. 12.

49 *Geelong Advertiser*, 31 March 1871, p. 2.

50 For a discussion on the relationship of lions in architecture, and illustrations of lion's head grotesques, see Franz Sales Meyer, *A Handbook of Ornament*, 4th edition, London, Batsford, 1894, pp. 63–76.

51 *Geelong Advertiser*, 24 March 1871, p. 2.

52 *Geelong Advertiser*, 26 April 1871, p. 2.

53 *Weekly Times*, 29 September 1877, p. 13.

54 *Weekly Times*, 29 September 1877, p. 13.

55 *Geelong Advertiser*, 8 April 1876, p. 3.

56 *Ballarat Star*, 19 June 1876, p. 3.

57 *Geelong Advertiser*, 26 February 1876, p. 2, and 7 January 1878.

58 VPRS 24/P0 File 1877/879, Public Record Office Victoria (PROV).

59 VPRS 24/P0 File 1877/879, PROV.

60 'Funeral Notice', *Ballarat Courier*, 26 September 1877, p. 3.

61 VPRS 28/PO and 28/P2, File 16/274, PROV.

62 *Weekly Times*, 29 September 1877, p. 13.

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On the Street Where I Live: Walking the Windsor Park Estate

Graeme Davison

Abstract

There have been small consolations along with the perils and frustrations of the Melbourne lockdown. No longer able drive or ride afar, we have been living locally. As we walk the streets for daily exercise, nodding to masked neighbours, we look afresh at familiar places, appreciating their individuality and pondering their history. When you are in a car, one suburb looks much like another. It is only when you slow down and walk that you appreciate what is on your doorstep. Could COVID 19 be the prompt we need to make us see what is remarkable in our taken-for-granted suburban surroundings?[1]

I have lived in Mont Albert, an ordinary middle-class Melbourne suburb, for almost 40 years. When our children were growing up in the 1980s and 90s, we lived in a picturesque 1913 Federation villa with a candlesnuffer tower and a terra cotta eagle on the gable. Locals called it 'The Eagle House'. When the kids left home, we decided to downsize but moved just around the corner to a 1937 red brick veneer in Windsor Crescent. I had often walked the Windsor Park Estate and enjoyed its meandering crescents and leafy ambience. So, when we bought our retirement house, it was for its location as much as its deco architecture.

A Romantic Suburb

From the Surrey Hills station, Windsor Crescent slowly winds around the hill to the east, following the contours of the land rather than the rules of Euclidean geometry. The houses and gardens emerge shyly, one by one, through a canopy of oaks, pin oaks and plane trees. Other crescents—Albert, Albany and Balmoral—peel off and skirt the hill before meeting near the summit on Canterbury Road. For all its apparent informality, the plan reveals the mind of an intelligent designer, not your ordinary

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surveyor slicing the land into uniform rectangles. Who was this designer? I sometimes wondered. And what inspired him to challenge the cadastral logic of Hoddle's grid?

Mont Albert's crescents, mature deciduous street trees, deep setbacks, wide grassy verges and irregular garden allotments epitomise the ideal of *rus in urbe*. They are hallmarks of what the American architectural historian John Archer calls a 'romantic suburb'. 'Suburbs of this type', he explains,

> were intentionally planned as unitary wholes, and usually distinguished by curving, meandering streets, efforts to embellish the landscape in an informal, naturalistic and picturesque manner, and attempts to enrich the residents' environment through other amenities such as common parks, streams, ponds and trees screening houses from each other.[2]

The naturalism of the romantic suburb, with its individual houses set on large garden allotments, contrasts with the formality of Regency towns like Bath, Brighton or Cheltenham. It tilts the balance towards the *rus* and away from the *urbe*.

Figure 1: Windsor Crescent 2021 (Courtesy Graeme Davison)

Its serpentine crescents, following the contours of the land, set the Windsor Park Estate apart from the rectangular uniformity of Melbourne's colonial street plan.

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Established in 1883, the Windsor Park Estate is smaller and lacks the parks and ponds of Victoria Park in Manchester, Llewellyn Park in New Jersey, or Riverside in Chicago. Some of its features would become common in the automobile suburbs of the postwar era, but in 1880s Melbourne they were a novelty (Figure 1).[3] The estate anticipated some of the ideas of the Sydney architect John Sulman in his paper on 'The Laying out of Towns' (1890), often cited as the Magna Carta of Australian town planning. In criticising the charmless uniformity of the rectilinear grid or 'chessboard' planning of Australian cities, Sulman praised 'the use of curved roads following the natural contours of the hills'. 'As a source of beauty, the curved line is of inestimable value', he declared.[4]

The romantic suburb was an invention of the Victorians (in the chronological sense) that Victorians (in the geographical sense) adopted with enthusiasm. It was inspired by four influential beliefs of the era: 'Evangelical Christianity', which preached the sanctity of home and family; 'Sanitary Science', which taught the dangers of congestion and the benefits of country air; 'Romanticism', which celebrated the beauty of nature and the countryside; and 'Class Distinction', which encouraged the bourgeoisie to create secluded enclaves of their own. The most influential British guide to the modern suburb, John Claudius Loudon's *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion* (1835), was widely read and emulated in the colonies.[5] Windsor Park combined its key features in a distinctively Australian way.[6] Its conceptions of virtue, beauty, health and class were those of its time, not ours. Even then, as we shall see, it often fell short of their full realisation.

The Windsor Park Estate was the premier project of the Freehold Investment and Banking Company (FIBC), the most notorious of the 40 interlocking companies headed by the landboomer, lawyer and politician Sir Matthew Davies. Davies, his brother Joseph, the company's manager, and two of his fellow directors, the building society magnate and land speculator C.H. James and the surveyor Thomas Muntz, were the brains behind the estate. Together they took the business of suburban land development to dizzy new heights. All except James would stand trial in the early 1890s for their financial misdeeds, and a whiff of scandal hung over the half-built suburb they left behind.

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Figure 2: Map of Windsor Park Estate (Courtesy State Library Victoria)

Allotments in the second stage of the 'noble' Windsor Park Estate, including those on the most attractive crescents, went on sale in December 1883. The proximity of the Surrey Hills station and the rapid increase of population in the area were key selling points.

In *The Landboomers*, Michael Cannon relates the company's rise and fall as a morality tale, a parable of the greed, self-delusion and financial malpractice of the era. The Davies brothers—young, charming, and self-confident—rose fast, borrowed heavily, lived lavishly and crashed disastrously, leaving hundreds of angry shareholders and customers. 'It was the folly of his fellows that made a trusted financier of Sir Matthew Davies', a contemporary remarked.[7] Cannon reconstructs Davies' story from the wreckage of his fall, a perspective that leaves us in no doubt of his guilt, although mystified as to why so many Melburnians followed him to their ruin.

At the beginning, the landboomers were trusted because they seemed to live the dream they were selling to others. Many were leaders

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of the contemporary Christian lobby, attended some of the city's most fashionable churches, and filled leading positions in temperance, morality and missionary organisations like the Lord's Day Observance Society, the Victorian Temperance Alliance, the Social Purity League and the Young Men's Christian Association, organisations that also prospered in the 1880s.[8] Many of those who invested in the company and settled the Windsor Park Estate came from the same religious circles.

After the crash, when it had all come undone, the victims turned on their heroes, questioning their integrity. An anonymous correspondent to the *Argus* in 1893 responded angrily to the suggestion that 'Christians' were better off than 'worldlings' in the depression:

> It is a matter of history that the "Christian" of almost if not all denominations speculated and boomed just as much as the "worldling", and reference need only be had to some of the defunct institutions, such as the Freehold Investment and Banking Company, the Real Estate Bank, the Federal Bank, and others which have gone down with plenty of evidence in support of this … [M]any people trusted their money and little savings to the care of some of the companies now in liquidation, mainly on account of the persons who were at the head of affairs, many of whom were "Christians", and upon whom they thought reliance could be placed, but only in the end to find themselves miserably deceived and wholly or partly ruined.[9]

This was the wisdom of painful experience. The inference was that the 'Christians' were hypocrites whose professed religiosity cloaked their shady business morality. Although Davies and his associates escaped prison, they certainly breached contemporary standards of financial probity and violated the trust of their depositors and investors. Yet, in our eagerness to condemn, I wonder if we project too much of the disillusionment of the 1890s onto the aspirations of the early 1880s, when places like Windsor Park were conceived. Perhaps its creators were not villains from the outset, but men who wanted to be good according to their lights and believed that they could also make a business out of it. The problem was not that they sinned against the light but that their light was too dim, their morality too narrow, and their faith fatally confused with self-interest. Instead of beginning at the end, amidst the wreckage of their fall, how would their story look if we began at the beginning, with their youthful hopes and dreams, and followed their path forward instead of backward?

Morality

At the heart of the romantic suburb was the ideal of 'Home, Sweet Home'. An Englishman's home was proverbially his castle, a refuge from a hostile world. The English evangelical poet William Cowper pictured it as a little Eden that had providentially survived the Fall. Behind the walls of its home, the Christian family could worship its God and protect its children from the anxieties and temptations of urban life.[10] The dormitory suburb was Home writ large, a happy compromise between the economic opportunities of the city and the peace and quiet of the countryside.

In Australia, as in England, evangelicals fled to the suburbs, as they and their Pentecostal cousins still do. London's Clapham and Birmingham's Edgbaston were models for the bible belts that grew up in Melbourne's east and along Sydney's North Shore line.[11] Surprisingly, in their recent history of Australian evangelicalism the historians Stuart Piggin and Robert Linder seldom consider its distinctive social geography or business morality.[12] Yet, in following the careers of people like the Davies brothers, it is often difficult to tell where religious belief and family values shaded into business opportunity.

When Matthew Davies first appeared in the public record, it was not as a lawyer, businessman or politician but as a defender of Christian morality. He was born into a devout Congregational family in Geelong, educated at Geelong Grammar and Geelong College, and followed his older brothers to Melbourne University to study law. He joined a bible class conducted by the Scottish-born merchant and politician James Balfour.[13] 'There was no one he respected more, or to whom he would sooner go for counsel in case of a difficulty', he later recalled.[14]

Balfour, the acknowledged leader of Melbourne's evangelicals, installed his protégé as secretary and later president of a Melbourne branch of the Young Men's Christian Association, founded in 1871 to rescue friendless young men from the temptations of city life by offering them 'the comforts of home in Christian families'.[15] Davies joined Balfour and the merchant Robert Harper in establishing *Southern Cross*, a weekly evangelical paper. Several of Davies' fellow YMCA members joined his companies, while others, including Davies, his brother John, and Harper, would form a 'morality party' in the Victorian parliament.

A bachelor when he joined the YMCA, Davies soon became a family man. In 1876 at St Enoch's Presbyterian Church in Collins Street,

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he married Elizabeth, daughter of the Reverend Peter Mercer.[16] He was following his brothers, John and Joseph, who had also married daughters of the manse. Assisting the bride's father, who conducted the service, was Dr Adam Cairns, an enthusiastic advocate for what Presbyterians called 'family religion'.[17] 'The Church in its largest form', Cairns declared, 'is just an aggregation of families … The quiet, simple, unostentatious family is the true nursery of the Church below and of Jerusalem above'.[18]

Like his brothers, Davies followed the biblical injunction to 'be fruitful and multiply'. In 1876, when their first child, Arnold Mercer, was born, Matthew and Elizabeth were living in Cunningham Street, Northcote; in 1884, when their sixth and last, a daughter, arrived they were living in a 35-room mansion in St Georges Road, Toorak. By Davies' standards theirs was actually a smallish family. Matthew's father Ebenezer had sired no fewer than seventeen children by his two wives, while his older brothers, John and Joseph, fathered thirteen and nine respectively. An 1887 family photograph depicts 24 Davies cousins ranging in age from infancy to early teens (Figure 2). Their descendants include the political scientist Alan Davies and the historian Dorothy (Davies) Fitzpatrick.

Figure 3: The Davies cousins (Courtesy Stonnington History Centre MP7413)

When the 24 Davies cousins posed for this photograph in 1886–87, at the peak of the Melbourne land boom, their fathers—John, George, Joseph, and Matthew—were pillars of the church and darlings of Melbourne's financial world.

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The private world of home and faith shaped the Davies brothers' view of business and politics. Their political causes, from temperance and sabbatarianism to social purity and individual home ownership, grew from a deep but embattled belief in the sanctity of family life. Defending it, encouraging others to follow it, and promoting the material conditions to enjoy it, constituted the core of their outlook. It was an ideal with wide appeal to an improving immigrant nation and, in some of its bearings, a liberal and democratic one. But it had limitations. It supported the political enfranchisement of women, but primarily to enlist them as defenders of the home. Its sense of obligation to the wider community was often weak, as were its sympathies for those who did not share, or failed to meet, their moral standards.

Property

After graduating, Matthew joined his brother John as a city solicitor, and there met the second of the makers of the Windsor Park Estate, Charles Henry James. Born in County Wexford in 1848, James migrated to Melbourne in 1867, became a grocer in Queensberry Street, North Melbourne, and married in 1874, around the time he first appeared in the public record as a director of the County of Bourke Building Society.[19] The society was established in working-class North Melbourne in 1872 with the purpose, according to its chairman, the lawyer–politician George Higinbotham, of promoting 'thrift and economy' and home ownership among the 'industrial classes'.[20]

Building societies had strong links with other agencies of democratic self-improvement, such as temperance societies, and their leaders often came from the same local self-improving Protestant circles.[21] Higinbotham, too, was a temperance advocate as well as a fervent democrat. From the Puritans of the seventeenth century to the Chartists of the nineteenth, democrats had aspired to diffuse property rights—the ultimate guarantee of political as well as economic independence—as widely as possible.[22]

As the land boom got under way the building societies underwent a radical change. Small community-based 'not-for-profits' were transformed into giant colony-wide corporations headed by profit-seeking entrepreneurs.[23] In the late 1870s, the County of Bourke, now styled a 'Building and Investment Society', began to buy land, then

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subdivide and sell it to working-class borrowers. Higinbotham registered his unease with the shift and resigned as chairman soon after he was appointed to the Supreme Court.[24] James had meanwhile branched into land speculation. In partnership with his brother-in-law, Percy Dobson, he began to buy up tracts of land, mainly in the northern working-class suburbs, cut them into pocket-handkerchief allotments, and sell them with generous finance to eager working-class home seekers.[25] He had turned the building society model into a profitable business.

Soon he moved with his young family to Windsor, where he joined the board of the newly formed Prahran, St Kilda and South Yarra Permanent Building Society. With Davies, his solicitor, he began buying and selling land in the new suburbs opening up along the Gippsland railway in Malvern and Caulfield. By 1884 he had moved to St Georges Road, Toorak, where he built a 30-room mansion, 'Illawarra', around the corner from Matthew Davies. Standing for the Legislative Council in 1887 he boasted: 'He had done his best to get workingmen homes of their own as he believed every man should have a place to call his own'. Some of his Northcote audience doubted his honesty—one wanted to know why he had not paid all his council rates—but most cheered, and he was comfortably elected.[26]

God and Mammon

An observer of the intimate connections between Melbourne's commercial, political and religious worlds would have found no more interesting spectacle than Sunday morning worship at Toorak Presbyterian Church. 'It is famous for its wealth, its orthodoxy and its Sunday schools', a journalist who visited the church in 1886 observed.[27] 'It is a temple where, one day out of seven, Mammon worships to God', *Melbourne Punch* added more caustically.[28] Founded in 1876 on land donated by the Scottish-born businessman James McBain, its 300 Sunday morning worshippers included some of Victoria's richest and most powerful men, such as the gold-rush merchants James Balfour, William Bayles and Robert Harper and newly rich landboomers Matthew and Joseph Davies, C.H. James and James Munro, who all served on its session or board of management during the 1880s.[29]

In 1886, its new minister, 36-year-old Glaswegian John Ewing, bravely tackled the question often in the minds of outsiders, if not of his

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flock: God and Mammon. News of Melbourne's 'astonishing material progress' had already reached Ewing in Britain. God, he assured them, had endowed the British race with 'the function of advancing material civilisation'. Yet, while making money was not intrinsically evil, it brought 'dangers and temptations'. 'It is hard for a rich State or city to enter the kingdom of God', he warned. The dangers, however, were mainly to the salvation of the wealthy rather than the welfare of their employees or customers.[30] The practice of religion, in Ewing's view, was a private rather than public matter: 'religion is a family or domestic thing'.[31] If some parishioners prospered more than others it was a cause for congratulation. 'Those among us who are not rich feel that this is a church for them as much as for the wealthy', one remarked.[32] Davies and his friends were generous, even ostentatious, contributors to church and charitable causes. So, when they formed a new company, many fellow Presbyterians were eager to share their success.[33]

The ideas and personalities that finally came together in the Windsor Park Estate first emerged among the overlapping religious, business and political circles of Toorak. In 1881 Matthew Davies was elected to the Prahran Council and almost immediately became mayor. There he encountered the third member of the team, the municipal surveyor and engineer, Thomas Bingham Muntz. Born in Belfast, Muntz migrated to Australia aged nineteen in 1854. He tried his luck as a miner on the Blackwood diggings and farmed with his brother near Kyneton before becoming the local shire secretary and engineer. In 1872, soon after passing the municipal engineers' examination, he was appointed municipal surveyor in Prahran.[34] One of his first tasks was to plan the subdivision of Governor's Park, the grounds of the former vice-regal residence 'Toorak House' a superb 36-acre site on the slopes overlooking the Yarra. His plan, with its three- and four-acre villa allotments and wide intersecting crescents, enhanced the vice-regal associations and scenic attractions of what would become, and remain, Melbourne's most prestigious suburb (Figure 3).[35] Among its future residents were Matthew Davies, J.M. Davies, C.H. James, and James Balfour, who all built mansions on prime sites overlooking the river near the intersection of Lansell and St Georges roads.

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Figure 4: Thomas Muntz (Courtesy Stonnington History Centre PH6181)

Irish-born Thomas Muntz resigned as municipal surveyor of Prahran to pursue his own business interests, including his role as director of the Freehold Investment and Banking Company and surveyor of the Windsor Park Estate, before returning to Prahran as mayor. He is depicted here in his mayoral robes, holding what appear to be plans, perhaps a symbol of his dual roles.

A restless innovator, Muntz chafed against the restrictions of his official position. A contemporary noted his 'great thinking and planning ability … large constructiveness' and propensity for 'contriving and scheming'.[36] He persuaded the council to allow him to engage in private practice, and he was soon planning new estates as far afield as Hawthorn, Middle Brighton and Box Hill.[37] He joined C.H. James as a director of the Prahran, St Kilda and South Yarra Building Society. Some locals thought his private and official interest were in conflict, although he was not alone in that regard.[38] In 1882, perhaps stung by criticism, he resigned from the council to join Davies and James as a director of the newly formed Freehold Investment and Banking Company.[39] Two-thirds of the company's 40,000 original share issue were held by just five shareholders—Joseph and Matthew Davies, C.H James and his brother-in-law Percy Dobson, and the Melbourne merchant John Moodie. Muntz, the main designer of the estate, held a mere 200 shares.[40]

Muntz's supporters on the council, including former mayor Matthew Davies, bade him farewell with a lavish banquet. The current mayor, auctioneer John Turner, congratulated him on finding 'a more lucrative business and hoped his income would be increased tenfold'.[41]. His 'skill and sage advice', said the local newspaper, had made Prahran 'a second paradise'.[42] Muntz responded by promising to 'a more prominent personal

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interest' in its welfare. Sure enough, three years later, he was back as a councillor and in four he was mayor.

Railway Dreaming

As they watched the surge of suburban development in Malvern and Caulfield, Davies, James and Muntz began to appraise the opportunities for railway-led suburban development opening up elsewhere across the metropolis. One of the guests at Muntz's banquet was an old friend from Kyneton days, the auctioneer and politician J.B. Patterson, now minister for railways.[43] In 1881 Patterson let contracts for the construction of a new line from Hawthorn to Box Hill. With a stroke of the pen he opened up the longest, richest tract of suburban real estate in the land. By the end of the year, Patterson, in his private capacity, was auctioning land all over the metropolis, including 125 acres of farmland 'suitable for subdivision' opposite the Whitehorse Hotel and 'near the Box Hill and Surrey Hills Railway Stations'. 'Besides being admirable for subdivision, the nature of the country is beautifully undulating', the advertisement boasted (Figure 4).[44]
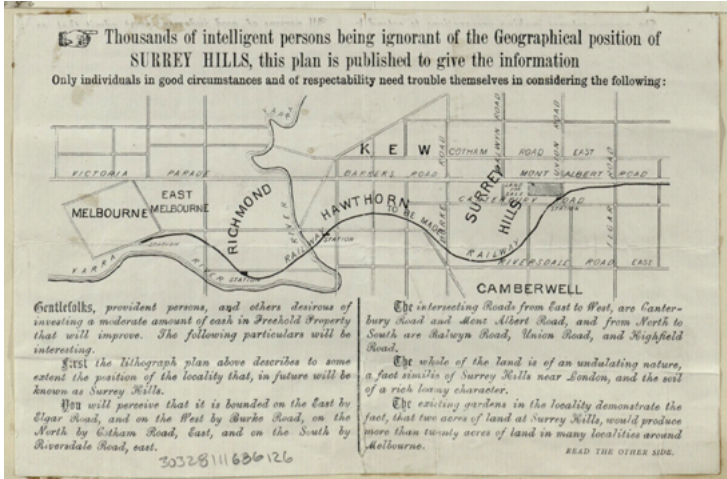
Figure 5: Location map of Surrey Hills (Courtesy State Library Victoria)

News of the approaching railway stimulated a wave of speculation through Melbourne's eastern suburban corridor from Hawthorn to Box Hill. This undated map from the early 1880s promotes Surrey Hills as an ideal suburban residence for 'gentlefolk and other provident persons'.

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Building suburban railways looked like good public policy as well as good business. 'All the world over', the Melbourne *Herald* later observed, 'suburban traffic pays well, and has an excellent effect upon the health of the population since it conveys people out of the cities and prevents the unwholesome aggregation of many persons in one central spot'.[45] The biggest profits were reaped by those who owned land near, or purchased it before, the route of new lines. Farms and orchards suddenly became lucrative suburban real estate. Today governments sometimes attempt to capture the value ('uplift') created by public infrastructure through betterment taxes or other charges, but in the early 1880s few people thought that way. A new railway was like a goldfield, a public asset anyone was welcome to exploit. As on the goldfields, the biggest winners were the first comers.

Few of the new suburban lines included in the 1884 *Railway Construction Act* (called the 'Octopus Act') proved as profitable as the Box Hill line.[46] Only afterwards, when millions had been spent and the speculators had pocketed their profits, did anyone question the arrangement. 'That the landowners who have benefited by our vast outlay on railways are now beyond the reach of taxation is, of course, a most exasperating thing', the *Herald* newspaper observed in 1890.

> The forty millions sterling we have spent on our railways have increased the value of the property of men who never paid a shilling toward their cost by five times its amount, at the most modest computation. But we cannot undo the past. We can only mend our ways for the future.[47]

The Freehold Investment and Banking Company was a vehicle for privatising the increased land values generated by the publicly owned suburban railway. As a 'bank', it offered its depositors, many of them gold-generation migrants entering their later years, an attractive 8 per cent interest on their savings. 'All deposits are invested in first-class City and Suburban Properties, so that the company affords to depositors the VERY BEST SECURITY that can be given', it assured depositors. Its objective was to buy, subdivide, develop, promote and sell property for profit. 'The success of such companies depends entirely on the business capacity of the directors', one contemporary shrewdly observed.[48] While the colony prospered, he expected the company to do well. What would happen if conditions changed he left his readers to imagine.

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The Plan

The survey of the Hawthorn to Lilydale line was completed by March 1881.[49] In 1882 Joseph Davies, manager of the Freehold Investment and Banking Company, appeared in the Nunawading rate books as owner of 117 acres of the 'Survey Paddock' in Nunawading. The portion of that land adjoining the Box Hill line was later shown against the name of T.R. Morton, secretary of the company.[50] Whether the directors had inside knowledge of the railway's route before their purchase is unknown.

In the original survey, no provision was made for a station at Surrey Hills, which would require trains to stop and recover momentum on the long climb from Canterbury to Box Hill. But pressure from locals, and perhaps from other interested parties, overturned the plan, and the Surrey Hills station was conveniently located at what became the gateway to the FIBC's Windsor Park Estate.[51] To avoid exceeding the standard 1 in 40 maximum gradient, the line deviated towards Mont Albert, creating a curve that required an adjustment to the rectilinear street plan. [52] The bend in the line may have inspired Muntz to introduce the meandering crescents that are now the estate's most distinctive feature.

Before the 1880s Melbourne's suburban developers seldom deviated from the rectilinear grid pattern established by the government surveyors, Hoddle and Russell. The plan of Brighton's Dendy Estate, laid out by surveyor H.B. Foot in 1841, included a town reserve and semi-circular 'outer', 'middle' and 'inner' crescents. While acknowledging their 'elegance', historian Weston Bate dismissed the notion that they were modelled on England's Brighton.[53] Emerald Hill (present-day Albert Park), laid out in the 1850s by the government surveyor Clement Hodgkinson, also includes a few semi-circular crescents and an elegant square, St Vincent Place, reminiscent of other English Regency towns.[54] But the Windsor Park Estate was different. Its nearest precedents in Melbourne were not in earlier suburbs but in public gardens and cemeteries.

Through his *Principles of Landscape Gardening Applied to Public Cemeteries* (1843), John Claudius Loudon, the prophet of suburbia, inspired a new wave of cemetery designs in England and Australia. The serpentine drives, gatehouses, rotundas and tree plantings of the Melbourne General Cemetery, laid out by Albert Purchas from 1854, and the Botanic Gardens designed by William Guilfoyle in 1873 demonstrated landscape principles readily adaptable to the design of new suburbs.[55]

Hawthorn's St James Park (1871), where the main streets, Coppin Grove and Shakespeare Grove, followed a bend in the river, tentatively moved in that direction.[56] The most immediate precedent was Muntz's plan for the Governor's Park in Toorak, where the curves of St Georges and Lansell roads hinted at the sweeping drives of an aristocratic demesne (Figure 5).[57]

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Figure 6: Governor's Park Estate *c.* 1875 (Courtesy State Library Victoria)

As municipal surveyor, Thomas Muntz was responsible for the subdivision of the land surrounding the former vice-regal residence in Toorak where Matthew Davies, C.H. James and other prominent landboomers built mansions. The plan, with its distinctive intersecting crescents, evidently inspired the similar scheme in the Windsor Park Estate.

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In Mont Albert, Munitz gave his estate a royal, rather them merely vice-regal, title and made the crescent the dominant feature. Windsor Great Park, the hunting grounds attached to Windsor Castle, was famous for its ancient oaks and strong associations with Queen Victoria and her consort, Prince Albert, who are both buried there. Advertisements for Mont Albert, named after the dead prince, emphasised its 'royal name' and 'noble' character. Several streets were named after members of Victoria's family—her daughter-in-law Alexandra, children Albert, Beatrice, Louise, Arthur and Leopold. Other street names—St Johns, St Georges and St James avenues—reinforced the suburb's patriotic and pious image. Others—Salisbury, Stanhope, Beresford, and Churchill avenues—recalled aristocratic members of the Conservative English government of the day.

Beauty

The aesthetic language of the Windsor Park Estate was picturesque or romantic. But, in other respects, it was a contrived and *un*natural creation, a landscape in what historian George Seddon calls the 'nostalgic' mode.[58] 'ALL THE AVENUES have been formed and planted with valuable trees AT GREAT EXPENSE', the FIBC boasted. The trees, according to a contemporary report, were English oaks and elms.[59]

While the oaks of Windsor Park Estate were being planted, a few kilometres to the east a group of young artists were painting the spindly eucalypts that the landboomers were chopping down. Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton and their friends rejected the nostalgic Englishness that inspired the Windsor Park Estate.[60] The Artists' Camp at Box Hill is remembered as a great beginning, the 'genesis' of a truly Australian school of art. Yet, by imitating the French impressionists' weekend excursions to the outskirts of Paris, the painters were as attached to the Old World as the real estate men who planted the English oaks. And, while the real estate men imitated England, in another way they looked forward, for their 'romantic' approach to suburban design foreshadowed elements of the 'Garden City' of the twentieth century.[61]

From the beginning, locals treasured the arboreal character of the Windsor Park Estate, either as a reminder of England or simply for its natural beauty. It softened a landscape they perceived as harsh, offering shade in summer and warmth in autumn, while letting in the winter sun. After the company departed, they formed a progress association,

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lobbying the local councils to plant more trees and erecting protective guards around them. They contributed to the cost and volunteered to water the thirsty trees in time of drought.[62] Some of the original oak trees succumbed to disease and, after the turn of the century, were supplemented or replaced by American pin oaks, a faster-growing lighter-leaved variety less susceptible to disease and more suited to Australian conditions.[63]

Allotments on the Windsor Park Estate were offered on 'liberal terms' at a series of public auctions beginning near the Surrey Hills station and progressing in an easterly direction. The first section, comprising 61 alloments in Windsor and Albany crescents, Alexandra, Beatrice and Victoria avenues, was advertised for sale in September 1883. A second, of 77 allotments in Albany, Albert and Balmoral crescents, was auctioned in December. In 1884 the government announced that the new line would be duplicated, with a prospective improvement in the frequency and reliability of services, although four years later locals were still waiting for the work to commence.[64] In January 1885, 60 allotments at the eastern edge of the estate, in Balmoral Crescent and St Georges Avenue, went on sale, and towards the end of the year a last subdivision, of smaller lots beside the railway in Lorne Parade, was released (Figure 6). By then, the name 'Windsor Park' had proved so popular that other vendors had adopted it to promote neighbouring estates. Meanwhile Muntz had also introduced his signature feature, the crescent, to other 'park' estates, including Broughton Park, Box Hill Park and Halifax Park, Brighton.

In March 1888, Melbourne's most famous journalist, 'The Vagabond' (Stanley James), surveyed the new landscape from the window of his railway carriage on the way to Lilydale. 'New houses spring up like mushrooms in the night', he observed.

> From Camberwell to Surrey Hills, which but the other day one remembers as paddocks of almost primal bush, there is a fringe of settlement, which shortly will be increased a hundredfold … No more charming sites in the world for suburban residences could be found than on the heights of Surrey Hills and along the Canterbury road to Box Hill.[65]

'Surrey Hills is still continuing to advance', a local reporter noted eighteen months later, but by the end of 1889 sales had begun to slow.[66] When the boom burst early in 1890 the Windsor Park Estate was almost entirely

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sold, but only about one-third of the allotments had been built on, mostly in weatherboard.[67] Even twenty years later about one-third remained vacant. Ironically, the long hiatus between the launching of the estate and the surge of development after 1900 probably added to its charm, for the asymmetrical Federation houses of the later period complement its 'romantic' landscape better than the handful of Victorian villas and cottages.

Health

One of Mont Albert's boasted attractions was its salubrity. Loudon had placed 'the healthiness of the situation' at the top of his requirements for a suburban residence. 'An elevated site', he explained, 'will always be found to have the clearest atmosphere', provided it was also dry and open to the 'free circulation of air'.[68] He was an ally of sanitary reformers like Edwin Chadwick who linked low-lying, damp and congested environments with the prevalence of killer diseases like typhus, cholera and consumption.

Surrey Hills was apparently all Loudon could have wished for. Advertisements praised its 'pure and invigorating air' as an escape from the hazards of crowded riverside suburbs like Collingwood and Richmond. 'Very delightful living here with fresh country air filling one's lungs', a new Surrey Hills resident exulted in a subtle advertorial published in the *Richmond Guardian* in 1884. 'It is astonishing how soon the new arrivals from other suburbs lose their pale cheeks and recover the bloom of health.' [69]

Yet, like other low-density boom suburbs, Mont Albert was not as healthy as it was cracked up to be.[70] While allotments had been pegged out, streets marked and trees planted, most of its roads were unmade. 'In dry weather … the dust powder from the clay was a most intolerable nuisance while in wet weather the roads were a perfect bog', a resident of Albany Crescent complained.[71] It had no piped water supply or adequate drainage. In 1887 the Central Board of Health listed it as a hotspot in the prevailing typhoid epidemic. When drought struck in 1888 and 1889, locals were forced to cart water from a standpipe on Union Road.[72] Typhoid was transmitted either by person-to-person infection or by drinking contaminated water, not by atmospheric pollution. 'The question of water supply with the people of Surrey Hills was one of life and death', a local spokesman protested.[73] In 1891 the newly created Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works opened a nine-million-gallon reservoir

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on the highest point of Surrey Hills. It delivered fresh Yan Yean water to places as far away as Brighton and Moorabbin. But not a drop of it reached the parched, perspiring residents of Mont Albert who remained dependent on their own rainwater tanks.[74]

The problem was not engineering but politics. 'The district of Surrey Hills has many advantages', the president of the Surrey Hills Progress Association observed in 1908, citing its 'beautiful, undulating country', 'higher elevation' and 'clean atmosphere'. But residents had to put up with 'disadvantages … in regard to municipal control'.[75] Straddling the boundary between the town of Boroondara and the shire of Nunawading, and just outside the ten-mile radius of the metropolitan area as defined by the MMBW, it was 'a kind of municipal monstrosity'. If residents took their water from the board, they had to pay the board's rates, which included a charge for sewerage that the board could not actually provide. Yet, if they joined the rest of Nunawading in creating their own water supply system, they lost the advantages of participating in the superior metropolitan system. In 1893 the anomaly was partly rectified, and locals could buy their water from the Board of Works at a reduced rate. But they remained beyond the reach of the board's metropolitan underground sewerage system and reliant on the services of the nightman for another two decades.

Privacy

Windsor Park reproduced many of the features of romantic suburbs in Britain and America. But it lacked the public parks and squares, ponds and brooks that embellished romantic suburbs elsewhere. 'The most favourable situations for suburban residences are generally those on the borders of commons, or open spaces, or open pieces of ground under pasture, and free to the public', Loudon had recommended Such places not only contributed to 'the purity of the air' but provided space for children to play and grown-up people to walk.[76] Windsor Park was an estate *without* a park; the fresh air, scenic views and natural beauty it promised were largely confined to its private homes and gardens.

Ironically, as mayor of Prahran, Windsor Park's designer Thomas Muntz would champion a more generous civic vision. He borrowed heavily to purchase land for public parks, road construction and drains to improve amenity and public health. He supported municipal ownership of gas and water utilities, citing the City of Birmingham, the most famous

contemporary example of 'gas and water socialism', and urged the swift adoption of a metropolitan underground sewerage scheme.[77]

What a more generously planned Windsor Park might have been like was demonstrated later in the decade when the Freehold Investment and Banking Company launched a 'model town' on land it had acquired seven years earlier near the Blackburn station, four kilometres to the east. Many of the features of Windsor Park—crescents named after patriotic heroes, Generals Wellington, Gordon and Wolseley, and street trees—reappeared in Blackburn Park, together with some that Surrey Hills lacked: an ornamental lake, a cricket oval, tennis courts, a recreation hall and sites for the various religious denominations. The plan was probably a product of desperation as much as idealism. As the boom peaked and buyers became more nervous, the company needed to offer additional attractions for land so far from the city. In December 1889 the model town was formally launched at a ceremony attended by all the principals of the company. Local dignitaries lauded Davies and Balfour ('men of good character and integrity') and the company's achievement in turning 'primeval wilderness' into a 'paradise'. But already the clouds were gathering. When the inevitable crash came, and the liquidators moved in, the developers' recklessness was apparent in the long list of unsaleable properties strung along the suburban frontier from Doncaster to Laverton and from Mordialloc to Essendon.[78]

In 1889 the new Surrey Hills Progress Association began to voice the residents' grievances, press for improved rail services and support candidates in local elections.[79] Early in its history it identified the lack of recreation space, but it was not until 1908 that it secured a small triangle of vacant land near the railway, originally acquired as a site for a primary school but relinquished by the Education Department as unsuitable, as a children's playground.[80] As the Windsor Estate's once generous villa allotments were progressively subdivided for villa units and apartments, its deficit of public space became more glaring.

Domesticity

The romantic suburb gave geographical expression to one of the most cherished ideals of the Victorian era, the doctrine of 'separate spheres' for men and women. While their husbands toiled in the harsh competitive world of the city, wives and daughters sought refuge in the quiet and seclusion of the suburban house and garden. Whether the residents of

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Mont Albert came anywhere near realising this ideal is an open question. While many of its male breadwinners followed city-based white-collar occupations, such as merchant, accountant, civil servant, commercial traveller, legal manager and draftsman, almost as many were employed locally as shopkeepers, builders, and tradesmen. However, local residents agitated for more frequent rail services, and after the duplication of the line patronage rose quickly to 237,000 journeys per annum by 1891.[81]

For Mont Albert's wives, daughters and mothers, evidence of domestic and public life is more difficult to uncover. While evangelicals, like those who inspired the creation of suburbs like Surrey Hills, were among the strongest defenders of the 'separate spheres' ideal, they were also among the strongest supporters of female suffrage. Of the 50 Surrey Hills women who signed the 1891 suffrage petition—more than signed in Camberwell or Canterbury—most were Wesleyans and Presbyterians, the denominations that led the petition's sponsoring organisation, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.[82] Within the churches and among the community, attitudes to women's suffrage were divided. In 1894 the Box Hill and Surrey Hills Literary Societies arranged a debate on the question. Robert Beckett, a leading Wesleyan layman and local councillor, argued that involvement in politics would 'lead [a woman] to neglect her home duties and compel her to study such subjects as would unfit her for her social duties'. He may have been arguing a case he did not really support, although, interestingly, none of his family signed the petition. His opponent replied: if going to political meetings caused a woman to neglect her home duties, why did women's attendance at church meetings, balls and theatres not have a similar result? 'Many social questions would be settled once women had the vote.' Among the audience, his was the view that prevailed; supporters of female suffrage beat their opponents 47 votes to 23. Yet the division of opinion may have disguised an underlying unanimity about the terms of debate, for, whether they supported the suffrage or not, the gentlemen of Surrey Hills and Mont Albert were unanimous that a woman's place was primarily in the home.[83]

Class Distinction

Windsor Park wanted to look 'royal' and 'noble', but how exclusive was it really? In England, according to historians, the first suburbs were 'an invention for accentuating and even refining class distinctions'.[84] Loudon

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advised his readers to 'choose a neighbourhood where the houses and the inhabitants are all, or chiefly, of the same description and class as the house we intend to inhabit, and as ourselves'.[85] Some English and American suburbs excluded social inferiors by erecting hedges and gates, or imposed covenants requiring houses to be built in a high style or standard. Windsor Park also required its first purchasers to submit their house plans 'to prevent the erection of objectionable buildings', and for a time gates were erected at the entrance of each avenue for the temporary protection of houses under construction.[86]

Figure 7: Empire Day procession in Windsor Crescent, early twentieth century (Courtesy State Library Victoria)

On the left, out of view, is the Surrey Hills railway station, the nucleus of the estate. The oaks and elms, planted to strengthen the self-consciously English character of the estate, have yet to rise far above their protective guards. Surrey Hills' famous Empire Day celebrations were another loyalist gesture.

Attempts to create socially exclusive suburbs, however, never fared as well in democratic Australia as in England or America.[87] The promoters of the Windsor Park Estate hedged their bets by offering prestige to the top of the market without deterring customers near the bottom. Their advertisements began by offering 'Investors, Speculators, Builders, Merchants, Clerks and Others' allotments suited to 'the erection of MANSIONS and VILLAS'. But they also promised that 'the MILLIONAIRE or ARTISAN can find a block suitable for their requirements, and AT A PRICE which neither will miss nor grudge'.

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One of the advantages of the estate's irregular street plan was that it created a range of large and small allotments. The most generous allotments on the high side of the crescents were 150 feet wide and 250 feet deep, and would eventually be occupied by substantial villas, but the smallest, on the lower ground near the railway or the eastern end of Windsor Crescent, were only about 18 x 50 feet. By the early twentieth century, when the estate was more or less built up, the large allotments were occupied by city merchants, accountants, solicitors, manufacturers, doctors, civil servants and an occasional pastoralist, while a mixture of drivers, carpenters, commercial travellers and labourers occupied the terraces and cottages at the eastern and northern edges of the estate.[88]

If Windsor Park was exclusive in any sense at all, it was probably religious rather than economic. Its royal associations and avenues named after St George and St John conjured up ideas of loyalty and piety that appealed more to people of English and Scottish descent, and to tribal Protestants, than to Irish Catholics. Thomas Muntz was not an ostentatiously religious man, but, as an Ulsterman and a Freemason, he was a tribal, and perhaps fervent, Protestant.[89] St George's Church of England, the first church to arrive in Mont Albert, was consecrated in 1886 with Masonic rituals.[90] Other Protestant denominations—Methodist (1888), Presbyterian (1889), Church of Christ (1889) and Congregational (1891)—arrived soon after the first settlers, often erecting their buildings on land donated by wealthy residents.[91] The first Catholic church, Our Holy Redeemer, did not appear until 1902. By then, Protestants of all kinds, and especially non-Anglicans such as Methodists, who alone comprised more than a quarter of the population, dominated the suburb, while fewer than one resident in ten was Catholic.[92]

What all these churches had in common was their devotion to the quiet, home-centred way of life associated, from its evangelical beginnings, with the suburban ideal. Local society revolved around the nuclear family, living ideally in a detached house surrounded by its own garden, and the church, with its attendant Sunday Schools, sporting clubs, bible classes, prayer meetings, flower shows, and mutual improvement societies. 'The only place outside a man's house where he could get to spend an evening', one contemporary glumly observed, 'was either a public house or a prayer meeting'.[93] But the public house was a forlorn hope, since there were few in 1888, and none at all after locals voted in a state-wide local option poll in 1920 to close those that were left.[94]

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Long after the Freehold Investment and Banking Company had been wound up, the Davies brothers' vision of the ideal suburb remained imprinted on the landscape they had created. By the mid-twentieth century it was at the heart of the area dubbed 'The Dry Zone', 'The Bible Belt' and 'The Sunday Suburbs'.[95] Since then opinion has swung hard against the ideals that created it. We now expect our cities to be denser and more cosmopolitan, less exclusive and more aware of their impact on the environment. An Australian republican might replace the suburb's English oaks with eucalypts and rename its streets after democratic Australian heroes, or Aboriginal ones, rather than English princes and peers. But that would be to jettison the characteristics that made it historically significant and which continue to delight residents and visitors. The current City of Whitehorse Planning Scheme protects the Windsor Park Estate under a heritage overlay that recognises its 'highly distinctive planning and streetscapes'.[96] The estate is not only 'distinctive', I would say, but innovative in its time and worth conserving as a classic expression of a once-dominant ideal.

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13   Andrew Lemon, *The Young Man from Home: James Balfour 1830–1913*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1982, pp. 45, 87.

14   *Weekly Times*, 21 March 1891.

15   *Argus*, 6 March 1874.

16   *Leader*, 27 March 1875.

17   Malcolm Wood, *Presbyterians in Colonial Victoria*, Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2008, pp. 142–3 and *passim*; Don Chambers, 'Cairns, Adam (1882–1881)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (*ADB*), Vol. 3, 1969, pp. 330–1. at https://adb.anu.edu. au/biography/cairns-adam-3140/text4681.

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'Loyally Made for Loyal Australians': Industrial Heritage, Modernity and Nationalism at Australian Knitting Mills, Richmond, 1910–55

Chris McConville

Abstract

Australian Knitting Mills' Richmond site raises interesting problems in industrial heritage. Rebuilt between 1923 and 1951, these mills intentionally express the autarkic ideology of interwar Australia. This article traces an interplay between nationalism and modernity reflected in the mills' material form, a link easily overlooked in heritage rankings. It proposes that social and political, rather than technological, significance in industrial heritage can be comprehended by stepping away from thematic methodologies and treating places in a particularist historical narrative.

Fred Robinson enjoyed his firm's annual picnics. As managing director at Australian Knitting Mills, Richmond (AKM), each one was 'a red-letter day with him'.[1] So, when millhands gathered in Frankston Mechanics Institute for their 1918 seaside outing, Robinson was prepared with a strategy to hand. In this, he sketched AKM's future as a modernising 'All-Australian' wool-manufacturing enterprise before warning that work in making army uniforms must soon end. Instead, if managers and workers combined in common purpose, AKM would buy advanced technology to convert pure merino fibres into undergarments. Through draperies, 'mercers', and emporia in every state, these high-quality woollens would be sold into an enclosed Australian market. The company's advertising slogan, 'Loyally Made for Loyal Australians', aptly reflected Robinson's aspiration.

Without wanting to cast shadows across this 'red-letter day', he did point to dark clouds gathering. Free traders in the Commonwealth parliament were intent on throwing Australia's economy open, whereas Robinson's strategy relied on import controls. With open borders, millhands' secure, well-paid jobs must surely vanish. 'How were firms like the A.K.M. to compete against stuff imported from places like

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Japan?' Robinson asked.[2] Despite the challenge from imported 'stuff', Fred Robinson clung tenaciously to his ideal of a modernised industry sustaining organic Australian identity through quality for customers, solid dividends for shareholders, and secure jobs for workers. But his firm could never quite resolve the tension between stable, All-Australian cohesion and modernity's restless embrace of the new.

Even between the wars, when AKM flourished, the Great Depression, adventurous styles, and invented fabrics forced directors to give ground, one way or another, to globalising American firms. As they canvassed options, AKM modernised the mills, commencing with their worsted plant, stylising the project with a glyphic merino and kookaburra to be set into bas-relief medallions on the southern—Stewart Street—elevation.[3] As salutes to Australian singularity, and logos for AKM brands, they would loom high above Richmond railway station and no doubt could prompt travellers to upgrade their underwear. AKM's mills, exemplars for modern—in other words efficient, hygienic and technically advanced— Australian manufacturing, safeguarded by a scientific autarky, may not immediately impress Richmond's 21st-century commuters. Travellers heading to digitised, post-Fordist co-workspaces in Richmond's 'Silicon Yarra', for which AKM's site has become a northern frontier, would no doubt find the concept of enclosed All-Australian industry more fanciful than feasible. To globalist workers looking back from today's retrofitted, cloud-connected mills, a transnational firm's eventual takeover of AKM must seem entirely warranted.

If the autarkic ideology central to AKM, without which the firm eventually lost command of clothing markets, seems so alien in the 21st century, how can we read the mills as heritage places, relaying a coherent history? When Victoria's premier, Dick Hamer, sponsored heritage laws in 1974 and created what later became the Heritage Council, he initiated systematic heritage assessment, refined by a taxonomy of themes.[4] These themes typically interpreted Victoria's history through an anthropological reading of 'culture'. Conceptually fluid, culture could not always ensure a stable platform for analysis, but the council nonetheless proceeded to distinguish eight criteria reflecting its themes, expecting they would enable precision in heritage ranking. Four of the criteria drew on 'cultural history'. A fifth focused on aesthetics. Another ranked a building's technical or creative achievement, while the remaining two criteria tested buildings for links to significant individuals or cultural groups. Atop the

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pinnacle of the heritage hierarchy stood those buildings listed on the state's heritage register, with sites not deemed to be of state significance relegated to local government planning schemes.

'History is a free-rider on the heritage band-wagon', observed Graeme Davison, and other historians have rarely found the protean underpinnings of criteria entirely reliable.[5] For example, as recently as 2018, Stuart Macintyre, then Heritage Council chair, wondered about assessing 'the degree of heritage significance according to objective criteria', contrasting such judgments to the subjectivity of popular fascination with heritage.[6] Factories and workshops have not always fared well in the rankings either, although Fred Robinson's AKM site would most likely meet thresholds for state listing, not least through its leading role in woollen manufacturing.[7] Landmark prominence alone ought to ensure the mills' significance when tested against local heritage criteria.[8] At the same time, in measuring the mills against discrete themes, rather than narrating their histories, we might easily miss the All-Australian modernity that infused all of AKM's projects with a sweeping coherence. Disaggregating an industrial building's attributes, so as to meet technocratic measurement—for which an occasionally capricious 'culture' became central—might easily consign history to the background, while foregrounding design and technology. This remains the case even when machinery has been stripped out from factory shells.

With such issues in mind, this article traces the story of this evolving Richmond industrial site before turning to history's often messy encounters with heritage. It explores the mills of AKM in inductive chronology, and thus steps back from thematic taxonomies and criteria, to comprehend a history in which Fred Robinson and his workers struggled to defend their All-Australian singularity. Technology and design make up only one part of this story.

Sheep's Clothing

'Australia rides on the sheep's back', once served as shorthand for pastoral riches and, implicitly, as rebuke to Australia's unadventurous manufacturers. Bales of greasy wool, shorn from Western District flocks and shipped to northern hemisphere manufacturers, remained interwar Victoria's prime export. Although only a very small part of vast wool clips ended up in local mills, to the manufacturer, 'riding on the sheep's

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back' came to serve as a catchphrase for industrial modernity. These wool manufacturers had clustered in the first instance in Geelong and the gold towns.[9] In her exhaustive survey, Airlie Worrall identified three mills in nineteenth-century Melbourne: Foy and Gibson's majestic Gibsonia, Collingwood; Australian Mill (later Bradmill), Yarraville; and Gaunt's Alfred Mill, Williamstown.[10] Only after 1907, and with the support of Commonwealth tariffs, did a woollen clothing industry encircle the city, from Williamstown to the Winterfold Mill in Elsternwick.[11] AKM emerged as the most successful of these, almost entirely through foresight shared between Fred Robinson and his siblings. W.S. (William Sydney) Robinson and eldest brother, Lionel, invested in Alexander Stewart's wool business before reshaping Australia's mining.[12] Arthur Robinson handled AKM's legal affairs. Gerald, along with Fred's sons, worked at AKM. Perhaps we can trace their concern for harmony in the workplace to childhoods in Melbourne's Parkville. Here, a very young W.S. was guided through the streets by H.B. Higgins, the man who pronounced the Harvester 'living wage' judgment. An older W.S. was entranced by another neighbour, social reformer Vida Goldstein, who went on to radicalise women's politics. As W.S. mused, 'our respectable little neighbourhood seemed, on looking back, to be teeming with radicals and humanitarians'.[13]

If, as W.S. hinted, radical neighbours had left their mark, less understandable remained his and Gerald's decision to graduate from Longerenong Agricultural College and then turn to orcharding. Any enchantments in rural life were soon lost on W.S., for whom fence posts enclosing their Ardmona orchard 'assumed the form of prison bars'. By 1899, the brothers had used capital accumulated through Lionel's London stockbroking to buy Thomas Murray's hosiery makers, Stewart Street, Richmond.[14] They renamed Thomas Murray as Australian Knitting Mills and, backed once more by Lionel, floated the firm in 1910.[15] Within a year, AKM reported a profit of nearly £6,000, with machinery double the worth of Murray's buildings.[16] AKM then brought Bradford—worstedopolis—manufacturers into a Collingwood wool scourers.[17] Here they set up Australia's only woollen yarn spinner, Yarra Falls.

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Jackets and Fire

After 1914, and along with other local firms, AKM lost no time in responding to military planners' insistence that Australia's 'armies in the field should be clothed and equipped with articles of Australian manufacture'.[18] Their Richmond mills were soon filling order books, composed almost entirely of military clothing, as AKM kitted soldiers in jackets made from toughened worsted with four large pockets at the front and a pleat at the back to allow air to circulate freely. Dyed a curious pea-soup shade, which could quickly turn to grey, or even pink, these jackets still spoke to an hygienic, modernised, martial identity. Official home-front historian Ernest Scott recalled Australian soldiers rejecting impractical British kit, even when their woollen jackets 'almost fell from their backs'. In Scott's assessment:

> The garment was one of which the Australian soldier was justifiably proud. Whether on the march or in the trenches, whether in the sands of Egypt in a hot, dry climate, or in the trenches of France subject to frequent drenching … he was more comfortably clad than any other soldier with whom or against whom he was fighting.[19]

AKM signed contracts for 2,000 jackets in January 1915 and for £700 worth of military clothing in August, more than several other mills, although less than orders with Foy & Gibson. By the time Robinson addressed his workers at Frankston in March 1918, he had signed on to supply woollen singlets and jackets.[20] AKM, as one patriotic journalist enthused:

> Are now a munitions works and the employees are munitions workers engaged almost exclusively in weaving and knitting the woollen-wear and articles of warmth that will help the brothers of Gallipoli to better withstand the rigours of the climate they are called on to face in a strange land.[21]

No sooner had Richmond's machinists become munitions workers, than AKM, acting on Robinson's Frankston strategy, altered course. With the merino ram symbolising pure-wool Golden Fleece and wool-cotton identified as Kookaburra, high-quality undergarments revived pre-war templates. AKM would go on to experiment with other lines, but Golden Fleece and Kookaburra remained staples for decades to come.

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Figure 1: Advertising Golden Fleece (Courtesy *Table Talk*, 23 June 1927, p. 45)

Given the task of promoting wool in 1920, Commonwealth civil servants suggested that 'every true Australian' must buy locally manufactured clothing.[22] AKM's customers certainly proved themselves true Australians. The mills could not keep up with demand, with prospects for a profitable future only dampened in part because the firm had failed to overturn a Taxation Department ruling.[23] Directors remained confident enough to rebuild Murray's worsted mill. Before 1920, timber houses had lined Tanner Street, backing onto the northern boundary of AKM. Rainer's bedding manufacturers occupied 44 Tanner Street, with Lyddy's confectioners at 64–66.[24] The undergarment works faced Margaret Street, at AKM's western boundary.[25] Guest and Lee's furniture stood at 9–11 Stewart Street. A few doors to the east, the site's southern boundary, Australian Knitting Mills—'manufacturers of all classes of hosiery'—took up about 500 feet, 19–29 Stewart Street, before houses ran eastwards to Henry Buck's, shirtmakers—'outfitters to gentlemen'—at 51, on the intersection with Tennyson Street.[26] When completed in 1923, the worsted mill ran along the eastern edge of the AKM site, to a main entrance in Tanner Street.[27] By July 1924, another new mill towered above cottages, this time built from necessity rather than choice, since fire had destroyed Murray's underwear factory earlier that year.

A lookout atop Eastern Hill Fire Station spotted the red fire glow in Richmond, 7.30 p.m., 18 January 1924. With flames leaping more than a

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hundred feet, families in Tanner Street rushed to hurl wet hessian onto their cottages' iron roofing.[28] AKM had eyed off Mrs Mavis's cottage for years, for recreation space. With flames licking her back fence, Mrs Mavis no doubt regretted her long-standing refusal to make way for AKM, while neighbours ran to cart her furniture onto the street. The house survived, neighbours moved the furniture back in, and Mrs Mavis stayed on. Along Stewart Street's railway embankment, passengers jumped from trains to watch the walls of Thomas Murray's old undergarment plant balloon outwards, sway inwards, and crash down. Railway officials eventually corralled onlookers behind barriers while fire crews saved the new worsted mill. By midnight the crowd had drifted on anyway. Destructive as undoubtedly the fire had been, it gave AKM 'the opportunity of installing a thoroughly modern plant [where workers had] plenty of room [with] refreshing surroundings' including lawns and a canteen.[29] A new red-brick undergarment mill, lit by expansive windows, now rose at the centre of the site, with the south-facing façade defined by the firm's name across the parapet (Figure 2). A signature feature appeared, of course, in the Golden Fleece and Kookaburra medallions. Machinists were now able to turn out 'Australian-made' underwear in

> a new factory embracing all that is best in design and equipment … working conditions and manufacturing efficiency are immeasurably better than before … the quality of A.K.M. products, will equal if not surpass, the notably high standards of the past.[30]

Figure 2: New Undergarment workshop, 1924 (Courtesy *Advocate* (Burnie), 26 July 1924, p. 3)

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Fred Robinson could tell shareholders that AKM was making more money than in prewar years.[31] Between 1926 and 1928, profits continued their climb, which, according to Robinson, 'must be considered satisfactory for a difficult business period'.

Flash and Cheap

Buoyed by these returns, AKM extended the worsted mill in 1928. With an hygienic and functional rather than daring aesthetic, the new mill matched well with the company's pure wool union suits and long johns, underwear relying resolutely on the hygienic aura of expensive materials and the skills of flat-seam overlockers. Year after year, AKM advertised snugness, elasticised cuffs, and quality fabric, while steadfastly avoiding fashionable flair. Even after 1925, when Everlast invented boxer shorts, AKM saw no reason to alter course. Unshrinkable, and sold in both winter and summer weights, expensive Golden Fleece and reliable Kookaburra formed impenetrable barriers to any chill: fitting emblems for All-Australian protectionism.

AKM's advertisements sometimes pictured customers as tennis-playing, pipe-puffing professional fellows, the very class in fact that might order bespoke twill shirts from neighbouring Henry Buck's. AKM then turned to the wives who bought for their tennis-playing menfolk. If the firm had not quite comprehended fascination for boxer shorts, AKM reacted even more slowly to the fashion sense shared amongst younger women, whose dresses emphasised dropped waistlines, squared shoulders, and carefully contoured 'boyish' silhouettes. Stereotyped as 'flappers', these women were confident enough to make their own demands on the underwear market, abandoning corsets and petticoats for the freedom of slips and undershorts. So, at some point, AKM had to accommodate women's styles. The firm subtly altered woollen underwear for young women off to tennis or a town-hall dance. Designers then brightened swimwear, hoping to interest women repelled by the unadventurous, single-colour, knitted, and decidedly dull 'Klingtite' swimming costumes that AKM had turned out before the war. By 1928, the firm was promising a startling new design.[32] 'Neither France nor America is responsible for this', boasted AKM's advertisements for swimwear with unique capes attached. Caped beach ensembles, stylish in their own right, were at the same time, and in keeping with a familiar sales pitch, 'eminently

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practical'.[33] Labelled inventively in Queensland as 'surfwear', the new range was aimed directly at fashionable women. In chocolate, 'capucine' and green, and taking inspiration from New York, AKM launched designs at a roof-garden soirée during Brisbane's 1930 summer.[34] Acrobats turned cartwheels in Klingtites, confirming their snug fit, while journalists took notes on the costumes' 'ultra-smartness'.[35]

Just as AKM launched their spring campaign around capes and capucine, Fred Robinson was drawing his tour of English mills to a close and sailing for home. Interviewed at sea in October 1929, Robinson resurrected his red-letter day grumble about Japanese woollens. He insisted that Bradford mills were mistaken in churning out the cheap clothing he had just seen in warehouses. They would never beat Japanese—or for that matter German and French—manufacturers on price. AKM would stick with quality. Yarra Falls might have experimented with artificial silk, but Fred Robinson remained wary. Synthetic lingerie would only 'have its vogue as long as the feminine section of the community preferred to buy cheap and flash-looking articles of apparel', he lamented. True to a faith in quality and pure merino wool, Robinson sensed markets for cheap synthetics had hit their limits, predicting that artificial silk could never show more than a 'reasonable profit'.[36] No sooner had he reached Melbourne than Wall Street crashed.

Cordiality and Design

Clouds imagined years before in Frankston's Mechanics Institute now gathered darkly. At first AKM weathered the storm, with 1929 profits close to the 1927–28 high-water mark. As profits slid, AKM began selling directly to retailers and so eventually recovered from the crisis in better shape than its rivals. The company, however, could no longer lay claim to a harmonious workplace. In Airlie Worrall's account, woollen mills remained 'consensual' working environments.[37] Before the 1929 crash, and consistent with this view, AKM boasted of the 'utmost cordiality and a spirit of comradeship' between managers and workers.[38] Modern, hygienic mills forestalled that 'spirit of antagonism' evident elsewhere in clothing factories, with managers going so far as to suggest, disingenuously, that a millhand's weekly pay packet gave each one a share in company ownership. More likely, Commonwealth clothing-trade awards determining wages and conditions encouraged

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cordiality at major manufacturers like AKM, whilst sharpening a 'spirit of antagonism' in small, struggling workshops. Awards sought a balance around skill levels, distinguishing female 'outworkers' on rates per garment from a more masculine 'indoor' workforce on hourly wages.[39] The 1929–32 crisis coincided with unexpected arbitration rulings on these wages. Clothing firms had anticipated sympathetic hearings on a new award from Judge Drake-Brockman, war hero, former conservative senator, and sometime president of the Australian Employers' Federation. In 1928, they failed to get one. Drake-Brockman investigated poverty amongst female machinists before ruling that unionised women had first rights in filling vacancies. He annoyed manufacturers with further amendments; paid leave for Jewish holidays was one. As manufacturers anticipated, Australia's High Court overturned his award in 1932, by which stage Drake-Brockman's ruling had encouraged resistance amongst female machinists.[40] Women struck at Yarra Falls in 1932, and then male 'full-fashion' workers walked out of the Richmond plant in 1937.[41] Both strikes quickly faltered. Resolving the 'full-fashion' dispute with speedy pay rises and minimal roles for the clothing trade union seemed proof of AKM's faith in consensual workplaces.[42] Not so Yarra Fall's failures in responding to female strikers.

In reflecting on female machinists, both Airlee Worrall and Raelene Frances rejected Braverman's thesis that new technology deskilled factory work across the twentieth century.[43] Frances investigated another Richmond company, Pelaco Shirtmakers, where automated technology, allied to Taylorist labour controls and normalised through a carefully plotted company paternalism, ensured that women workers would suffer more than men through automation.[44] With less psychological manipulation than at Pelaco, AKM still drew on architecture to entangle workers in emotional debts to the company.[45] A bright canteen, gardens, and light-filled workshops may have subtly muted antagonism over wages, working hours and safety. Young female machinists could play netball alongside fellow workers, perhaps even office staff, in company teams—post-1945 plans included a netball court on the roof of the undergarment mill.[46] Given the limited inroads of the union, these were successful strategies, and distinguished the higher standards of woollen mills compared with those across the wider clothing industry. At the same time, hygienic factories barely encouraged loyalty amongst outworkers, whose numbers grew as the Depression deepened. Productivity rose while

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the industry's workforce fell across the 1930s, an increase in output that can only be explained by intensive use of advanced machinery.[47] One visitor to AKM watched:

> Various types of machines, but they may be briefly described as a circular frame armed with hundreds of needles operated by ingenious mechanics which work automatically to such good purpose that a tube of fabric up to 60 inches in diameter … descends from the frame … when the roll weighs 25 or 30 pounds … the machine uncomplainingly begins another roll.[48]

Machines may well have laboured uncomplainingly, but workshops still demanded the finishing skills of female machinists. Journalist Elizabeth Auld had looked on in other mills as dexterous 'mill girls' reacted to high-speed looms. In a routine she likened to a 'huge ballet',

> Watching the wheels go round, expert girls some of them keeping an unfaltering eye on 300 revolving tops and spindles can see in a flash, among the 300 threads, where one breaks. And in less than a second, with a lightening twist of the wrist, the ends are joined together again, and the thread goes on its way.[49]

With standardised technologies advancing across Richmond and the worst of the Depression slowly receding, women familiar with factory routines, who might otherwise be classed as unskilled, could move from one manufacturer to another or work at home for several. With these factors in mind, we need to be cautious in proposing AKM's design aesthetic as central to industrial relations, or in accepting that automation inevitably deskilled clothing workers. As AKM rebuilt after 1932, managers continued to advertise for skilled workers, from overlockers to cutters. The full-fashion tasks over which men were to strike involved technical deftness in folding, heeling, seaming and then stabilising fabric loops on artificial-silk stockings.[50]

AKM had sought, and to a degree succeeded, in giving material expression to a harmonious workplace, an identity shared by managers and workers although diminished in awards fixing female pay below that of men.[51] The firm's faith in modernist function, modulated through light and airy workshops, pretty gardens, hygienic canteens and, of course, the benefits of above-award wages, all served to dampen down conflict. While AKM faced fewer workplace disputes than mills elsewhere around Australia, limits to company paternalism remained. The crisis unfolding

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as Fred Robinson sailed into Melbourne would expose differing responses to men and women, an inequality endemic across the clothing trades. These disparities, reflected in the gap between piece work and hourly rates, were never properly resolved. Before 1929, managers may well have been justified in insisting that AKM fostered a consensual workplace. After brief strikes between 1932 and 1937, the mills' 'utmost cordiality' could equally be identified as one more of the Depression's many victims.

Tariff Walls

Taking stock in 1932, Robinson acknowledged obstacles neither he nor his brothers could have envisaged in 1910 when they floated AKM. He reported on collapsing profits in October 1931—£33,000 net compared to £79,000 in 1927—with Yarra Falls rather than Richmond making money.[52] A year later, consumers were chasing bargains, forcing AKM to sell on low margins. 'A feature of the business in the last year or two had been the growing demand for low-priced goods to the neglect of those of higher quality', Robinson complained to shareholders.[53] If thrifty customers were not difficult enough, Commonwealth faith in tariffs was waning. AKM may not have welcomed trade union organisers into the firm's consensual workplaces, but directors turned readily enough to unions in jointly lobbying Australian Labor Party (ALP) leaders, many of whom had filled roles as union officials anyway. In fact, in 1929, with the union-owned *Australian Worker* anticipating 'class war', Fred Robinson found himself lauded in the journal's pages. He had spoken up and challenged the 'pastoralists' dismal wailing', about falling wool prices, their prelude to cutting wages.[54] Robinson had wrongly expected that prices would recover speedily. Even so, AKM and neighbouring manufacturers could still feel secure behind tariffs guaranteed by Jim Scullin, Richmond's federal member, committed ALP protectionist, and Depression-era prime minister. After all, in launching his election campaign in 1928, Scullin warned that Australians must 'resolve to do our own work in our own country [and that] any breach in our tariff walls should be repaired at once'.[55] As free traders sought to topple his walls, and with no answer to the Depression's crises, Scullin's cabinet disintegrated. Whereas Commonwealth agencies had favoured manufacturers in 1920, their successors demanded an end to industrial protection, and liberation

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for wool exporters. This 'whole structure … is top-heavy, unstable and dangerous' asserted one 1932 report on tariffs.[56]

With Scullin's successors no longer resolved 'to do our own work in our own country', and with consensual workplace relations lost at some point between 1929 and 1932, AKM tried to recover through an advertising coup that soon unravelled. When England's cricket team arrived for a Test series in which Australia's young star, Don Bradman, was expected to shine, AKM gifted cable-stitched, pure merino pullovers to every England player.[57] Kitted out in his cable stitch, England's captain, Bombay-born Scotsman Douglas Jardine, ordered his fast bowlers to launch their lethal 'Bodyline' at Bradman. AKM now found itself on the wrong side of an intra-imperial scandal, as benefactors to a reviled Jardine rather than protectors to a tormented Bradman. To recapture popular trust, AKM turned again to swimwear. Beach capes, first envisioned in Richmond rather than Paris or New York, had not made quite the splash that AKM anticipated. Competitors like Black Lance were marketing brighter costumes by 1937.[58] McRae's Sydney mill promoted another rival. When Australia's star swimmer, Clare Dennis, won the 200-metres breaststroke at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics, she had shocked officialdom by swimming in McRae's unique 'Speedo Racer-Back', with daring cutaway shoulders.[59] McRae went further, promoting 'half-backless' and even 'backless' Speedos. Caught in the wake of such confronting minimalism, AKM unveiled their own Klingtite 'gladiator back', which boasted adjustable straps for the perfect suntan. Even though AKM had dropped the pipe-puffing tennis player for the gladiator's bronzed silhouette with or without cape, Speedos still left Klingtites labouring body lengths behind.

As it turned out, by the end of the decade, Jantzen's patented 'swimsuits' for women, and 'half-trunks' for men—'the most streamlined way of putting on swank', as Jantzen's eccentric patter made clear—had outdistanced both Speedo and Klingtite, raising record profits for the Oregon firm's Australian offshoot.[60] As for underwear, even the highest quality Golden Fleece would soon look irretrievably dated. In 1935, avid customers trudged through January snows and into Marshall Field's Chicago emporium to buy out a new line's entire stock.[61] Cooper (later Jockey) launched these flimsy cotton men's 'briefs' in Australia in 1938, manufactured under licence by McRae. Brief in name and nature, they were soon remodelled for women. If flimsy briefs could enthuse

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snowbound Chicagoans, they faced few obstacles in winning over Australian consumers. Appealing in their scantiness, they cost less than woollens too. Men's cotton briefs sold in Sydney in 1938 for under three shillings a pair.[62] True to Robinson's strategy of quality not cost, AKM held back from advertising prices, although in winter 1931, with the Depression choking sales, AKM advertised Golden Fleece in a range to nine shillings and sixpence, with Kookaburra at seven and six.

Golden Ray and the Doctor

A seemingly eternal dispute with one customer also dragged on, eventually undermining AKM's claims to hygienic durability.[63] Dr Richard Grant purchased his Golden Fleece at Adelaide's famous Martin's emporium in 1931. After two weeks in his woollens, Dr Grant suffered a terrible rash and took to bed. The rash grew worse, his surgery closed, and Dr Grant sued for negligence. Dr Grant's landmark case in consumer law made its way from Adelaide to the High Court, then on to the Privy Council in London, which found for Dr Grant.[64] Sulphides from sheep dip somehow survived through wool scouring to settle in the elastic cuffs of Grant's underwear. After alerting shareholders to legal costs incurred, both Fred Robinson and his son Norman resigned from AKM's board.

Infecting a respectable client with sheep-dip residues hardly assisted AKM's reputation for hygiene, while hastening an urgent search for new fabrics. Even as he derided women's love of artificial silk, Fred Robinson had already prepared for an artificial-silk partnership with New York's Julius Kayser.[65] By branding artificial silk as rayon—with its modern, scientific allusions—and backed by blanket advertising, American firms were slowly squeezing woollen manufacturers. In response, AKM formed Julius Kayser (Australia) in 1930, expanding their Stewart Street footprint, and providing their partner with plant facing Tennyson and Stewart streets.[66] After only five years, AKM abandoned investments in Kayser. Kayser hung onto storerooms in Richmond while turning to new Ferntree Gully workshops, leaving AKM to produce rayon at Yarra Falls and cut its own line—Golden Ray—in Richmond.[67]

Rayon took directors, with tentative steps, away from staid Golden Fleece; soon they were marketing Golden Ray as 'shimmering luxury'.[68] With a daring, even mildly erotic, undertone to advertisements, copywriters suggested a 'touch of brevity' in lingerie, hinting there could

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be 'nothing nicer—next to you', than slinky Golden Ray. Rayon required intense chemical processing of natural fibres and had its own problems. Consumers did not really know how to care for rayon. The material tore easily.[69] At the same time it cost less than silk or wool. Rayon had a lustrous sheen, especially in evening light, and draped languidly over the body in the less boyish fashions popular after 1932.[70] To one promoter, 'the sight of almost any article made from artificial silk [rayon] … is sufficient to arouse admiration, and in many cases to create a desire to possess the article'.[71] AKM could have easily overcome rayon's drawbacks. A disdain for the cheap and flash and, implicitly, for 'feminine taste' most likely frustrated mastery over the magic of synthetics. In any case, AKM had broken traditional ties to British capital by investing in Kayser and, by marketing Golden Ray, had turned away from Australian wool. The kookaburra and merino continued to look down on Richmond's commuters, with the name 'Julius Kayser' now emblazoned below. AKM's claims to All-Australian product were looking a little hollow.

Post-Depression and Post-Fordist

In 1937, within a year of Fred Robinson retiring, and with his brother Gerald running the mills, AKM converted Kayser's workshop for Golden Ray. Ramshackle sheds inherited from Thomas Murray were gone. In their place, three rectilinear red-brick landmarks towered above the timber cottages and railway platforms of Richmond. A rayon plant still branded with 'Julius Kayser' in the parapet fronted Stewart Street. The 1924 undergarment building and the worsted mill also abutted Stewart and Tanner streets. AKM had bought up cottages along the south side of Tanner Street, and storerooms intended for Kayser fronted onto Tennyson and Wangaratta streets. Builders also extended a dyeing plant and boiler room on Tanner Street. War then aided AKM's escape from the Depression's lingering aftermath, and the firm's troubles with Dr Grant, as the entire plant turned once more to military clothing. AKM signed contracts for cotton singlets, while building a two-storey cotton-spinning plant over Stewart Street recreation spaces.[72] With this, AKM signalled the obsolescence of their worsted jackets, of little use to soldiers fighting through New Guinea jungles. AKM then contracted to manufacture more than £3,000 of military clothing and continued to supply cottons into 1945.[73] The war delayed other building plans, but AKM commissioned

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Stephenson and Turner for glass-walled offices in 1948.[74] Although they never took up the mid-century modernity of these drawings, it seems that the firm added a floor to the undergarment mill.[75] Recruiting workers to fill any extra floor space proved difficult. At first AKM turned to women retiring from military service and then hoped a workplace opposite Richmond station would bring in applicants. Along with rival plants, they highlighted the sophistication of music piped through workshops— although woollen firms drew the line at horserace broadcasts.

Between 1951 and 1959 the numbers of Victorian woollen mills and woollen workers remained more or less stable.[76] These figures masked a growing fragility. Apart from new synthetics, or wool–synthetic blends, the 1950–51 'Pound for a Pound' wool-price boom proved disastrous for manufacturers.[77] AKM had, however, managed to increase profits on expanding sales, at least up to 1951 (Figure 3).

YEAR	Total Sales (£)	Gross Profit (£)	Net Funds to Hand (£)	Net Profit to Net Funds (%)
1939	262292	50856	451593	4.67
1940	397160	75811	413774	9.18
1941	451060	82475	372634	11.85
1942	532482	96236	410039	15.40
1943	468312	89646	355834	14.75
1944	540576	110292	402861	16.76
1945	451976	97162	462896	12.32
1946	431567	88169	439240	8.38
1947	486893	105647	421211	14.15
1948	589897	140877	473721	16.82
1949	635503	170838	625908	15.68
1950	764111	202681	878452	12.92
1951	1144033	275271	1134895	14.10

Figure 3: Australian Knitting Mills: Financial Position 1939–51 (Source: Australian Knitting Mills, Financial Analysis Files, 1939–52, Prices Control Branch, VPRS 10251/ P000, 49/2383, PROV)

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These returns hardly suggest a failed firm awaiting takeover, nor could shareholders complain about either sales or return on capital. Nevertheless, in responding to customers fascinated by another new synthetic, nylon, AKM sought out American expertise once more, this time joining with the global giant Holeproof. One industry expert hailed Du Pont's 1938 experiments with nylon and Holeproof's 1940 nylon stocking revolution as 'a success story unparalleled in textile history'.[78] Brunswick, however, remained the Milwaukee company's Melbourne centre, and so, once partnered with AKM, Holeproof shifted underwear and hosiery finishing work from Richmond. By April 1955 Holeproof had bought £635,625 of AKM's 'ordinary capital' for a cost of £508,500, effectively taking control of its partner. Holeproof tried to rid itself of the Richmond mills entirely in 1956, a sale they expected would realise 'substantial profits', before eventually suburbanising to factories in Deepdene and Nunawading.[79] By initially licensing Australian firms to produce American products—in AKM's case, 'Zealon' socks—then launching a takeover, Holeproof, like so many transnationals, expertly manoeuvred its way around tariff regimes.[80] The logos of synthetic clothing brands were now drilled onto Stewart Street's red-brick walls. Above these, the kookaburra and merino no longer connoted national identity, modern production of high-quality woollens, or workplace 'cordiality'. Dumped English fabrics had begun to threaten jobs, and, with a 1957 Japanese trade deal confirming Robinson's pique over 'stuff', clothing workers faced uncertain futures.[81]

Between Frankston's 1918 picnic and Holeproof's 1954–55 buyout, Fred Robinson's vision for AKM fragmented, gradually after 1929 and then at speed after the wool-price boom. As early as 1920, AKM directors recognised weaknesses in depending on high-quality raw materials, alongside few, if any, advantages in technical expertise or capital raising, and with production costs at least 50 per cent higher than overseas rivals.[82] Pleas for tariff security had won state support before the Depression, only to prove less persuasive after 1932. And even between 1918 and 1928, when AKM reaped expanding profit, the firm was never comprehensively All-Australian. Lionel Robinson certainly found shareholders for AKM, although he devoted more of his energies—and capital—to reshaping London's public transport, while managing his not so onerous duties as high sheriff of Norfolk. Lionel Robinson did part-own two Melbourne Cup winners, and he speculated, with astounding success, on sending

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prized British racehorses to Australian stables.[83] In the end, however, he preferred the glories of his English manor, 'Old Buckenham Hall', to the grit of Richmond. AKM meanwhile, turned to Bradford for machinery and New York for fashion clues. By 1945, and ominously for firms like AKM, 'Bobbysoxers', those vanguard teenaged consumers, were looking askance at high-quality woollens and instead delighting in bright, cheap, and synthetic American styles. After 1965, as one clothing-firm stalwart recollected, suburban shopping malls destabilised woollens' nationwide networks in fabric dealers, department-store buyers, and, above all, family-run draperies.[84] It might not have looked this way in Frankston in 1918, but, in retrospect, Fred Robinson's autarkic aspiration had launched AKM on a difficult, not to say, impossible path.

Heritage in Silicon Yarra

AKM's All-Australian modernity, erected on the purchase of Thomas Murray's mills and, in any event, incrementally compromised, had clearly run its course. The buildings that make up the site spanned the decades from 1920 through to 1955. The 1920s mills proclaimed faith in nationally symbolic wool. AKM added rayon works between 1930 and 1938, and wartime cotton brought a spinning plant before Stephenson and Turner rebuilt a section of the worsted mill after 1948. AKM remained loyal to their interwar aesthetic, bringing unity to each stage of renovations, with Stephenson and Turner eventually recycling bricks in the worsted mill and choosing metallic roofing to conform to the 1920s patterns.[85] AKM often centred advertisements on the site and its townscape, confident in the appeal of their mills' modernity. These photographs embody managerial ambition, they symbolise consumer desire, and they display haptic spaces experienced dialectically by workers, intensifying their commodity production. As panoramas, they reflect a progressive rather than archaic autarky. So, even after AKM had rejected daring aesthetics, preferring quality and Australian singularity, the mills' surviving modernity might still measure up to heritage thresholds (Figures 4, 5 and 6).

Figure 4: Australian Knitting Mills. Lyle Fowler Photograph for Stephenson and Turner Collection, 16 December 1948 (Courtesy State Library Victoria 1926963/ pi009242)

Figure 5: Australian Knitting Mills Site in 1948. Photographer Lyle Fowler, Harold Paynting Collection (Courtesy State Library Victoria H92.20/2968)

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Figure 6: Old Richmond Station from Pattersons Tower 1954, Stewart Street and AKM to right of photograph, Corner Hotel right foreground (Courtesy Victorian Railways Photographic Negatives H4291, Public Record Office Victoria VPRS 12800/P0001)

Both AKM and Yarra Falls lie within the City of Yarra, where manufacturing shaped Richmond, Collingwood and Fitzroy, and where heritage controls have, at least to date, and in the main, protected buildings. Through curiously diverse routes, at least six of Yarra's genuinely twentieth-century industrial complexes have found their way onto the Victorian Heritage Register, each one justified in citations.[86] The Commonwealth note-printing works had a uniquely state-protected role. Foy & Gibson's complex is divided into three distinct entries emphasising the firm's retail business. The Pelaco factory's neon sign is registered. Working conditions for the women labouring beneath the giant sign are presented in benign fashion, without emphasis on the oppressive techniques of Taylorism described by Raelene Frances. Bryant & May's match factory also appears in benevolent guise. The paternalism of this Richmond enterprise, expressed through garden, tennis courts and nurse on call, might be better understood once set against the horrendous working conditions in Bryant & May's London plant, the resulting 1888 Match Girls' Strike, and global condemnation of the firm's ownership.[87] The British company also worked around industrial protection with much the same acumen as subsequent American transnationals.[88] The York Butter Factory is registered because a family firm imaginatively adapted domestic Spanish Mission to industrial architecture. Wertheim's Pianos' reliance on tariff protection is well cited, though perhaps overshadowed by the buildings' later roles, not least as home to GTV9 television stars.

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Taken together, these plants form an eclectic rather than systemic list, protected thus far by their state heritage status. How well can their heritage safeguards, with origins in Hamer's 1974 reforms, withstand 21st-century challenges? As high-rise property developers query heritage controls, and neoliberal economists promote the 'opening up' of inner-city land markets, four problems emerge. Standardised criteria disaggregate the unique historical attributes of each site, paving the way for limitless comparative debates in which a more telling example of any theme can always be discovered elsewhere in the state. Second, the protean concept of 'culture' will always be volatile, hardly a stable principle through which heritage sites can be defined. Third, the technocrat's criteria leave little room for popular enthusiasms about buildings. Finally, in their very diversity, the industrial sites of Richmond and its neighbours suggest that bridging the gap between abstract, generic history and recondite heritage has very little bearing on built heritage. In local government planning schemes, each building, even one with the highest heritage ranking, remains subject to site-specific, practical constraints, factors far removed from generalised debates about history and heritage. Particularist narrative histories, on the other hand, can respond to popular interest whilst raising queries about thematic heritage's hierarchies, their certainties called into question by ahistorical thresholds, cultural opaqueness and, above all, a tendency to disarticulate a building's coherent biography. Site-specific histories expose ideology rather than culture. When they incorporate rather than simply provide preludes to themes, they take us past shortcomings in those rather bloodless frameworks through which heritage significance is currently filtered.

AKM's mills tell a story that is far more profound than one of building shells with machinery stripped out and workers sent on their way. The buildings reflect the Robinson family's role as uniquely influential entrepreneurs. They remind us of the misfortunes of Dr Grant and the origins of consumer law. The buildings are landmarks punctuating the Richmond skyline. Laneways run between them, turning, enclosing, and then opening kinetically. Threaded away from Stewart Street's narrow arc, each turn reveals manufacturing's once overpowering presence across inner Melbourne. Along with neighbours—Henry Buck's, Julius Kayser, and the 1937 Mascot factory—and when approached along the curve of Stewart Street, the mills anchor a vista of evolving modernism, expanding and contracting from the 1954–66 Corner Hotel westwards. From the

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north they tower as ramparts, reflecting the tension between ever more cramped interwar housing and constantly expanding industry. These qualities might well reach heritage thresholds without illuminating the site's intrinsic meaning. When approached inductively, in particularist chronological narrative, the mills symbolise a recently maligned though historically respected ideology of modernised national self-sufficiency. In a locale transforming through digital globalism, they become political and social documents, neither mnemonic for a facile protectionism nor reducible to technological heritage.

One Friday in Frankston in 1918, as clouds rolled away and the sun shone, Fred Robinson shared his plans for AKM, reconciling modernity to a stable, self-sufficient Australia. 'We cannot all be growers of wheat, wool, and other agricultural commodities', AKM reminded policy makers in 1920.[89] AKM expected their modernity to reorient Australian identity itself, away from romanticised bush farms so loathed by W.S. Robinson and towards the urbanised, commercial, even humanitarian nationhood he found amongst his Parkville neighbours, and which his brothers hoped to share with their Richmond employees. AKM continually modernised, restructuring the board, buying advanced machinery, incorporating novel designs, and experimenting with fabrics, all to protect profits whilst cementing an All-Australian character—in the end, to little avail. Modernity, relentlessly seeking the new and rendering the recent obsolete, could always subvert irenic All-Australian stability. Self-sufficiency, tantalising and elusive, would float persistently beyond the grasp of Fred Robinson and his millhands. AKM could never strategically resolve this contradiction. Even so, the home of Kookaburra, Klingtite, Golden Fleece and Golden Ray brought faith in nation and modernity to Richmond's townscape. Monumental afterwords for a 'resolve to do our own work in our own country', the mills reflect the guiding aspiration of AKM, and one of twentieth-century Australia's most persuasive ideologies.

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A Band of Energetic Citizens: The Preston-Reservoir Progress Association Fights Back against Kennett's Neo-liberal Reforms

Karin Derkley

Abstract

When the Liberal Party came into power under Jeff Kennett in Victoria in 1992, it would bring about massive changes to a state that had been under Labor rule for ten years. The next eight years would be a time of unprecedented political polarisation in Victoria, as the Kennett government's hardline economic rationalist approach encountered fierce resistance from a community outraged by what they saw as a government abrogating its responsibilities to its people. Among them were the 'energetic citizens' of the Preston-Reservoir Progress Association who used the tools of democracy to push back against the destruction of the community services that had been so hard fought for over the years.

The Preston-Reservoir Progress Association was one of many such associations established in the suburbs and townships of Victoria from the early years of the twentieth century.[1] These groups of local volunteers lobbied to improve the services and amenities in their local communities. Progress associations have been described as a middle-class phenomenon, made up of upwardly mobile local citizens wanting to create respectable and aesthetically pleasing suburbs, with the side benefit of improving property values.[2] In her booklet on progress associations, which focuses largely on Nunawading in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, Diane Sydenham, writes: 'They were essentially apolitical organizations united by a shared goal of improving the immediate locality', with a focus on improvements 'that not only enhanced living standards, but improved property values as well'.[3] In the less advantaged northern suburbs of Melbourne, progress associations were an important instrument through which working-class citizens could lobby for the kinds of community services that provided for a decent and dignified life.

Many progress associations were highly localised. Sydenham points out that there were fourteen progress associations just in Camberwell, and, in Nunawading, some were set up by the residents of a particular street. One of the first progress associations to be set up in Victoria was the East Brunswick Progress Association in 1905.[4] The West Coburg Progress Association was established in 1917. Preston had a progress association for each of its four wards in the early years. Over the ensuing decades, associations languished or merged into others. By the 1990s, the Reservoir Progress Association had merged with the four Preston Progress Associations to form the Preston-Reservoir Progress Association.

The residents who joined the various predecessors of the Preston-Reservoir Progress Association were mostly working-class people who, after the First World War, started moving from inner-city Collingwood, Carlton and Fitzroy to the newly settled suburbs bounded by the Merri and Darebin creeks. For these people, the move from the inner suburbs was a big leap towards the goal of self-improvement, and they were determined that their new area would give their families the chance of a better life than the cramped suburbs they had left behind. The new suburbs on the barren basalt plains north of the city offered more space, but they lacked many of the most basic facilities such as paved roads or street lighting, let alone schools and health services. There were many pockets of disadvantage and the area was ethnically diverse, for many new migrants who worked alongside traditional working-class Australians in the nearby industrial areas also moved north. The area also had (and still has) one of the biggest Aboriginal populations in Victoria. Many residents lacked the money to pay for private services; few had cars, many could not pay private market rents, let alone purchase a house of their own, and many of the homes were provided by the Victorian Housing Commission formed in 1938. Most residents would have found it difficult to pay for private health services, and few would have been able to send their children to private schools.[5]

The early efforts of the members of what became the Preston-Reservoir Progress Association (PRPA) (and which would in 2011 become the Darebin Progress Association) to provide these kinds of amenities are documented in the association's minute books. They show that, like other progress associations in the area, these volunteers lobbied for amenities and facilities, such as street lighting, street signs, parks, bus shelters, sporting grounds and swimming pools. They also established

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community health services, gained extensions to public transport routes, and tried to improve the local schools and public housing that were crucial to the education and shelter of people in this area.[6] During World War II, the Preston Progress Association was involved in distributing much needed supplies, including firewood, to local people.[7]

The association had dwindled to a small group by the early 1960s. But, by the time Jeff Kennett came to power in 1992, it had been reanimated by a highly active core group that was able to mobilise the wider community to mount an impressive and creative resistance on a number of fronts in an attempt to protect the services it saw as essential to the wellbeing of the local community. It was a time that was undoubtedly the heyday of the progress association, when its power, relevance and numbers reached a height it is unlikely to achieve again.

Ian Gray has described the kinds of people who make up the typical progress association as 'energetic citizens' who assume a 'degree of leadership, and carry out some of the activities demanded from the council, even though it has no official status'.[8] During the Kennett years, the Preston-Reservoir Progress Association happened to be made up of a particularly energetic band of citizens who tried, and sometimes succeeded, to push back against forces that threatened to erode the community services the group had fought so hard to win for its residents over the past decades. What motivated these citizens? Organisation and management scholar Jone L. Pearce has described volunteers as 'pro-social', arguing that the benefits of their activities can flow back to them as well as to others they assist.[9] This was clearly the case for those who volunteered with the PRPA and its antecedents, for whom the campaign to establish amenities and community services operated for the potential benefit of everyone in the community, including themselves.

Marc Musick and John Wilson's study of volunteers points out that, while volunteering is often regarded as motivated by compassion for others, for many people volunteering is also a political act inspired by a desire to redress injustice.[10] Sydenham's claim that progress associations were essentially apolitical and that what was best for the neighbourhood took precedence over party political sympathies does not necessarily mean they were devoid of ideology and a sense of wider political purpose. In the case of the PRPA in the 1990s, it is arguable that the core group that led the protests against economic and social reforms brought about by the Kennett government were motivated not just by compassion for those

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who would be disadvantaged by its reforms, but also by an ideology that valued collective benefits over a neo-liberal user-pays system in which the state was conceived as having a limited role in improving the lives of the wider community.

To piece together the story of the energetic band of citizens that comprised the key members of the Preston-Reservoir Progress Association and what they tried to achieve during this time of social and economic upheaval, I conducted three oral history interviews. The first was a roughly hour-long one-on-one interview with its long-term president Marion Harper. Marion recommended I speak to three other members who were part of the core group during this time. Claude Anatolli, and Miriam (who did not want to use her second name) joined Marion in a second interview. I spoke separately with another key member, Debbie Moon, a month later for around one and a half hours. In the group conversations, participants reminisced about the various campaigns in which they had been involved over the years, often prompted by the association's collection of photos. As the PRPA's leader (a role she continues to hold to this day) Marion's was the voice that dominated in these interviews. But the contributions of the others supported the general narrative, even if exact dates or timing of events were sometimes muddled. Many of these events took place up to twenty years ago, and, to cross-reference the oral accounts, I also researched the coverage in local and metropolitan newspapers, such as the *Preston Leader* and the *Preston Post Times*, as well as the association's minute books and other documents held in the association's archives. From this research it was evident that the leaders' recollections of the chronology of events were not always completely accurate. However, the newspaper reports on the various protests and other lobbying activities did support Marion's claim that these people were key members of the association at the time. And there is no doubting the participants' recollection of their enthusiasm for the causes they fought for, and the energy and strategy they brought to the protests and to mobilising the local community to try to save the services they saw as crucial to the area.

Marion Harper and her husband Jim became leaders of what had already become the Preston-Reservoir Progress Association after they relocated to Reservoir from Richmond in 1961. The couple had migrated to Melbourne from England in the 1950s and were employed in Richmond as factory workers. According to Marion, it was there that

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she and Jim had received an education in activism when, concerned about the effects of the postwar recession on working people, they had joined the Communist Party after attending one of its lectures. 'We were absolutely fascinated with these people who were fighting for a better society', she said:

> So we joined the party and that's where we developed organisational skills, and learned how you take up issues, and develop ideas. We learned that you've got to take power into your own hands, and that you can't rely on other people to solve your problems.[11]

Marion said that message was later reinforced when as a young mother she attended a seminar in the mid-1970s for parents of school councils and mothers' clubs conducted by Joan Kirner, who was then president of the Victorian Federation of States School Parents' Clubs.[12]

> I remember Joan Kirner asked us all to write down our skills. She came to me and said, "you haven't written anything". I said, I don't have any skills. And she said, "Have you got children? Have you worked? Then you've got skills".[13]

The couple moved to Reservoir when Jim secured a job as a tram driver based in the Preston Tramways depot. Buying a former Victorian Housing Commission home, the couple were keen to become involved in their new community. By then the association's membership had dwindled to three elderly gentlemen who met in one of their homes 'around a pot belly stove', Marion said. Jim joined first, but 'found he couldn't get anything moved or seconded because they just talked. And so he asked me to come along'. The gentlemen were 'astonished' when Marion turned up: 'They said to Jim "we're happy to have your good wife here but she can't participate because we don't have women"'.[14] Not one to be put in her place, Marion Harper persisted, succeeding not just in making her way into the group but, with her husband, in transforming it.

Under their enthusiastic leadership, the association membership quickly increased in numbers. Among those who joined was Claude Anatolli, one of Jim's 'trammie' mates.[15] The tramways union was then well known for its activism, and for Claude becoming part of the progress association was a natural extension of that activism, applied in a community context. 'There were just so many things happening at that time', he told me, 'and I liked the fact that the association was trying to help

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the citizens and the ratepayers if they had any complaints or anything to do with the council, or the state or federal government'. Other residents joined as the growing group fought a number of battles on their behalf for better services and amenities. They included Miriam, who moved into the area from the north-eastern suburb of Research and joined after hearing Marion Harper speak at a community meeting. 'I was so full of admiration. She was just so articulate and her arguments were so clear-cut. You really understood what she was saying', she said in the group interview. Miriam has been active in the group ever since and is still the association's minute secretary today.[16]

'Our aim was to encourage people to learn how to struggle and defend their own democratic rights', Marion said. 'We wanted people to learn how the system operates and who's in control of that system and what you can do to change it. It was important for people to realise that collectively we can change things.'

During the 1970s and 1980s the association lobbied for residents on many fronts. It fought to stop the council forcibly acquiring homes for a carpark for a local church school, and it fought to get Edwardes Lake cleared of toxic waste that had been dumped there over the years without penalty. It set up a tenants' action group to advocate for the many Housing Commission residents in the area and got funding and support to set up the first Community Health Centre in Victoria. It tried but failed to stop the demolition of a dozen homes for the expansion of Northland Shopping Centre. Inspired no doubt by Jim and Marion's bigger picture of their role as social activists, the association also campaigned on more global issues. In the 1980s, with the threat of atomic warfare looming over the world, nuclear disarmament became a major issue. In April 1984, the association joined the anti-nuclear march and managed to convince Preston Council to erect council-funded signs on roads into the city declaring that Preston-Reservoir was a 'Nuclear-Free Zone'. That same year, the association advocated for East Timor, asking Prime Minister Bob Hawke and the ALP National Conference to support the tiny state's effort to gain independence from Indonesia.[17]

Campaigning and lobbying for change—or against it—were skills new to many who joined the association. Guided by Marion and Jim (who died in the 1980s), members like Claude and Miriam quickly became adept at letter writing, at organising petitions, at being part of a deputation to a local MP or councillor, and at understanding the minutiae of the

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processes involved in driving change in a democratic state. They also had to learn patience; as Marion reminded them, the wheels of democratic change can grind slowly, and it might take weeks or even months before a response to a letter or petition to a politician was received. Then those responses—often negative—had to be responded to in turn, often with a warning that the association was prepared to take the issue further, with a call to the local newspaper for instance, or the threat of a rally in High Street. This organisational effort got results—especially with the local council. 'Council was used to individuals complaining, but we found they listened when a group like ours got together, particularly if we put out leaflets and newsletters, or wrote to the newspaper', Marion said: 'They became concerned that we were reaching a fairly wide section of the community, and so they tended to listen more when we spoke. They realised that we had public opinion on our side'.

The association was always careful to keep council on side, as long as the councillors were prepared to work with them. 'We would never fight against them behind their back', Marion Harper said: 'We'd let them know that we intended to pursue things further with the government or whoever, so they always knew where we stood'. Council, for its part, began to learn that the association could be useful; if they wanted something to be done, say by the state government, and were not in a position to campaign for it themselves, they would ask the association to take up the issue. 'If we agreed with what they were wanting, we'd do that', Marion Harper said.[18]

Fighting for what you believe in is simply just a matter of understanding how to use the tools of democracy, and being confident to do so, Marion said.

> Once you understand how the system works, then you can work within it without feeling nervous. After all, the whole point of government and politics is for them to listen to what people want. That's what they are there for. And if you use those processes, you can have a big impact.

'You don't always win, but winning is not the whole point', she added: 'The point is to feel that you can have a say and that you can fight for what you believe in. That's what empowers people'.[19]

In her interview, Debbie Moon told me the association was a great learning environment. 'You learned from each other. People brought their experiences and knowledge and skills, and you'd work alongside them

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and learn from them.' Campaigning was never about fighting for the sake of it, she said: 'It wasn't about "We want this". It was about "Why do we need it? Who will benefit from it? Will the community support it?" You'd soon know whether or not the community supported it'.[20]

A New Kind of Liberal Government

From the end of World War II until the ten-year Cain/Kirner administration, Victoria had been mostly presided over by Liberal and/or Country Party governments. But, before the 1990s, Victorian Liberal-led governments had seen themselves as fitting the mould of a small 'l' liberalism in which the state played an important role in improving the lives of citizens. Their role was to provide 'intervention to achieve the equality of opportunity that was so important to liberal philosophers such as John Stuart Mill, and assisting local capital to create a prosperous socially progressive society'.[21]

Liberal administrations since the late nineteenth century had established substantial pieces of public infrastructure, including the Board of Works, the railways, the education system and the state's energy infrastructure. Premier Henry Bolte (1955–72) established the National Parks Authority and expanded public-sector authorities such as the MMBW, the State Electricity Commission and the Gas and Fuel Corporation. He built freeways, and the Melbourne-to-Albury railway was completed under his government. Bolte's government also saw its role as building a cultural infrastructure, legislating for the establishment of Monash and La Trobe Universities, the La Trobe Library and the Victorian Arts Centre.[22] Liberal premier Rupert Hamer (1972–81) built or completed key infrastructure such as the underground rail loop and the Westgate Bridge, as well as art galleries, libraries and theatres. Hamer was also socially progressive—he decriminalised homosexuality, abolished capital punishment, and outlawed sexual discrimination in the workplace.[23]

The arrival of Jeff Kennett in 1992 transformed the long-accepted notion of what Liberal governments stood for. Kennett came into power at a time of surging debt and financial contraction in Victoria. The whole of Australia was at the time in the grip of a recession that had been triggered by the 1987 stock market crash and then by high interest rates imposed to rein in high inflation that led to a property market

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crash. However, Victoria was particularly hard hit after the collapse of the Pyramid Building Society and the State Bank of Victoria. In 1993, Victoria's current account deficit was over $1.5 billion, with debt of 32 per cent of Gross State Product (GSP), compared to just 17 per cent for New South Wales and 15 per cent for Queensland.[24] Kennett's approach to the crisis was to pursue an austerity agenda that aimed to reduce state debt by selling off state assets and cutting funding to public services. This was guided by an 'economic rationalist' or 'neo-liberal' view of the world that had been embraced by Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Ronald Reagan in the United States. According to this model, the market, rather than the government, was the proper provider of services such as public transport and health, and consumers were expected to pay for the services they used.[25] Under this system, government's role was to 'steer rather than row', which meant it should withdraw from direct service provision and privatise or contract out existing government-provided services so it could focus on returning the budget to surplus.[26]

Conveniently for Kennett, the efforts of previous administrations, including Liberal governments, meant there were many high-quality assets and services to sell. Over the next seven years the Kennett government would sell off more public institutions in dollar terms than the Thatcher government, shifting more than $30 billion worth of assets into private hands, including electricity and gas utilities, state-funded schools and hospitals, Melbourne's public transport system and several prisons, as well as other services worth $10 billion.[27] It also slashed the budgets of the services it was unable to sell off completely—including education, health and the public service. In its first three years it sacked 50,000 public servants, closed 350 government schools, and rationalised hospitals. It raised rents for public housing and dramatically scaled down funding to the community health centres the association had fought so hard to establish. It also transformed the character of local government, amalgamating inner city councils, merging 210 municipalities into 78 by the end of 1994, and sacking 1,600 councillors across Victoria. The inner-city councils were the first to be overhauled, with seventeen councils amalgamated into seven and 170 councillors sacked, 24 of them in Northcote and Preston when both suburbs were subsumed into Darebin.[28]

According to Marion Harper, the PRPA had always considered itself non-party political; 'it did not align itself with either the Liberal Party, the Labor Party, or any other party', she told me, and there had been many

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instances when the association was as critical of the Labor Party and its politicians on local, state or federal levels as of the Liberal Party. But from 1992 to 1999, the battle lines between the parties became more clear-cut. The association always believed that governments play an important role in providing public services such as housing, education and health, and, to those in the PRPA, it quickly became evident that the Kennett government no longer regarded its citizens as members of a community to which it had an obligation to provide services but as customers who should pay for the services they used. To Debbie Moon, for instance, the Kennett government's approach broke its bonds with the polity it governed. 'To me that dissociated them from the idea that they were governing on our behalf', she said.[29]

Among the Kennett government's first actions demonstrating that the state no longer took responsibility for providing essential services for its citizens was the sale of the power and gas utilities, the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV) and the Gas and Fuel Corporation. These utilities had been run by both Liberal and Labor state governments for decades with the aim of ensuring a reliable supply of electricity and gas throughout the whole state. But, according to economic rationalist policies, utilities should be owned and run by private companies. They were also valuable assets that could be sold off, using the proceeds to pay off the state's debt. In 1995, the SECV was divided into three separate operations responsible for generation, transmission and distribution, to be marketed as separate businesses. In the Preston-Reservoir area, Solaris Power won the tender to supply electricity to consumers. Solaris was later sold for $950 million to an Australian and United States consortium, AGL (Australian Gas Light Company).

To the PRPA, it was clear that private buyers, whose primary objective was to increase profits, would inevitably increase prices, meaning low-income residents would no longer be able to afford to power and heat their homes. In an attempt to stop the sell-offs, the association joined forces with the Reservoir Tenants Group, the Uniting Church, the Trades Hall Council, and local organisations, collecting 2,000 signatures protesting against the sale. Marion told the *Preston Post Times*: 'Our publicly owned gas, water and electricity are being stolen from the Victorian people by a government that has no mandate from the people for the theft'. Foreign-owned electricity companies were 'not going to care about the customers', she said: 'The bottom line for them

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will be boardrooms and stockholders'.[30] In the first demonstration of Kennett's refusal to heed the protests of local communities against his plans, the sell-off went ahead. When it was revealed that the Gas and Fuel Corporation was also to be sold off, the PRPA mounted similar protests, again to no avail. Between 1997 and 1999 the Gas and Fuel Corporation was divided up and sold to private operators.

Threat to Community Health Services

Another target of Kennett's economic rationalisation was the community health centres (CHCs) the association had helped establish in the area in the 1970s and whose running they had assisted ever since. Established as an initiative of the Whitlam government, CHCs provided free health services to local residents and focused on health promotion, as well as disease prevention and management, with the aim of improving the health and wellbeing of local residents rather than just treating their ailments. They were intended to have strong involvement with the communities they served and to be responsive to their needs.[31] The committees of management were made up of members of the community, and local residents were consulted on the kinds of services each centre would provide. By the 1980s, however, the Commonwealth had handed jurisdiction over the CHCs to the states, which now controlled their funding and their administration.

Broadmeadows CHC was the first to come under attack in 1992, when its board of management was dismissed by the minister of health and replaced with an administrator. Fearing it would be among the next to be targeted, the East Preston Community Health Centre made alliances with other health services to establish the Victorian Hospital Association in an attempt to bolster its resources.[32] Later that year, the PRPA's fears seemed to be borne out when funding to the East Preston CHC was cut by more than $200,000. The cut meant it would almost certainly have to reduce its services.[33] But the board pushed back against a requirement by the Kennett government that CHCs should charge fees for services by taking advantage of a loophole in the new rules that meant fees would not need to be charged if a CHC's committee of management was made up of members of the community. For four years the East Preston CHC was able to continue operating without having to charge fees. But, in 1996, the government announced a new requirement that centres must

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be administered by professional managers rather than members of the local community. An energetic 'Bite Back Campaign' in November 1996 saw two busloads of people join a rally of around 300 people outside the office of the minister of health in Box Hill.[34] The following March a public meeting was held at the Preston Town Hall to protest the requirements. It was the first step towards a full user-pays system, Marion told the *Preston Post Times*: 'Seventy-five per cent of EPCHC's users are concession card holders, and community health centres are the last place where people who can't afford services could go'.[35]

This time the battle was lost and in April the government brought in legislation that required elected board members of the community health centres to be replaced with state government appointees.[36] Under the new management regime, the East Preston and Northcote CHCs were forced to merge, the *Preston Post Times* reported. Services were drastically reduced, and the dental service—so important to the health and dignity of Preston and Reservoir residents—was cut back and fees had to be charged. Within weeks of the new fee schedule, the head of the dental service, Bruce Hurley, reported that the number of 'no-shows' for appointments had doubled to 35 per cent. As one resident explained, dental services had become a luxury they could not afford.[37] Other doctors quit in protest at the cuts to the services. By the end of the 1990s, community health centres were not very different from regular private medical clinics, with fees charged for all services, almost no local input on the committees of management, and very little in the way of preventative health services or health education.

The Fight to Keep PANCH

In 1994, the PRPA launched into its biggest battle yet against the Kennett government as it fought to stop a plan to close down and sell off the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital (PANCH). The community hospital on top of the hill on Bell Street near Plenty Road had been a truly community endeavour. It was first planned during the Second World War to treat injured returned servicemen and provide residents with local hospital services. Prior to its opening, the Royal Melbourne Hospital in Parkville and St Vincent's in Fitzroy were the nearest hospitals for seriously ill patients, and, as one elderly Preston resident pointed out in a letter to the *Preston Post Times* during the First World War, if the Germans

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were to bomb the bridges over the Merri Creek, the people of Preston and Northcote would be totally isolated from major hospital care.[38]

In 1941 Preston Council passed a resolution that a hospital be established in the suburb, and later that year the Charities Board purchased three hectares of what had been a dairy farm in Bell Street. When government funding to build the hospital faltered, the community threw its efforts behind various fundraising efforts, including a fancy dress ball, musical afternoons, swimming competitions, a photographic exhibition, and a scheme in which thousands of local residents contributed the cost of a brick each.[39] When the hospital, affectionately known as PANCH, was finally built in 1958, it quickly became a place of pride for the people of Preston, Reservoir and Northcote. It was regularly cited as one of the city's more successful and cost-effective hospitals, and local newspapers reported the latest records: the birth of triplets in the maternity unit, or awards given to the plastic surgery unit.[40] However, even one of the best-run hospitals in Victoria, beloved of its community, was not to be immune from the Kennett government's asset-stripping program.

It was not until Kennett's second term that the bell started tolling for PANCH. First came the budget cuts. In June 1994, the government announced a $1.6 million budget cut to the hospital.[41] Later in the same year, Health Minister Marie Tehan announced that PANCH would lose its 24-hour emergency service. This did not mean it was being downgraded, she insisted, although it would face 'dramatic changes'.[42] A new hospital at Epping, to be named the Northern Hospital, was announced, initially described by Tehan as an off-shoot of PANCH. In October 1994 she announced that PANCH would help build and manage the new hospital.

For a time, all seemed to be well. In 1995, PANCH received a number of much-needed funding injections, including $400,000 to improve treatment in its Accident and Emergency Department, one of the busiest emergency departments in Melbourne. As the year went on, however, rumours emerged that several hospitals in the northern and eastern suburbs, including the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute, the Eye and Ear Hospital, St Vincent's and St George's in Kew, would be merged. When PANCH's board of management head, Ian Brand, refused to comment on whether PANCH had taken part in the merger talks, the anxieties of residents were raised still further.[43]

In 1997, the hospital was reported to be suffering a $1.6 million deficit. The government announced it would have to start cutting back

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on the services it offered. A ward was closed, and the number of intensive care staff was reduced from nine to seven.[44] Resident Margaret Gilbert told the *Preston Post Times* in August 1998 that she suspected the writing was on the wall for PANCH when she heard Don Gillies, the Darebin administrator, refer to hospitals as an 'industry', to patients as 'clients' and 'customers', and to doctors and nurses as 'providers'.[45] Marion Harper told me that the association's fears were confirmed when the head doctor at PANCH revealed to her that the hospital was definitely to be sold.[46]

Outraged at the prospect of losing their beloved PANCH, the PRPA called a public meeting at the town hall in the hope of galvanising the community in a campaign to oppose it. The town hall was filled to capacity, according to the *Preston Post Times*. Marion said that a long line of people formed immediately in response to her call for a subcommittee, which would come to be called People for PANCH. She urged them to write letters, reminding them that the government was obliged to respond to every letter sent in on a matter. 'We wrote to [local Labor MP] Michael Leighton, we wrote to Rob Knowles, and we wrote to federal ministers', Marion Harper recalled: 'We said, we will not tolerate losing what was a hospital built by the community. It doesn't belong to the government, it belongs to the community and we will not tolerate losing it'. [47] But again the Kennett government refused to be deterred from the course of action it had decided upon. Despite the extent of the community opposition, PANCH was closed in early February 1998, and all hospital staff, patients and equipment were moved to the new Northern Hospital.[48]

It would have seemed that the battle was lost. But the association was already regrouping for the next stage of combat. While it had to be accepted that the community would not be able to save its hospital, the next question was what would be done with the site on which the decommissioned hospital building still stood. The state government's initial announcement in 1996 regarding the hospital's closure had included a promise that an integrated care centre, including a day surgery, outpatient clinics and aged day care services, would be included in any redevelopment of the site. It soon became clear, however, that not only did the Kennett government plan to sell the entire site to developers, but that there were no firm plans for a community health centre.

In marketing material issued by the Health Department that visualised the site's transformation into an upmarket hotel and student accommodation, the integrated care centre had disappeared, to be

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replaced with a private fee-paying day surgery.[49] The glossy brochure proved that the open community consultation the developer had promised was a sham, Marion Harper told the *Preston Post Times*.[50] For Preston residents, already angered by the loss of the hospital to which the community had contributed so much over the years, the news that the site would be sold for profit with no benefit to the community was a further insult, the newspaper reported.[51] An assurance that part of the proceeds of the sale would go to fund other hospitals such as the Austin Hospital in Heidelberg was little consolation.[52] The great granddaughter of one resident, who in the 1950s donated £200 pounds to buy the original land, argued that, if the site was not to be retained for community use, at the very least people should be given their money back. 'Why should the government get to keep the money the community donated?' she argued.[53] At another public meeting, Marion declared that, while it was too late to save the hospital, it might not be too late to stop the state government selling the site. A rally and petition-signing event was called at which 'we had four clipboards and three people, and we could not keep up', Marion told me.

Taking guidance from the Save Albert Park group over the kinds of tactics it had used in its attempt to stop the Grand Prix taking over Albert Park Lake, People for PANCH under the leadership of Marion Harper and others in the core group planned a course of action on a number of fronts. The first was to set up a permanent information booth alongside the PANCH site on Bell Street. Nicknamed the 'Purple Palace', the booth was a converted container, painted bright purple. On the first day it opened, the *Preston Post Times* reported that around 400 people attended, writing their feelings about the PANCH closure on a big roll of paper to be hung on a fence around the hospital. One night, a banner reading 'Don't Pinch PANCH' was strung across Bell Street. By the morning it was gone, Marion Harper said, although she could not say who had been responsible for removing it.

The group also hired a bus and drove to Health Minister Rob Knowles's local office in Gisborne, where members staged a street theatre piece that incorporated a mock trial of Knowles for his 'crimes' against the City of Darebin. Marion recalled:

> We had two barristers with wigs and robes, one for the defence and one for the prosecution, and we had a policeman and witnesses and a picture

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of Rob Knowles' face, and we held the court in the car park outside the supermarket and we had the trial …

After the 'trial', the bus drove around the town, Marion and others calling out through a loud hailer.

> I said, we recognise the people up here have their own problems, but they must sympathise that we built a hospital with our hard work by holding fetes and buying bricks and now it had been sold to a bankrupt, and that was a crime against not just the people of Preston but against the people of the state. Because if we could lose our hospital, so could they.[54]

The issue had clearly become party political by March 1999, when a public rally at Northcote Town Hall was addressed by Labor politicians, including Batman federal MP Martin Ferguson and Victorian shadow minister for health, John Thwaites. Thwaites declared that selling the site was part of the Kennett government's plan to 'get rid of people's right to free health and introduce a health-for-the-rich system'. Outside the hall, around 200 members of People for PANCH carried banners, and Melbourne Workers Theatre performers dressed in nurses' uniforms told the crowd they were now on unemployment benefits after having worked at PANCH for several years.[55]

The group also drew on the tradition of 'green bans' used by builders labourers unions in Sydney in the 1970s to prevent the destruction of historically significant or environmentally sensitive areas by refusing to work on developments on these sites. Similarly, the PRPA convinced the Victorian branch of the builders labourers union to put a ban on any work on development of the site until the state government agreed to include a health centre in the plans.[56]

In April, People for PANCH sent another deputation to the office of Rob Knowles, who agreed to meet with Marion Harper to discuss the group's concerns. The health minister was adamant nothing could be done to reverse the decision to sell the land and rejected the group's demand for publicly funded health services on the site, arguing that Darebin was 'over-endowed' with health services, she reported to the *Preston Post Times*. But he had also 'left the door open' for further negotiations after admitting that the Northern Hospital was having problems with meeting demand, she added.[57]

Another rally, this one outside the Health Department in Collins Street, incorporated more street theatre. 'We had wheelchairs and nurses

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with giant syringes and lots of blood, and people lying on the footpath and being bandaged in the gutter and we called it "Kennett's Emergency Section"', Miriam recalled. Around 2,500 people attended this rally, amongst them a large contingent of Preston and Reservoir's Greek community. 'They were really upset about losing the hospital. They all wore the big yellow "Keep PANCH" badges and the T-shirts.' Onlookers were supportive, asking what it was all about, said Claude Anatolli: 'It was inspiring to them and they were supporting us'.[58]

In September, Darebin Council added its voice to the campaign by insisting that any redevelopment of the site must include the integrated health care centre promised in the original announcement in 1996. Mayor Cr Chris Kelly told the *Preston Post Times* that 'the centre [originally promised] was to provide a range of services including day surgery, renal dialysis, chemotherapy and other medical procedures along with aged day care programs'. There was not enough access to the Northern Hospital for these services for Darebin residents, she pointed out—particularly those living in the central and southern areas of the city.[59]

When an election was called in September 1999, shadow health minister John Thwaites promised that if elected his government would save public health facilities in Preston and build a health service to replace PANCH.[60] In November 1999, Jeff Kennett's Liberal government was voted out of office, bringing in a Labor Party government under Steve Bracks. Now the progress association and People for PANCH were to confront the Labor Party in power. Marion recollected how the elevation to government impacted the new health minister. While in opposition, John Thwaites had played a key part in the protests, marching alongside the rally with his hand on the truck, she said. 'When Labor was voted in, he came over and gave me a kiss and he said, I'll never be able to thank you enough for the work you did on PANCH.' But a month after the election, when Marion paid a visit to Thwaites to ask about getting a doctor for the new Little PANCH,

> he didn't kiss me this time, because he was now the health minister, not just the opposition. He shook hands very formally—he was in a different position now you see. And he wouldn't give us a doctor. So in the end there was not much difference between bloody Kennett and Labor in my opinion.

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The minister did agree that Preston-Reservoir would get a community health facility that would come to be called Little PANCH, but it would be run on his terms, which to the PRPA sounded not so very different from those dictated by the previous government. The board would be made up of professional managers, with only two community representatives, and attaining services—such as a 24-hour clinic and health professionals—was going to involve as much lobbying as getting the centre itself built.

Little PANCH eventually provided a centre that would include limited emergency care, a 24-hour clinic, dialysis, ante- and pre-natal care, and aged and dental services. While the community was grateful to at least have a community-run centre, the new facility was but a shadow of what had once been PANCH, and only a portion of what it had hoped to salvage as a community medical facility for the Preston, Reservoir and Northcote area. In a final insult to the community, the year after the Kennett government was voted out of office it was revealed that the sum paid by the developers for the site had been less than $5 million, an amount People for PANCH ridiculed as a 'bargain basement price'. The group called on the developer to sell or donate part of the site back to the state government. 'It's worth 10 times or 20 times more than that to the community', Marion said: 'They got it for a song, so the least they could do is to give the community some of it back'.[61]

Fighting against the juggernaut of the state government under Jeff Kennett was always going to be a David and Goliath affair (albeit without the happy ending). Despite the outcome, Marion considered the fight to save PANCH a vivid demonstration of community activism: 'I have never seen, in all my years as a political activist, a response like the one we have had for PANCH. It was stupendous'. The association had always insisted over the years that it was not all about the victory 'but about educating people about their rights', she said: 'If you get together and fight, you've got a chance of winning. If you do nothing, you'll never achieve anything'. [62] While the association itself is past its hey-day and its numbers have dwindled, it is arguable that, along with associations such as Save Albert Park Lake and many Save our Suburbs organisations, it provided a model for other campaigns of community activism, including the more broad-based national GetUp movement. The impact of a charismatic leader such as Marion Harper, regardless of formal education or powerful connections, is also reflected in the recent rise of independent

political candidates who, like Marion, gain their strength by mobilising and empowering other members of the community with the belief that they can achieve change through their numbers, strategic campaigns and compelling negotiation tactics.

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New South Wales Indigenous Men in Port Phillip

John Daniels

Abstract

While much has been written about Victoria's European beginnings, less has been recorded of Aboriginal responses to colonisation, and very little has been said of the Indigenous men from NSW who played a role in these early years. This historical note investigates these men, their origins, how they came to be in Port Phillip, their actions in this infant colony and the outcomes of these engagements. It is another reminder of the mobility of Indigenous people in the colonial world and their surprising stories of independent action.

Melbourne's European history began with John Batman, John Pascoe Fawkner and their pastoral associates, who jumped at the opportunity to relocate their sheep to Port Phillip's grasslands, which ironically had been created for them by Indigenous land managers. The story of Victoria's European beginnings has been examined exhaustively, beginning with James Bonwick's *Discovery & Settlement of Port Phillip* (1856). However, little has been written about John Batman's Aboriginal assistants from the south coast of New South Wales. A reconstruction of the evidence about them will help us to understand how they confronted and moved within the colonial world.

These men collectively were referred to as Batman's 'Sydney natives', but they were from the coast a considerable distance south of Sydney. The word 'native' is also a colonial word not acceptable today, unless they are quotations from the past. For shorthand I will refer to them here as 'NSW men'. Indeed, they were not Batman's men but, as we will see, their own men in many ways. Who were they? Where did they come from? What roles did they play? What became of them?

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Johnny Crook and Pigeon: To Port Phillip via Van Diemen's Land

The involvement of some of these NSW men in colonisation was initiated by John Batman when in Van Diemen's Land (VDL). After calls 'to send to Sydney for their savages and employ them to catch ours' in early 1828, Batman led a party that captured eleven Pallawah or Aboriginal Tasmanians.[1] Pigeon and Johnny Crook were part of the round-up party.[2]

John Crook (variously known as Kanninbayer, Janingbaya, Jonninbia, Yunbai, Janenbia, Tom/Tommy) was a Barewurrer (Bereworrah) man from Five Islands, Illawarra, NSW (Figure 1).[3] George Augustus Robinson, protector and conciliator of Aborigines in VDL, recorded that this man was named after missionary William P. Crook 'with whom he had formerly lived' in Parramatta prior to Crook's departure for Tahiti in 1816.[4] Johnny Crook may have attended the Parramatta Native Institution, or visited the annual Parramatta feast there. William Walker, Wesleyan missionary, observed a corroboree in November 1821 at Parramatta where 'Many of the surrounding tribes were encamped in the woods. The Five Islands blacks, when darkness had shrouded nature in her mantle, began to undress'.[5] Given John Batman was born at Parramatta and resided there until November 1821, Johnny Crook and Batman may have been acquainted. Also, John Batman's father, William, owned a timber yard and was contracted to cut cedar in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven areas in 1821.[6] John Batman quite possibly took Crook (and Pigeon) with him to VDL at the end of 1821, although historian Rebe Taylor says that Pigeon made contact with Batman while living with sealers in Bass Strait.[7]

Figure 1: Johnny Crook. Native name Yunbai from Illawarra. E.D. Barlow. 1844 print. Probably the work of William Nicholas (Courtesy Rex Nankivell Collection, National Library of Australia)

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John Pigeon (Beewurher, Waymorr, Warroba, Warrora) was a Killembargon man from Shoalhaven.[8] The origin of his English name is uncertain but may be after Pigeon House Mountain, a prominent landmark named by James Cook, inland from Ulladulla. 'Young Pigeon' was named in reports of ritual revenge battles in Sydney Town and began sealing in 1811, being in a gang of sealers landed by the brig *Mary & Sally* at the volcanic Campbell Island in the sub-Antarctic ocean, some 700 km south of New Zealand.[9] He was engaged in tree-felling and shingle-splitting with a settler at Lake Echo in central VDL in 1823.[10] Later, he was with a gang of sealers at King George Sound, Albany, Western Australia, in January 1827, sighted by the French explorer Jules Dumont d'Urville, commander of the *Astrolabe.* He recorded that Pigeon was a Port Jackson man. In late December 1826, Pigeon acted as a mediator between the Mineng people at King George Sound and the newly arrived commandant Major Edmund Lockyer and was rewarded with rations.[11]

The employment of Indigenous people of NSW as sailors was not uncommon, especially among the crews of sealing vessels. These vessels probably attracted south coast men to Sydney and beyond, 'although the communities of Sydney and the south coast have long-standing and deep family and cultural connections'.[12]

In 1830 Batman used some of these men in the infamous roving parties that hunted down or rounded up troublesome Pallawah. Governor Arthur met Pigeon and 'promised to give him a great deal if he could succeed in bringing in a tribe on friendly terms'.[13] By September 1830, the government had granted both Pigeon and Crook 100 acres adjacent to Batman's Kingston property for their services.[14] The *True Colonist*, in January 1835, noted a grant to 'Batman (originally located to John Crook) 106 ac. Malvern parish'.[15] It seems Batman may have profited from Pigeon and Crook's properties. In June 1839, soon after Batman's death, Pigeon complained to Robinson, by then the chief protector of Port Phillip, 'about not having received any compensation for the 100 … also the want of wages from Batman'. Robinson wrote promptly to James Simpson, a leader of the Port Phillip Association, about the matter.[16] The fate of these land grants deserves further research.

Working with the roving parties exposed the NSW men to danger, both from the Pallawah and settlers. In February 1832, when catching a treed possum while a member of Anthony Cottrell's roving party, Pigeon was mistaken for a Pallawah man by a shepherd who 'fired a charge of

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buckshot at him; most providentially it had not a fatal effect, but poor PIGEON was very severely wounded in the breast and in the leg and arm'.[17] In December 1832 it was reported that Steward, 'one of the most trusty and sagacious of … Sydney blacks', also in Cottrell's roving party, survived an attack by the spears of Tasmanian blacks whilst crossing a stream.[18]

More Recruits from NSW

At the height of the Black War in VDL, Batman proposed recruiting more NSW men and sent Pigeon and Crook, who returned with five men in August 1831.[19] All came from the south coast, Sydney down to Jervis Bay—Dharawal (or Tharawal) language country. According to N.J.B. Plomley, they were likely the following men:[20]

- **Lewis or Macher** (Maccah, Mackey), chief of the Killembargon, Shoalhaven; brother of Pigeon. His portrait was made by John Rae in 1842;[21]
- **Jack Radley**/Radly (or Garrammilly, Tanambilly, Terro'mallee), a man of the Mullowong people;
- **Sawyer** (or Numbunghundy, Nombargundy, Nambardo), man of the Kairhermywurher (Germioworrah) people; listed in 'The Return of Aborigines Issued with Blankets at Illawarra, September 1829'; and noted in the 'List of Native Blacks Assembled at Wollongong in May, 1830';[22]
- **Steward** (or Stewart, Nillang), man of the Kollallec people, near Jervis Bay. Alexander Berry, in his 'Diary of an Expedition to Shoalhaven River', June 1822, noted meeting Steward (probably first overseer of Numbaa, leased by Charles Throsby), who had an Indigenous man servant.[23] Since it was common for Indigenous workers to take or be given the name of white employers, he was possibly named after the overseer Steward;
- **Waterman** (or Onnorerong, Monowara) man of the Berwerry people, near Jervis Bay. In August 1825, Berry hired two local Indigenous men, one being Jack Waterman, to act as guides for a doctor visiting the Illawarra.[24] Waterman was mentioned in the 'List of Native Blacks Assembled at Wollongong in May, 1830'.[25] Artist Charles Rodius drew a portrait of 'King Jack Waterman' in 1834.

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In September 1831, two more NSW men arrived:

- **Joe the Marine** (or Quanmurrer), a man of the Koorrambun people near Jervis Bay;
- **Jack Waiter** (or John Peter, John Piper, Bulberlang, Bollobolong), man of the Barwurrer tribe, from the headwaters of the Shoalhaven.

In 1832 another Indigenous NSW man arrived in VDL after travelling to various colonial sites. He was:

- **William** (or Budgergorry, Willimanan), aged 25 years, a man of the Koonametta peeople, possibly from Eden, who landed in Launceston in March 1832 after five years sealing on Kangaroo Island. He was employed when a boy on a farm and then became a whaler.[26]

There is a portrait drawing from 1833 in the British Museum by convict artist W.B. Gould of an Aboriginal man titled 'Tom'. Gould was under sentence at Macquarie Harbour when three NSW men, Joe the Marine, Lewis, and Steward, accompanied Cottrell in a roving party to Macquarie Harbour, then absconded back to Kingston.[27] Gould's subject is in a sailor's outfit, so it is likely to be Joe.[28]

The three who absconded from Cottrell's roving party demonstrated fierce independence, and Robinson reported similar defiance by the NSW men in October 1832. They abused Captain Kelly, refused to return to the island and 'Said … they should go to Hobart Town to the Governor and that they insisted upon having their rights'.[29] George Robinson, conciliator of Aborigines, was scathing about them, claiming:

> They are great drunkards and since their arrival in Launceston have been rolling about the streets in a beastly state of intoxication. It is a mistaken notion to bring them down here. They are small, effeminate creatures and know nothing of the language of these people. The natives of this country would soon destroy them. They cannot throw their spear except with a womera.[30]

However, the NSW men were utilised in carrying and ferrying supplies, hunting for food, building shelters and canoes, and tracking and guarding captive Pallawah.

In January 1833, Batman ascended Ben Lomond with a party that included his surveyor friend J.H. Wedge, his neighbour the artist John Glover, and some NSW men. Glover recorded the event in his sketchbook

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97, prompting the curator David Hansen to write in 2003 that 'From headdresses, weapons and dance steps, it appears likely that the night-time corroboree and possum-hunting figures … are … these domesticated Sydney natives'.[31] Wedge named a nearby tarn Pigeon's Well. Later, in February 1835, two of the NSW men assisted Wedge and Surveyor-General George Frankland to explore the source of the Derwent River.

After William was rewarded with £7 and despatched to Sydney in January 1833, Pigeon and five others also returned on the *Ellen* in March. Since Lewis, Joe the Marine and Steward were still with Batman in April when he applied for their rewards, the five must have been Radley, Sawyer, Waterman, Jack Waiter and Crook.[32] However, the *Colonist* reported in March 1834 that: 'The Sydney natives who were employed here during our Black War under Mr Batman' had returned to work for him as farm labourers, describing them as 'active fellows and we understand much more industrious than the generality of their nation'.[33]

Not all returned. Only Pigeon, Crook and Jack Waiter came back, along with four newcomers from the NSW south coast: Brolick, Bloody Jack Bullett, John Allan and Peter Logan.[34] A Brulick was mentioned in the 'List of Clothes and Blankets Issued to NSW Aborigines during 1828 and 1829' at Wollongong. Jonny Allan was listed in the 'Return of Aborigines Issued with Blankets at Illawarra in September, 1829'. Allan likely took his name from David or Andrew Allan, first grantees of land in the Illawarra in 1816. Both Jonny Allan and William Brulick appear in the 1829 'Nominal List of Aborigines in Illawarra and Shoalhaven'.[35] Bloody Jack Bullett could have been Young Bloody Jack who appeared in the same list. Keith Vincent Smith, curator of an exhibition on Aboriginal Australia's colonial maritime history, thinks Bullett was likely Pigeon's old ally, Blueitt or Blewit.[36] No mention can be found of Peter Logan. Of those who did not return, Waterman can be identified from later blanket returns. In September 1836, a convict worker at Shoalhaven estate, Thompson, was sentenced to 35 lashes for 'keeping sawyers wife the native'.[37] I take this as meaning 'Sawyer the native's wife'. Radley cannot be traced.

With Batman to Port Phillip

Seven NSW men accompanied Batman on the *Rebecca*, although Batman's journal only names six: Pigeon, Joe Marine, Bungitt (Bungett), Stomert and Old Bull, adding Bullet when referring to those he left with

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William Todd at Indented Head. This is the first reference to Bungett and Old Bull. Rex Harcourt states that Bullet was also known as Stomert and raises the hitherto unmentioned Jacky (also known as Joe King), although Bonwick also lists Joe King and only four above-mentioned others named by Batman.[38] John Allan was also known as Jack.[39]

Keith Vincent Smith, in his study of Indigenous people who sailed on British ships, suggests that Old Bull was Bulldog (Toula or Toulgra), a partner of resistance leader Musquito. Both were related by marriage to Bennelong, and both were sent to Norfolk Island in 1805. Bulldog was fourteen or fifteen years old in 1802 when French artist Nicolas-Martin Petit drew his portrait at Parramatta.[40] He was involved in sealing and had joined Batman by 1835 when he would have been about 50 years old.

Perhaps the most reliable list of the seven who accompanied Batman to Port Phillip is provided by W.H. Gill (art dealer and collector of Australiana) in a letter to the *Argus* in 1925: 'John Pigion, Joe Marin, Bill Bullets, Joe Bungett, John Stewart, Old Bull, Chief Mackey. I give the spelling of the natives' names as written in my manuscript'. Gill claimed to have 'a valuable Van Diemen's Land manuscript journal of 1835, which gives the full personnel of the Rebecca'. It is unknown to which manuscript Gill was referring—and it may not be extant. Interestingly, Gill names one of the crew as 'Henry Shern (seaman)', a name not noted in any historical writing about the event.[41] My research has not found any other reference to Shern, suggesting Gill may not be totally reliable or Shern's name is misrecorded.

Clearly, name changes from spelling variations or altered circumstances cause confusion and make the identification of individuals difficult. Many Indigenous people assumed or were given the names of their employers, or were devalued with mocking, crude, belittling and racist names. Some are hard to trace because of this. The name Jack Waiter, who was with Batman in VDL, is not found again until almost twenty years later, as a professional prize-fighter in NSW in 1853.[42] Whether it is the same man is unclear.

The seven NSW men formed a majority of Batman's eleven-strong party that landed in June 1835 to explore Port Phillip. Batman relied on their bush skills but more importantly their capacities for negotiation, being travellers in the colonial world, skilled in Aboriginal protocols and able to communicate despite language differences. From the beginning of the voyage on 10 May from Launceston, Batman reported that they

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'worked exceeding well during the day and night, and in a great measure owing to their exertions we got so far down' the Tamar. The NSW men worked well throughout the journey. Batman determined on 7 June, that

> two of the Sydney natives should swim across the smallest river and go to the vessel and bring up the boat. Bullet and Bungett swam, and had to go about seven miles, which they did, and were back with the boat in three hours.

Their role as conciliators with the Kulin began on 11 May with the first encounter when they 'stripped off and went up to them quite naked'. The next encounter with the Kulin was at the treaty site on 6 June when they 'gave the chiefs and their tribe a grand corroboree' which '[t]hey seemed quite delighted with'. Before leaving the site, on 7 June, 'Bungett went to a tree and made the Sydney natives' mark'. After this was done Batman took 'the principal chief and showed him the mark … this he knew immediately and pointed to the knocking out of the teeth'.[43]

The NSW Men in Port Phillip

Upon leaving Old Bull, Bullet, Bungitt, Joe Marine and Pigeon at Indented Head, Batman returned to Launceston with Steward and Mackey/Lewis. Historian James Boyce claims that 'Todd's journal makes it clear that he and Gumm were little more than onlookers' and that Pigeon was the head man among the NSW men.[44] There are constant references to 'Pigeon, etc.'. William Todd's journal continues the variety of name spellings such as Bull/Bulbalong, Bingett/Bunguet. He refers to them as vetras, vitras and vibras, probably variants of Pallawah dialect words (wybra, viper, vaiba, weiba, wiber). 'Viper' among the Cape Grim people also referred to 'native of NSW'.[45] Whilst Todd's diary indicates a concern for the NSW men's welfare in dealing with the Wathaurung, he recorded that 'Pidgeon states that he should not be the least afraid of going in the bush with them for any length of time without Arms. They all seem to be very attached to Pidgeon, etc.'.[46]

The NSW men assisted the exploration of Port Phillip after the *Rebecca* returned in July with John Helder Wedge, Henry Batman (with his wife and four daughters), and the NSW men Steward, Johnny Crook and John Allan. Wedge explored the surrounding area, accompanied by several NSW men. In mid-August he traversed the Bellarine Peninsula with Steward and Old Bull.[47] In February 1836, Steward accompanied

Gellibrand on his tour of the treaty territory to the north of the settlement and was helpful in recognising landmarks from his earlier exploration with Batman. When horses strayed at Plenty River, Steward tracked them, allowing Gellibrand to catch his returning boat, the *Caledonia*, to Hobart.[48]

Before John Batman settled permanently in April 1836, his brother Henry was in charge of the NSW men, used to unload and ferry cargo to the settlement. However, Henry set a bad example with his own heavy drinking. Disorder and drunkenness followed the unloading of the *Adelaide* in January 1836. Henry quarrelled with Johnny Crook and 'struck him'. He then recorded: 'Sydney Blacks absconded last night & took all the Blacks about here away', disappearing from the settlement for six days. When John Pascoe Fawkner and Henry Batman disputed primacy of settlement, the NSW men became enmeshed in their enmity. Bullet faced a citizens' court in May 1836 in connection with Fawkner's claim against Henry Batman for damages caused by Bullet killing some of Fawkner's rabbits. The judiciary panel found that 'some hasty expressions of Mr. Batman may have led Bullett to destroy the rabbits'. Fawkner also claimed Batman sent 'the Sydney Blacks to pull down my Paling during the night'. Fawkner complained to Charles Swanston, a member of the Port Phillip Association, that 'he monopolises the Sydney blacks'.[49] Their services were clearly in demand.

By early 1836 there were at least eight NSW men in the new settlement: Old Bull, Bullet, Bunget, Joe Marine, Pigeon, Steward, Crook, and John Allen. On 4 April Henry Batman 'sent … some men to help the *Hetty*, [stranded near Brighton] viz. Eight Sydney Blacks and went himself'.[50]

John Batman returned from VDL on 20 April 1836, bringing with him Wesleyan minister the Reverend Joseph Orton. Ten NSW men attended Orton's first church service four days later, held under she-oak trees on Batman's Hill. The Reverend Daniel Draper reported they were

> smart, intelligent looking fellows, dressed in red shirts and white trousers, with black handkerchiefs about their necks. The chief of the party was decorated with a full military suit presented to him by Governor Arthur; the cocked hat and feathers formed the crowning ornament to a dress which he wore with ease and grace.[51]

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Probably this 'chief' was Pigeon. The identity of the other Indigenous men is unknown. The NSW men probably camped near John Batman's house on Batman's Hill.[52]

In July 1836, Charles Franks and a shepherd were killed by Aboriginal landowners at Mount Cotterell. Bullett, Steward and Joe the Marine, and some Kulin men, accompanied the investigating party headed by Henry Batman, which led to the shooting of some Indigenous owners.[53]

By September 1836, Crook and Lewis were back in New South Wales. Tommy/Johnny Crook guided the Quaker missionary James Backhouse in September/October 1836, joining Backhouse at the Kangaroo Ground (Kangaroo Valley) where he and Lewis jointly directed the party to Bong Bong (Berrima). Lewis appears in the 1842 blanket returns and provision store books of the Shoalhaven estate.[54] Artist William Nicholas did two watercolour paintings of Crook in the 1840s in the Illawarra. A watercolour portrait of Crook also exists, possibly by T.G. Wainewright.[55] The *Sydney Monitor* in late 1840 reported: 'DRUNKARDS. James Perry confined by Constable Smith, 12 hours treadmill; John Crook by Bradbury, 5 hours stocks'.[56] Then as late as December 1843 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported: 'John Crook and Betsy Crook, two aborigines, for being drunk and disorderly'.[57]

In late 1838 John Batman's health deteriorated. Two NSW men wheeled him around Melbourne in a 'large perambulator' and took him to church, lifting him into a pew.[58] Prior to Batman's death in May 1839, the NSW men were reported a number of times for being drunk and disorderly. Bunget spent 21 hours in the stocks as punishment during 1837 and 1838.[59] Steward's body was discovered in the Yarra in March 1839 his drowning allegedly caused by 'brutal intoxication'.[60] Fawkner overstated the situation in his newspaper: 'The Sydney blacks oftentimes when drunk, grossly injured the natives of this district, and this was the only cause of dispute up to the time when the Governor arrived in September'.[61] Relations and interactions between the NSW men and the Kulin were generally congenial, and some certainly drank together. William Thomas, the assistant Aboriginal protector, reported one night in November 1839 there was an

> awful uproar. A Sydney (Joe, late at Batman's) and a Port Phillip black (Derrimut) came at ten o'clock, drunk, into the encampment [at South

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Yarra]. They had fallen into the Yarra and were vociferating against the whites who Derrimut said had stole his hat and stick.[62]

After John Batman's Death

With Batman's death in May 1839 the NSW men lost their employer and camping place. Although there is no evidence of regular payment of wages by Batman, he asked Dr Cussen to attend to their medical needs.[63] Robinson commented that on 6 June 1839 'Bullet, Sydney black, came in the evening for protection'.[64] On the same day, Fawkner asked in his newspaper:

> What has become of the Blacks that were living at Mr. J. Batman's, some rumour has reached us, that the Chief Protector intends to see where, and how, these men are employed, and paid. This ought to have been done long ago, for these men have been for years real SLAVES.[65]

A draft agreement was drawn up, possibly by Edward Thomas Newton (formerly Batman's superintending clerk and, after 23 June 1839, an attorney of the executors of Batman's estate) placing them under Chief Protector Robinson's care:

> We, … aboriginal natives of NSW, having from a want of a knowledge of the usages of the white people heretofore experienced much difficulty in the management of our own affairs, and with the view of preventing further loss arising therefrom, desire that the Chief Protector of Aborigines will be good enough to act for us in all cases where we are individually concerned, either in providing us with employment, or in the appropriation of the monies or goods that we may receive in consideration of our services. This being our express wish and desire, we now voluntarily place ourselves under the immediate protection and guidance of the Chief Protector of Aborigines in New South Wales, being assured that whatever he advises will be for our good and personal advantage.[66]

This agreement sounds like a genuine effort to look after their interests. However, they may not have been happy with such oversight. William Thomas in 1840 informed his superior, George Robinson, that '[i]t would be well did all the Aborigines late with Mr. Batman place themselves under your benign protection'.[67]

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On 14 June 1839, the first legally ratified work agreement between an Aboriginal person and a European employer in Port Phillip occurred when Newton agreed to give board and lodging for one year at Mordialloc and £26 annually, paid to the protector in the names of Robert Bullet and Robert Allen.[68] Similar agreements were organised by William Thomas for John Allen with Newton, and for Pigeon, Joseph (likely Bunget) and Joe the Marine with Edward William Hobson on the Mornington Peninsula.[69] However, Robert/John Allan stayed with Newton for only one month. These work arrangements were treated loosely. Thomas complained that '[l]aboring hands are so scarce that the Blacks are decoyed from one Master to another, parties knowing that the Bench refuses to take cognizance of their agreement'.[70] Partly owing to this problem Batman's NSW men were now scattered, and their movements are difficult to track. However, William Thomas recorded in June 1839:

> Mr. Batman's black Jack went with the dray to supply forage for horse police and was left at the Goulburn; Bungat removed to Baxter's Station at the Goulburn; Sam, removed to Dixon's Station at the Goulburn; Pigeon taken by young Smith to Arthurs Seat … John Allen and Old Bull at Batman's sheep station.[71]

In October, Bullet reported to Robinson that 'Pidgeon and Joe the Marine had black women whom they were living with north of Mount Macedon'.[72]

We have just been presented with three more names: Robert Allen, Sam and Black Jack. Exactly who they were and whether they were with Batman back in 1836 is impossible to say. As well as more NSW men appearing in Port Phillip as crew on smaller boats, other Indigenous people found their way south accompanying overlanders. Robinson came across a number of them in his travels, recording: 'Bill the Sydney native', stockman for Bunbury at Mount William in the Grampians; 'Tinker, the Cape How native, whom I had formerly seen on the Lodden' near Elmhurst in July 1841; in November 1845 at Tallarook a 'Sydney black was with Campbell, came overland with Campbell'; and in the Western District in April 1843 Robinson noted a 'Sydney native formerly with Fairy robbed Frenchman'.[73] In 1844 an Indigenous man from Sydney worked for Manifold in the Portland area.[74]

Pigeon continued his adventures. In 1840, Pawel Strzelecki, the Polish explorer of the Australian Alps and Snowy Mountains, was forced to abandon his horses and geological specimens at Koornalla. A month

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later, in June, a party of four men including Pigeon retrieved the items. The following year, 1841, Pigeon was involved in pursuing a group of VDL Aborigines who had committed raids on properties in West Gippsland and killed two whalers at Cape Patterson. The group of five (two men and three women, one being Truganini) began their actions in Cranbourne in early October, continuing onto Cape Patterson and back almost to Dandenong, and then reversing all the way to Anderson's Inlet at Westernport, where they were apprehended on 20 November. 'Three principal guides rejoiced in the names of Mr. Lively, Mr. Langhorne and Pigeon, an old man dressed in a green frock coat … and a beaver hat, armed with an immense musket'.[75] Those deemed responsible for the raids and killings were Maulboyheener (Bob) and Tunnerminnerwait (Jack), two of the fifteen Pallaway Robinson had brought with him from Flinders Island. On 20 January 1842 these two men were publicly hanged in Melbourne, the first sentenced offenders to be executed in Port Phillip. The Indigenous guides received a reward of a blanket each, but only because William Thomas insisted.[76]

The year 1841 was almost the last we hear about Batman's NSW men, referred to at the time as 'Sydney Blacks'. In March Robinson 'saw Derrimart, Niggeranaul, Parderup in Melbourne, ordered them off, also Pidgeon'. In September 1841 Robinson noted a visit, recording that 'Bullert, Sydney native, called'.[77] Settler William Kyle recalled that in 1841, on his family's Tarcomb station near the Goulburn River, a

> Sydney black, our assistant stockman, civil, obliging and speaking good English, fell in love with Black Kitty … He left his civilised life and resumed native habits, joining the tribe. At a corroboree with another tribe, the head man, who was unfavourable to his union with Kitty, took the opportunity to kill him.[78]

Those on another's country could be seen as threats to be disposed of. George Robinson reported an Aboriginal youth, from Joseph Hawdon's station near Sydney, was murdered at Sunday Creek in August 1841 by local Aborigines.[79] In 1845, it was reported that a Sydney Indigenous man named Bradbury, in the service of Learmonth near Hamilton, 'left him a short time since to reside with the blacks of Mount Eales. These gentry not relishing the company of their new visitor knocked his brains out'.[80]

Pigeon, one of the most prominent of Batman's NSW men, died in 1842 in typically adventurous circumstances. The *Port Phillip Patriot* reported on a salvage operation of the *William Salthouse*, the first cargo

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vessel from British Canada to Port Phillip, which was lost while entering the Heads on 28 November:

> Death by Drowning,—On Sunday last an aboriginal native, named Pigeon, who was employed as a diver by the owners of the wreck *William Salthouse*, to assist in recovering the goods on board, met his death under the following circumstances:—It appears that Pigeon had dived down to the vessel to fix a tackle to a cask of whisky, and remaining under water longer than usual his companions became alarmed, and endeavoured to rescue him, but without avail. The unfortunate man must have either fallen prey to a shark, or else remaining at the wreck till exhausted, the strength of the current must have carried him away so far that before he could regain the boats he sank unperceived.[81]

Robinson curtly, and perhaps inaccurately, noted: 'Pidgeon drowned last Sunday night, was intoxicated'.[82]

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Batman's NSW men, the so-called 'Sydney Blacks' from the south coast of NSW, disappeared from the historical record within a decade of the European colonisation of Port Phillip, which they helped to expedite. They lived on the edge, not belonging to white society, nor to the Indigenous societies with which they mixed. They made their way in the colonial world as best they could, first in NSW, then VDL, and finally Port Phillip. They lived in the fog of their present, not knowing how things might play out, but remaining their own men in an unpredictable world.

Notes

1 *The Tasmanian*, 28 March 1828, p. 2.

2 Michael K. Organ (compiler), *Illawarra & South Coast Aborigines 1770–1900*, Vol. 2, University of Wollongong, 1993, p. 86, at https://ro.uow.edu.au/asdpapers/118.

3 N.J.B. Plomley (ed.), *Friendly Mission: The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson 1829–34*, Hobart, Quintus, 2008, p. 506.

4 Plomley (ed.), p. 459.

5 Organ (comp.), p. 57.

6 Organ (comp.), p. 86.

7 Rebe Taylor, 'The Wedge Connection and the Conundrum of Humane Colonisation', *Meanjin Quarterly*, Summer 2017, pp. 34–55.

8 Plomley (ed.), p. 506.

9 Keith Vincent Smith, *Mari Nawi: Aboriginal Odysseys*, State Library NSW, 2010, p. 32. This book is an elaborate catalogue for the 2010 exhibition at the State Library of New South Wales under the same title.

10 *Hobart Town Courier*, 5 December 1829, p. 4.

11 Smith, p. 15.

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Gum-Tree Gas, Soap and Candles: The Work of Civil Engineer Godfrey Praagst in Colonial Victoria

Ian D. Rae

Abstract

Godfrey Praagst (1827–72), an experienced European civil engineer, arrived in Melbourne in 1855 and applied himself to the transformation of local materials into commercial products—lighting gas from gum leaves, and soap and candles from animal fats. He compiled a substantial portfolio of patents and used the press to defend himself against challenges to the originality of some of them. Gas from gum leaves is a historical curiosity, but soap is still manufactured from animal fat. Praagst is mentioned in passing in a number of histories, but no full appreciation of his contributions has been published until now.

Arriving

Godfrey Praagst (1827–72) arrived in Melbourne in May 1855 aboard the *Tasmania*, after a voyage of three months from London. He was accompanied by his wife, Therese née Mallavaux, whom he had married in France in 1852, and his younger brother, James Theodore Praagst (1837–1918). It would seem from their family name that the Praagst brothers were German, but although their family had German origins their parents were English, and the boys had been born in Moscow in 1827 and 1837 respectively. Their father, Francis Edward Praagst, an iron founder, and his wife, Jane née Hampson, had moved to Moscow in 1840, when Francis was invited by the Russian government to establish a factory there.[1]

Settling

Although no details have survived of Godfrey Praagst's European experience, it is clear that by heritage and experience he was well qualified to develop new industries in the rapidly developing colony

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of Victoria, and he got right down to business.[2] He had worked in his father's foundry business from 1842 and then broadened his experience by working as a mechanical and civil engineer in France, Germany and Russia.[3] Although Praagst must have understood the business of iron working, it was not to Victoria's fledgling iron industry[4] that he turned but to industrial sectors that perhaps related more to his later European experience—treatment of minerals, the generation of lighting gas, and the production of soap and candles from fats and oils. The first of these did not succeed—he purchased an interest in a quartz-crushing machine of novel design, but the insolvency of the principal owner led to this asset being seized by the insolvency commissioner, and no more was heard of Praagst's participation in the venture.[5] He was more successful with the other technologies, and the description of them forms the major part of this historical note.

Praagst's Lighting Gas

Lighting with gas produced by heating coal in an oxygen-free atmosphere (pyrolysis)—the solid product of this process being coke for use in iron smelting—was common in the nineteenth century in industrialised areas, notably in Britain where over half a century coal production grew from 10 million to 60 million tons a year. However, lighting gas was also produced in this period by pyrolysis of organic materials such as mineral, whale or fish oil.[6] Details of the use of wood for gas production were published in Ure's Dictionary, where it was commented that the relative cost of coal and wood could prevent the adoption of wood in Britain, but its 'rapid adoption in many German and Swiss towns proves the practicability of the process in districts where wood is cheap'.[7] Unlike coal gas, the gas derived from wood was free from sulphur and ammonia compounds and had slightly higher illuminating power.

Praagst saw an opportunity to produce lighting gas by the pyrolysis of local organic material—the leaves of the abundant eucalyptus species—and he achieved his first success in late 1856 by lighting the hotel at Carlsruhe in the central Victorian goldfields.[8] Because the leaves contained no sulphur the gas produced from them did not contain odorous sulphurous materials, as coal gas did, but there were acid impurities that had to removed from the gas by treating it with lime. 'A cartload of gum leaves per week', the paper reported, 'is more than

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sufficient for the sustenance of fifty burners'. On the basis of this modest success, the citizens of a larger regional town formed the Kyneton Gas Company to take up Praagst's process for the lighting of their town, with 400 burners operating for four hours a day on gas generated from gum leaves.[9] The pyrolysis plant constructed over the next few months was most visible on account of the gas storage, a gasometer 36 feet in diameter and 12 feet deep (Figure 1). The eucalyptus plant material was first distilled destructively (vinegar being recovered as a by-product), and a mixture of the resulting charcoal, tar and oil was reheated to produce illuminating gas.[10] In the trial of the gas in early January, the Kyneton Hotel was illuminated with 'a pure and brilliant light'.[11] Within a few months the scheme was extended to other parts of Kyneton,[12] but the gas supply was often unreliable, partly because of uncertainties in the supply of raw material, and the plant was eventually converted to operate on coal.[13]

Figure 1: The Praagst gasworks in Kyneton, unchanged in form after being converted to use coal in place of gum leaves (Courtesy National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Database, B1272)

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The possibility of generating gas from locally available plant material attracted entrepreneurs in other goldfields towns too. A Mr Courtis succeeded in lighting his reading room in Castlemaine by this method before initiating another venture in Ballarat.[14] A plan to light the whole of Castlemaine with Courtis's gas was opposed by local resident John Martin, who doubted the ability of the company to provide the service within a year, warned of the possibility that leaks could plunge the town into darkness, questioned whether the local council had the right to 'empower a private company to cut up the thoroughfare to lay their pipes', and urged that a water company would be a 'more substantial comfort to us than a struggling gas company'.[15] Some years later, Praagst also put forward a proposal to light Castlemaine with gum-tree gas,[16] but those backing the development of a gas service preferred coal to gum leaves.[17]

According to the prospectus issued by the Kyneton Gas Company, the directors were considering, in addition to lighting gas, the production of pyroligneous acid, tar and charcoal. These products are formed, along with the gas, in the pyrolysis of wood and other vegetable material, the 'acid' consisting of a mixture of water, methanol and acetic acid. Acetic acid is a source of vinegar, so the pyrolysis could provide an alternative to the usual method of microbiological fermentation. Others were interested in this, and in the 1860s the dry distillation of wood was investigated by Ferdinand von Mueller and his associate George Christian Hoffmann.[18] The industry was never sustainable, except under special conditions, as was evident during its brief flowering in Victoria in the early twentieth century and in Western Australia in mid-century.[19] Enthusiasts felt that 'the expanses of foliage that stretch, in wavy outline, from one mountain range to another', serving 'no other purpose than to shelter the wild animals of the forest, or to preserve the solitude of nature', could well be put to use in the manufacture of gas,[20] but one perceptive writer greeted this view with the question 'What will become of our forests?'[21] Ultimately, it was the limited availability and cost of wood that were the main reasons such ventures were unsustainable.

Following the passing of the *Patent Act* in Victoria in 1854, inventors were able to protect their intellectual property by seeking patent protection for fourteen years. At first there were very few applicants (only 29 in the first three years), hence the low serial numbers (RGO74/CSO59)[22] of the 1858 patent issued to Godfrey Praagst for 'Manufacture of oil from a material not hitherto used'. The claims were, first, for extraction by

distillation of a spirituous oleaginous compound oil from gum-tree leaves, and, second, for the extraction of carbureted hydrogen, pyroligneous acid and tar. The granting of the patent was derided in an article published in the journal of the Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria,[23] in which the writer(s) noted that 'the present President of the Legislative Council had employed himself in distilling oil from native gum-tree leaves' and so, although nobody had opposed the patent, it was 'not worth a straw'. The personal reference was to James Frederick Palmer (1803–71),[24] although the credit for eucalyptus oil distillation, which began in 1853, most often accrues to his partner, Joseph Bosisto (1824–98).[25] The article was unsigned, but it should be noted that Bosisto was co-editor of the journal. While questioning his priority for the distillation of oil from eucalyptus leaves, the author(s) complimented Praagst on the success of his experiment at Carlsruhe, although he was also advised 'to amend his patent for his own protection'. Similar sentiments were expressed in the daily newspaper.[26] The lack of interest in patent protection in the colony is perhaps demonstrated by the fact that patents had not been taken out by the early eucalyptus distillers, and it was not until 1861 that Bosisto registered his first patent (No. 512) entitled 'Production of volatile oils from the leaves, twigs, and bark of the gum-trees and Australian tea-tree, and for the use thereof'.[27]

Praagst's critics had not read his patent carefully, since underlying the title—manufacture of oil—were two claims. It was the first of these that had caught their eye—the 'extraction, by distillation, of spirito-oleaginous compound oil from gum tree leaves'—which they identified as involving knowledge that had already been put into practice by his predecessors, although Praagst used dry distillation and not steam distillation (as Bosisto and others did) to separate the oil from the leaves. His second claim, however, took him into virgin territory since it was for 'extraction of carburetted hydrogen, pyroligneous acid, and tar'. There was newspaper coverage of the dispute, too, rehearsing the arguments on both sides without reaching a conclusion about the validity of Praagst's patent.[28]

As with many patents, it was likely that the success enjoyed by the Praagst as the inventor owed much to 'know-how' that was not made explicit in the patent. Experiments with gum leaves at Ballarat had proved unsatisfactory in other hands, and the gas company there opted for the use of coal. Praagst responded to the implied criticism by stating that he was not surprised at the poor quality of the gum-leaf gas obtained

there, adding that 'it was only by dint of perseverance that I acquired certain experience as to the species of gum-leaf, the best season for collecting same, the drying, and, lastly, the most suitable apparatus for manufacturing the leaf into gas'. He continued to innovate and to patent the results of his investigations, first in 1861 (no. 481) for 'improvements in the manufacture of vegetable-gas for illuminating purposes' and finally in 1864 (no. 717) for 'improvements in gas burners'. Although his other activities, discussed in the next section, came to dominate Praagst's work, he always retained an interest in the generation of illuminating gas from wood, despite the dominant position achieved by coal. His last recorded public appearance on this stage was in 1867, when he wrote in some detail to a Melbourne newspaper about his involvement with a proposal of that type being put forward by the Co-operative Gas Consumers Company.[29] Tracing his interest back to his 'having witnessed its use in cotton manufactories in Russia and Germany', and relating his experiences in Victoria, he claimed that wood was a cheap alternative to coal.

> Whilst it is important that we should try to discover the deposits of coal stored by nature in the carboniferous strata—the remains of forests of former epochs of the earth's existence—it is also desirable that we should utilise the woods of our forests.

Praagst's status as an inventor was recognised when he was awarded a medal 'conferred with honourable distinction' for his entry in the Australasian colonies section at the International Exhibition in London in 1862, for 'secondary products obtained in the manufacture of gas from wood'. The official reports of the exhibition do not say exactly what these products were, but Praagst's citation was included in a section dealing with distilled hydrocarbons available for illuminating and lubricating purposes.[30] Further recognition came in 1863 when he was elected an ordinary member of the Royal Society of Victoria.

Praagst seemed to be ever alert to the possibilities of innovation in other ways of exploiting the natural environment and obtaining patent protection for his ideas: in 1858 for a machine for 'auriferous-soil washing, puddling and amalgamating' (no. 214/189), and in 1866 for 'improvements in preserving fowl, fish, meat and other animal food' (no. 979/956). He submitted entries to competitions and exhibitions such as the Intercolonial Exhibition held in Melbourne in 1866, where he entered his meats preserved by a new principle, and his stearine and

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sperm candles and residual products. The second of these was associated with industrial ventures to which I now turn.

Praagst's Soap and Candles

Animal fat was a by-product of the meat industry. In its crudest form (tallow) it was used as a lubricant; refined it became the lard used in cooking. But processed chemically, animal fat was a source of soap and candles, and this was a business in which Godfrey Praagst became involved. Animal fats and vegetable oils are chemical combinations of glycerol and a range of fatty acids. Heating fats and oils with a strong solution of caustic soda splits complex substances into glycerol—used in pharmaceutical products or in the munitions industry to make nitroglycerine—and a mixture of fatty acids. The acids—typically stearic acid from animal fats and analogues such as oleic acid and palmitic acid from oils from which the acids' names derive—are recovered as sodium salts that find immediate use as soaps (hence the name given to the process, 'saponification'). The acids themselves can be liberated from their salts by treatment with sulphuric acid.

Candles consisting of tallow had been used for centuries, but burning them always produced an acrid odour that is due to thermal 'cracking' of the glycerol moiety, resulting in the production of the offensive and highly toxic gas, acrolein. A solution to this problem, replacing tallow with the fatty acids derived from it, thus freeing candles from glycerol as described above, was found early in the nineteenth century by the great French chemist, Michel Eugène Chevreul.[31] Superior candles were thus made from 'stearine', a mixture of stearic and palmitic acid, but tallow candles were cheaper and remained on the market despite their being by 'far the most extravagant, offensive, destructive and dirty things that can be brought into any well-regulated house'.[32] Among the goods advertised for sale in the Melbourne papers of Praagst's time, as also in London, were stearine candles sourced from St Petersburg whence much of the world's supply emanated. Praagst and his competitors also labelled their products as 'Neva Stearine' candles, using the name of St Petersburg's Neva River as an advertising device. Stearine candles dominated world markets until they were in turn displaced, albeit only gradually, by those made from paraffin wax, starting from about 1850 when petroleum products became available.

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The principles of the industrial chemistry involved in soap and candle production would have been known to Praagst from his days in Europe, but putting them into practice took capital and engineering skill. Praagst announced his entry into the field early in 1860 when he was granted a patent for 'Improvements in the manufacture of candles' (no. 266/310). Setting up his factory, the Hobsons Bay Soap and Candle Works at Williamstown, he sought his raw material in an advertisement for 'fat bought, highest prices given' in the Williamstown *Chronicle*[33] and announced a few months later that the company had commenced operations.[34] The factory was located on The Strand, looking across Hobsons Bay to Port Melbourne and conveniently situated on the coast for disposal of waste materials. Soap and candle manufacture were among the noxious trades, and their 'vile odours' had seen them forced out of the City of Melbourne a decade earlier and relocated in the suburbs, where they were usually accepted as part of normal colonial life.[35]

After three years in Williamstown, the company moved to a larger site at West Melbourne. Pressure from the Williamstown Borough Council might have influenced Praagst's decision to move. Other noxious trades remained on that seafront; the council complained to the Central Board of Health about them but to little effect.[36] The real targets of council complaints were probably the boiling-down works, because a reflective piece some years later in the Williamstown *Chronicle* opined that:

> the odour arising from the Soap and Candle Works situated at North Williamstown was positively delightful compared with this nuisance, notwithstanding which, even at some pecuniary loss to the district, it was removed on the very first suggestion that it was unpleasant to the residents and dangerous to their health.[37]

In 1862, while he was still at Williamstown, Praagst had been granted a patent (no. 513/562) for 'improvements in treating fatty matters in the manufacture of stearine and sperm candles', but the patent specification also covered the use of pyroligneous acid, one of the products of his gas generators, to decompose saponified matter, that is, to release the fatty acids from their sodium salts. Sperm candles were made from spermaceti, a solid wax from the head cavity of a sperm whale that also burned without the formation of the irritating acrolein, and it would seem that Praagst was using this material as well as tallow to make candles. A question arose as to whether his candles consisted of a mixture of spermaceti and

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stearine, a combination not unknown in the world of candle-making,[38] or whether he was making sperm candles and stearine candles as separate items. *The Times* of London on 19 September 1862 published an extensive commentary on the Victorian Court at the International Exhibition being held that year in London, and this was reprinted in full in the Melbourne *Argus*.[39] *The Times* reporter had written of 'the production of stearine candles, and the candles called "sperm" though made from stearic acid'. Recognising the candles in question to be those manufactured by his company and submitted to the Exhibition, Praagst wrote to the *Argus*,[40] saying that the report was in error because 'the candles alluded to are a new patent sperm candle, without any stearic acid in their composition' and signing himself 'Godfrey Wm Praagst, Patentee of the New Patent Sperm Candles, Hobsons Bay Soap and Candle Works, Williamstown'. A subsequent article in the *Argus* did not correct the error but merely referred to 'our stearine and sperm candles'.[41]

In the fashion of the day, a reporter visited the West Melbourne works of the Hobson's Bay Company and reported at some length on its operations.[42] Adverting to a debate that was carried on for many decades in the Australian colonies, he opined that such industry did not require protection from overseas competition because of 'the vast superiority of the mode of manufacturing soap over that adopted in England'. Whereas traditional manufacture involved heating of vats over a fire, Praagst's factory brought the mixture to the boil by means of steam pipes arranged at the centre and circumference of the vessel, allowing good control to avoid the mixture boiling over by restricting the flow of steam. Purification of tallow by 'rendering' (or 'boiling down') was conducted near the Melbourne gasworks, some distance from the soap factory, and the product was transported in vessels holding up to 800 pounds of soap. The saponification was carried out in steam-heated vessels, and the solidified soap was turned out of the vessel in a solid mass, in contrast to the traditional method of digging it out. After air-drying, it was cut up, stamped with a brand, and packed in wooden boxes. Production was approximately 30 tons a week, and the soap 'could be sold in the English market at one half of the price usually fetched there by an article of inferior quality', according to the newspaper report. Tallow candles were also produced, up to ten tons a week, from purified material that was melted by steam and cast around wicks wound by a hand machine.

The implicit and explicit claims made on behalf of Praagst's operation were challenged a few days later in the letters column of the Melbourne *Argus*[43] by competitors, J. Kitchen & Sons.[44] Kitchen's began by praising Praagst's company for developing a colonial industry without protection but then pointed out that boiling soap by means of steam was hardly new. In fact, the letter claimed, it had been practised in England and America for years, as attested by books in their possession, and, moreover, the method was 'in use by ourselves and others before the Hobson's Bay Company was in existence'. They also claimed that English price lists would show that, when freight was taken into account, 'the balance is in favour of the old country'.

Godfrey Praagst, describing himself as 'Manager of the Hobson's Bay Soap and Candle Works', was quick to reply.[45] While his ordinary soap was produced by the processes used by Kitchen's and others, his first quality soap, he wrote, was produced by methods 'entirely different from any process in use either in this colony or in England', although he did not specify the difference. He went on to claim that the reporter had misinterpreted his price claims, and that he merely claimed to sell to Australian markets at one half the English price. Curiously, he ascribed the price difference not just to the cost of freight—for tallow to England and for soap exported to the colony, as mentioned by Kitchen's—but to 'the cheapness of colonial perfumes'! Whereas five years ago, he said, England and Sydney were the main suppliers to Melbourne, his company was now exporting half of its production to Sydney and the other colonies.

Within a few years of the move to West Melbourne, Praagst and Adalbert Kruge[46] formed a new company, the Melbourne Patent Stearine Candle Company Limited, with works located on an adjacent site. In June 1864 the government of Victoria announced a scheme to promote new manufactures and industries and allocated £5,000 to provide rewards or premiums to persons submitting claims for production of such things as woollen goods, paper, olive oil, flax, hemp, hops, and silk (from locally bred silkworms).[47] Godfrey Praagst (his family name appearing in the lists as 'Prangst'), the manager of the company, was among the claimants, and in 1865 received a premium of £100 for production of stearine candles.[48] The Board of Trade and Customs, chaired by the commissioner of trade and customs, James Francis,[49] noted in its report that Praagst's candles were superior to any previously made in the colony, 'but still further

improvement must be made before the imported article can be driven out of the market'.

Despite this evidence of its success, the Melbourne Patent Stearine Company was wound up voluntarily less than a year later in August 1866.[50] Its site and presumably its equipment were taken over by Praagt's next creation, the Star Stearine Candle Works, when it was formed in March 1867. The saponification of fats at the Star works was followed by acidification to give a mixture of fatty acids, from which a liquid portion (mainly oleic acid) and a solid (mainly stearic acid) were separated by physical means. The oleic acid went next door to the soap works for re-neutralisation with caustic soda and marketing as soft soap, while stearic acid was made into stearine candles. Praagst also constructed apparatus for recovering glycerin from the aqueous portion of the saponification liquor. This had formerly been discarded but was now expected to be a saleable product, although the intended use was not specified.[51]

In March 1868, Praagst sold his interest in the Hobson's Bay Soap and Candle Works. His workmen were moved to entertain him at a dinner, where they thanked him 'for his uniform kindness, justice, and urbanity', presented him with a purse of 50 sovereigns, and ascribed his success not to protection but to 'labour economically and scientifically employed, backed by sufficient capital'.[52]

Concluding Remarks

In July 1869 Godfrey Praagst was declared insolvent, but a few months later he was able to receive a Certificate of Discharge although he had withdrawn from most of his business ventures. In the same year, he was granted the last of his patents (no. 1318) for improvements in the manufacture of candles. From the late 1860s he was ill with the disease (phthisis) that was to cause his death at age 45 on 25 November 1872,[53] but right to the end he continued to innovate. Shortly before his death he advertised an 'aromatic mosquito repeller', described as a 'preventative against that intolerable scourge' and available through chemists.[54]

Godfrey Praagst lived in Victoria for only seventeen years, but they were years packed with action. The industries he fostered were based as much on technology transfer as on innovation, but he compiled a substantial portfolio of patents. The use of vegetable materials to produce lighting gas soon gave way to coal, and the role of gas in lighting was

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expanded to include domestic and industrial heating. The soap and candle industry grew and attained international dimensions.[55]

Praagst himself is long forgotten, but his presence as a civil engineer in some developing industries in colonial Victoria is referenced in a number of histories of regional cities, as well as in writings about the soap and candle industry. No full appreciation of his contributions has been published until now.

Notes

1 Given the boys' birth dates, the parents must have also spent an earlier period in Moscow, or it could be that the family recollection of the date that Francis took up employment in Moscow is incorrect.

2 His younger brother, James, did not settle in Melbourne but spent three years in South Australia before returning to the Victorian capital. Employed by the government of Victoria in water supply, he styled himself as a civil engineer, and was elected a member of the Victorian Institute of Architects in 1876. In 1868 James married French-born Louise Clemence Pelletier, a schoolteacher. Unlike his older brother, who had no children from two marriages, James had four children with Louise and a number of their descendants became medical practitioners. *Argus*, 17 July 1918, and 18 July 1918. Godfrey's wife Therese was probably the Madame Praagst advertising in the Melbourne *Argus* as a milliner and dressmaker with Parisian fashion goods for sale, starting within a few weeks of the couple's arrival in Melbourne and continuing over the remaining months of 1855. *Argus*, 19 May 1855, and 9 November 1855.

3 *Argus*, 28 May 1858.

4 R. Ian Jack and Aedeen Cremin, *Australia's Age of Iron: History and Archaeology*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press with Sydney University Press, 1994.

5 *Argus*, 22 October 1856.

6 Archibald Clow and Nan L. Clow, *The Chemical Revolution: A Contribution to Social Technology*, Philadelphia, Gordon and Breach, 1992, p. 436.

7 Robert Hunt (ed.), *Ure's Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures, and Mines*, Vol. II, 7th edition, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1878, p. 611.

8 *Argus*, 20 December 1856.

9 *Kyneton Observer*, 11 August 1857.

10 *History of Kyneton*, Vol. 1, compiled from the files of the *Kyneton Observer* 1856–62 and the *Kyneton Guardian* 1863–, Kyneton, Kyneton Guardian, 1935, p. 15.

11 *Kyneton Observer*, 5 January 1858.

12 *Argus*, 20 May 1958.

13 Ray Proudley, *Circle of Influence: A History of the Gas Industry in Victoria*, Melbourne, Hargreen in conjunction with the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria, 1987, p. 296.

14 *Argus*, 20 May 1854; Terence O'Neill-FitzSimons, 'A Balloon on the Ballarat: Green's Balloon Extraordinary', *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 71, no. 1, March 2000, p. 19.

15 *Mount Alexander Mail*, 27 May 1854.

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16 *Argus*, 28 May 1858.

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25 James Griffin, 'Bosisto, Joseph (1824–1898)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 3, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1969, p. 197.

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27 Des Shiel, *Eucalyptus. Essence of Australia: The Story of the Eucalyptus Oil Industry and of the Eucy Men and their Contribution to the Australian Bush Tradition*, Melbourne, Queensbury Hill Press, 1985, p. 16.

28 *Argus*, 13 May 1858, copied from the *South Australian Register*, 4 May 1858.

29 *Argus*, 31 December 1867.

30 E. Frankland, 'Industry of Distilled Hydrocarbons Available for Illuminating and Lubricating Purposes', *Reports of the Juries*, London, International Exhibition, 1862, p. 138.

31 J.F. Thorpe and M.A. Whiteley, *Thorpe's Dictionary of Applied Chemistry*, London, Longmans Green, 4th ed., Vol. 2, 1937, p. 263.

32 *Argus*, 13 May 1856.

33 *Chronicle*, 7 July 1860.

34 *Chronicle*, 17 November 1860.

35 Michael Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town before the Gold Rush*, Main Ridge, Vic., Loch Haven Books, 1991, p. 226.

36 *Argus*, 29 November 1871.

37 *Chronicle*, 29 January 1870.

38 Thorpe and Whiteley, p. 263.

39 *Argus*, 12 November 1862.

40 *Argus*, 17 November 1862.

41 *Argus*, 20 November 1862.

42 *Argus*, 24 November 1864.

43 *Argus*, 26 November 1864.

44 The Kitchen family began candle manufacture in Melbourne in 1855 and soon added soap to their product line. Colin Kitchen, 'John Kitchen, Chemical Industry Pioneer: A Soap Story', *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 64, no. 1, April 1993, p. 46; 'The Story of John Ambrose Kitchen (1835–1922)', *Unilever Australia Reporter*, September 1956, p. 20.

45 *Argus*, 29 November 1864.

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46 Adalbert Bernhard Kruge had arrived in Melbourne in 1864 as consul for the Kingdom of Prussia. He left in 1868 to arrange the donation to Victoria by the King of Prussia of a specially commissioned portrait but later returned to Melbourne where he died in 1891.

47 'New Manufactures and Industries', *Victorian Parliamentary Papers*, 1864, Vol. 1, p. 589.

48 Some other recipients of note were T. Kenny for production of paper, provided his machine could produce 10 tons a week (£1500); G. Fincham, Richmond, for organ building and manufacture of metal pipes (£100); and Clark & Co, manufacturers of sulphuric acid (£50).

49 Geoffrey Bartlett, 'Francis, James Goodall (1819–1884)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 4, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p. 211.

50 *Victorian Government Gazette*, 1866, p. 394.

51 Donald M'Leod, *Melbourne Factories 1868*, Melbourne, Walker, May & Co., 1868. A copy of this publication is held by State Library Victoria in *Victorian Pamphlets*, Vol. LXXVII.

52 *Argus*, 12 March 1868.

53 *Argus*, 26 November 1872. His wife Therese at the age of 44 had predeceased him in 1869. At the time of his death his spouse was listed as Mary Hay whom he was said to have married in Gippsland when he was 42 years old (that is, in 1869). No record of this marriage, nor of Mary's subsequent life as Mrs Praagst, could be found in official records.

54 *Argus*, 16 March 1872.

55 Praagst and the companies he founded did not contribute to the continuation of this industry. Thomas Loader (John Lack, 'Loader, Thomas (1830–1901)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 5, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1974, p. 97) founded the Apollo Stearine Candle Company in 1872 with a factory on the east bank of the Maribyrnong River, actually part of Footscray, at the time (John Lack, *A History of Footscray*, Melbourne, Hargreen, 1991, pp. 95, 124). The company merged with Kitchen's in 1885, and the Apollo factory was closed in 1889.

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Victorian Echoes of the Holocaust

Simon Holloway

Abstract

Victoria's history has a connection with many key global events, and this historical note discusses one of great significance in world history. On 20 January 1942, a group of senior representatives of the Nazi Party and the SS met at a villa on the shore of Lake Wannsee in Berlin. It has long been assumed that the purpose of the meeting was to plan the Final Solution to the Jewish Question: the means by which Jews across the continent would be rounded up and deported to places where they could be killed. In actual fact, the evidence would suggest that the meeting was little more than an attempt to subordinate the Final Solution (already in progress) to Reinhard Heydrich's office.

The history of Victoria as an immigrant society is connected to many of the great movements and events in the recent global past: wars, revolutions, climatic changes and the human desire to seek safer or more favourable conditions for themselves and their families. Among such events is the Holocaust, the effects of which still reverberate and ripple through society in ways that many Victorians may not recognise.

As indicated in the 2016 census, 'the Victorian Jewish population is disproportionately of immigrant background when compared with the total population'.[1] While the percentage of Australian-born Jews in Victoria has certainly risen, and mostly as the result of natural increase, the number of Jews who were born overseas (41 per cent) is somewhat larger than found in the general population (35 per cent), and, where only 39 per cent of Victorian respondents listed both of their parents as immigrants, that number in the Jewish population of Victoria is almost 60 per cent.

It has long been asserted (not entirely inaccurately) that, while Hungarian Jews settled in Sydney, Melbourne attracted greater numbers of Polish Jews. Of all the Polish Jewish migrants to this country, a total of 73 per cent today reside in Victoria, so there is some basis to the

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stereotype. Similar numbers prevail for other Eastern European Jewish immigrants: 62 per cent of those coming from Russia live in Melbourne, as do 61 per cent of those coming from the Ukraine.[2]

Unlike the Russian and Ukrainian Jews—many of whom migrated to Australia in the late 1970s and into the 1990s—most of the Polish Jews who came to these shores did so in the immediate aftermath of World War II. They came to Australia as Displaced Persons (DPs), with no home to which they could otherwise return.

The story of postwar Jewish migration is fraught with controversy. As a recent article by Sheila Fitzpatrick has indicated, the long-established assumption that Australia sought to limit its intake of Jews is not entirely accurate, and where it is accurate is not necessarily attributable to antisemitism.[3] And yet the fact remains that, while Australia brought in 170,000 Displaced Persons between 1947 and 1951, authorities provided a number of administrative hurdles to the Jewish DPs, despite their comprising less than one tenth of all such immigrants.

The desire to bring European migrants to Australia was related to the Labor government's 'populate or perish' plan, itself part of a number of governmental initiatives that have since been derided as reinforcing the White Australia policy. Unsurprisingly, the government sought to encourage migrants from particular parts of Europe—specifically from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia—who were 'said to be blonde, blue-eyed, and civilised'.[4] This worked not just to limit Polish DPs, who made up the largest number of people in the European DP camps, but also those whose nationality had been registered simply as 'Jewish'.

The total number of Jewish DPs, spread out across over a hundred different DP camps, was in the vicinity of 230,000. Australia's Jewish community in 1933 had numbered only 23,000, and the influx of some 35,000 by 1960 meant that Australia had accepted the largest number of Holocaust survivors per Jewish head of population outside of Israel. While some of those survivors had come from Shanghai, having previously fled persecution in Europe, the overwhelming majority came directly from Europe.

Recipients of a Jewish free loan from a society known as Mutual Enterprises, many Holocaust survivors were able to establish businesses in Melbourne, where they concentrated on rebuilding their lives and on raising families. Emulating those charitable institutions that had so benefited them, they established philanthropic organisations of their

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own through which they were able to provide support for schools and a variety of other institutions within Melbourne.

The survivors' contributions to Melbourne have been most profound. Their impact can be felt in the fields of art, architecture, public health, business, music and food. Placing a tremendous value on education, many of the survivors have also taken great pride in their children, who would come likewise to contribute in inestimable ways to Melbourne's general economic and cultural life.

At the same time, the physical and psychological trauma that the survivors had endured would mean that many were to live with the Holocaust their entire lives. The grief that they carried for their murdered relatives and friends would be such that their children and grandchildren would grow up within the shadow of that trauma themselves. While such grief can be deadening, it can also serve as a catalyst for social justice activism, and for ensuring that others do not suffer similar fates.

With the intention of transmitting that message, as well as ensuring that the murdered Jews of Europe would never be forgotten, many survivors and their descendants were determined to establish memorials and museums around the world. Their experience was one of suffering and hardship, but their message was one of survival and hope. One such museum, established in Elsternwick in 1984, is the Melbourne Holocaust Museum.

Not every survivor wished to speak about their experiences, but those who did—initially in journals and newspapers—contributed to a growing awareness in Australia of Nazi atrocities. Their published memoirs, courtroom testimonies and public talks took their place alongside a general body of testimonial, documentary, photographic and artefactual evidence that underpins the most widely studied subject in the humanities today.

Curiously, however, and as Leni Yahil observes, 'some myths that developed before researchers plumbed the depths of the catastrophe live on in popular conceptions'.[5] It is understandable, given the scope of the Holocaust, and given the impossibly vast body of sources, that such myths should exist. As time goes by, historians have had great success at correcting many of these popular misconceptions, but there is one that has proven somewhat difficult to eradicate.

In this note, I will focus on this particular myth and outline the reasons as to why we know it to be untrue. I am referring to the

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misconception that the murder of Europe's Jews (the so-called 'Final Solution') was planned on a single day, at a meeting of security officials and bureaucrats. That day was 20 January 1942, and the misconception about what happened then seems all the more pertinent in that we now find ourselves, this year, on the 80th anniversary of the meeting in question.

Wannsee Meeting and the Holocaust

When people refer to the Holocaust, what they most frequently have in mind is an industrialised process of murder, by which civilians were transported in cattle cars to 'death camps', where they were murdered by carbon monoxide or cyanide in gas chambers made to look like shower blocks. Although roughly 1.5 million Jews were murdered by shooting squads, an additional 800,000 through starvation, privation and disease, and roughly half a million others as a result of violent persecution, it has been estimated that some three million perished as part of the industrial process described.

All told, the number of people murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators is in the vicinity of eleven million. Most historians use the word 'Holocaust' to refer specifically to the six million Jews who were murdered, since their deaths were part of an attempt to annihilate the entirety of their population, but some historians also include the murders of Roma and of people with disability. While a great deal of chaos accompanied the German-led persecution and annihilation of these people, attempts were also made to produce a centralised organisation and to impose administrative order over the sprawling violence that was unfolding.

When we consider the nature of that administration, we are met with the curious nexus of organisation and chaos at every stage. Police and SS power was centralised in the office of Heinrich Himmler, but there was frequent competition amongst his various deputies, and competition also between his office and that of the civilian governor of occupied Poland, Hans Frank, who in turn was in competition with other governors, like Arthur Greiser in the Warthegau. It is perhaps unsurprising that attempts at asserting administrative control always led to greater radicalisation, and always to an increase in violence.

Historian Mark Roseman has noted this 'paradoxical combination of constant energy and changing purpose',[6] by which he refers to the

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curious mess of competing orders, some of which were quite at odds with one another, coupled with an increasing desire to work towards specific goals. Our tendency, however, to see a *single* organising principle at play has contributed to the myth that there must have been a specific event, dated to a particular day, on which the Final Solution was formulated and given approval.

That event, known popularly as the Wannsee Conference, was the meeting on which public attention in this regard has long focused. Discovered only in March of 1947, when the US prosecutor unearthed the last remaining copy of its minutes (*Protokoll*), it initially struck historians likewise as being such an event. There fifteen senior representatives of the SS and Nazi Party apparatus sat around a table in a magnificently appointed villa in Berlin discussing the combing of Europe from west to east and the evacuation of its Jews (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Manor in Berlin-Wannsee, Germany—also known as the House of the Wannsee Conference (Courtesy A. Savin, *Wikicommons*, https://commons.wikimedia. org/wiki/File:Haus_der_Wannsee-Konferenz_02-2014.jpg)

The minutes state that the evacuated Jews would immediately be put to work at building roads. Since most would perish 'by natural causes', the surviving remnant must be considered the most resistant and thus the most capable of forming the nucleus of a new Jewish civilisation. The experience of history, the minutes go on to relate, is sufficient to demonstrate that such hardened individuals 'will have to be dealt with appropriately'. That this document outlines the Final Solution is

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undeniable, but what was the purpose of the meeting for which it served as *Protokoll*?

When we consider the identities of those fifteen men at Wannsee, the notion that they were there to make decisions about these issues might seem self-evident. Of the fifteen, five were senior bureaucrats, representing ministries with especial interest in the Jewish Question:

- **Wilhelm Stuckart** served as state secretary in the German Ministry of the Interior. He held rank within the SS and, as co-author of the 1935 Nuremberg Laws, had helped draft the Nazi definition of 'Jew'. A lawyer and a former judge, Stuckart was noted in the minutes as objecting to the inclusion of half- and quarter-Jews in deportations owing to the 'endless administrative work' involved.

- **Roland Freisler** served as state secretary in the German Ministry of Justice. Like Stuckart, Freisler held a doctorate in law. A fierce advocate since 1933 of the prohibition of 'race defilement', Freisler was also intimately invested in legal definitions. In August of 1942, slightly more than six months after Wannsee, he was appointed president of the People's Court, in which office he interrogated, sentenced and hanged those suspected of treason.

- Ministerial Director **Wilhelm Kritzinger** represented the Reich Chancellory, while State Secretary **Erich Neumann** (who likewise held rank in the SS) represented Hermann Goering's office as plenipotentiary of the Four Year Plan. The latter is recorded in the minutes as voicing an objection to the evacuation of Jews in vital industries, while the former (who is not mentioned in the minutes as having spoken) was the only one interviewed by assistant to the US chief counsel, Robert Kempner, to have expressed any shame.[7]

- Undersecretary of State **Martin Luther** (to whom the minutes in question had belonged) represented the Foreign Ministry. He is recorded as having noted that there would be no difficulties evacuating Jews from southeast or western Europe but that there would be a problem with evacuating Jews from Scandinavian countries. Due to the small number involved, he proposed a temporary deferral in that regard. Although he was representing Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, his attempt to overthrow Ribbentrop in 1943 saw him sent to Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, where he died shortly after liberation.

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In addition to the former five, another three senior bureaucrats were present, representing the civilian administration in the occupied East:

- State Secretary **Josef Bühler** represented Hans Frank as ruler of the General Government. Inasmuch as he presided over the largest concentration of Jews within the German sphere of influence, Frank's representative (who like so many others in attendance, held a doctorate in law) is recorded on no fewer than three occasions asking that the Final Solution commence within his territory, and as quickly as possible.
- Ministerial Director **Georg Leibrandt** represented the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, while State Secretary **Alfred Meyer** represented the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories in German-occupied USSR. The latter, who held a doctorate in jurisprudence and political science, is recorded alongside Bühler as insisting that the Final Solution commence as quickly as possible, while the former (who was not mentioned as having spoken) held a PhD in history and philology.

Representing the SS and security apparatus were seven attendees of varying rank:

- With a special interest in race-related issues were **Otto Hofmann**, chief of the Race and Resettlement Office, and **Gerhard Klopfer**, a lawyer and a former judge, who was ministerial director of the Reich Chancellery. While the latter is not cited within the minutes, the former is on the record twice: once, in his offer to send a representation to Hungary to assist the local police in their work, and a second time, in his recommendation for surgically sterilising all half- and quarter-Jews.
- Senior members of the SS included **Heinrich Müller**, who ran the Secret State Police ('Gestapo'), and **Adolf Eichmann**, who ran an office within Müller's department tasked with overseeing 'Jewish Affairs'. Included also in this list were **Eberhard Schöngarth**, regional commander of the SS and Police (BdS) in occupied Poland, and **Rudolf Lange**, chief of the Security Police ('SiPo') in Riga, and commander of *Einsatzkommando 2*. The latter two men, like so many of their colleagues, held doctorates in law.

That over half of the attendees had doctorates is striking at a time when only a very small percentage of the German population was receiving higher education. But although striking, it is by no means

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unusual. While these men were going over the particulars, as outlined in the minutes, hundreds of thousands of people (the overwhelming majority of them Jewish) were being shot by armed squads at the order of SS *Einsatzgruppen* and German police battalions. The men in charge of those operations almost all had doctorates. One of them (known, by German convention, as Dr Dr Otto Rasch) held two. Rudolf Lange, himself fresh from the killing fields of Latvia, was therefore no exception in this regard and by no means out of place in a company of similarly educated men bent on committing mass murder. That some of those men might have been accounted 'men of culture' only adds to a sense of the macabre that one feels when perusing a document of this nature and when pondering its contents.

The minutes include a tabulated list of all the countries in Europe (conveniently divided into those already occupied by Germany and those yet to be occupied) and their estimated number of Jews—a detail that further reinforces that it was the continent-wide Final Solution under discussion (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Wannsee Protokoll (Courtesy French Wikipedia, https://commons.wikimedia. org/wiki/File:WannseeList.jpg)

A page from the minutes (*Protokoll*) in which the estimated Jewish populations of Europe are tabulated. The chart is divided between territories under German control, and territories yet to be under German control. Estonia (*Estland*) is already marked *judenfrei*: free of Jews.

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But was this meeting the occasion on which the Final Solution was *planned*? What precisely was decided upon?

According to Adolf Eichmann, who commented upon this meeting at his trial in Jerusalem: not very much.[8] The minutes cover the various announcements made by Reinhard Heydrich, who chaired the meeting, with only a few interjections by attendees (Figure 3). Alluded to but not included in the minutes was a rather free-wheeling discussion in what Eichmann termed 'an atmosphere of drunkenness'. There, the delegates openly discussed methods of murder but did so in a way that indicated they did not yet know the precise details of what was being planned.

Figure 3: Reinhard Heydrich. Photographer Heinrich Hoffmann (Courtesy Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1969-054-16 / Hoffmann, Heinrich / CC-BY-SA, CC BY-SA 3.0 de, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5482511)

There is much that we simply do not know about this meeting. Three major motion pictures have sought to represent it to the public,[9] but, while each of them is based on varying degrees of research, they each likewise depart from what is *known* about the day and venture into speculative territory. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum declares that 'none of the officials present at the meeting objected', but if we do not even know what people there said, beyond the thin minutes that exist, how can we know what they did *not* say?

Unbeknownst to any of the participants, at precisely the same time as their conversation was transpiring, a Jewish man named Szlama Winer was making his slow way by foot through the countryside of the Warthegau and into the General Government of Occupied Poland. Along the way, he stopped at several villages to warn Jews as to what he had witnessed but was met with shock and disbelief. Arriving eventually

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at the ghetto in Warsaw, he met a man named Hersh Wasser, who was prepared to take his testimony.

For the purpose of anonymity, Szlama had adopted the pseudonym of Yakov Grojanowski, under which name his testimony (written as a diary) was recorded. Hersh Wasser, who assisted him with the recording of his diary, made sure to include it in the secret archive that he was helping to gather and maintain.[10] This diary—one of the most detailed and graphic of its kind—documents Szlama Winer's time as 'gravedigger' in Chelmno.

An isolated village in the Warthegau, Chelmno was chosen by Governor Arthur Greiser as a convenient place to annihilate all of the Jews of his district. Not a camp as such, Chelmno at this stage consisted only of a manor house, to which Jews were brought by train. There, they were made to undress for a shower and were told that they would be taken into Germany to work. What was made to look like the entrance to a shower block, however, was actually a door leading out into the courtyard, against which a van would be backed up and into which the Jews were forced to climb.

Known as a 'special van' (*Sonderwagen*), its commission had originally been intended for the purpose of murdering Polish psychiatric patients. After redirecting carbon monoxide into the passenger compartment, the driver could take his human cargo into the woods where it would be buried by labourers like Szlama Winer.[11] His experiences, prior to his escape, had indicated to him that the murderous persecution of his people was reaching unprecedented and unimaginable heights.

In fact, if we include the shootings perpetrated by police, SS and local collaborators, the number of Jews murdered by this time was already in the hundreds of thousands, and it included trainloads of German Jews whose evacuation was originally going to be postponed. As of a special decree of October 1941, Jewish emigration was now to be prevented at all costs, and the Jews were instead to face deportation 'to the East': a euphemism for removal to a ghetto, the purpose of which was to contain them until they could be murdered.

It is quite evident, therefore, that while the minutes at Wannsee testify to a discussion of the Final Solution, that 'solution' was already well underway and could not have been decided upon at that gathering. In fact, we know that at the time of this infamous meeting a death camp in Belzec was already under construction, and the plans existed for death

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camps in Sobibor and Treblinka—as well as on the outskirts of Auschwitz, in a village called Birkenau.

If the Final Solution was already underway, what decisions were the fifteen attendees at Wannsee making? If the meeting was not to *plan* the Final Solution, then what exactly was it for?

The answer to this is neither strange nor particularly surprising. The man who called the meeting and who chaired it was Reinhard Heydrich. Until his assassination less than half a year later, he was widely considered a man on the rise. As Himmler's deputy, he ran the Security Police (SiPo) and Security Service (SD) from a centralised agency known as the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA). Appointed the Reich protector of Bohemia and Moravia, he governed the occupied Czech lands, where he was nicknamed 'The Hangman' and 'The Butcher of Prague'. As president of Interpol, he brought his entire security apparatus to bear on the policing of all occupied Europe and was a man who took pride in the fear he inspired.

It is no surprise that he should have considered the Final Solution to be thoroughly under his own jurisdiction, and that he should have sought the glory that came with fulfilling his Führer's own deepest desire. But, while the operation of three of those death camps would come to share his name, being known as Operation Reinhard, he assumed little of the actual administrative responsibility.

That all fell to another rising star within the Reich security apparatus—Odilo Globocnik. The SS and police leader in Lublin, Globocnik was tasked with overseeing the eradication of the Polish Jews and with running three of the camps to which other Europeans Jews were being sent. Auschwitz-Birkenau remained outside of his jurisdiction, but neither did it fall to the jurisdiction of Heydrich, however much he might have desired it.

Globocnik was not represented in Wannsee, and neither were the higher SS and police leaders (the 'little Himmlers'), whose ranks were commensurate with Heydrich's. More surprisingly, we find that the German military was not represented in Wannsee, although their logistical cooperation was going to be essential, and neither was the German Ministry of Transportation, although their involvement would be an absolute necessity. Other ministries whose participation would be indispensable to the Final Solution were those of Finance, Food and Labour—all likewise unrepresented. If this was a planning meeting, why were none of those who bore responsibility for the planning in attendance?

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The evidence would suggest that the purpose of Wannsee was twofold. On the one hand, Heydrich sought (and failed) to amend the Nuremberg Laws in such a way that half- and quarter-Jews could be deported from Germany. The discussion of this issue appears to have taken up most of the time that the men sat and spoke. Second, Heydrich's intention—likewise unrealised—was to ensure that the Final Solution would be under his jurisdiction, and his alone (Figure 3).

That a group of men who might have been accounted sophisticated, well-educated men of culture could sit around a table and discuss the commission of genocide is horrifying. That such a meeting might have served no greater purpose than a naked power play, by which the man who chaired the meeting attempted to subordinate the Final Solution to his own bloated ambitions, is simply repugnant. Another bureaucratic detail in the history of Nazi Germany, already infamous for its bureaucracy, it nonetheless remains little more than that.

The Melbourne Holocaust Museum

Part of the tragedy implicit in the nature of genocide is that while it is easy to name perpetrators it is much more difficult to name their victims. While large numbers of students across Victoria, throughout Australia and around the world study the policies that led to the annihilation of the Jews, how many of them can claim familiarity with Jews and the means by which they responded to their persecution? Fifteen men, each of whom can be named, sat and spoke about the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question', but the millions murdered were to perish without so much as an epitaph.

Based on the principle that everybody had a name, the Melbourne Holocaust Museum is committed to preserving a memory of those Jews of Europe—west and east—who were divided from one another by nation, culture, language, politics and religion, but who were united in the simple accident of birth. We remember them for who they were and what they did, and not just for what was done to them by others. Through this museum and the stories it tells, Victoria's history is connected to a global history.

Most importantly, we pay honour to those who survived by sharing their stories and by transmitting their legacy. A core part of that legacy is that we, all of us, share a common humanity. It is important to appreciate that the individuals responsible for these terrible crimes

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were themselves human beings. They were not monsters, and nor were they in any ontological sense 'evil'. The evil lies within the nature of their deeds, while what is monstrous is that such deeds can be committed by ordinary people.

As all who engage in this history know, the possibility of such unbounded persecution was only provided by the careful eradication of the victims' humanity. By dehumanising Jews and by normalising that dehumanisation, people who should have baulked at the possibility of violence were brought to commit it. Our task is to countenance that by emphasising our shared humanity, and by contributing to a greater empathy for all.

We anticipate the opening of our new museum in 2023 and look forward to honouring our survivors, their families and their communities. Most importantly, we look forward to continuing to transmit our survivors' stories of liberation and survival to all Victorians: a sombre reminder of what humans are capable of doing to one another, and a celebration of the spirit of resistance.

Notes

1   Andrew Markus and Tanya Munz, with David Graham and Emmanuel Gruzman, *The Jewish Population of Victoria: Key Findings from the 2016 Census*, Melbourne, Monash Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, 2020, p. 20.

2   Markus *et al.*, p. 23.

3   Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Migration of Jewish "Displaced Persons" from Europe to Australia after the Second World War: Revisiting the Question of Discrimination and Numbers', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 67, no. 2, 2021, pp. 226–45.

4   Fitzpatrick, p. 230

5   Leni Yahil, review of *Himmler's Timetable*, in *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 28, 2000, pp. 351–62 (at 351–2).

6   Mark Roseman, *The Villa, The Lake, The Meeting: Wannsee and the Final Solution*, London, Allen Lane/Penguin, 2002, p. 4.

7   Roseman, p. 73.

8   For discussion of Eichmann's testimony, see Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939 – March 1942*, Lincoln NE, University of Nebraska Press, 2004, p. 413.

9   Heinz Schirk (dir.), *Die Wannseekonferenz* (1984); Frank Pierson (dir.), *Conspiracy* (2001); Matti Geschonneck (dir.), *Die Wannseekonferenz* (2022).

10   For more information about this archive, see Sam Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?: Rediscovering a Hidden Archive from the Warsaw Ghetto*, London, Vintage, 2009.

11   For further information about Chelmno and the decisions that led to its establishment, see Patrick Montague, *Chełmno and the Holocaust: The History of Hitler's First Death Camp*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

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Comment

Henry Johnson: The First Identified European Settler in the Upper Goulburn River District?

Martin Williams

Lawrie Hall in the December 2021 issue of the *Victorian Historical Journal*, centres his historical note on the question in its title, 'Henry Johnson: The First Identified European Settler in the Upper Goulburn River District?' The answer is readily provided.

On 6 March 1837 Governor Richard Bourke proclaimed for the first time that settlers of New South Wales were permitted to enter the Port Phillip District with their assigned convicts.[1] Previously the convicts had been banned under penal laws from accompanying them. The first large parties of New South Wales settlers were already at the Murray River in readiness: George Hamilton for Henry Howey; Charles Ebden. Ebden recorded that he beat the starter's gun by five days.[2] Numerous others followed, but none settled the Goulburn River until 15 May 1838.[3]

During the year 1835, a vanishingly small part of Victoria was occupied by Europeans. By December, John Pascoe Fawkner had about eleven at Melbourne and John Batman had left three at Indented Head. In the north, William Wyse had only just reached the banks of the Murray River. The Hentys had about thirteen at Portland.

From November 1836, the arrival of these groups was minutely debated to assert precedence. The cudgels were initially taken up by the participants, and then by others far into the nineteenth century, including at the regional newspaper level. Johnson and the other members of his large party had decades of opportunity to report that they settled the Goulburn River in 1835, and to explain how they remained unseen, requiring no supplies from Melbourne, for nearly three years. It would have been a sensation, and would have been tested for veracity on the spot.

If on the other hand Johnson had travelled there with a party that carried three years' worth of supplies in order to remain concealed, then it would have required about 20 drays and 40 men to do it. They would have had to build at least one large stockade for the supplies and numerous

huts. Peter Snodgrass would have seen those buildings on his arrival. In fact, he and Johnson both saw the Taungurung as the only inhabitants of Burnnanto when they arrived there together in May 1838.

The period from 1835 to 1838 has been recorded in great depth in Australian historical literature, official historical records, contemporaneous newspapers, and later reports by eyewitnesses in newspapers and published memoirs. There is not one word or map to dispute the time of settlement of the Goulburn River in May 1838.

Against those records, Henry Johnson wrote on a copy of the *Prize-Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society of Scotland* the words 'Henery Johnson', 'Burnnanto' and '1835'.[4] When Johnson was incarcerated after his conviction in 1834, he was forced to do a literacy test. He could 'Read' but he could not 'Write'.[5] Other evidence demonstrates that Johnson had devised a method of signing his marriage certificate in 1832 and the above words on his *Transactions*.

The evidence also demonstrates that in 1835 Johnson was not at 'Burnnanto'. He was transported to Sydney and reached there on 15 July 1835. He was serving his convict sentence in Sydney. Indeed, he did have to accompany a convict master to get to the Goulburn River. That he did so legally at a time when he and his convict master were permitted to do it, and that he was in no other way a miscreant, is confirmed by the fact he was freed on 23 September 1841 just after his sentence ended.

Peter Snodgrass was that convict master. Snodgrass arrived at the Goulburn River with the large Farquhar McKenzie and John Murdoch parties on 15 May 1838.[6] Snodgrass was already a commissioner of crown lands for Port Phillip.[7] As such he had responsibility for controlling the movement of convicts and had a vested interest in controlling his own convicts.[8] Indeed, in October 1838, Snodgrass was instrumental in setting up a scheme whereby he and his fellow squatters agreed not to employ escaped convicts.[9]

Snodgrass originally took a squattage of 102,000 acres incorporating the entire Muddy Creek (Yea River) to the Goulburn River.[10] Johnson later took 160 acres on the northern extremity of this land held by Snodgrass. It was named 'Bumanto'.[11] Rigid convict regulations obligated an individual to remain on the land of his convict master.[12] Johnson did exactly that, he did not escape, he remained on that Snodgrass-squatted land until his convict sentence expired at the end of 1841. Having built a store there, Johnson chose to remain at Bumanto for ten years until at least 1848.

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Johnson had a powerful motive to write as he did. He became a wealthy landowner and wanted to conceal from his family the intense and lasting social stigma of being a convict. He went through the difficult task, for him, of writing the characters on the *Transactions*. He wanted an alternative to the truth that he was serving his convict sentence in Sydney in 1835.

Johnson left another diversion for the same end. In 1969 local historian Gerald Noble was told by another descendant that 'Henry Johnson was the son of a wealthy English mill-owner, and was trained as an engineer … coming to Australia in the early 1840s'.[13] At the time of his incarceration in England, Johnson was recorded as a 'machine builder, smith'.[14] It was a manual occupation that encompassed smithing mill machinery and an awareness of mill-owners. The myth has a ring of unique inside knowledge to it that could only have originated with Johnson, but it covers up the convict stain and his sudden rise to wealth.

Johnson had still more to cover up. The historians Patterson and Jones reveal that in 1860 Henry Johnson and Peter Snodgrass worked to close the Acheron Aboriginal Reserve and succeeded in 'evicting Taungurung farmers from their land in September 1860'.[15] This led rapidly to the removal of Taungurung completely from the Goulburn River to Healesville in 1863. Johnson was instrumental in both dispossessing the Taungurung in 1838, and then evicting them.

Henry Johnson's obfuscations to conceal his past are not factual history.

Notes

1   *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 8 March 1837, p. 236.

2   Charles H. Ebden to James Donnithorne, 28 November 1836, Donnithorne Family Papers, *c.* 1837 – *c.* 1849, MS 10152, State Library Victoria (SLV).

3   Farquhar Mackenzie journal, October 1836 – April 1850, p. 58, B 926, State Library of NSW.

4   *Prize-Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society of Scotland*, New Series, Volume 2, Edinburgh, William Blackwood, and London, T. Cadell, 1831.

5   Henry Johnson, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Indents, 1788–1842, State Records Authority of NSW, ancestry.com.au, 1834, p. 51.

6   Captain Murchison's Memoirs, in Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh, *After Many Days, being the Reminiscences of Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh*, Melbourne, E.W. Cole, 1917, p. 67.

7   Peter Snodgrass Esquire, Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 21 March 1838, No. 325, p. 213.

Comment: Henry Johnson: The First Identified European Settler in the Upper Goulburn River District?
—— Martin Williams

8   Arthur McMartin, *Public Servants and Patronage: The Foundation and Rise of the New South Wales Public Service, 1786–1859*, Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1983, p. 205.

9   Public Meeting, *Port Phillip Gazette*, 27 October 1838, p. 3.

10   Ralph V. Billis and Alfred S. Kenyon, *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip*, London, MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1932, p. 126.

11   Bumanto, marked on William Owen, 'Map of Victoria Including the Pastoral Runs &c. of the Port Phillip District', Melbourne, H. Bolton, Lith., 1869, SLV, at http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/382397.

12   Assignment of Male Convicts, Regulation 1, *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 20 May 1835, No. 168, p. 306.

13   Gerald W. Noble, *The Red Gate: A History of Alexandra*, Alexandra, Council of the Shire of Alexandra, 1969, p. 16.

14   Henry Johnson, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Indents, 1788–1842, State Records Authority of NSW, ancestry.com.au, 1834, p. 51.

15   Uncle Roy Patterson and Jennifer Jones, *On Taungurung Land: Sharing History and Culture*, Canberra, ANU Press, 2020.

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Henry Johnson: The First Identified European Settler in the Upper Goulburn River District?

Lawrie Hall

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Martin Williams' critique of my historical note in the December 2021 edition of the *Victorian Historical Journal* regarding the possible 1835 arrival of Henry Johnson as a settler at 'Burrnanto' in the Upper Goulburn District.

There is insufficient space to address all of the issues that Mr Williams raises except in passing, some of which speak to Johnson's honesty, general character, and literacy. These issues are unimportant in the context of his arrival date in the Upper Goulburn, unless they provide direct evidence negating the claims made in my note.

A key point made by Mr Williams is that Johnson accompanied Peter Snodgrass as a convict assigned to him when Snodgrass arrived in the Upper Goulburn District. Snodgrass was born in 1817 and would have been about 18 years of age[1] when Johnson arrived at Port Macquarie in 1835, and a search of the *NSW Government Gazette* between 1835 and 1840 reveals only one convict assigned to Snodgrass, a brickmaker around the end of 1837.[2] As referenced in my note, Snodgrass said in 1853 that he arrived in the Port Phillip District in 1837. If Johnson was assigned to him, was that assignation in 1835, in Sydney, or was Johnson assigned to another master, and reassigned to Snodgrass closer to the date of the journey south? Mr Williams provides no evidence for a connection between the two men.

Mr Williams reports that Snodgrass initially held the land on which Johnson lived from May 1838. In my note, I recorded by hand the first leaseholders in the area on a map from 1869, and I recorded J.H. Campbell as the initial holder of 'Doogallook', the pastoral lease within which 'Burrnanto' was located. The discrepancy with regards to whether Snodgrass or Campbell was the first holder relates to inconsistencies within the Billis and Kenyon work cited in my note. They do record Snodgrass as first holding three pastoral leases, being the 'Murrindindi',

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'Killingworth' and 'Doogallook' leases, under the heading of his name. However, in the second half of the book, they record the first holder of 'Murrindindi' as Peter Snodgrass from 1838, 'Killingworth' as G.S. Airey from 1839, and 'Doogallook' as J.H. Campbell from 1840. I suspect the discrepancy in Billis and Kenyon relates to the somewhat chaotic and informal boundaries and connections between settlers edging towards the more regulated pastoral lease system that gradually developed. The first twelve pastoral leases in the Port Phillip District were formally processed in Sydney in July 1838. I concede the likelihood that Snodgrass had informal possession of 'Doogallook' for an unknown period prior to being legally licensed to hold 'Murrindindi' from 1838, and possibly informally for a time afterwards. As a corollary, it would also be highly likely that he was aware of Johnson and his party living in the district if in fact, as I suggest, they were there.

Mr Williams makes the reasonable point that to survive in the area as first settlers, a party would require considerable resources and a need to renew supplies from time to time. Although not directly addressed in his 'Comment', there is also a presumption that such a group would have needed to have the forethought, skills and capital to successfully make the overland trek and establish themselves. My view is that Johnson's supposed 1835 arrival probably only makes sense if he was part of a smaller, less well-led-and-equipped group that failed to assert itself beyond the small holding of 'Burrnanto', which was subsumed within the larger 'Doogallook' pastoral lease.

Mr Williams finds it difficult to accept that a group of settlers arriving as early as late 1835 would not have left a historical mark. However, as I discussed in my note, less prominent settlers were often overlooked and do not appear in the historical record. I provided the example of how John Cotton, holder of 'Doogallook' from 1843 to 1849, makes no mention of Johnson in his significant volume of letters to his brother, although the evidence suggests that Johnson lived at 'Burrnanto' for the entirety of Cotton's tenure. In another pertinent example, the Port Phillip District census of 1841 lists Snodgrass as the proprietor of a household that totalled twenty persons, but only he and one other were named.[3]

Janet McCalman eloquently discussed the importance of reputation in Port Phillip's early settlement and the commonality of lies and distortions used by individuals and families to promote themselves and survive.[4] It is uncontroversial that Johnson could have lied about his

origins and obfuscated his convict origins, especially as he climbed the social ladder towards successful pastoralism.

In part of his attempt to discredit Johnson, Mr Williams raises questions about his literacy, presumably in the context of his capacity to sign and date his name and include the word 'Burrnanto' in his book. The convict indent referred to by Mr Williams that records a convict's ability to read or write is a blunt instrument that simply records a 'yes' or 'no' to both questions. It tells us nothing about the continuum from complete illiteracy at one end to language professor at the other, or how changes in literacy skills occur over time.

Mr Williams has not provided an explanation for how or why Johnson recorded his name and location dated '1835' in his book other than the vague inference that he might have had some unnamed deceitful intent in writing that information at some later date. I accept that the evidence that Johnson was in the Upper Goulburn region in 1835 is far from overwhelming, but Mr Williams' response has not refuted that key piece of evidence, nor considered the signature and spelling similarity between Johnson's 1832 and 1835 signatures and how they differed in later years.

Notes

1   Alan Gross, 'Snodgrass, Peter (1817–1867)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, first published 1967, at https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/snodgrass-peter-2676.

2   *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 7 February 1838, No. 319, p. 103, at https://trove. nla.gov.au/newspaper/page/12579700.

3   1841 Census of the Port Phillip District, Transcriptions N to Z, at https://portphillipdistrict. info/1841%20PPD%20Census%20Transcriptions%20N%20to%20Z.htm.

4   Janet McCalman, *Vandemonians: The Repressed History of Colonial Victoria*, Melbourne, Miegunyah Press, 2021, pp. 57–63.

INTERPRETING AN IMAGE

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Picturing Sound and Song at the Murray River Crossing Place

Bruce Pennay

Abstract

This piece argues that documentary evidence drawn from George Robinson's journal and Lady Jane Franklin's letter, twelve months earlier, demonstrate the Murray River police hut and its surrounds were a 'contact zone', that is places where people, long separated geographically and historically, encountered each other, and where they were beginning to establish ongoing relations. This is 'a place of evocation', that is a place for sharing stories among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people relating to the productive lives pursued nearby before the intrusion of Europeans and stories relating to the impact of that intrusion.

George Robinson, the chief protector of Aborigines in Port Phillip, sketched stock being swum across the newly designated official crossing place at the Murray River on 25 April 1840.

The speckled ink sketch (Figure 1) focuses on 20 to 30 men, represented as hatch marks, as they urged sheep and cattle into the water, and then splashed and shouted to keep them swimming to the other side. There was, Robinson says, 'bustle' and 'din' that could be heard at a great distance.

Robinson sketched the noisy scene from the vantage point of the police hut, high on a hill overlooking the crossing. The crossing was not wide, the water was not deep, but it could be dangerous. Robinson noted that many sheep drowned. Aboriginal people, probably Wiradjuri, had gathered to feed on the carcases.

In the foreground of the sketch are the fenced graves of two stockmen, drowned near the ford in dangerous water holes where

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whirlpools formed. In the mid-distance is a substantial public inn, where there was a blacksmith, and a cultivated paddock close to a native encampment represented with other hatch marks. Robinson was told a township had been laid out nearby. In the distance the word 'hill' suffices for a sketch of an activity, not a landscape. Alongside his sketch, Robinson notes: 'A number of Blacks were employed'.
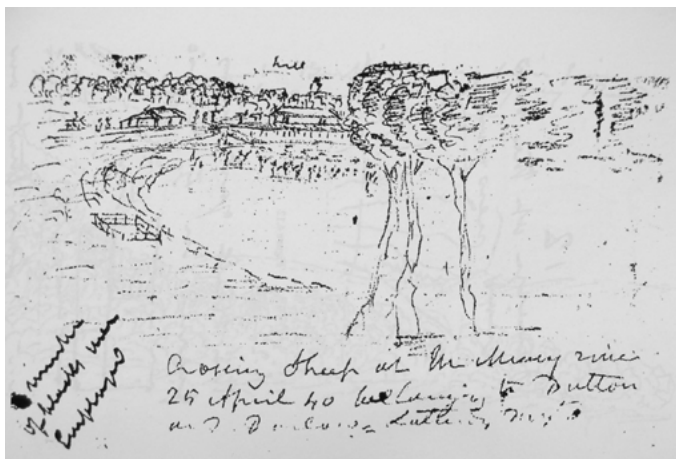

Figure 1: 'Crossing sheep at the Murry [*sic*] River' (Courtesy Ian Clark (ed.), *The Journals of George Robinson, Chief Protector, Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate,* Volume 1, Melbourne, Heritage Matters, 1998, p. 266)

The sketch was Robinson's personal memory prompt. It appears in the first of his personal journals where he recorded his expeditions through his protectorate.[1] The superintendent of the Port Phillip District, Charles La Trobe, was worried about the increasing number of Aboriginal people coming to Melbourne. He had hopes that the chief protector might be able to help alleviate the conditions in the hinterland that were forcing Aboriginal people to move. He ordered Robinson to visit the Goulburn River District because of the recent conflict between squatters and the traditional Indigenous landowners.

Robinson, then, was to find out more about how Europeans and Aboriginal groups were interacting. He found that some Aboriginal people were integrating themselves into the newcomers' economy. One pastoralist told him how they used Aboriginal men in 'all kinds of labour', mainly 'fetching bark, looking after stock, fetching and chopping wood,

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looking after cattle'. The station manager at Indigo Creek said, 'He should be at a great loss without them'. Indigenous people were a prized workforce but not commonly paid in money. Instead, they received clothes, flour, meat, sugar, tea or tobacco.[2]

Robinson told a story of a man at the police hut. His name was Wor. rum.me.yeer (Ome.he), alias Joe. He had been there fifteen or eighteen months: 'He is quite domestic, does the work that a white person can do'. When Robinson visited the black encampment at the foot of a hill, he found Wor.rum.me.yeer cooking a sheep's head. He was singing a song 'about a blackfellow being tired crossing sheep'. Robinson observed that the task of crossing required hard work, and that the Aboriginal men 'were more useful than any white man'. 'Such exertions deserved to be recognised in song.'

Robinson's journal records provide documentary evidence that inform an archaeological investigation of the police hut site at the Murray River crossing place being undertaken in 2022 by Biosis Pty Ltd, a Melbourne-based heritage consultancy firm. The statements of significance that guide that investigation suggest the place may be important to the state for the ways it helps explain: first, the development of law enforcement; second, the formation of the township of Albury; third, interchanges between Aboriginal groups and settlers; and, more generally, Aboriginal occupation of the river reserve where it is located.

Robinson presents the police hut as a primary element in what Mary Louise Pratt describes as 'contact zones'—places where people, geographically and historically separated, encountered each other, and where they were beginning to establish ongoing relations.[3] At and about the police huts on the line of the road north from Melbourne, settlers and Aboriginal people were finding ways to live together and separately. Some were starting to form an integrated economy.

Lady Jane Franklin, Robinson's Van Diemen's Land patron and friend, had visited the Murray River crossing place twelve months before him. She, too, met Wor.rum.me.yeer.

In her letters to her husband, Lady Franklin portrayed the Aboriginal people she encountered directly or indirectly as two sets of people: '[some] still fighting to protect their traditional livelihood by courage, stealth and skill'; and 'some accepting dependence and cultural dislocation as the price of survival on pastoral stations'.[4] She had been very fearful moving in a small and vulnerable party through land that was still

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being contested, having heard stories of the Faithfull Massacre (1838) in which overlanders were murdered the year before. She knew, however, that Governor George Gipps had established police huts with adjacent towns to protect travellers along the route she was taking (Figures 2 and 3). Lady Franklin was nevertheless much relieved to reach the safety of the Murray River where the natives were, 'quite quiet'.

Figure 2: Map showing proposed military posts between Sydney and Melbourne 1838 (Courtesy Michael Cannon, *Historical Records of Victoria, Vol. 2A, The Aborigines of Port Phillip 1835–1839*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1977, p. 357)

Figure 3: Thomas Townsend's 'Plan of the Township of Albury at the River Murray', showing the police hut and the crossing (Courtesy NSW State Archives, N1040)

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At the Murray, Lady Franklin met with and described two Aboriginal families headed by Joe and Jem. Joe, Mary and their daughter spoke a creole she dismissively calls 'jabber English'. They did the drudgery work of fetching wood and water for the police hut. They were paid with 'refuse victuals'; they ate potato peelings, cabbage stalks and whatever had been left on plates. She remarked on the way Joe 'treated his gin well' and noted his reluctance to scale a tree to show her how he hunted possums. Jem worked for the publican, and acted as human scare crow, protecting the publican's maize crop. Both men and their families did menial chores for minimal in-kind payment and were prized for their reliability.[5]

Both Robinson and Lady Franklin are imperfect witnesses to European and Aboriginal interactions. Jane Franklin was a privileged white woman who had fleeting encounters with Aboriginal people. Hers was a curious but othering colonial gaze. George Robinson was a government official, caught between doing his job to protect but being complicit in the dispossession of Aboriginal people. Still, Inga Clendinnen found him a worthy guide and one who appeared to win the confidence of his Aboriginal interviewees with his possession of Aboriginal words and understandings of tribal affiliations that suggested he was 'mapping the Aboriginal world of meanings and imagination'.[6] He admired the 'ingenuity of this singular people', notably, as he saw it, in the way they eked a living from the rivers and the land.

Both Franklin and Robinson provide one-sided contact stories depicting European settlement. Yet, they start, even advance, conversations about how Europeans and Aboriginal groups related to each other and how the land, the river and the crossing place were being used at a stage in white Australia's black history.

The sound, song, public inn, native encampment and police hut have all long gone. But it is to be hoped that such documentary evidence is sufficient to persuade archaeologists looking for the place and determining its meanings to see heritage values important to the local community and to the state.

The undeveloped nature of the police hut site and its immediate river reserve surrounds help make what Heather Goodall calls 'a place of evocation', that is a place for sharing stories among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people relating to the productive lives pursued nearby before the intrusion of Europeans and stories relating to the impact of that intrusion.[7]

Notes

1. Ian Clark (ed.), *The Journals of George Robinson, Chief Protector, Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate*, Volume 1, Melbourne, Heritage Matters, 1998, p. 266.

2. Clark (ed.), pp. 241–50.

3. M.L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London, Routledge, 1992, pp. 6–7.

4. Penny Russell (ed.), *This Errant Lady: Jane Franklin's Overland Journey from Port Phillip to Sydney, 1839*, Canberra, National Library of Australia, 2002, p. 48.

5. Russell (ed.), pp. 61–8.

6. Inga Clendinnen, *Tiger's Eye*, Melbourne, Text, 2000, pp. 191–221.

7. Heather Goodall, 'Too Early Yet or Not Soon Enough: Reflections on Sharing Histories as Process', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 33, no. 118, 2002, pp. 21–3.

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REVIEWS

Extreme and Dangerous: The Curious Case of Dr Ian Macdonald

By Kate Hutchison. Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne 2020. Pp. vi + 196. $39.95, paperback.

It is disconcerting enough to discover your father has an intelligence file, whatever the reason. Mine was a young refugee from Nazi Germany, and his record is a banal one. Kate Hutchison's parents were openly committed communists in Melbourne during the 1930s (and indeed for the rest of their lives), but even so she admits surprise at the depth and longevity of the intelligence services' interest in them.

Hutchison was intrigued by the brutal description of her father as 'extreme and dangerous', for this was not the man she knew—an inner-suburban Melbourne GP, respected by his patients, a family man with a deep interest in political ideas and ideals.

In the 1930s her parents maintained a naïve faith in a belief system that they—as did so many others—thought could redress the inequalities evident around them in post-Depression Melbourne, a rich city in which poverty and hunger were still in plain sight. 'They believed communism was an ideology that could be made to work.' One marvels only that their adherence outlived the Stalinist purges, the rise of the gulags, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Australian Communist Party itself.

These beliefs would see them remain under political surveillance for more than 40 years. The lengths to which the civilian and military intelligence services pursued Ian Macdonald, especially during the 1940s and 1950s, open a window on a very different Australia. This was an era in which the contest of political ideas was on a level very different from what passes for such discourse today.

The harshest intervention in their lives would be the forced removal of Macdonald from his post as a civilian government doctor in Darwin during World War II. This was at the behest of armed forces intelligence and was based upon the flimsiest of premises that he posed a security risk. The head of the Commonwealth health department was ambivalent, and

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senior law officers opined that there were no grounds for dismissal, but nonetheless the matter went all the way to the war cabinet. Macdonald was compelled to return to Melbourne, where he worked in the quarantine service before eventually being drummed out of this organisation too. He promptly joined the army, where somewhat ludicrously he did not seem to pose a security risk and spent the rest of the war specialising in the prevention of malaria, for which he was mentioned in dispatches.

Ideology politics were clearly at play here; one of the key informants against him was W.J.R. Scott, World War I veteran, sometime secret right-wing army leader in the 1920s, briefly in military intelligence and later to command with aloof incompetence the ill-fated Gull Force in the Dutch East Indies. More than two-thirds of his men never came home. Scott had it in for Macdonald for reasons that are not entirely clear.

After the war, Macdonald would face off allegations of professional impropriety in the 1949–50 Victorian Royal Commission Inquiring into the Origins, Aims, Objects and Funds of the Communist Party in Victoria. His main fears were that he could be deregistered as a doctor or that his patients would desert him. Neither eventuated. Macdonald remained committed to the cause but largely disappeared from public view.

The book is let down by an array of annoying errors that should have been eliminated in production. Not only is the family name of the subject alternately spelled 'Macdonald' or 'McDonald', but that of the CPA's celebrated modern historian the late Stuart Macintyre is also variously rendered as 'Macintyre' and 'McIntyre'. Perhaps the most egregious example is reserved for the English writer 'D.H. Laurence'. An assortment of other minor text errors tests the reader's patience, as does a reference to the 'Governor General of Victoria'.

In fairness, the author is writing a slice of her family's story rather than a formal history. However, for all of this, it is a work of considerable scholarship, which sets that story in a broader historical context. The juxtaposition of the national authorities' pursuit of her leftist father against the emergence of the extreme right secret armies—and more importantly some of the figures involved in them—is evidence of this. Such deeply personal stories set against the backdrop of deeper political intrigue provide important insights that are often lost to history.

John Schauble

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William Cooper: An Aboriginal Life Story

By Bain Attwood. The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne 2021. Pp. 296. $34.99, hardback.

In 2017, the Uluru Statement from the Heart invited the Australian nation and its people 'to walk together' with First Nations Australians 'to build a better future'. The statement acknowledged the 'structural nature' of the issues facing contemporary First Nations Australians, perpetuated by the systemic oppression created by settler colonialism over the last 250 years. To overcome this systemic disempowerment, the Uluru Statement called for 'the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution'. As historian Bain Attwood demonstrates in *William Cooper: An Aboriginal Life Story*, this call for 'Voice' has important historical precedents.

A culmination of over a decade of research, this biography of William Cooper, a Yorta Yorta activist born at Lake Mira (Lake Moira) in the early 1860s, historicises contemporary calls for an Aboriginal voice to parliament. It views Cooper in the context of his involvement in petitioning King George V for Aboriginal representation in parliament in the 1930s. Although framed in this way, the parts of Cooper's life story presented here point to the myriad contributions he made to Aboriginal politics, going well beyond advocating a voice to parliament. Perhaps most influentially, this biography delves into broader cultural, structural and political forces that, at times, bore down on Cooper but also continued to guide his political work.

In the first section of this book, Attwood consults a plethora of dispersed archival material to piece together an account of Cooper's early years, little textual evidence of which exists. In lieu of archival absences, Attwood illuminates Cooper's formative years through an examination of several missions and reserves within the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria during the late nineteenth century. Such contextualisation demonstrates that Cooper's political work was influenced by his exposure to specific individuals, communities and ideas from childhood, mediated through settler colonial impositions. In particular, Cooper's proximity to the Maloga Mission and the Cumeroogunga Aboriginal Reserve on the banks of the Murray River influenced his advocacy. In these spaces, Cooper's adoption of Christian sensibilities under the paternalism of missionaries Daniel and Janet Matthews coincided with his exposure

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to notions of Aboriginal sovereignty and citizenship, not least from residents of Cumeroogunga and also Coranderrk who advocated for autonomy. It was at Maloga, and later Cumeroogunga, Attwood argues, that Cooper developed a sense of the collective struggles of peoples subject to colonialism, as well as acquiring the means through which to protest against such subjugation.

It is in the second half of *William Cooper* that the reader gets to know Cooper more intimately. Cooper's activism manifested most tangibly in the 1930s through his letter writing, petitioning of King George V, and his vital involvement in the establishment of the Australian Aborigines' League. This political work, captured in rich archival material, reflected Cooper's desire to have settler Australians recognise 'civilised' Aboriginal people as worthy members of the Australian nation. But, in explicating this point, Attwood points to a key nuance in Cooper's activism; in calling for Aboriginal representation and attempting to contest settler conceptions of racial difference, Cooper necessarily redefined racial difference as it was experienced by settler and Aboriginal Australians in the early twentieth century. Attwood shows that Cooper, as is also argued in the Uluru Statement, believed that Aboriginal people were unique not necessarily owing to racial differences but by virtue of their experiences of subjugation at the hands of settler colonialism. This, Cooper maintained, meant that Aboriginal people needed specific representation to overcome the systemic oppression preventing what he understood as Aboriginal 'uplift'.

By guiding his readers through Cooper's life story, Attwood not only historicises the Uluru Statement but contributes to a growing genre of Aboriginal biography. At the outset, Attwood attempts to divorce his work from that of traditional biography, citing what he views as the genre's chief limitations, including its 'tendency to render its subjects as unique', its propensity to 'disconnect their lives' from those around them, and its dependence on the subject's personal papers. Nevertheless, *William Cooper* sits comfortably within a burgeoning body of contemporary Aboriginal biographical work such as Grace Karsken's essay 'Nah Doongh's Song' (2019) and Cassandra Pybus's *Truganini* (2020). These works read against (and along) the archival grain for glimpses of lives obscured by the settler archive but nonetheless representative of important political positions and perspectives. Reconstructing such stories requires historians to move beyond conservative conceptions of

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archives as necessarily written and neatly collated, instead demanding deep and often innovative research techniques.

Through its extensive archival work and intimate engagement with William Cooper and those around him, *William Cooper* is an important biography of a remarkable, though not entirely peerless, individual. Attwood comfortably places Cooper's life story in conversation with broader narratives of Aboriginal political mobilisation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, unravelling a vital and contemporarily relevant history. But, rather than working against biography as a genre, *William Cooper* reflects the methodological maturation of the practice of Aboriginal life writing in response to historiographical developments that recognise the contemporary importance of recovering stories such as Cooper's.

Jessica Urwin

Needlework & Women's Identity in Colonial Australia

By Lorinda Cramer. Bloomsbury Visual Arts, London 2021. Pp. x + 247. $59.99, paperback.

In-depth studies of material history are still comparatively rare in Australia, which makes Lorinda Cramer's engrossing monograph on nineteenth-century needlework all the more welcome. Sewing was one of those ubiquitous female occupations in the past, ever-present but rarely the focus of the historian's interest. It is long overdue for attention, and Cramer's study invites us to see those laboriously worked children's samplers, or colonial mothers' overflowing mending baskets, with new eyes.

As the book title suggests, Cramer positions her study within the context of colonial Australia's shifting class identities. While the Victorian gold rush arguably created the most turbulent social context for new arrivals, the act of emigration was a fraught one whatever the destination, and women could face new and bewildering social challenges. Economic success in new ventures could prove illusory, and in those contexts women might be called upon to use all their skills, including needlecraft, to preserve social standing, or even just to keep their families decently clad. Much of the book explores this productive process. The role of needlework in creating or reinforcing gender identities is perhaps less contentious, but it is still worth exploring, and Cramer found some

interesting contradictions in the historical record, not all of them the result of the topsy-turvy world of gold-rush society. Tailors aside, it seems that some men were adept at sewing and were quite unselfconscious about their activities. But it is women's work that is the primary focus of this book. Cramer's thesis is that nineteenth-century needlework was far more than a genteel pastime or, in other circumstances, a tedious necessity. Rather, through their sewing, women performed, maintained or remade identities in new and often testing social settings.

Successive chapters reinforce this argument, beginning with women's education. Historians of education have long recognised the gendered nature of children's education until quite late in the twentieth century. Girls, but not boys, were inevitably taught to sew. We now marvel at the capacity of quite young girls to execute the intricate patterns of the many samplers surviving from the nineteenth century, but Cramer argues that little girls learned far more than how to make neat stitches from these tasks. Indeed, these extended sewing exercises were lessons in the feminine behaviours expected of them in later life, encouraging patience, discipline, self-control and virtue as they stitched. She points out that stitching encouraged girls to work with 'downcast eyes', even in company, and I was reminded of those excruciating scenes in Jane Austen's novels as needlework masked the awkwardness of long pauses in 'polite' conversation. However, it was the chapters dealing with genteel women's 'fancy work' as opposed to 'plain sewing' that I found most intriguing and original.

Nineteenth-century 'fancy work' encompassed far more than embroidery, to include knitting, crochet, tatting, wool work (embroidery in wools), lacemaking and so on. It signalled that the maker had both the resources and the leisure to make such objects, which could include anything from embroidered fire screens to gentlemen's smoking caps. It is the performative nature of fancy work that interests Cramer, since it was often undertaken in company or made for show, allowing women to express or perhaps negotiate gentility in the colonial setting. Plain sewing, on the other hand, was rarely a public performance, unless a woman was making goods for charity. Plain sewing, including mending, could be a strategy for survival, as household linen or clothing was made, altered, mended, patched and remade to extend its useful life. Cramer points out that women might actually conceal such sewing from their peers to preserve a family's status and mask financial stress. Far from just another

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household task, plain sewing according to this analysis might be seen as one in a range of conscious strategies women adopted to negotiate complex social environments.

Cramer draws on a wide range of historical source material to illustrate her argument. Inevitably the diaries and letters of literate women feature strongly, along with the many and varied advice manuals published during the nineteenth century and aimed at middle-class (or aspiring) women. The decision to focus largely on genteel (middle-class) women may reflect this source material, although there is a brief section acknowledging the work of professional needlewomen, along with that of the increasing number who earned a living in clothing factories as the century progressed. Those women are not Cramer's main focus here, but I would certainly welcome more work in this area from this historian. Material evidence is also examined closely throughout, which is refreshing. Some artefacts, like the children's samplers, obligingly identify maker, date and sometimes even location, allowing precise conclusions to be drawn. Others remain stubbornly mute, forcing the historian to assume the likely maker from association with place, in techniques borrowed from archaeology. While in general such conclusions seem reasonable, they do underpin the difficulty presented in working with what is often called 'material culture'. However, overall, Lorinda Cramer has written an absorbing, original account of what can no longer be dismissed as a commonplace activity.

Margaret Anderson

Comrades! Lives of Australian Communists

Edited by Bob Boughton, Danny Blackman, Mike Donaldson, Carmel Shute and Beverley Symons. Search Foundation, Sydney 2020. Pp. 435. $30.00, paperback.

This book can be quite moving, because it tells the life stories of ordinary, decent activists. The premise is simple: assemble short biographies of 100 members of the CPA over the 100 years since its formation in 1920. Selection criteria were that there be equal numbers of men and women, and that they were not usually prominent leaders. Many are not household names, at least not in my household.

What makes them moving is that they were all household names somewhere. They were all so involved and dedicated, in unions, community groups, the women's movement, artistic circles, and so on. They worked for child care, for domestic violence shelters, for better workplace safety, for peace, to save an historic building or to advance an Indigenous cause. They took minutes, organised leaflet drops, founded organisations, and argued for critical interpretations. In retirement, many just kept going, and quite a few joined a choir.

There are two obvious ways one might be critical. First is that all this activism had ulterior motives, to extend the CPA's influence; the other is that the authors are too gentle with their subjects, who all emerge in their best colours. On the latter, it is true there are no harsh words, and none of the subjects deviate much from the exemplar of a dedicated life. Phrases such as 'consummate organiser', 'dedicated' and 'honest' recur. Some entries read like the eulogies composed by daughters or sons; others are more academic, with sharper edges, such as Peter Beilharz on Noel Counihan and Phillip Deery on Idris Williams.

But none of these subjects were lazy and ineffectual, nor had any left the party to make money and build their dominion over others (there must have been some of both); none were apostates, going over to the other side to work against the CPA (there were well-known examples). But why should the editors be expected to include this fuller range of the human experience of membership? Their purpose is to honour ordinary members and, in a sense, to humanise them, to release them from the vilification membership often attracted.

That vilification raises the second possible criticism—that all this activism had ulterior motives, was inherently false, a front to build influence in anticipation of the day the tanks somehow rolled across the Torres Strait. It was always the argument of anti-communists that a CPA unionist—even if regularly elected by members, and sometimes preferred by management because they were honest—was actually something else, or that an activist arguing against war was actually advancing the Comintern cause. This de-legitimisation of motives was the premise of anti-communism and, after all, was often encouraged by the party's own view of its 'front' activities. It was certainly encouraged by the Labor Party, which, in its perpetual turf war with the CPA in the unions, participated in the theatre of 'exposing' an activist (who might be authentic) as a communist (who obviously could not be).

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What is striking from this book, however, is just how reformist most of these dedicated activists were. Perhaps, if a genuinely revolutionary situation had developed in Australia, they were ready to be revolutionaries; but, meanwhile, in the real world, they were reformists, even in the strongest of the CPA unions. In day-to-day activism, CPA members worked to remedy specific inequities and chipped away at structures of oppression, pushing one step at a time towards what they saw as a better, more just society for workers, women, Indigenous Australians and, in the later years, for migrants, gays and the environment. Despite the trumpet calls of revolutionary ideology, their daily practice was working for progressive reform.

In these accounts, the party emerges as a support network providing encouragement and lessons in activism more than as a command structure dictating front work. There are plenty of instances where members say being in the party meant supportive friendships, as well as learning skills. For Tom McDonald, membership 'gave me encouragement, opportunity and greatly assisted my self-development', while Alice Hughes, despite struggles to advance feminism within the party, said 'we had a lot of camaraderie that's lasted for years and years'.

What might Australian history have been like without all this activist energy? If, as Menzies and others before him devoutly wished, the CPA had been expunged from the Australian polity, what difference would it have made? Doubtless, many of the same individuals would have still been activists for social justice, though perhaps with less ideological conviction and less support; progressive causes may have had less energy and momentum. And, on the other side of the ledger, what if anti-communism had not been so effective in excluding individual communists from 'influence'? Many had careers blighted by the covert intervention of the secret police, dropping a word that so-and-so should not be promoted or perhaps employed at all, especially in the bureaucracy, science and teaching, though less so in the unions and the law. Australian policy making, diplomacy, education, science and the public service were denied use of a lot of talent and dynamism by the phobia that none infected with Marxist ideas should have influence. This book suggests those losses, as much as the gains for progressive politics.

John Murphy

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Made in Lancashire: A Collective Biography of Assisted Migrants from Lancashire to Victoria 1852–1853

By Richard Turner. Monash University Publishing, Melbourne 2021. Pp. 256. $34.95, paperback.

Migration histories are always, to some extent, transnational. After all, their core business is people who cross borders. Yet, it is not uncommon for migrants' pasts to be treated as footnotes to their resettled lives, their home towns, villages, and streets appearing only in an introductory chapter or paragraph, after which regional differences disappear into new identities such as 'English' or 'Italian' or 'Chinese' migrants. This is logical in many respects; migrants' origins can be difficult to trace, and they may view themselves in such broad terms after resettlement. Richard Turner's *Made in Lancashire* offers one way to deal with this critique, demonstrating the value of a history that traces the whole migration journey from one specific local context to another. As he sketches the lives of migrants in motion, we see the various forms of baggage with which they travelled and how these shaped their lives in emigration.

The book examines 225 assisted migrants who travelled from the southern regions of Lancashire to the colony of Victoria in 1852–53. Most were married couples with children, but single men and women also appear throughout. Most were skilled or semi-skilled industrial workers. They were largely ordinary: no luminaries among them, and, though a few became prosperous, most were just comfortable and perhaps contentedly so. Turner's reasons for focusing on this particular cohort do not become entirely clear until the book's conclusion—his own family hailed from Lancashire and had connections to the group. But selection of this cohort also captures a moment of significant change. As Turner points out, the surge of assisted migration in 1852 would remain unsurpassed until after the Second World War.

Like most histories of non-elite figures, Turner's research involves painstaking, detailed reconstruction of lives that appear only fleetingly in documentary records. He is remarkably honest about this process. In the conclusion, he recounts stumbling upon a quote, presumably the words of one of his subjects—'we did not come all this way to tug forelocks'—but that he lost the source and never could find it again (I suspect this happens to many of us, though we rarely admit to it in print). Throughout, he highlights the gaps he dealt with, the places where he had to shade in

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detail or guess at likely outcomes. Herein lies the difficulty of this sort of work; it requires multi-archival research across countries and continents. People in motion are apt to disappear from the historical record along the way. Further, migration's bureaucratic hurdles often result in individuals misrepresenting themselves on paper, making it difficult to piece together their stories. Nevertheless, *Made in Lancashire* contains both illuminating anecdotes and a number of coherent individual narratives.

Three early chapters sketch the broader context of assisted migration via the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission, the cohort's skills and occupations prior to emigration, and the contours of municipal and cooperative life in Lancashire. This is where Turner is at his best; his street-level descriptions of industrial Manchester are particularly rich and form a compelling backdrop to his argument that the cohort arrived steeped in Chartist ideas and cooperative practices. The quantitative figures that dot these early chapters are drawn mostly from census data and are a particular strength. The inclusion of a map or two—given the book's distinct grounding in place—would have further assisted the reader.

The remaining chapters reconstruct the variety of options available to the Lancashire migrants upon arriving in the colony: travelling to the goldfields to seek fortune or (in many cases) set up commercial enterprises in the surrounding towns; settling on Melbourne's urban and suburban fringes; mobility, particularly following the expansion of the railways; and seeking a place of one's own, either by rural land selection or urban home ownership. Turner's stories of women and children's lives and enterprises are particularly compelling. So too his argument that lives in Lancashire had equipped the cohort with flexible work skills that they applied in inventive ways in Victoria, along with a cooperative approach to labour and enterprise that was valuable both at the diggings and afterward. The politics of land reform and free selection are also central concerns—this makes the absence of the region's Indigenous peoples conspicuous, given that the land ownership this cohort so prized was predicated on relatively recent, and typically violent, dispossession.

Made in Lancashire does not claim to be representative of all assisted migrants' experiences in colonial Australia—and nor does it need to. The book's contribution lies in its eye for the local: for the streets, townhouses, and factories of industrial Lancashire, and the impact they had on the breweries, general stores, stone cottages, and urban terraces built in

colonial Victoria. It adds rich texture to our understanding of working-class lives and mobility in Australia's colonial history.

Ebony Nilsson

Maurice Blackburn: Champion of the People

By David Day. Scribe, Melbourne 2019. Pp. 339. $49.99, paperback.

David Day has written biographies of four Labor leaders: Andrew Fisher, John Curtin, Ben Chifley and Paul Keating. He has shown how each has had their distinctive claim to prominence in our national life. Maurice Blackburn, his fifth, had a reputation, in his own time and since, as a man of principle who paid a heavy political price for his rectitude. This biography traces the emergence of his political ideas and the moral framework within which they were embedded. The narrative explores how he navigated the rough and tumble of Labor politics with a steady moral compass.

Blackburn's background was markedly different from that of nearly all his Labor contemporaries. Although his family endured serious difficulties, such as Maurice's bank manager father dying and leaving his wife and children to make their way in a world that cared little for such misfortune, Maurice's mother's family were respectable middle-class people with some connections to colonial wealth. While it did not extend much to the Blackburns, his mother's pride and ambition for her son helped him on the way to a privileged, if precarious, education in Toorak and at Melbourne Grammar. He went on to university where his progress was interrupted by tutoring and full-time teaching. After several attempts at the mathematics hurdle in his arts program, he was able to move on to law, where he found a comfortable field of endeavour. In the course of his interrupted studies, his political engagement shifted from a flirtation with the Kyabram Movement to an increasingly clear socialist view of how he thought his good work might improve the lot of his fellow citizens.

Day explains how Maurice met Doris Horden, the love of his life, who shared many of his political views, which sat well with her feminist beliefs. As the relationship deepened, Doris's initial close association with Vida Goldstein's Women's Political Association slowly drifted away in the face of Goldstein's increasingly stringent feminism. While Maurice

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struggled to establish his Labor-oriented legal practice, his victory at a by-election and soon after at a state election provided an income sufficient to marry in December 1914.

One of the persistent themes in Day's biography is the tension between Maurice's beliefs and the changing context of the electorate and the internal dynamics of the Labor Party. In the first instance he lost his Victorian parliamentary seat in the 1917 election because of his deeply held objection to war and particularly Billy Hughes's conscription proposal. Although he supported a citizens' army for national defence, he was against conscription for overseas service. He also opposed it on the grounds that it could be the precursor of industrial conscription, thus linking his pacificist principles to his socialist objection to capitalist exploitation. In 1915 he told the Victorian parliament that he would take no part in recruiting campaigns and denounced the capitalist system that led to war. In face of the intensely patriotic mood of the 1917 electorate, he was defeated.

While he struggled to make a living as an independent barrister, he set up his own firm of Maurice Blackburn in 1919. Despite his economic struggles, he maintained his intense activism. At the 1921 ALP Federal Conference, Blackburn's interpretation of the party's 'Socialisation Objective' softened the radical aim to a reformist formulation. This was one of the occasions where he was out of step with the labour movement's 'red dawn' mood.

In 1925 Blackburn fought the Wren/Catholic faction for preselection in the Victorian seat of Fitzroy and won the subsequent election. After a redistribution, he stood for and won the Clifton Hill seat with a solid majority. Until 1933 he concentrated on both his electorate and the profound damage that the Depression and the conservative Premiers' Plan was inflicting on ordinary citizens. In the 1932 election he was returned with a reduced majority. The following year he was elected speaker of the Legislative Assembly. He then announced that he would seek preselection for the federal seat of Bourke against the wishes of its outgoing member, Frank Anstey, and won in the 1934 election. But he was soon in trouble again with his party's official policy and committees.

Blackburn's 1935 expulsion looks like a quaint Australian version of J. Edgar Hoover's description of Americans who fought for the Spanish Republic in 1936–39 as 'premature anti-Fascists'. In the 1941 case, he was expelled just before the Soviet Union became 'our great and glorious

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Soviet allies'. These were outstanding cases where Maurice was vindicated by history. As an Independent Labor MP he argued against Curtin's proposal to send conscripted soldiers overseas in Australia's Pacific region. In the 1943 election he was defeated by official Labor candidate Bill Bryson.

In 1944 the long-standing brain condition that had plagued him for years developed rapidly and killed him. There were effusive testimonials to his support for deprived individuals, civil liberties and socialist political ideas. In 1946 his long-term political collaborator, Doris, was elected as an Independent Labor representative to the seat of Bourke, which she held until the anti-Labor landslide of the 1949 election.

David Day has given us another of his very detailed and engaging political biographies that explains and pays handsome tribute to the life of a decent and honourable politician. We are lucky to have this fine political biography, which sits well alongside Carolyn Rasmussen's intimate portrait of an admirable political couple.

Peter Love

Early Australian Automotive Design: The First Fifty Years

By Norm Darwin. H@nd Publishing, Mt Rowan 2017. Pp. 340. $59.95, hardcover.

Norm Darwin's *Early Australian Automotive Design* is a pioneering work of automotive history that should be on every Australian enthusiast's bookshelf. It is pioneering in two ways: first, it focuses on automotive design (rather than, say, marque) and, second, the text is accompanied by the full critical apparatus of research scholarship—namely source and archival references in footnotes, sources of illustrations and selected bibliography. While these elements of scholarship are normal, indeed requisite, in academic publication, they are not so common in Australian automotive history publishing.

Darwin's decision to write a book about the genesis of Australian automotive design was triggered, as he explains in the Preface, by the work he did assisting me in the exhibition *Shifting Gear: Design, Innovation and the Australian Car*, which I devised for the National Gallery of Victoria in 2015. Local design was the theme that connected the 23 vehicles on display and, as I am not an automotive enthusiast but a design historian, I

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relied heavily on Darwin's knowledge and advice. Indeed, the first books I consulted in my research were his ground-breaking studies published nearly 40 years ago—*The History of Holden since 1917* (1983) and *The History of Ford in Australia* (1986).

While issues of design were raised in these early books and also in the later *Monaro Magic* (2010) and *Torana Tough* (2012), design was not the framework around which his argument was constructed as it is in *Early Australian Automotive Design*. And this is the breakthrough, for while on the one hand Australian automotive history had, until *Shifting Gear*, sidelined design, on the other hand Australian design history had ignored automotive design as a field of study. This book therefore is as important for our design history as it is for automotive history. Darwin uses a broad definition of design that has enabled him to look beyond the surface of the vehicle, the area that transfixes most of us, and investigate engineering and mechanical design as well. In so doing, he has discovered a number of notable designers and innovators whose contributions to the industry were hitherto unknown.

The legacy of Darwin's PhD, on which his book is based, can be seen in the rigour of his arguments and his command of his sources. The first chapter—'First Motorised Vehicles'—is the most complex; it has over 200 footnotes and was probably the most difficult to write, given everywhere Darwin is breaking new ground in scholarship. A glance through the notes is testimony to Darwin's extraordinary command of the archive and the range of his sources. This enables, indeed commands, those interested in this subject to follow his reasoning closely through his interpretation of the documentary evidence.

Methodologically, Darwin's most important innovation in the early sections of the book is to use patents as evidence of design intent. As he writes: 'Adding an engine, particularly someone else's engine, to a buggy, is not the work of a designer. There needs to be evidence of design activity, a sketch and/or drawing of intent. A patent application provides proof of design intent' (p. 2).

Furthermore, as a self-publisher, Darwin has been able to use as many illustrations as he liked, and this chapter—and indeed the entire book—is lavishly illustrated with images never before published. So, in chapters 1 and 2 for example, patents and drawings from contemporary books, manuals and motoring and coach-building magazines illustrate his arguments. There is enough material here to fill many books. The short

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chapter 3 focuses on a neglected area of scholarship, namely automotive design during World War I, and the theme of war-time production and innovation is revisited in the final chapter examining the origins of the Holden 47-215 during World War II. Chapter 4 examines local attempts to design and build an Australian car between the wars and critically examines the design credentials of the short-lived and now iconic local marques Australian Six, Summit, Roo and Chic and others.

The three long chapters 5, 6 and 7, which occupy more than half the text, return to Darwin's long-held interests as an automotive historian, the mass-production cars Holden and Ford, principally the former. Along the way are some excellent analyses. In chapter 6, Darwin is exemplary in sorting through the myths and murky research surrounding the origins of Lewis Bandt's famed 1934 Ford ute, highlighting its antecedents and, indeed, its contemporaries. As GM-H brought out a similar vehicle three months after Ford, the idea for such a vehicle had clearly been in circulation for some time. Darwin also makes a claim for the innovatory and forward-looking 'all enclosed coupe' produced by GM-H in 1935, which has been neglected by historians. His methodical reconstruction of the history of the first Holden is likewise exemplary and should be required reading for anyone entering into debate about this car.

The chronological organisation of the book reflects its teleology, as the history of Australian automotive design leads seemingly inexorably from its origins in the 1890s to the development of 'Australia's own car', the Holden 47-25, 50 years later. And this is understandable given Darwin's interests and expertise. But it is not the whole story. The area of Australian auto design that intrigued me as curator of *Shifting Gear* was the messy but very lively story of great racing cars and 'specials' to which I devoted half the exhibition space. This history is not divorced from that of the 'Big 3' American car companies as they shared staff, expertise and innovation, particularly around engine design, but it is another history that awaits as good an historian as Darwin.

Harriet Edquist

The Women of Little Lon: Sex Workers in Nineteenth-Century Melbourne

By Barbara Minchinton. La Trobe University Press, Melbourne 2021. Pp. 304. $32.99, paperback.

Archaeological investigations in Melbourne's Commonwealth block have made a rich contribution to our understandings of the city's history. Barbara Minchinton's *The Women of Little Lon* is no exception, focusing on the sex work that was at the centre of the area's notorious reputation. Like the other outputs from this research project, it seeks to reconstruct the world of the people who left the relics behind.

The book is divided into four sections, the first of which explains the legal and economic context that allowed sex work to flourish. While the legal aspects have been well explored in other histories of nineteenth-century prostitution, the economic context is less well understood. Rather than depicting sex workers as outsiders, Minchinton shows how their work was central to the area's microeconomy. Sex workers were customers as well as businesswomen, and they, and their clients, were essential to the prosperity of many of the non-sex-related businesses that flourished in the area.

This interconnectedness is more fully explored in the second section of the book. Without downplaying the rowdiness, violence and disorder for which the area was best known, Minchinton directs the reader's attention to the caring and cohesive elements that sustained the women who worked there. Noting that surviving accounts of Little Lon have almost always been created by men—police, journalists, clients and moral crusaders—she seeks out situations in which the women represented themselves, occasionally through their words but more usually through their actions. The picture that emerges is a far more complex one than the existing records would suggest. While for some women life was as short, miserable and degraded as contemporary 'experts' suggested, others found, in the outcast community, care in times of crisis, support for their children, and for some the opportunity to accrue considerable property and business interests that allowed them to leave a substantial legacy for their families. For Minchinton, the primary motivation for women choosing sex work was economic, driven by the lack of opportunities to support themselves and their families in the absence of a reliable male breadwinner. However, she also notes that some of these women came

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to relish the autonomy that such work gave them, rejecting the restraints that a return to respectability would involve.

This point is more fully explored in the third section of the book, which fills out the lives of five such women. It is at this point that the quality of Minchinton's research comes to the fore, assiduously reconstructing lives from disparate, and unreliable, genealogical, legal and property sources, in addition to the archaeological find to which each woman is linked. The cast of characters here is rich and varied, ranging from the elusive Mary Williams, who plied her trade in the back lanes, to Sarah Saqui, who entertained the visiting Duke of Edinburgh. Through such life stories, the author creates a more rounded image of women making autonomous decisions, albeit within constraints of varying degrees, actors not victims, involved in a range of relationships with men who emerge as similarly flawed.

The book would not be complete without a discussion of the best known of Little Lon's nineteenth-century sex workers, Caroline Hodgson, better known as Madame Brussels. Minchinton uses her story as a focus for the final section of the book, which explores the area's decline, correcting many of the popular misconceptions about Hodgson's life along the way. Sex work had been able to flourish in Little Lon because, while the authorities were concerned about disorder, they were surprisingly tolerant of immorality. But the tide was turning, with the voices of moral campaigners gaining increasing influence. Madame Brussels, conducting her business in highly visible properties uncomfortably close to Parliament House, became a particular target, even though, or perhaps because, politicians featured amongst her clientele. The passage of the *Police Offences Act* in 1907 brought the concentration of sex work in the area to an end. This shift, Minchinton convincingly argues, did little to diminish the demand for prostitution, but it did limit the autonomy it had offered to women, scattering them to the inner suburbs where they were more likely to be under the control of men, and creating the oppressive legislative climate that we are still struggling to deconstruct today.

Shurlee Swain

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Vandemonians: The Repressed History of Colonial Victoria

By Janet McCalman. The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne 2021. Pp. 343. $39.95, paperback.

The neighbouring colonies/states of Victoria and Tasmania share long historical ties. Launceston was the launching pad for the settlement of the Port Phillip District, setting a pattern of movement of people and goods across Bass Strait that continues to the present. For generations Melbourne was the primary destination of Tasmanians leaving for the mainland (the balance of movement has shifted recently), while Victorians were the largest group of visitors to the island. However, one significant aspect of the relationship receiving little detailed attention was the large-scale movement of ex-convicts from Van Diemen's Land to Victoria.

The Port Phillip District and other early settlements in Victoria were never quite a haven of free settlement like South Australia. Ex-convicts and absconding convicts moved south from what is now New South Wales from the late 1830s where pastoralists and others keen for labour asked few questions. Transported convicts still under sentence also decamped from VDL hidden in vessels, on whaleships and small boats they stole (especially from the Tamar) from the 1830s. However, by far the largest group were VDL convicts moving to Victoria after serving their sentence, and this group is the focus of Janet McCalman's book.

The book is based on the Founders and Survivors Ships Project, drawing on records linking convicts to their ships of arrival, the transcription of which was begun by Deborah Oxley. It is a subset of the larger Founders and Survivors database of the over 70,000 convicts transported to VDL between 1803 and 1853, a large and impressive digital data set compiled by a collaboration of academics/experts like Hamish Maxwell-Stewart and Trudy Cowley together with an army of citizen social scientists, many the descendants of convicts. Big data sets have enormous potential to progress historical research by enabling more questions to be asked, difficult questions to be probed and powerful collaborations with detailed qualitative research. While McCalman refers to some overarching statistics, her focus is on writing a predominantly narrative account of ex-VDL convicts in Victoria across a wide array of social spheres.

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Vandemonians is a rich, informed and nuanced narrative, capturing the turbulent 1850s in particular; it describes how ex-convicts survived in a society trying to portray itself as a free settlement without the taint of convictism. With vivid pictures of individuals, groups and particular locations like the working-class suburb of Collingwood and mining towns like Ballarat, McCalman explores both general shaping factors and micro-scale differences. With regard to general factors, she shows how poverty intersected with criminality and the especially vulnerable position of women that led to, amongst other things, intergenerational/child prostitution. This included exploitation of young girls by their parents and these girls' vulnerability to rape by their 'betters', who used the convict taint to escape serious punishment even if charged—and almost certainly many were not. McCalman argues fractured families affected both the likelihood of transportation and life chances thereafter. She links extreme poverty, criminality and alcoholism (the refuge of despair), premature death and, together with the high infant mortality of the times, the absence of descendants. The book shines a sometimes harrowing light on Victoria during and after the gold rushes, on things that have received too little attention in previous research on the period. Also particularly insightful is the role of hospitals, benevolent institutions and even prisons, which actually provided some support (a bed and food) for the 'fallen' in country towns like Ballarat and Bendigo.

McCalman identifies a wide array of other life-trajectories for Vandemonians, including those men who remained single but in fairly continuous if often precarious and poorly paid work, with few friends and dealing with loneliness and living on the social margins. Others managed a degree of success, they (and their descendants) securing work in the factory districts of inner Melbourne, the residence enabled by a miner's right (which widows could use), or on the land—though few got enough to farm sustainably over the longer term. The survivors generally disappeared into the community, in the sense that their convict origins were repressed. Their time in Tasmania was massaged to minimise convict connections. Death certificates often knowingly or unknowingly painted a picture different from the facts. McCalman notes their grandchildren served in the AIF, proud bearers of what later generations would see as a true Australian family in the twentieth century before identifying convict forebears became increasingly popular from the 1980s.

This summary barely does justice to *Vandemonians*, which includes a valuable list of short biographies at the end. McCalman admits there are limits to her sample, including under-representing those arriving in the 1840s. VDL employers lamented losing workers with in-demand skills. Ex-convicts had formed/joined unions in VDL from the 1830s and some likely carried this to Victoria—certainly Melbourne and VDL unions communicated in the 1840s. Most convicts were tried for work-related dissent while in VDL, and McCalman refers to transported Chartists who went to Victoria. These and other interconnections warrant further research, but this does not diminish McCalman's achievement.

<div align="right">

Michael Quinlan

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Margaret Anderson, FFAHS is director of the Old Treasury Building in Melbourne. She first worked as an historian in museums in the 1970s and held senior posts in museums in Western Australia and South Australia before returning to Melbourne in 2015. In the 1980s she taught history and material culture studies at Monash University. Her research interests include women's history, the history and demography of the family and the practice of public history.

Harriet Edquist AM, FAHA is a curator, professor emerita of architectural history at RMIT University, founding director of RMIT Design Archives and founding editor of *RMIT Design Archives Journal*. Her research interests include Australian design history, the design history of European diasporas, architecture at the colonial frontier and the women's maker tradition. Recent titles she has authored or co-authored include *Melbourne Modern* (2019), *Globalisation, Entrepreneurship and the South Pacific* (2017), *Shifting Gear: Design, Innovation and the Australian Car* (2015), *Free, Secular and Democratic: Building the Public Library 1853–1913* (2013) and *Michael O'Connell: The Lost Modernist* (2011).

John Daniels, a former schoolteacher, has an interest in undiscovered, untold early Melbourne history. He began his involvement in local history as secretary of the Broadmeadows Historical Society in the 1980s, has published on *Early Schooling in Victoria, 1900–1920*, contributed articles to the *Victorian Historical Journal* on Batman's and Gellibrand's routes through the colony, and has now further developed his interest in the roles of Aboriginal people in the early settlement of Port Phillip.

Graeme Davison AO, FAHA, FASSA, FRHSV, FFAHS is emeritus professor of history at Monash University. He has lived for almost 40 years in Mont Albert on the Windsor Park Estate. He is the author or co-author of several works on Australian cities and suburbs, including *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne* (1978 and 2004), *Outcast Melbourne* (1983), *The Cream Brick Frontier* (1995), *Car Wars* (2004), *Trendyville* (2015) and *City Dreamers* (2016).

Karin Derkley is a historian and journalist who completed a PhD at La Trobe University on landed settlers to Van Diemen's Land. In 2012–13,

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she was commissioned to write the history of the Darebin Progress Association. She currently works as senior journalist and online editor for the *Law Institute Journal*.

Lawrie Hall is a retired social worker with a master's degree in social work. He has worked in the homelessness, substance abuse, and youth residential care sectors. He has tried his hand at project work, and briefly taught social work at RMIT University. He has been a keen family historian for decades, writing a number of unpublished short biographies of family members, placing their stories within broader historical contexts.

Simon Holloway is head of education at the Melbourne Holocaust Museum. He holds a PhD in classical Hebrew and Biblical Studies, and a masters in ancient history. Simon served as education officer at the Sydney Jewish Museum for six years, and as a sessional academic at the University of Sydney. At present, his research concerns the identification of biblical and rabbinic references in Yiddish and Hebrew documents produced during the Holocaust.

Andrew Lemon AM, FRHSV is a past president of the RHSV and edited the *Victorian Historical Journal* for a decade in the 1990s. He has written innumerable articles and sixteen major books. His topics range from local history, schools and education to biography and, with Marjorie Morgan, *Cataraqui*, about Australia's worst shipwreck. His epic three-volume social and political history of Australian thoroughbred racing was completed over three decades. His latest book, based on a true story, is called *The Pebbled Beach at Pentecost—a Novel*.

Peter Love is a retired politics lecturer who specialises in labour history. He is president of the Victorian branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History. His current project is the conversion of his PhD thesis on Labor MHR Frank Anstey to a publishable form.

Janet McCalman AC, FAHA, FASSA is emeritus Redmond Barry professor at the University of Melbourne, where she taught and researched interdisciplinary history for over twenty years. She has pioneered the building of historical life course datasets for demographic and health analysis. She is the author of three multi-award-winning books: *Struggletown* (1984, 1998, 2021), *Journeyings* (1993), *Sex and Suffering*

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(1998). In 2020 she co-edited with Emma Dawson *What Happens Next? Reconstructing Australia after COVID 19* and in 2021 *Vandemonians: The Repressed History of Colonial Victoria.*

Chris McConville has written widely about Australian urban history and heritage. He has published on social outcasts in Melbourne, the Irish in Australia, Australian sports history, the history of the Australian pub, and the history of Hanging Rock. He is currently researching labour relations in late-colonial Calcutta (Kolkata) and in Derry (Northern Ireland). He has an ongoing professional involvement in heritage issues.

John Murphy is a professor of political science at the University of Melbourne. His most recent book is a political biography: *H.V. Evatt: A Life* (NewSouth Publishing, 2016). An earlier book on experiences of being on welfare benefits, authored with Suellen Murray, Jenny Chalmers, Sonia Martin and Greg Marston, won the Australian Human Rights Commission 2011 Award for Literature/Non-Fiction (*Half a Citizen*, Allen & Unwin, 2011). He is currently working on a history of Australian welfare policy since 1950 and with colleagues at Monash University on a history of Australian fatherhood.

Ebony Nilsson is a research fellow in the Centre for Refugee, Migration, and Humanitarian Studies in the Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences at the Australian Catholic University, Melbourne. She is a social historian whose work focuses on Russian and Soviet migrants and their experiences during the Cold War. She earned her PhD from the University of Sydney and is writing a book on politics and surveillance in the lives of left-wing Soviet refugees, considered potential enemy aliens in Cold War Australia.

Bruce Pennay is an adjunct associate professor at Charles Sturt University and a long-time member of Wodonga Historical Society and Albury & District Historical Society. His research interests are in regional and immigration history. His most recent publication is 'Almost Everyone's Bonegilla' in the *Journal of Australian Studies.*

Michael Quinlan is emeritus professor of industrial relations at UNSW. He has researched and published extensively on the history of work and worker mobilisation. His two most recent books are *Contesting Inequality and Worker Mobilisation: Australia 1851–1880* and (with H. Maxwell-

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Stewart) *Unfree Workers: Insubordination and Resistance in Convict Australia, 1788–1860*. For many years he has served on the editorial board of *Labour History*.

Ian D. Rae is an organic chemist who followed a conventional career path in university education and governance. In 1997 he relinquished a senior appointment to begin another career, working with Australian governments and the United Nations Environment Programme to develop policy on management of chemicals in the environment, and to expand his interest in the history of chemistry and chemical technology in Australia. He holds an honorary appointment at the University of Melbourne and is editor, with Dr Sara Maroske, of the Australian Academy of Science journal *Historical Records of Australian Science*.

John Schauble has degrees in history, law, politics and emergency management from the University of Melbourne and Charles Sturt University. He worked as a journalist with the *Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* for more than twenty years in Australia and Asia. He later spent over a decade as a senior public servant in Victoria, working in fire and emergency management.

Shurlee Swain AM, FAHA, FASSA is emeritus professor at the Australian Catholic University. Her research, focused on the history of women and children with a particular interest in their interactions with the welfare system, has informed many of Australia's inquiries into historic institutional abuse. Her most recent book, *Apologies and the Legacy of Abuse of Children in 'Care'* (co-edited with Johanna Sköld), addressed the challenges of writing history in the post-apology era, drawing on insights developed through her role on the Find & Connect web resource project. She co-edited with Judith Smart the online *Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-century Australia* (2014).

Jessica Urwin is a PhD candidate in history at the Australian National University. Her research charts a history of nuclear colonialism in South Australia from 1906 to the present. In 2021 she was the recipient of the Australian Historical Association's Jill Roe Prize, the Minoru Hokari Memorial Scholarship and the History Council of NSW's First Nations History Prize. Her work is currently published in *Australian Historical Studies*, *History Australia*, *The Conversation*, *Inside Story* and the *Australian Policy and History Network*, and she has further scholarly

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work forthcoming in the *Australian Journal of Politics and History* and the *Australian Journal of History and Biography.*

Elizabeth Wade holds a PhD in law and justice, and a graduate diploma in human resources development. She has experience in various tiers of government, including the Victorian Law Department, where she developed an interest in the history of the clerks of courts. She has been involved with leadership development, higher education, mentoring programs and the community arts sector over a long career.

Martin Williams graduated in engineering with two degrees from the University of Melbourne in 1976. He had a research career at the Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Melbourne, the Australian Road Research Board, and Technisearch Ltd, RMIT University, and he retired as deputy chief of the CSIRO Division of Textile and Fibre Technology, the wool research laboratory of CSIRO. He has a continuing interest in the history of exploration in the Port Phillip District.

Allan Willingham, FRHSV, MRSV, M.ICOMOS is a conservation architect and architectural historian. Allan served on Victoria's statutory heritage body (1977–1990) and was an expert witness in heritage and conservation planning matters. Among his many heritage reports, local histories and architectural publications, *Camperdown: A Heritage Study* (1999) won a Victorian Community History Award in 2001. Allan won the Deakin University Lifetime Achievement Award (2016). He is a benefactor and past vice-president of the RHSV. He is completing a PhD on the architectural history of Real (Royal) Tennis worldwide, having represented Australia in royal tennis many times.

About the
Royal Historical Society of Victoria

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria is a community organisation comprising people from many fields committed to collecting, researching and sharing an understanding of the history of Victoria. Founded in 1909, the Society continues the founders' vision that knowing the individual stories of past inhabitants gives present and future generations links with local place and local community, bolstering a sense of identity and belonging, and enriching our cultural heritage.

The RHSV is located in History House, the heritage-listed Drill Hall at 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne, built in 1939 on a site devoted to defence installations since the construction of the West Melbourne Orderly Room in 1866 for the Victorian Volunteer Corps. The 1939 building was designed to be used by the Army Medical Corps as a training and research facility. It passed into the hands of the Victorian government, which has leased it to the Society since 1999.

The RHSV conducts lectures, exhibitions, excursions and workshops for the benefit of members and the general public. It publishes the bi-annual *Victorian Historical Journal*, a bi-monthly newsletter, *History News*, and monographs. It is committed to collecting and making accessible the history of Melbourne and Victoria. It holds a significant collection of the history of Victoria including books, manuscripts, photographs, prints and drawings, ephemera and maps. The Society's library is considered one of Australia's richest in its focus on Victorian history. Catalogues are accessible online.

The RHSV acts as the umbrella body for over 330 historical societies throughout Victoria and actively promotes their collections, details of which are accessible via the Victorian Local History Database identified on the RHSV website. The Society also sponsors the History Victoria Support Group, which runs quarterly meetings throughout the state to increase the skills and knowledge of historical societies. The RHSV has an active online presence and runs the History Victoria bookshop—online and on-site.

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Guidelines for Contributors to the
Victorian Historical Journal

1. The *Victorian Historical Journal* is a refereed journal publishing original and previously unpublished scholarly articles on Victorian history, or on Australian history where it illuminates Victorian history. It is published twice yearly by the Publications Committee, Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

2. The submission of original scholarly articles is invited following the journal's *Guidelines* available at http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/publications/victorian-historical-journal.

3. Articles from 4,000 to 8,000 words (including notes) are preferred.

4. The *VHJ* also publishes historical notes, which are reviewed by the editors. A historical note may be up to 4,000 words in length. It contains factual information and is different from an article in not being an extended analysis or having an argument. Submitted articles may be reduced and published as historical notes after consultation with the author.

5. The *VHJ* has a category 'Interpreting an Image' reviewed by the editor(s). Submit 1,000 words together with image(s).

6. The review editor(s) commission book reviews—no unsolicited reviews.

7. The RHSV does not pay for contributions to the journal.

8. The manuscript should be in digital form in a minimum 12-point serif typeface, double or one-and-a-half line spaced (including indented quotations and endnotes), with margins of at least 3 cm.

9. Referencing style is endnotes and must not exceed 10 per cent of the text. They should be devoted principally to the citation of sources.

10. The title page should include: author's name and title(s); postal address; telephone number; email address; article's word length (including notes); a 100-word biographical note on the author; a 100-word abstract of the main argument or significance of the article.

11. Suitable illustrations for articles are welcome. Initially send clear hard photocopies, not originals. Scanned images at 300dpi can be emailed or sent on disk. Further requirements for final images and permissions will be sent if your article is accepted.

12. Titles should be concise, indicative of the subject, and can include a subtitle. The editor reserves the right to alter the title in consultation with the author.

13. Send an electronic copy of your manuscript, either on disk or preferably as an email attachment (.rtf or .doc or .docx file format). Email attachments should be sent to office@historyvictoria.org.au. Telephone enquiries to the RHSV office 9326 9288.

14. A signed copyright form for online load-up is required before publication.