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**ARTS
VICTORIA**



Cover: Bust of Justice Thomas Fellows (Courtesy of Supreme Court of Victoria.) Sculptor: James Scurry

VICTORIAN HISTORICAL JOURNAL

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SINCERE THANKS

It is with sadness that we announce the retirement of Dr Kate Jones from work on the *Victorian Historical Journal*. Kate became involved in the production side of the journal in 2009. Since then she has laid out twelve editions over almost six years. She has not only donated enormous amounts of time to this, but also purchased the software herself to complete the work. This commitment was undertaken while pursuing an academic life in tertiary education. Kate provided expertise on all issues to do with the layout, illustration and appearance of the *Journal* from the raw text to the printed page. She initiated a schedule for all the tasks that needed to be carried out to get the *Journal* out on time. She has worked with three editors and also initiated a new design for the journal, which will be implemented at a future date.

Her working habits, attitudes, commitment and relationships within the editorial team are outstanding, drawing high praise. A former editor remarked: 'Kate was always patient with my too-frequent and often unreasonable requests for revision of copy and extremely efficient in carrying them out'. The current editor commented Kate is 'a pleasure to work with' and working with her 'has been one of the better professional relationships of my working life'.

Her hard work has continued despite the onset of a serious health problem. Kate Jones' voluntary work for this Society has been nothing short of exemplary and was fully deserving of the Distinguished Service Award to the RHSV that she received at the recent AGM. To Kate, we extend the heartfelt gratitude of all members, and all those who read the *Victorian Historical Journal*.

Richard Broome
Chair, Publications Committee
Marilyn Bowler
Editor

INTRODUCTION

When I returned to full-time academic study in my retirement, I found puzzled friends asking me why I was doing it. ‘Because I want to’ hardly seemed an adequate explanation, so I found myself pondering why people study history and what people think they have learned from their historical studies.

The RHSV has community historians and academic and professional historians amongst its members. The *Victorian Historical Journal* publishes contributions from those who make their living as historical researchers and those who have a love for the history of a particular community or a particular topic.

Out of curiosity, I emailed some members and contributors to ask them why they studied history and what they considered they had learned.

The reasons members study history includes a desire to expand their horizons and their experience. Richard Broome, our Vice President and the Chair of the Publications Committee, said: ‘I study history to enter other lives and worlds beyond my own, and because we stand on many layers of previous experience and existence. This interest is in the first instance due to a strong fascination with diversity and difference—a sort of armchair travel and time travel.’ Associate Professor Don Gibb echoed Broome’s belief that history enlarges our experience and challenges our world view and hoped that it provided ‘similar experience and enjoyment for countless students as well’. Former *VHJ* editor Judy Smart considered that history ‘has widened my appreciation of different cultures and provided insights into disparate and often challenging world views’. Liz Downes, a postgraduate student at La Trobe University, liked ‘the way that history gives another dimension to the world around me. I have learned to read places to see the evidence of the past that shapes the communities of the present’.

Another motive for historical study was the desire to make sense of the world, to understand how people and societies work or to understand why historical events happened, often echoing Santayana's well-known dictum that those who do not learn from history are forced to repeat it. From the age of eight, Smart knew she wanted to 'study and teach history', because the 'only way I could make sense of my life and identity, after I ditched religion, was to trace their origins in the past'. Andrew Lemon, professional historian and immediate past president, studied 'history to help make sense of the world in which I live, from the personal and local through to the universal. I believe there is truth, not multiple truths, but there are multiple experiences and understandings that help us in the impossible quest to find the truth: context is often the key'.

Another reason, and perhaps one more common than historians would care to admit, is the desire to solve the puzzle of the past. Lemon commented: 'And then history has the best stories, an endless supply—and I enjoy solving the mysteries inherent in every story.' In keeping with this, John Daniels, who, in the last edition, wrote about his search for Batman's route on his first historic trip to Melbourne, when asked why he researched that particular topic, replied that 'it was a puzzle that needed solving—a search for the truth. Typically, more questions were raised, so the puzzle (and the research continues)'.

When asked what he had learned from the study of history, Broome remarked: 'Through such experiences of being taken outside myself, I have become more knowledgeable and tolerant of the people and the world around me.' Gibb considered that the study of history 'has given me deeper understandings of how individuals and societies work and a healthy scepticism towards claims about the present and the future'. Judy Smart explained: 'As a teacher, I wanted to help others escape from a crippling *presentism* and sense of powerlessness by demonstrating through studies of past conflicts that things don't have to be as they are.'

And me? When I was in Form 4 (Year 10), I had to choose between humanities and sciences. Though my marks were better in science, I chose humanities. Why? Like John Daniels and Andrew Lemon, I liked puzzles. Solving the problems in algebra and geometry was fine, but I also liked analysing a poem or looking at causes and effects in history. The humanities, I thought then, and still believe, posed problems to which there was more than one answer. More importantly, literature and history involved that endlessly fascinating subject—people and why they do the things they do—

and I was enough of an optimist to think that we can learn from the past.

In this edition, our contributors look at the puzzles history provides and do not accept easy answers. Trevor Lipscombe takes issue with past historians by examining whether Point Hicks is really where Cook first sighted Australia. Douglas Wilkie argues that historians should examine the evidence more closely when looking at the effect of the Bathurst gold discovery in Melbourne. Murray Johns considers how likely it is that the 'Geelong Keys' really were dropped by a Portuguese explorer. Gerald O'Collins and David Webb dispute 1838 as the founding date for the Melbourne Cricket Club.

Others are boldly going where no man (or woman) has gone before by introducing us to little-explored areas of Victorian history: Fay Woodhouse details the history of yoga, Noel Jackling and Doug Royal give us insights into plumpton coursing (the greyhound coursing of live hares), John Dwyer looks at a neglected environmental issue, the introduction of weeds, and Joanne Boyd discusses the public portraiture of Supreme Court judges. Finally, Darren Watson reveals the shadier side of human nature in looking at the dubious dealings of Melbourne businessmen in Fiji.

Whatever your reasons for being interested in history, I hope that you will find historical mysteries, new challenges and new research about the past and some insights into that many-faceted puzzle, humanity, to enjoy in this edition of the *Victorian Historical Journal*.

Marilyn Bowler

EXODUS AND PANIC? MELBOURNE'S REACTION TO THE BATHURST GOLD DISCOVERIES OF MAY 1851

Douglas Wilkie

Abstract

News of gold discoveries at Bathurst, New South Wales, in May 1851 aroused great excitement across Australia and the world. In Melbourne, the reaction ranged from calm optimism to concerned alarm. But subsequent writers were inclined towards the alarmist view. Even the most objective of historians, when faced with the need to write abbreviated accounts of what happened, have used words such as 'exodus' or 'panic' to sum up Melbourne's reaction. However, a careful reading of contemporary correspondence and press reports suggests this was not the way that most saw it at the time.

WHEN NEWS OF POTENTIALLY RICH GOLDFIELDS near Bathurst, west of Sydney, reached Melbourne late in May 1851, there was a 'migration of the population to New South Wales and ... panic [was] created throughout the whole Colony'. At least, that is what a Victorian Legislative Council Select Committee reported in March 1854.¹ By contrast, in October 1851, just four months after the Bathurst news, Victoria's Lieutenant-Governor, Charles La Trobe believed that, although the discoveries at Bathurst had 'unsettled the public mind of the labouring classes ... few comparatively of the labouring classes' actually left Melbourne for Bathurst.² La Trobe's description of comparatively few leaving Melbourne does not match the panic and exodus of the Committee's

report—yet historians have repeated the report’s sentiments and ignored La Trobe’s ever since. This paper investigates the initial response of Melbourne, between late May and mid-July 1851, to the news of the Bathurst gold discovery.

Initial Responses in Sydney and Melbourne

News between Sydney and Melbourne was usually sent by the overland mail or on the regular steamer *Shamrock*. The time taken for despatches to arrive varied considerably, depending upon whether the mail was about to leave and unforeseen delays along the way. An example of this uncertainty followed the publication of a vague report of gold near Molong in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 29 March 1851.³ Apart from this unconfirmed gold news, the Sydney correspondent for the *Argus* had several other reports to send back to Melbourne, the most important concerning a debate in the Legislative Council about the imminent creation of the colony of Victoria. The correspondent had the choice of sending the urgent report either by the overland mail, or by the steamer *Shamrock*, both of which were due to leave Sydney on 1 April. He decided: ‘The overland mail and the mail by the *Shamrock*, close about the same hour to-day, and as it is uncertain which will reach Melbourne first, I think it necessary to send you duplicate communications’. The overland mail reached Melbourne in time for the Legislative Council report to be published on Tuesday 8 April.⁴ The gold report, which he considered of lesser importance, was sent by the *Shamrock*, which arrived on Wednesday 9 April and was published on 11 April.⁵ The correspondent dismissed the Molong gold as simply ‘another gold mine’ and wondered why ‘nothing seems to come of these wonderful discoveries’.⁶ The gold report appears to have created no discernible reaction in Melbourne; the report of impending separation from New South Wales was of much greater interest.

Throughout April, there were a number of vague and unconfirmed reports of gold near Bathurst published in the Sydney press.⁷ Apart from the *Geelong Advertiser* dismissing them as ‘apocryphal’, the reports generated little reaction in Melbourne.⁸ By mid-April, the Sydney press was becoming more excited about the reports from Bathurst, but most were still sceptical, and it was not until 29 April that the *Sydney Morning Herald* decided: ‘Recent intelligence would lead to the inference that there is *something* in the recent alleged discovery of gold in the western districts.’⁹ By 6 May, the *Argus* still thought the news from April was ‘not altogether credited’.¹⁰

It was only after the government surveyor, Samuel Stutchbury, was sent to Bathurst to confirm the reports that excitement really began to grow in Sydney.¹¹ Again, the Melbourne and Geelong press copied the reports of Stutchbury's mission a week later without additional comment.¹² The Melbourne press was more interested in news that Doctor George Bruhn, a German mineralogist who had been undertaking a locally sponsored survey in the Macedon and Pyrenees Ranges closer to Melbourne since February, had 'been fortunate enough to discover the existence of gold'. Bruhn was expected to return to Melbourne in about eight weeks.¹³

Even after a more positive report appeared in the Sydney *Empire* on 7 May, it aroused no comment when published on page four of the *Argus* on 17 May. But then, as the Sydney *Empire* said, 'It would be premature to speculate.'¹⁴ More reports appeared in the Sydney press in mid-May, including news that over 200 had left Sydney for Bathurst.¹⁵ These reports eventually reached Melbourne, but still aroused no comment.¹⁶ By Friday 23 May, the *Argus* had still only received Sydney news to 13 May, but reported that surveyor Stutchbury had sent 30 ounces to the government, which was yet to decide on its reaction.¹⁷ The *Argus* now thought the discovery was probably authentic, and the *Melbourne Morning Herald* carried a similarly positive report dated 16 May, but both missed the news that the Executive Council had met in Sydney on that day and ordered extra police to the site.¹⁸ The Council met again on 22 May after receiving Stutchbury's long-awaited report confirming the value of the goldfields.¹⁹ By Saturday 24 May, the Sydney press was publishing details of the new gold licenses, but the news being published in Melbourne was still eight-days-old.²⁰ The first overland mail for the week had arrived on Thursday 22nd, but was 'saturated with wet' and the 'newspapers damaged by friction'.²¹ The second overland mail from Sydney arrived in Melbourne over the weekend, although the *Geelong Advertiser* of 27 May complained that it had not arrived as expected and presumed it had been detained by floods in the upper Murray—'This is a disappointment, as we expected three days later news from the diggings. It is not likely that we shall have any intelligence till Thursday next.'²² Nevertheless, on Monday 26 May, both the *Argus* and the *Melbourne Morning Herald* carried positive news of the existence of gold, but even then the leading article in the *Argus* was about the impending Victorian elections.²³ The *Herald* gave the gold more prominence and printed extracts from private letters received by the overland mail, with one correspondent asking Victorians, 'What do you

say to Separation now?’ The implication was partly that after separation the southern colony would gain no benefit from any revenue that might come from the gold discovery, but, more directly, it was a barbed response to longstanding complaints that the Middle District had misappropriated revenue that rightfully belonged to the Port Phillip District. The *Herald* cautioned Melburnians to ‘ponder well the difficulties and dangers that await them’ should they decide to head for Bathurst.²⁴

‘Exodus’ and ‘Panic’ or Optimism in Melbourne?

By such means, news of the Bathurst gold discoveries reached Melbourne. Contemporary observers of the rapidly unfolding events reacted in ways that ranged from alarm to optimism, and subsequent writers tended to show a preference for one over the other—usually the alarmist view. In stories, alarm, rather than calm, captures the imagination. But even the most objective of historians faces constraints that call for abbreviated accounts of what happened and must decide what to include, what to exclude, and how to summarise a year of detailed events into a chapter or paragraph. A month of events that are described in a chapter by one historian may be abbreviated to a page by another; to a paragraph; a sentence; and finally to a single word. Indeed, Graeme Davison believes that, ‘The secret of Melbourne’s rapid rise can be told in a single word—gold.’²⁵ Likewise, the single words ‘exodus’ or ‘panic’ have often been used, without accompanying justification, to sum up Melbourne’s reaction to the opening of goldfields near Bathurst.²⁶ However, a careful reading of contemporary correspondence and press reports suggests this was not the way many, if not the majority, saw it at the time.

It can be argued that the reaction throughout the Port Phillip District was predominantly one of excitement and optimism. Excitement, because that is what gold causes, and, as David Goodman has observed, there was debate in both Victoria and California about ‘the levels of excitement that were desirable in society.’²⁷ Charles La Trobe, for one, preferred calm and steady progress, rather than excited and rapid change.²⁸ But gold also caused optimism, because those in Port Phillip who had been calling for the development of known goldfields for the previous two years, now saw a precedent that would hasten the process and provide lasting benefits for industry, the economy and immigration. As the *Geelong Advertiser* observed on 31 May 1851, ‘the magic name of gold is sufficiently exciting

without any other element to feed it, and we cannot contemplate enterprise employed in its attainment, otherwise but legitimate direction of labour'.²⁹

After a decade of bitter antagonism between the Middle District of New South Wales centred on Sydney, and the Port Phillip District centred on Melbourne, the Port Phillip District was to be granted separation from New South Wales on 1 July 1851. The causes of the antagonism can be found in the remoteness and apparent indifference of the New South Wales government based in Sydney—a constant frustration for the residents of Port Phillip, and for their Superintendent, Charles La Trobe; the ongoing 'misappropriation' of Port Phillip revenue to cover costs associated with the Middle District—frequently referred to as blatant theft; and more recently, bitter differences of opinion that had emerged over the diversion of convict ships from Port Phillip to Sydney in 1849.³⁰ From a purely financial point of view, the victor in the contest was clearly Melbourne, as the Middle District relied heavily upon income generated by Port Phillip, and Sydney would soon be in serious financial difficulties.³¹ Indeed, as Governor George Gipps observed a few years earlier, 'the appropriation of Port Phillip money to Port Phillip purposes alone would leave the citizens of Sydney under a total inability to pay their bounties'.³²

Fortuitously for the Middle District, a solution came only two months before the separation of Port Phillip when extensive gold deposits were confirmed near Bathurst.³³ A Melbourne correspondent thought: 'The revenue of almost bankrupt Sydney, will be no doubt invigorated by the discovery of the gold ... the annual plunder of Victoria having ceased ... [it became] ... imperatively necessary that, some other source, whence the Treasury might be replenished, should be discovered.'³⁴ The *Sydney Morning Herald* denied there was a crisis, and claimed that jealousy and a spiteful sense of superiority led to such statements from Victoria.³⁵ Even so, *Bell's Life in Sydney* sneered, 'Poor divorced Victoria! Don't you wish you could get it!'³⁶

But Melbourne was not too concerned about 'wishing they could get it', because many knew that Port Phillip already had it. Indeed, in February 1849, long before Edward Hargraves thought of looking for gold near Bathurst, a Frenchman, Alexandre Duchene, gave Charles La Trobe detailed directions for locating gold discovered by a shepherd in the Pyrenees Ranges. When *Bell's Life* heard of the Pyrenees discovery, it assumed the gold would 'not be procured in any large quantities, until the "Act of Separation" be passed'.³⁷ This was logical given the extent to which Sydney

had been appropriating Port Phillip's revenue, and perhaps La Trobe thought the same when he sent police to disperse the Pyrenees gold seekers.³⁸ After receiving a cool response from La Trobe and Governor Charles FitzRoy, Duchene went to California a few months before Hargraves, where he told stories about finding gold 'west of Sydney', and how he had unsuccessfully sought a reward and government appointment. Duchene died in the 1850 San Francisco cholera epidemic, but Hargraves returned to Australia determined not only to find the gold west of Sydney, but to successfully claim both the reward and the government appointment.³⁹ Unknown to Hargraves, in March 1849, Duchene's meeting with La Trobe, together with reports of minerals in the Middle District, prompted FitzRoy to request an official minerals survey. Samuel Stutchbury, the surveyor, began his work in January 1851. It is likely that gold would soon have been confirmed even without Hargraves's efforts.

Searching for gold in the Pyrenees was officially discouraged in 1849, but unofficially the area was regularly explored and exploited, and there were ongoing calls for the development of Port Phillip's mineral deposits. Now, in May 1851, with news that the Bathurst goldfields were to be opened, and diggers licensed to dig, many in Port Phillip could see no good reason for local goldfields to continue to be off limits. This would be good news for most, but as with any event likely to trigger rapid and dramatic social change, there were pessimists and doomsayers—those whom the *Argus* called 'chattering alarmists' and 'prophets of evil', and those who suffered from what the *Geelong Advertiser* labelled 'aurophobia'.⁴⁰

Responding to the pessimists, the *Argus* thought, 'One would fancy from the tone adopted, that some serious calamity had befallen us, instead of a very valuable addition having been made to our list of productions. ... we have no reason to despair.'⁴¹ Indeed, the *Argus* pointed out: 'The eagerness with which men naturally run after that attractive metal cannot but, at first, produce such changes as will amount in a great degree to a sort of social disorganization; and considerable inconvenience, and some loss will accrue before the counterbalancing advantages will be fully developed.' Beyond that, 'the amount of injury is apt to be very much overrated' and such reports were 'all nonsense'.⁴² The *Geelong Advertiser* had similar views: 'A temporary derangement of the usual current of industry will be experienced, but the results will not be unfavourable to social progress.'⁴³ And a few days later: 'A prospective good must be purchased at a present sacrifice.'⁴⁴ Then again: 'What is true need not be feared. ... The fact of

the existence of gold in profusion will not be got rid of by side winds and woful [*sic*] anticipations, and why should it be feared?'⁴⁵ But, despite the reassurance, there were still a few who threw up their arms in panic—and, 'Nothing,' observed the *Argus*, 'is so contagious as panic.'⁴⁶

At the beginning of June 1851, the *Melbourne Times* acknowledged that the Bathurst news had 'created a sensation' in Melbourne and that 'fears of the ultimate result were entertained' by some.⁴⁷ The lawless example and greed-driven rushes of California were fresh in the minds of all, but the *Geelong Advertiser* dismissed negative comparisons with California and pointed to the benefits.⁴⁸ The *Times* also concluded: 'there is no cause to fear a panic in Melbourne from mining mania'; some shepherds, shearers and building labourers might leave, 'but beyond this, we cannot see any bad effects likely to arise; on the contrary there will ultimately be a reaction and our colony will be more prosperous than ever'.⁴⁹ Indeed, a few days earlier, the *Times* had noted that at the Pyrenees 'there are parties now driving a lucrative trade by bringing ... [gold] ... to Melbourne'.⁵⁰

Among the alarmists were writers at the *Melbourne Morning Herald*, who, on 7 June, wrote that 'the gold field migration [from Port Phillip] continues both by land and sea', but supported this with reference only to 'half a dozen fresh expeditions' preparing to travel overland.⁵¹ In fact, by 7 June, very few had left by sea and the numbers going overland were uncertain. Three days earlier, a correspondent from Geelong reported that anticipation was not of an exodus, but of an eventual massive increase in immigration.⁵² The *Herald* claimed 'several desertions of apprentices' had taken place; others had 'sold off all the goods and chattels' they owned; and 'passages were thickly taken in the many vessels now laid on for Sydney'.⁵³ How many had actually done these things was not specified, and the *Argus* responded with a denunciation of those who were 'disseminating the most extravagant reports'.⁵⁴ Not only were there extravagant reports about Melbourne's reaction, but about the discovery itself, and, when the *Maitland Mercury* saw the Melbourne papers, it thought the 'letters that had reached Melbourne evidently gave the most highly coloured rumours'.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, while extravagant reports tend to capture the imagination and remain in popular memory, they can also serve the interests of those later wishing to claim credit for stopping the imagined panic. In 1895, Louis Michel claimed people 'were leaving for Sydney by every possible means'—but then, he also wanted to claim maximum credit for stopping the supposed exodus by discovering local gold.⁵⁶ William Campbell also

claimed there was a ‘migration of the population’ and ‘panic created throughout the whole colony’—but as we shall see, he too had personal reasons for claiming to be the saviour of the colony.⁵⁷ Others simply went with the story that sounded most impressive: Edwin Booth—‘no sacrifice was too great to make in order to get to the diggings’; William Hall—‘our labourers left us by ship-loads’; and Robert Martin—‘alarm was felt throughout the settlement lest the flocks would perish for want of shepherds, while agriculture would be entirely abandoned’.⁵⁸ Thomas McCombie wrote in 1861 that there was a ‘great crisis’ when ‘labour flowed’ to New South Wales—reflecting his own alarmist views of a decade earlier.⁵⁹ Even the *Argus*, which maintained a relatively calm approach through mid-1851, had had a change of editor and a lapse of memory by 1882, when it claimed the colony had been ‘paralysed in its industrial pursuits by a commenced exodus of the working population’.⁶⁰ These vivid secondary accounts were a distorted version of the commentary that appeared in the contemporary press of mid-1851.

Later writers repeated such accounts. Geoffrey Blainey said that Louis Michel ‘had been so perturbed by the exodus of customers and cronies ... that he decided only gold would lure them back’.⁶¹ Ronald Younger thought: ‘*Melbourne* was not prepared to allow the great *exodus* to go unchallenged. Activity was all but paralysed as more and more people left.’⁶² Serle sums up the period between the Bathurst news in late May and the confirmation of Victorian goldfields in mid-July in just over one page and refers the reader to Louis Cranfield for ‘an authoritative account’ of the beginnings of the 1851 Victorian gold discoveries.⁶³ Wrongly citing 26 April 1851 as the day news arrived, Cranfield said that ‘within a week every ship for Sydney had been booked out, warehouses became deserted and in short the District of Port Phillip was in similar straits to that of New South Wales after gold had been discovered in California’. Cranfield went on to use phrases such as ‘mass exodus’ and ‘panic migration’, but, like the ‘chattering alarmists’ of 1851, such terms misrepresent what happened and reflect only the most extreme reaction.⁶⁴ Cranfield, like Blainey, gave much credence to Louis Michel’s 1895 account, and his claim that small ‘lime craft which usually traded to the Port Phillip Heads’ were ‘pressed into service’.⁶⁵ However, there appears to be no evidence for this.⁶⁶

The problem with accounts written over a century after the event is not so much that later historians were influenced by biased reports in the contemporary press, but that they seem to have relied largely upon

colourful secondary accounts, written some time after the event, rather than confirming that terms such as 'exodus' and 'panic' actually reflected the feeling of mid-1851.

Contemporary Press Accounts

Of course, the contemporary press was also frequently biased in its reporting. In January 1848, Charles La Trobe gave his opinion of the Melbourne press.⁶⁷ The *Melbourne Argus*, he considered, was read mainly by 'the Presbyterians and Orange parties'. La Trobe's personal opinion was that the 'violent and disgraceful party spirit' that had arisen in Melbourne, though not started by the editor of the *Argus*, had 'nevertheless mainly been kept alive by his publications'. The *Argus*, he said, 'violently deprecates the introduction of prison labour in any form'. Of the main Port Phillip newspapers—the *Daily News*, edited by George Boursiquot; the *Melbourne Morning Herald*, edited by William Kerr; and the *Port Phillip Gazette*, edited by Thomas McCombie—it was James Harrison's *Geelong Advertiser* that La Trobe believed held the most balanced views. La Trobe's opinion of the press did not change, and when he wrote to his friend John Murray about recent gold yields in Victoria in 1852, he said, 'Our colonial newspapers have such a bad character—that ten to one their statements will be doubted, & perhaps with justice.'⁶⁸ Edmund Finn, better known as Garryowen, was chief writer for the *Melbourne Morning Herald*, and later regarded the 'outspoken and uncompromising' *Argus* as the 'mouthpiece of public opinion'.⁶⁹ As for the *Herald*, he regarded it as being 'hand-in-glove' with the Melbourne Club, which saw the paper as being its 'semi official organ'.⁷⁰ It would, however, be too much of a generalisation to suggest that the *Argus* represented the view of the workers, while the *Herald* represented that of the employers.

For all its failings, the colonial press of Melbourne and elsewhere, provides an invaluable source, not only of historical information, but, importantly, a feeling for the essence of life in those times. Just as judging the importance of historical events depends on the viewpoint of the observer, deciding whether a newspaper displays bias also depends on one's own point of view. Nevertheless, by comparing narrative and opinions from rival newspapers, as well as those less closely connected with Melbourne—the press of Van Diemen's Land, South Australia, New Zealand, and even England—and combining these accounts with those written by private residents, contemporary visitors, and the accounts in

official correspondence, it is possible to build a reasonably objective view of the events of 1851.

Passengers and Overlanders

Although some previous historians, such as Serle, seem to have made an attempt to estimate the actual numbers of passengers travelling from Melbourne to Sydney in mid-1851, digital technology has made the interrogation of passenger lists, whether in newspaper reports or in official archives, easier. Within a week of news arriving on 24 May 1851, only three ships had left Melbourne for Sydney and another three had started advertising passages—but they were not booked out. During 1851, the route was regularly served by five or six ships each month, as well as schooners that made single trips with a few passengers. Between February and May 1851, an average of about 125 passengers per month went to Sydney.⁷¹ The regular steamer, *Shamrock*, sailed at eight o'clock on 24 May.⁷² It carried 58 passengers—only eight more than in April, and ten more than February. But with seven fewer than March, it was not booked to capacity, despite the *Cornwall Chronicle* inflating the number with 'upward of ninety steerage passengers'.⁷³ When the *Shamrock* left Melbourne again on 25 June, it carried only 31 passengers; and, in July, the number dropped to 26.⁷⁴ The declining number on the *Shamrock* in June was caused after the Sydney owners raised fares to cover increased seamen's wages, and several other ships offering lower fares were diverted from their usual routes.⁷⁵ In mid-July, the *Shamrock's* fare rise was reversed.⁷⁶

The *Argus* of 26 May reported 30 to 40 people had 'secured passages' for Sydney, implying they were off to the 'diggings'.⁷⁷ The only ship advertising for Sydney, apart from the *Shamrock*, was the brig *Emma Prescott*.⁷⁸ Having cleared out from Melbourne on 23 May with no passengers at all, it sailed on 25 May, the day after the Bathurst news, with nine passengers and 400 bags of sugar. With 13 passengers fewer than it brought to Melbourne, like the *Shamrock*, it was hardly filled to capacity.⁷⁹

The *Hirondelle* started advertising on 27 May, intending to depart on the thirty-first. It left on 3 June with 16 passengers and 800 bags of flour. A regular on the route, the *Hirondelle* returned to Melbourne a few weeks later with 11 passengers. Between February and August 1851, the *Hirondelle* carried 59 passengers to Sydney, and 73 to Melbourne.⁸⁰ Not only was the ship not filled to capacity, but any 'exodus' on the *Hirondelle* was more than cancelled by those coming to Melbourne.



'Diggers on the road to a rush', John Skinner Prout (artist), J. Godfrey (engraver), reproduced from Australia (Edwin Carton Booth, London: Virtue & Co., 1874-1876?).

'RHSV Collection –BK006-0004'

The schooner *White Squall* arrived from Launceston on 6 May with two passengers, and was offered for sale as suitable for the Port Phillip coastal trade.⁸¹ By Friday 30 May, 'Queen's wharf was completely blocked up with bags of flour' to be shipped by the *White Squall*.⁸² The new owners were taking advantage of inflated flour prices in Sydney, where people were urged to 'speculate in flour' as 'a safe and sure investment'.⁸³ Due to sail on 31 May, it departed on 5 June with 957 bags of flour and 22 passengers.⁸⁴

The new schooner *Don Juan*, intending to sail from Sydney to Hobart on 6 May, was diverted 'to take a valuable cargo to Victoria'. The agents added: 'Should inducement offer, the *Don Juan* will be continued as a regular packet to Melbourne.'⁸⁵ The 'valuable cargo' was 100 tons of coal, which was needed more than gold was in Melbourne, and which was being imported from Newcastle at highly inflated prices.⁸⁶ Indeed, after the Pyrenees gold discovery in 1849, Charles La Trobe observed that he would have preferred 'the discovery of a good vein of coal'.⁸⁷ Due to return to Sydney, from 29 May, the *Don Juan* advertised 'An Eligible Opportunity

for Proceeding to the Gold Diggings'. A week later, there were still 12 berths vacant and the Master had to remind intending passengers to pay their outstanding fares. He sailed on 8 June with 45 passengers, 750 bags of flour and a cargo of tea.⁸⁸ Upon reaching Sydney, the *Don Juan* was to return to Melbourne 'full or not full', but was instead diverted to Adelaide and offered for sale.⁸⁹

On 11 June, a correspondent in Sydney observed that 'an unusual number of vessels are laid on at Melbourne for Sydney, and passengers invited to the "gold field" ... You must warn them against this delusion'.⁹⁰ The only ship to mention the 'gold field' was the *Don Juan*.

On 4 June, the *Courier* claimed 'thousands are preparing to leave for the new "diggings"', but a letter from Port Phillip received in Sydney on 13 June stated, 'I do not think that 100 persons have yet left Melbourne by sea, although great numbers have started overland'.⁹¹ Most of the overlanders passing Kilmore were apparently 'without sixpence in their pockets, or even a day's provisions', and the Melbourne press thought many were 'vile and worthless' members of society who would not be missed.⁹² Indeed, a drop in police cases seemed to confirm this view, and the *Geelong Advertiser* happily announced 'the desperadoes at all events are off'.⁹³ On 11 June, Governor FitzRoy reflected that California had drawn off 'a vast number of desperate and unruly characters', who might have been 'exceedingly troublesome and difficult to deal with', had they stayed in Sydney.⁹⁴ Unfortunately for Sydney, those on their way from Port Phillip included 'some of the most notorious scoundrels in the province' and 'many of the recently imported Van Diemonians'.⁹⁵ The Melbourne *Herald* thought 'these we can well afford to spare; and it is some consolation to find that if we lose, we also gain'.⁹⁶ When the overlanders reached Gundagai, it was observed: 'from all appearance Port Phillip must be emptying itself very fast ... but if we may judge from the physiognomy of many, the province of Victoria will be well quit of a multitude of blackguards'.⁹⁷ If people were leaving, Melbourne was happy for them to go.

When a party of about 30 'able strong working men' supposedly set out ill-prepared for the journey to Sydney on 4 June, the *Argus* thought, 'If men will be silly enough to go, it is far better to go properly'.⁹⁸ But any concern about people leaving Melbourne for Sydney was more than balanced by the excitement caused by reports of discoveries closer to home. By 6 June, the *Argus* thought up to 200 may have left Melbourne by foot for Bathurst, but also reported another 300 going to the Plenty

River to look for local gold.⁹⁹ Describing the beginning of the 1851 rushes in *The Golden Age*, Serle mentioned 200 going to Sydney and hundreds searching locally, but gave prominence to contemporary pessimistic and alarmist views, such as McCombie's talk of 'impending ruin'.¹⁰⁰ After stating that 'a large number of people' went to Sydney, Cranfield claimed 'there were many who were unable to go and various efforts were made to discover the precious metal locally'.¹⁰¹ Maybe so, but it seems likely that many in Melbourne had no desire to leave and believed local goldfields would soon be opened anyway. Dr Webb Richmond had no doubt gold could be 'obtained from all the rivers and creeks having their rise in the Pyrenees, Yarra and Plenty Ranges'.¹⁰² Likewise, a Sydney correspondent said, 'I think the best advice is to *sow grain, and explore the country*; for depend upon it, gold abounds in Port Phillip in as great quantities as it does here.'¹⁰³ As early as 5 June, the *Geelong Advertiser* had decided 'the colony is mineral mad'—not about Bathurst, but about gold 'here, there and everywhere' in Port Phillip.¹⁰⁴ As Darby Callagan [sic] said, 'I intend to stay home' and make more money by selling goods to gold seekers who could find gold locally in the Plenty Ranges.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, reports from Sydney continued to malign Port Phillip. On 6 June, the *Empire* predicted: 'Van Demonian expirees and Victorian scapegraces' would soon arrive to take the gold 'by force of arms'.¹⁰⁶ By 14 June, the *Sydney Morning Herald* claimed Melbourne had suffered a 'stagnation in business'; land purchasers had forfeited their deposits; Geelong was about to be deserted; and one hundred passengers were on sailing vessels headed for Sydney.¹⁰⁷ In her study of Victorian newspapers, Elizabeth Morrison observed, 'From May Geelong papers had reported the goldrush to Bathurst in New South Wales, predicting local depopulation.'¹⁰⁸ On the contrary, the *Geelong Advertiser* had responded indignantly to Sydney taunts by saying, 'Geelong still stands where it did, and it is likely to do so ... not a dozen individuals have left town; the gold mania is very much abated.'¹⁰⁹ The *Daily News* pointed out that the number of land deposit forfeitures was 'inconsiderable'.¹¹⁰ By contrast, a few days earlier, the *Sydney Morning Herald* was not too concerned when it observed that New South Wales itself was suffering a 'temporary stagnation' of business.¹¹¹ Yet, a month later, business in Sydney had reached 'perfect stagnation'.¹¹²

Notwithstanding the embellished accounts, the number of passengers to Sydney did increase significantly during June, although the frequent postponing of departure dates suggests the filling of berths and loading of

cargo was not as rapid as speculating shipowners hoped. The reminders to passengers to pay their fares may suggest that it was those short of cash who saw most attraction in rushing off to Bathurst, despite press warnings that gold seeking was 'worse than gambling' and 'the most disadvantageous lottery in the world'.¹¹³

The brig *Diana*, a regular on the Sydney to Melbourne route with cargo and up to 22 passengers, started advertising on 31 May intending to sail on 4 June. It sailed on 8 June with 26 passengers. The *Prince of Wales* variously served Melbourne, Geelong and New Zealand, usually carrying between four and 13 passengers. It began advertising on 4 June, intending to sail on 9 June, and left Melbourne on the eleventh with 46. In July, it brought 11 back to Melbourne, and returned to Sydney from Geelong with only two passengers. The *Esperanza* normally served Melbourne and Hobart and was diverted to Sydney for a single voyage. It advertised from 3 June, intending to depart on 7 June, and, after several delays, left Melbourne on 12 June with 14 passengers. The *Christina*, a regular, usually carried cargo and a few passengers. It began advertising on 2 June; scheduled to sail for Sydney on 7 June; was sold on 6 June; and left for Sydney on 14 June with 70 passengers.¹¹⁴ The schooner *Adelaide* usually served the Hobart route with up to eight passengers. It arrived from Hobart on 1 June, but on 5 June, the Master advertised, 'Gold! Gold! For the Gold Country (Sydney) Direct' departing on 6 June—'If sufficient inducement offer.'¹¹⁵ After several postponements, he sailed on 14 June with 25 passengers before returning to the Hobart run.¹¹⁶ The *Phoebe*, also a regular to Sydney, usually with around 12 passengers, arrived at Melbourne on 3 June, intending to depart again on 11 June. It left on 16 June with 32 passengers.¹¹⁷ The brig *Dart* usually carried cargo, and 20 or 30 passengers. After taking 20 to Sydney in May, its next sailing was delayed for nearly three weeks when the captain decided to 'fit her out as a passenger vessel only'.¹¹⁸ When it sailed on 28 June, there were 102 passengers.¹¹⁹ By contrast, the next voyage took only 12.¹²⁰ The brigantine *Elizabeth* was a regular trader on the Melbourne to Adelaide route, normally carrying between 16 and 26 passengers. It arrived in Sydney on the same day as the *Dart* with eight passengers.¹²¹ Returning to Melbourne with 10 passengers, it then resumed the Adelaide trade.¹²² Other ships, such as the schooner *Swordfish*, a Hobart regular, advertised for Sydney but did not sail.¹²³

A Sydney correspondent wrote on 20 June that there were 'some thousands at the diggings, and a great many who came from Port Phillip in

the last vessels'.¹²⁴ In fact, the only ships to arrive before 20 June were the *Wanderer* from Geelong on 1 June with eight passengers, and the *Hirondelle* on 17 June with 16—including military personnel and family groups.¹²⁵ The *Esperanza*, *Adelaide*, *Phoebe*, *Christina*, *Diana*, and *Don Juan* arrived at Sydney over the weekend of 21 and 22 June with 215 passengers, and the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported 'two hundred and forty passengers' had arrived, and somehow decided that 200 were expected to head for the goldfields.¹²⁶ The writer of the 20 June letter added a postscript on 23 June—'four vessels have arrived from Port Phillip, bringing 200 passengers who intend to go to the mines'.¹²⁷ Another correspondent suggested only 100 were intending to go the goldfields.¹²⁸ The *Herald* optimistically added that 'one hundred additional passengers' were on their way from Melbourne and 'the *Shamrock* ... due tomorrow afternoon will be crowded'.¹²⁹ They would have been disappointed when the *Shamrock* arrived with only 31 passengers.

The total number of passengers arriving in Sydney from Port Phillip during June was around 410, an increment of perhaps 280 on the monthly average. Certainly it was a significant increase, but was it an 'exodus' and did it cause 'panic'? As a proportion of the total population, several hundred going to Sydney was no greater than when 300 were reported to have left Melbourne in February 1849 for the Pyrenees, and the population had nearly doubled since then. In January 1848, the population of Melbourne was estimated at about 11,000.¹³⁰ Eight thousand new emigrants arrived at Port Phillip between January and September 1849 alone.¹³¹ The census of March 1851 showed the population of the city to be 23,143 and for the whole district, 77,345. Several hundred in this population is less significant than the same number at the beginning of 1849.

On 15 June, the *Sea Belle* arrived at Port Phillip from Leith carrying mainly cargo. It was then laid on for Sydney, but postponed its departure on several occasions and finally sailed on 12 July. At £5 for cabins and £2 10 for intermediate berths, its fares were half those of the *Shamrock*.¹³² On 21 July, the *Sydney Empire* announced, 'The two vessels *Gazelle* and *Sea Belle*, which arrived yesterday, the former from Adelaide, and the latter from Victoria, brought no less than one hundred and forty-two passengers. This is sufficiently indicative of the interest which the gold discovery has created among our neighbours. It is feared that Victoria will be completely deserted.'¹³³ It was another example of Sydney trying to pour scorn on Victoria and *Bell's Life* predicted that Port Phillip would soon be seeking

‘reunion with the Middle District’.¹³⁴ But the *Empire* failed to mention that 112 passengers came from Adelaide, and only 30 from Melbourne.¹³⁵ Just as the reaction in Port Phillip was sometimes exaggerated, the *Sydney Morning Herald* complained that the ‘most exaggerated reports have circulated in the neighbouring colonies respecting the effects of the gold discovery’, and admitted some facts may be ‘rather too highly coloured’.¹³⁶

Political and business reactions

Highly coloured also was the language used by later historians. Robyn Annear suggested: ‘After a month of watching his city in panic, Melbourne’s mayor called a meeting. The town’s leading men all agreed that only a goldfield of its own could save Victoria from annihilation.’¹³⁷ ‘Annihilation’ had been added to ‘panic’ and ‘exodus’! In fact, the request for a meeting was drawn up by Melbourne auctioneer Asher Hymen Hart, who obtained the signatures of 77 businessmen on 3 June—two weeks, not a month, after the Bathurst news was received, and before most of the ships had even advertised for Sydney.¹³⁸ Only 15 of those who signed were members of the Victoria Industrial Society, which had 230 members, and represented a more influential group of the district’s businessmen.¹³⁹ Six months earlier, long before news of Bathurst, the Victoria Industrial Society had supported George Bruhn’s plans to survey the Macedon and Pyrenees Ranges. Bruhn had already confirmed local gold deposits, and during the week before the petition was drawn up, impressive amounts of local gold had been sold in Melbourne, causing ‘much excitement’ and reinforcing the long-held belief that gold was to be found in many places in the district.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, on 26 May, a Geelong correspondent revealed that he knew certain squatters near the Pyrenees had found gold, but understood their reluctance to reveal details.

It is quite natural that these gentlemen should conceal the fact of its existing on their stations ... [nevertheless] ... it would be a piece of madness for us to start off for foreign goldfields, when we can dig away at our own. ... Perhaps the prospect of a serious rise in the labour market may induce any one possessed of a knowledge of gold localities here, to throw out, a hint on the subject.¹⁴¹

Hart’s original petition said those who signed wanted to promote local goldfields, because they were ‘deeply concerned’ that the ‘working population’ should ‘forego their desire to emigrate to any neighbouring colony’. That was good patriotic language, but so far, there had been no

general exodus and the concern was not universal.¹⁴² A few days earlier, when signatory George Boursiquot, editor of the *Daily News*, wrote about a possible 'labour famine', the *Geelong Advertiser* responded: 'Our contemporary is unnecessarily alarmed. Everybody will not flock to the "diggings" and we are sure to obtain an influx of labour.'¹⁴³ A pro-Melbourne Sydney correspondent attributed negative reports to 'ill-natured people' who 'laugh at Port Phillip' and correctly predicted that 'very few people will desert their prospects' to go to Sydney.¹⁴⁴

Although many members of the Victoria Industrial Society attended the meeting on 9 June, not all had signed the petition, and not all agreed on what should be done, or the need to do anything.¹⁴⁵ As the *Lyttleton Times* observed, 'the opinions expressed were of a contradictory character'.¹⁴⁶ Three town councillors, Thomas McCombie, editor of the *Gazette*; John Hodgson, Studley Park squatter; and John Pascoe Fawkner, owner of the Pascoe Vale estate and original pioneer of Melbourne, expressed the most pessimistic views. But when they said something had to be done to 'save this half fallen city and its citizens from the impending ruin which now hung over it', or that Bathurst was 'likely to have an exceedingly disastrous effect upon this city', we must ask whether they, as candidates for the new Legislative Council, were simply politicians playing to the crowd.

Another councillor and recent Mayor of Melbourne, Augustus Greeves, who was also a doctor, publican, one-time editor of both the *Gazette* and *Herald*, and a supporter of separation who generally agreed with McCombie, said that, on this occasion, he 'did not entertain any such despondent feeling,' and others were optimistic about the prospects for Port Phillip.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, on the morning of the meeting, the *Argus* said 'the amount of injury is apt to be very much overrated', and 'the dread of the entire desertion of servants is equally unfounded'.¹⁴⁸ The *Geelong Advertiser* agreed: 'Our anticipations are anything but gloomy. We feel assured that rapid progress in prosperity will be the early result.'¹⁴⁹

The resolution put to the meeting was to offer a reward to 'any person or persons who shall disclose ... a gold mine or deposit, capable of being profitably worked within a distance of 200 miles of the city'—no mention was made of an exodus of workers. Asher Hart also privately petitioned the Town Council to approach the government 'to encourage scientific men to prosecute the search for gold' and again made no mention of a migration of workers.¹⁵⁰ Several speakers, including John Pascoe Fawkner and John Hodgson, wanted to extend the reward to include lead, copper, and coal.

Indeed, a year earlier, in May 1850, the Melbourne Coal Company offered an identical £200 reward to any person who could identify a workable coalfield ‘within a reasonable distance of Melbourne or Geelong’.¹⁵¹ Now, if gold was to be legally mined near Bathurst, it was clearly time for a reward to be offered to any person who would ‘make known the locality of a Gold Mine capable of being worked to advantage’ in Port Phillip.¹⁵² The discovery had already happened; it was the ‘making known’ that was needed, and when the reward was advertised on 11 June, the wording included the peculiarly Biblical phrase, ‘to discover to them’, meaning to reveal to them, a payable gold deposit.¹⁵³ As a correspondent said a week earlier, the ‘very best plan would be to make known some of our own gold fields, which it is understood are locked up in the breasts of certain individuals’.¹⁵⁴

Of the 17-member Gold Committee, eight were members of the Victoria Industrial Society, and several were candidates for the impending Legislative Council elections. Only one candidate, John Hodgson, specifically referred to gold in his election manifesto, when he promised to encourage ‘such measures on the part of the Government, as shall lead to the development of the mineral resources of this colony, with a view to the prevention of those fluctuations in the population, which such discoveries are apt to produce’.¹⁵⁵ Augustus Greeves, also a candidate, told those at the 9 June meeting that he did not share their concerns, and the *Geelong Advertiser* had warned a week earlier of ‘the baneful effects of the “aurophobia.” A check to progress is felt, not IN CONSEQUENCE of any result from the discovery of gold, but FROM FEAR of the consequences’.¹⁵⁶

Sometimes personal letters can be more reliable than anonymous press stories, but not always.¹⁵⁷ In August 1851, James Butchart, who worked for Campbell, wrote to his father in England and said: ‘If a vessel is going to Sydney the notice of her sailing is headed *Gold*’.¹⁵⁸ In fact, between the end of May and the end of July, there were only three ship advertisements using the word ‘Gold’, and none were the regular vessels. On 5 June, the schooner *Adelaide* advertised with the slogan, ‘Gold! Gold! For the Gold Country (Sydney) Direct’, and did not advertise again.¹⁵⁹ Likewise, between 29 May and 7 June, the *Don Juan* announced, ‘To the Gold’.¹⁶⁰ ‘GOLD! GOLD! GOLD!’ was used to advertise the schooner *Pilot* at the end of June—but it was sailing ‘For Hobart Town Direct’—not for Sydney.¹⁶¹ The *Emma* arrived in Melbourne on 26 July with 16 passengers. It first advertised the return trip to Sydney without mention of gold and included

the 'GOLD! GOLD! GOLD!' slogan only after George Bruhn used the same words to promote his lecture on 'the discovery of gold and other valuable minerals in Victoria'.¹⁶² Indeed, throughout June, the slogan 'GOLD! GOLD! GOLD!' was mainly used to advertise land sales in the Plenty Ranges. At the end of June, the Queen's Theatre Royal advertised its latest drama, *The Gold Seekers*—'GOLD GOLD GOLD!!! Come and see what you may expect at the Diggings, ROBBERY AND MURDER!! The Gold Seekers at half price.'¹⁶³ The claim that ships to Sydney were invariably using the 'Gold' slogan is another of the exaggerated accounts to come from the gold excitement.

By the end of June, news of gold discoveries in Port Phillip dominated the headlines and the *Sydney Morning Herald* retaliated with an editorial claiming the reaction in Port Phillip had been 'aggravated by feelings of jealousy and alarm'; that Victoria had been accustomed to 'look down on New South Wales as inferior to themselves'; that the justifiable prosperity and attraction of Port Phillip had been wrongly enhanced by 'false representations' that New South Wales had 'reached a crisis'; and now, 'unwilling to yield the palm without a struggle', Victorians had gone out to 'ransack their hills and gullies in all directions in the quest for gold'. The *Herald* claimed 'hundreds are already on the move' to Bathurst, and they would be 'followed by hundreds and thousands more'.¹⁶⁴

But the migration of people to Bathurst that some feared, and that Sydney hoped for, did not eventuate, and shipowners soon sold their vessels or returned them to their usual duties. The *Emma Prescott* arrived back at Melbourne on 13 July with four listed passengers.¹⁶⁵ It sailed again for Sydney on 23 July with 21, and was then sold before heading to San Francisco.¹⁶⁶ The *Emma* sailed from Melbourne on 8 August with 20 passengers—significantly short of the 30 it brought back in November—it was then advertised 'for sale, freight or charter'.¹⁶⁷ Early in August, the *Gazelle* and *Sea Belle* both sailed for Newcastle to load with coal destined for Adelaide and Launceston.

On Tuesday 1 July 1851, the Port Phillip District was officially separated from New South Wales and became known as Victoria. Robyn Annear suggests that 'though the celebrations boasted all the usual feasts and fireworks, their gusto was subdued by the blight of Sydney gold'.¹⁶⁸ But was Melbourne quite as despondent as Annear suggests? On 1 July, David Hill Young wrote a letter to England telling of George Bruhn's finds in the Pyrenees: 'The gold is said to exist in large quantities, and the diggers are now preparing to go there, thinking that they will stand a better chance

than at Bathurst, where so many have preceded them. There are explorers out in all directions looking for gold in this district.’ On the negative side, Young added, ‘There is a great fear that many of the shepherds will desert the sheep, and follow gold as the most profitable labour.’¹⁶⁹ Not to Bathurst, but to the Pyrenees.

Many later accounts suggest, as did Edwin Booth, that ‘before the end of July 1851, the gold-fever raged in Melbourne’, but, on 25 July, the *Argus* gave a contradictory assessment: ‘The Gold Fever has considerably abated—the crisis is past.’ Not only was it past, but ‘for some weeks, the ordinary business of the colony has been going on as quietly as if the Australian gold fields had never been heard of’. Indeed, the *Argus* never thought there was a crisis, apart from in the minds of a few ‘alarmists’, and reactions in general became more restrained. ‘Hopes are less bright—fears are less gloomy—the mind’s eye of the public is less dazzled by the golden glare—and the subject can now be discussed somewhat rationally and calmly.’ The attention of the *Argus* turned to the fact that local gold had been confirmed and that ‘there must be some better regulations promulgated for the workings than those of our neighbours. And to this, the serious consideration of our own Government cannot be too soon directed’.¹⁷⁰ Not wanting to hold back the gold seekers, the *Argus* published precise directions for how to get to the Pyrenees goldfields, and added ‘it may be as well to mention that it is within eight miles of the spot where the shepherd found the specimen of gold which caused such a sensation a few years back’.¹⁷¹

La Trobe knew that. He had visited the Pyrenees gold region at least twice since 1849, and was there when Donald Cameron and William Campbell found gold at Clunes in March 1850.¹⁷² But opening local goldfields was not a wise thing to do in 1849, 1850 or 1851. There were too many unreliable and unpredictable ex-convicts and exiles in the district; there was a much greater need to open a local coal mine to supply industry and transport; it would be better to wait until the new Colony of Victoria had a fully functioning legislature and an efficient police force; and it was unwise to open a goldfield while Port Phillip was still part of New South Wales and the revenue would flow to Sydney. Even *Bell’s Life in Sydney* could see that when it assumed in February 1849 that the Port Phillip gold would ‘not be procured in any large quantities, until the “Act of Separation” be passed’.¹⁷³

The news from Bathurst strengthened longstanding calls to open local goldfields in Port Phillip, and once that was done, La Trobe knew full well, it would be like opening Pandora's box. Indeed, when the *Melbourne Morning Herald* called for the opening of the Port Phillip goldfields in mid-June, it acknowledged that La Trobe was 'personally averse to gold discoveries, and would regard the finding of a gold mine as a national calamity'.¹⁷⁴ But, as La Trobe observed three months later—'had the position of the new colony been a more settled and favourable one, had it possessed the power of a timely and firm legislation ... a much more satisfactory system for the working of the gold-fields ... might and ought to have been set on foot from the very outset'.¹⁷⁵

By December 1851, despite its longstanding hostility toward La Trobe, the *Argus* was surprisingly optimistic.

We do not consider the present state of things very terrible. Some inconveniences are felt, and some loss will have to be submitted to. Wonderful, indeed, would it be, if such discoveries could take place without producing temporarily such effect! ... The discovery is doubtless intended for ultimate good, and we are quite prepared; individually, to take our chance. There may be men so circumstanced as not to be able to keep pace with the times, and to these the Gold fields may bring nothing but disaster, but we would fain hope that they are but few in number. To the great bulk of the community the discovery will, undoubtedly, bring solid and material advantage ... we hail the gold discovery as calculated to prove of inestimable value to these Colonies; and in the hopeful contemplation of such mighty advantages, we can cheerfully enough submit, for the present, to such minor grievances as scarce servants, thirty shilling loads of wood, or a sixteen-penny loaf.¹⁷⁶

By the end of 1851, talk in Sydney had changed from Bathurst to Port Phillip—'Have you heard anything about the Port Phillip diggings? ... What do you think of the news from Port Phillip?'¹⁷⁷ The real exodus was about to begin—not to Bathurst, but to Victoria. By December, the tide had turned, and the *Sydney Morning Herald* reflected:

With the opening of summer, the tide of Emigration set in with a rapidity scarcely less than our worst apprehensions. Every vessel that left our harbour for Port Phillip was crowded with steerage passengers. Mount Alexander bade fair to decimate even Sydney. Nor were these departures compensated by arrivals from England, the rage for emigration from that country being chiefly directed to what was generally believed to be by far the richest of the gold-producing colonies. New South Wales was comparatively forgotten, or remembered only as a star of inferior magnitude.¹⁷⁸

As William Morrell put it, Bathurst was a ‘mere prologue to the Australian gold rushes’.¹⁷⁹

Two years later, in October 1853, Augustus Greeves chaired a Legislative Council Select Committee investigating claims for the first gold discovery in Victoria. Its membership included many who had been on the 1851 Gold Committee, and they acknowledged that the 1849 discoveries had created a ‘strong and prevalent impression’ that extensive gold deposits existed in Victoria, and that the 1851 meeting had been called due to ‘apprehension’, rather than any reality of a ‘draining off of our population’. The Select Committee concluded: ‘Nor is it probable that the migration to the Sydney district would have been more than temporary, even had the Victorian diggings not been discovered.’¹⁸⁰ This was a reasonable conclusion, but in a decision that the *Geelong Advertiser* claimed was ‘a disgrace’ and displayed ‘gross partisanship’, the Committee changed its draft report to include a statement by William Campbell, who was ‘powerfully backed in the Committee by Melbourne interests and private friends’.¹⁸¹ Campbell wrote a last minute letter to James Graham, claiming that in June 1851 he decided to make public his March 1850 discovery of gold at Clunes, after observing ‘the migration of the population to New South Wales, and the panic created throughout the whole Colony, and especially Melbourne’.¹⁸²

Campbell had good reason to embellish his motives for making the Clunes discovery public. He had been widely criticised for keeping the discovery secret for eighteen months to protect the interests of the squatters, and, in December 1852, La Trobe had refused to support his claim to being the first to discover gold in Victoria.¹⁸³ La Trobe believed that honour belonged to the shepherd, Thomas Chapman, who made the 1849 discovery.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, Henry Frencham, who had also made a claim for the 1851 reward, later stated that Alexandre Duchene had revealed Chapman’s gold ‘long before Mr Hargraves’ discovery’ and, therefore, deserved to be recognised as first discoverer of gold.¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, Campbell’s words ‘panic’ and ‘migration’ found their way into the Select Committee report, and then to the accounts of later historians, who, like Cranfield, almost without question, accepted them as a suitably dramatic way to sum up Melbourne’s reaction to Bathurst.¹⁸⁶

The ‘sudden exodus of the population in Melbourne to the gold diggings’ at Bathurst in May and June 1851 did not happen in the way that has been suggested by many.¹⁸⁷ Such were the words of ‘chattering alarmists’ and ‘prophets of evil’. But people like a good story, especially if it

contains sensation, panic and the mass exodus of people—and ‘panic’ and ‘exodus’ were sensational words to use when later historians tried to reduce months of complex events down to a sentence or two. And those words were passed on to others—after all, as the *Argus* said at the time, ‘Nothing is so contagious as panic’.¹⁸⁸

NOTES

- 1 ‘Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Claims for the Discovery of Gold in Victoria, together with the Proceeding of Committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix, 10 March 1854’, *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council during the Session 1853–1854*, vol. iii, Melbourne, 1854, pp. 4, 10–12; hereafter 1854 Select Committee.
- 2 La Trobe to Grey, 10 October 1851, *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers* (HCPP), 1852 (1430) (1508).
- 3 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 March 1851, p. 6.
- 4 *Argus*, 8 April 1851, p. 2.
- 5 *Argus*, 10 April 1851, p. 2.
- 6 *Argus*, 11 April 1851, p. 2.
- 7 For example, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 April 1851, p. 2; *Empire*, 4 April 1851, p. 3; *Melbourne Times* quoted in *Geelong Advertiser*, 12 April 1851, p. 2.
- 8 *Geelong Advertiser*, 16 April 1851, p. 2.
- 9 *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 19 April 1851, p. 3; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 April 1851, p. 3.
- 10 *Argus*, 6 May 1851, p. 2.
- 11 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 May 1851, p. 3; *Empire*, 7 May 1851, p. 2.
- 12 *Geelong Advertiser*, 7 May 1851, p. 2; *Argus*, 8 May 1851, p. 2; *Geelong Advertiser*, 12 May 1851, p. 1.
- 13 *Argus*, 13 May 1851, p. 2; *Geelong Advertiser*, 14 May 1851, p. 1.
- 14 *Argus*, 17 May 1851, p. 4.
- 15 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 May 1851, p. 3; 16 May 1851, p. 2; *Empire*, 17 May 1851, p. 2.
- 16 *Argus*, 20 May 1851, p. 2; *Melbourne Morning Herald*, 21 May 1851, p. 2.
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THE BIRTH OF THE MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON ITS FOUNDATION DATE

Gerald O'Collins and David Webb

Abstract

The Melbourne Cricket Club, a most revered club, celebrated its 175th anniversary in November 2013 in error. This article explores the primary evidence for the often cited foundation date of November 1838, which is repeated in many club histories and secondary works on Australian cricket. While cricket was being played in Melbourne from 1838 there is no evidence of the Melbourne Cricket Club being in existence. This article argues that the minuted foundation of the Melbourne Cricket Club occurred in November 1841.

THE FRONT COVER OF THE NOVEMBER 2013 ISSUE of the *MCC News* proudly announced ‘a milestone to remember: Australia’s oldest sporting club turns 175’. Around 1,500 members and guests attended the highpoint of the 175th anniversary, a ‘gala night’ on 15 November. It featured a light show re-enacting ‘the beginnings’ of the club in 1838 when Frederick Powlett, Robert Russell, George Smyth and the brothers Alfred and Charles Mundy acquired equipment, formed the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) and played in the first match two days later on 17 November 1838. The gala night was ‘a fitting celebration of what we unashamedly call the greatest sporting club in the world’.¹ But was the celebration held three years too early?



*Frederick Powlett ca 1872. Photographer: T.F. Chuck.
(Courtesy of the State Library of Victoria, H5056/408.)*

Alf Batchelder, in *Pavilions in the Park: a History of the Melbourne Cricket Club*, provides biographical information about the five men.² Powlett, a crown land commissioner and the first police magistrate in Melbourne, was for years the outstanding cricketer in the Port Phillip District. A government surveyor, Russell had arrived from Sydney in 1836. George Smyth served as a captain in the 80th regiment; Alfred Mundy worked for the Melbourne Insurance Company; and his brother Charles was a pastoralist.

The public rightly admires the extraordinary history and performances of the MCC, which efficiently administers what is possibly the finest cricket stadium in the world and one of the greatest sporting venues anywhere, the Melbourne Cricket Ground. On the occasion of the Boxing Day Test in 2013, a TV announcer called the MCG ‘the sporting capital of the world’.

Over ninety thousand people attended and broke the record for crowds at a cricket match. But was 15 November 1838 the day the MCC was founded?

Some existing studies accept 15 November 1838 as the foundation date and identify the first publicly recorded cricket match, played in Melbourne on 17 November 1838, as being the opening match played by members of the newly constituted MCC. In his 1962 history, *The Paddock That Grew: the Story of Melbourne Cricket Club*, Keith Dunstan makes this claim, though he gives 22 November 1838 as the date of the match.³

In an authoritative work on the Port Phillip District, A.G.L. Shaw reports the match played on 17 November 1838, quotes (like Dunstan, Batchelder Harte) the account published by the *Port Phillip Gazette* on the following 1 December, but does not allege that the newly founded MCC provided the players for the occasion. He adds: 'other matches followed more or less regularly. They did not give birth to a permanent club, for new cricket clubs like the Melbourne Union Cricket Club [not to be identified with the Melbourne Cricket Club], seem to have been formed every year.'⁴ For the years that followed John Batman's arrival on the banks of the Yarra in May 1835, Shaw provides a vivid and detailed picture of the struggles to create and pave streets, build houses, provide water, establish schools and churches, maintain peaceful relations with the Aboriginal people, and all the other major challenges faced in establishing Melbourne.⁵ He also mentions the formation of the Melbourne Club in November 1838.⁶ But he does not mention the foundation of the MCC.

In *A History of Australian Cricket*, Chris Harte features Russell as the alleged prime instigator of the MCC, proposes 15 November 1838 as the foundation date for the MCC and, like Dunstan, wrongly dates the first publicly recorded cricket match to 22 November (instead of 17 November) 1838. He offers neither footnotes nor endnotes that would indicate his sources, but, significantly, lists Dunstan's history of the MCC in his select bibliography. Unlike Dunstan and Batchelder, he does not go 'the whole hog' by alleging that this match took place between two teams provided by the newly founded MCC. Rather, Harte states that some of 'the Military' were playing against members of the MCC (named in the contemporary press as 'the Civilians').⁷

In his 2005 history of the MCC, Alf Batchelder accepts a November 1838 foundation date for the MCC, even if he otherwise almost completely ignores Dunstan's work.⁸ But he follows him in highlighting the importance of the 'original agreement' that Russell provided for the formation of the

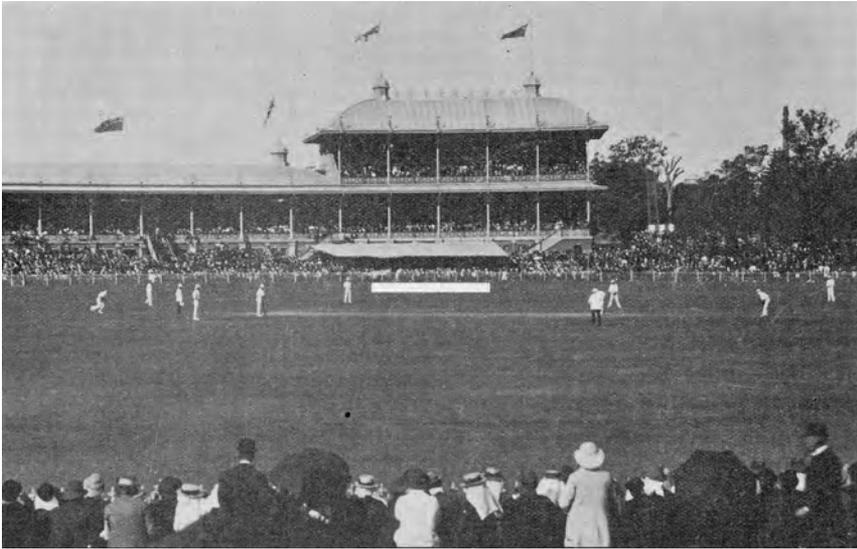
MCC.⁹ We will come back to this agreement, which Dunstan called the ‘most valuable document of all’ about the club’s foundation.¹⁰ Our article will devote most attention to Batchelder, since he has developed the most detailed case in support of the MCC being founded in November 1838.

What would be considered as constituting the foundation of a club like the MCC? As a minimum, we would expect one or more meetings (with perhaps invitations to these meetings and/or a previously printed prospectus) to approve the aims and rules of the club, elect some officials and begin the work of admitting new members. We might also agree that clubs do not drop out of the sky; they enjoy a ‘pre-history’ in the activities of those who eventually joined together in formally organising the club. For example, a widespread interest in horseracing and the prior existence of the Victoria Turf Club and the Victoria Jockey Club led to the Victorian Racing Club (VRC) being formed in 1864. Therefore, the foundation date for the VRC is 1864. Racing activities prior to that date prepared the way for its existence, but do not constitute its formal foundation. What then is the evidence for the founding of the MCC in the early years of the Port Phillip District?

The Primary Sources

In September 1841, the *Port Phillip Herald* published a letter, signed by ‘A Batsman’, probably George Cavenagh, the owner of the paper. After noting the public’s ‘considerable interest in cricket’, he wrote: ‘I would suggest to the gentlemen of the town the propriety of forming a club, who should establish regular days for play, and who should make the laws of the Mary-Le-Bone Club their guide, and adhere to them strictly at practice, as well as when playing matches.’ The letter calls for the *formation* of a club. It does not ask that an *already existing* organisation with its rules and officials be revived, improved and supported. It proposes the foundation of a new club, clearly implying that such a club was not yet in existence.

Cavenagh’s proposal was taken up. On 2 November 1841, the *Port Phillip Herald* reported that ‘yesterday afternoon a meeting of gentlemen interested in this manly game was held at the Exchange Rooms, for the purpose of forming a cricket club’. The article then gave details about the election of a president (Frederick Powlett, an obvious choice as an outstanding batsman and bowler and public official) and other office bearers, who ‘should draw up laws for the future government of the club’ and submit them for approval at a general meeting to be held a week later.



*England vs Australia, Melbourne Cricket Club Grounds, c. 1900, reproduced from The Cyclopaedia of Victoria, vol. 2, p. 127, James Smith comp., Melbourne, The Cyclopaedia Company, c. 1904.
(RHSV Collection—BK002-0089*

This contemporary account confirms that, prior to November 1841, no MCC with officials and rules existed.

On 16 November 1841, the *Port Phillip Herald* reported that ‘a meeting of the committee of management of the Melbourne Cricket Club was held at Davis’ Rooms on Saturday evening, when the rules for the guidance of the club were agreed to’. This is the first documented record of the name ‘Melbourne Cricket Club’ and describes the primary function of the newly elected committee—developing and confirming the new club’s rules. Before November 1841, neither the press nor any other contemporary sources document the existence of the Melbourne Cricket Club.

The letter from ‘A Batsman’ and the two reports in the *Port Phillip Herald* could hardly be clearer. The MCC was founded in November 1841; an existing club was not reformed or resuscitated after a period of hibernation, but a new club came into existence.

Of course, before that date, cricket had been played in what would become the State of Victoria. On 17 November 1838, there was the now famous match between ‘the Civilians and the Military’, reported by the

Port Phillip Gazette a week later and then at greater length on 1 December. But the paper never identified one or other of the teams as the MCC, nor implied, let alone stated, that this was an in-house game, played between members of a newly founded MCC.

Earlier on 17 November, George Arden, the proprietor and editor of the *Port Phillip Gazette*, had met Powlett, Russell and Smyth before they took the field to play with the Civilians against the Military. Together, they had attended a meeting to establish the Melbourne Club.¹¹ If the MCC had been founded on the very same day, Arden would definitely have known about the creation of this new cricket club. Why then did his paper, when reporting the match of 17 November 1838, have nothing to say about the two teams being members of the newly founded MCC? If his paper had failed to do so on 24 November, there was ample opportunity for Powlett, Russell, or someone else to correct the omission before the fuller report was published on 1 December.

Further evidence from a contemporary source (which was only published in 2012 and so unavailable to Batchelder, the most recent historian of the MCC) implies that the MCC did not exist from late 1838. Admittedly, this is evidence 'from silence'. But evidence from silence proves persuasive when the sources in question say nothing about events or institutions that they could reasonably be expected to mention.

In the journal that a London visitor, Robert Wrede, kept over four years (1837–41), his entries during a second visit to Melbourne (November 1838–January 1839) report joining 'a party of Gents' for a game of cricket on 14 November 1838. Three days later, he played for the Civilians against the Military in the historic match previously mentioned, the only player to record that game and his part in it.¹²

When publishing Wrede's journal in 2012, Peter Nicholls cited the authority of the MCC's 'online history' (based on the work by Batchelder) and alleged that this match of 17 November 1838 'was the first game played by the Melbourne Cricket Club' that had just been founded.¹³ He went on to quote the *Port Phillip Gazette*.¹⁴ But neither the paper nor Wrede himself mention the existence of a 'Melbourne Cricket Club', let alone that it had just been established and was playing its first match. Without appropriate evidence, it is simply gratuitous to claim that the game between 'the Civilians and the Military' was a match played by members of a newly founded MCC. If he had been playing for or against the MCC or for one group within the MCC, Wrede's silence is inexplicable. He was obviously

a keen cricketer, and, during his stay in Melbourne, recorded ten matches, naming those who made up the teams, but, from his first reference to a cricket match on 14 November 1838 until his departure, he never wrote anything about a 'Melbourne Cricket Club'.

Wrede's journal for 1 December 1838 noted playing and top scoring when 'the country' played and lost to 'the towns people'.¹⁵ On 22 December 1838, 'a grand cricket match' took place between 'the married and [the] single'. 'All the ladies in the town' attended, and the single 'were the victors'.¹⁶ On 5 January, before he left Melbourne, Wrede recorded a game 'between the Gentlemen and Shop Keepers of Melbourne', and, on 12 January 1839, 'a cricket match against the Tradesmen of Melbourne': 'we beat them in one innings'.¹⁷ Wrede did not explain who 'we' were, but presumably it was the team of 'Gentlemen' that he had played for a week earlier. He certainly did not report that this was a team drawn from members of the Melbourne Cricket Club.

Wrede meticulously documented matches played over the summer of 1838–9. Beyond question, he is the most significant personal source for the history of cricket in the earliest days of Melbourne. No other player or reporter has left such detailed records of cricket matches in the first years of the Port Phillip settlement. But he never mentions the existence and activities of a 'Melbourne Cricket Club'. Nor does the press or any other contemporary source record the name of the MCC before November 1841.

The *MCC News* for November 2013, when claiming November 1838 as the date for the club's foundation, relies on Batchelder's account in his *Pavilions in the Park*.¹⁸ He makes considerable efforts to establish that a 'first MCC' was formed two days prior to the match on 17 November 1838. Subsequently, this proto-MCC is supposed to have competed regularly, even though it was never mentioned as such by the press or any other contemporary sources. For instance, the match in which Wrede played on 12 January 1839 becomes the MCC's 'second recorded match'.¹⁹ Yet neither Wrede nor the press talk of an MCC team taking the field that day against the 'Tradesmen' of Melbourne. This looks very much like an unsubstantiated addition. Could a 'first' MCC have existed on and off for three years before vanishing without trace in early 1841, leaving neither records of its own nor any contemporary documents that would establish its existence?

Batchelder's Case

In trying to establish his case, Batchelder cites some later sources: first, an 1869 copy made by Russell of a receipt for cricket equipment bought on 15 November 1838 for Powlett and his associates; second, a copy also made by Russell in 1869 of a prospectus for founding a cricket club in Melbourne (allegedly the Melbourne Cricket Club, with the prospectus allegedly going back to 1838); and, third, 'evidence' from Thomas Strode, Garryowen (a nom de plume of Edmund Finn), and William Josiah Hammersley.²⁰

The original of the Russell receipt cannot be located. In any case, buying equipment, while certainly signalling an intention to play cricket, equally certainly does not amount to founding a new club. As regards the prospectus, even if it was from 1838, it does not establish the foundation of a club, but only an interest in joining others in doing so. The copy which Russell transcribed in 1869 begins: 'It is proposed to form a club' and records that five gentlemen had already subscribed to the prospectus. Such a proposal does not, however, record any meeting that founded the MCC. In any case, the only evidence for dating this prospectus and the receipt for the cricket equipment to 1838 comes from Russell over thirty years later. The supposed originals are lost.

The main problems with the 'receipt' and the 'prospectus' as evidence are these: the date for the copy of the receipt (15 November 1838) was written on the same piece of paper that Russell used in 1869 to transcribe the (undated) prospectus. Just because Russell copied two separate documents on to one and the same piece of paper does not indicate that they are both to be dated to the same day, let alone the same day in November 1838. We are left with two nagging questions. First, why was it that a prospectus, which, to achieve its effect, should have been distributed to some, or even many, prominent people, was never documented by anyone other than Russell? Second, could it be that in his later years Russell wanted to advance his own record by adjusting history? Notoriously, he did just that by claiming that he himself was responsible for creating the Melbourne Grid, and that Russell Street in Melbourne was named after him (the Melbourne *Argus*, 12 June 1897).²¹ In fact, Hoddle, the surveyor-general, laid out the Grid, and Russell Street was named after the Secretary of State for the Colonies (1839–41), Lord John Russell.

Batchelder quotes a letter Robert Russell wrote home on 17 November 1838, in which he enthusiastically reported his imminent membership in the Melbourne Club (not the MCC), the social benefits it would bring him,

and how he was 'flattered in having been requested to join'.²² That same day, he played in the match between 'the Civilians' and 'the Military', and we know from the *Port Phillip Gazette* for 1 December 1838 that he batted very successfully. But his letter said nothing about either a newly founded Melbourne Cricket Club or about Russell being one of its founding members.

Then there is the 'evidence' from Strode, Hammersley and Garryowen. Strode, the printer of the *Port Phillip Gazette*, lived and worked in Melbourne from the late 1830s. When writing his reminiscences in 1869–70, he stated that 'a Cricket Club was formed in Melbourne' in November 1838. Strode did not name the club, let alone specify it was the 'Melbourne Cricket Club'. Furthermore, he did not offer any personal testimony. He provided only a version of Russell's copy of the alleged prospectus and receipt, along with an extract from the *Port Phillip Gazette* report of 1 December 1838.²³ Strode has no independent evidence to offer.

Hammersley, an English cricketer and journalist, arrived in Melbourne in 1856 and so had no firsthand experience of any cricketing developments that took place between 1838 and 1841. In 1884, he published an article on 'The Marylebone Club of Australia', in which he reproduced a sheet of paper, 'framed and glazed' and hanging in the MCC 'club-room', which he had seen 'a few days' before—in other words, the 1869 version from Russell of the 'prospectus' for founding a cricket club and the receipt for cricketing equipment. (Hammersley or the printer changed the date of Russell's memorandum from 26 October 1869 to the 26 October 1839.) This testimony from Hammersley was not contemporary and simply derived from Russell.²⁴ It also leaves us with the question: did Russell himself frame the memorandum and present it to the MCC sometime before early 1884, when Hammersley first saw the text and then transcribed it?

In 1888, in his *Chronicles* of the early days of Melbourne, Garryowen (the Irish teacher and journalist Edmund Finn) describes the origins of cricket in the Port Phillip settlement.²⁵ He attributes most of his cricketing information to Russell, whom he calls 'my antiquarian referee', and draws as well on the *Port Phillip Gazette* for 1 December 1838. He says nothing to establish the existence of the MCC prior to November 1841. Like Wrede, Garryowen records the cricket match played on 12 January 1839 between 'the Gentlemen of the District' and 'the Tradesmen of the Town' and, like him, does not identify the former team as the MCC.²⁶ *Pavilions*

in the Park, however, maintains that the game was played between ‘the Melbourne Cricket Club’ and ‘the Tradesmen of the Town’.²⁷

This is typical of the way in which Batchelder doggedly repeats the claim that various teams which played matches between 1838 and 1841, named as Gentlemen of the District, Civilians, Married Residents, Benedicks, Bachelors, and so forth were in fact aliases for ‘the Melbourne Cricket Club’ or ‘Gentlemen of the MCC’. But he fails to present evidence supporting this identification.

Strode, Hammersley and Garryowen do not supply any independent evidence for the existence of the MCC prior to November 1841. They simply depend on Russell and the *Port Phillip Gazette* of 1 December 1838.

From the early years of the Port Phillip settlement until November 1841, the newspapers named various clubs and published reports of their matches and other activities. As well as the Pickwick Cricket Club and the Melbourne Club, the press referred to the Port Phillip Tennis Club, the Melbourne United, the Gentlemen Civilians and the Married and Single Residents of Port Phillip—a team Garryowen called the Bachelors and Married.²⁸ Batchelder, without adducing any evidence, turns this team into the ‘married and single men of the Melbourne Cricket Club’.²⁹ This unsubstantiated addition flies in the face of the fact that, during those years, the papers never wrote about a ‘Melbourne Cricket Club’.

Absence ‘Explained’

Although he fails to admit that, until 1841, there were no public nor private references to the Melbourne Cricket Club, Batchelder recognises that ‘no records have survived from the initial years of the MCC’.³⁰ Specifically, there is no mention of ‘office-bearers or a committee’.³¹ He explains this silence by stating that, in Melbourne’s early years, cricket clubs ceased to exist during the winter months and reformed in the summer.³²

Two responses can be made to this ‘explanation’. First, while much informality obviously characterised the cricket games played during Melbourne’s early years, nevertheless, the press reported the names of various clubs, such as the Melbourne Club, the Pickwick Cricket Club and the Melbourne Union Cricket Club that organised these games. Why was the MCC never mentioned? Presumably, because it was not yet in existence.

Second, the two reports provided by the *Port Phillip Herald* in late 1841 do not say or even imply that an existing club had been going into hibernation every winter, but should now be organised on a permanent

footing. The newspaper describes the formation of a new club, which had not existed before. It does not, as Batchelder suggests, report a decision that the MCC should be 'taken to a somewhat higher, more formalised level' and given an 'increased level of organization'.³³ This is what Batchelder *considers* the reports from the *Port Phillip Herald* had said. But they simply do not say this. They are concerned with the foundation of a new club, which they call the Melbourne Cricket Club.

Batchelder seems to have developed his theory about the spasmodic existence of the MCC from 1838 to 1841 on the basis on what Dunstan had written: 'there are blank spaces in the minutes where the club nearly went out of existence, only to be revived again. On November 1, 1841, there was an election, the first that gives us a complete list of office-bearers.'³⁴ Far from there being 'blank spaces in the minutes' from 1838 to 1841, there are simply no extant minutes at all. Likewise, the election of November 1841, far from being 'the first that gives us a complete list of office-bearers', is the first election that we know about at all. In short, no contemporary evidence supports the existence of a club known as the Melbourne Cricket Club before November 1841.

What we celebrated in November 2013 was 175 years since the first publicly recorded cricket match in Victoria on 17 November 1838. Only one of the players, Robert Wrede, left a personal record of the game. Another player, Robert Russell, wrote home on the same day but did not refer to the game. Significantly, in 1838, neither Russell (in his letter) nor Wrede (in his journal) talked of a 'Melbourne Cricket Club'.

Russell and some others who played in the 1838 match between 'the Civilians and the Military' went on three years later to take a momentous step for Victoria and Australia. They founded what has become one of the greatest sporting clubs in the world, the MCC.

NOTES

- 1 *MCC News*, November 2013, p. 12.
- 2 A. Batchelder, *Pavilions in the Park: a History of the Melbourne Cricket Club and Its Ground*, Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2005, pp. 3–7.
- 3 K. Dunstan, *The Paddock That Grew: the Story of the Melbourne Cricket Club*, Cassell, London, 1962, p. 7. On pp. 7–8, Dunstan cited an account of this match from the *Port Phillip Gazette* for 1 December 1838. The date he gave for the match (irrespective of the identity of the teams who played) was clearly wrong; rather than 22 November, it should be 17 November 1838; see the evidence we have cited from Robert Wrede. In 1988, Dunstan published a third edition of *The Paddock That Grew* to coincide with the alleged 150 years since the foundation of the MCC.
- 4 A.G.L. Shaw, *A History of the Port Phillip District: Victoria before Separation*, Melbourne, Miegunyah Press, 1996, pp. 83–4.
- 5 Shaw, pp. 44–86.
- 6 Shaw, pp. 82–3. At that time, the population of Melbourne and Geelong, while growing rapidly, was only just over 3,000; see Michael Cannon (ed.), *Historical Records of Victoria: the Early Development of Victoria 1836–1839*, Melbourne, Public Records Office, 1984, p. 426.
- 7 C. Harte, *A History of Australian Cricket*, London, André Deutsch, 1993, pp. 9–10. In his *Port Phillip Gentlemen and Good Society in Melbourne before the Gold Rushes*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1980, Paul de Serville often refers to and quotes from Robert Russell, has much to say about the foundation (in November 1838) of the Melbourne Club and its early years, but never mentions the MCC, let alone its foundation date.
- 8 Batchelder, pp. 420, 430 (references in endnotes).
- 9 Batchelder, pp. 3–7.
- 10 Dunstan, p. 250; see pp. 2–3.
- 11 Ronald McNicoll, *No. 36 Collins Street: Melbourne Club 1836–1988*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1988, pp. 1–4.
- 12 Peter Nicholls, *The Story of Robert Wrede: including his Journal 1837–41*, privately published, p. 136.
- 13 Nicholls, pp. 136–7.
- 14 Nicholls, pp. 137–8.
- 15 Nicholls, p. 141.
- 16 Nicholls, p. 147.
- 17 Nicholls, pp. 151 & 153.
- 18 Batchelder, pp. 1–15.
- 19 Batchelder, p. 11.
- 20 Batchelder, pp. 3 & 391–2.

- 21 Jenny Brown, 'Disputed', *Age*, 3–4 May 2013.
- 22 Batchelder, p. 5; see Nicholls, p. 4.
- 23 Batchelder, p. 3; see Robert Douglass Boys, *First Years at Port Phillip*, Melbourne, Robertson and Mullens, 1935, p. 16.
- 24 William Josiah Hammersley, 'The Marylebone Club of Australia', *Cricket: a Weekly Record of the Game*, 28 February 1884, p. 22.
- 25 'Garryowen', *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne 1835–1852: Historical, Anecdotal and Personal*, facsimile of the 1888 edition, vol. 2, Melbourne, Heritage Publishers, 1976, pp. 735–8.
- 26 'Garryowen', pp. 736–7.
- 27 Batchelder, p. 11; see Harte, *History of Australian Cricket*, p. 10.
- 28 'Garryowen', vol. 2, p. 737.
- 29 Batchelder, p. 11.
- 30 Batchelder, p. 6.
- 31 Batchelder, p. 12.
- 32 Batchelder, p. 6.
- 33 Batchelder, p. 13.
- 34 Dunstan, p. 9.

THE POINT HICKS CONTROVERSY: THE CLOUDED FACTS

Trevor Lipscombe

Abstract

Lieutenant James Cook's first landfall on the Australian continent in April 1770 is one of the most significant events in Australia's and Victoria's history, but has long been the subject of confusion and controversy. Nearly 250 years after the event, there is a widespread belief that today's Point Hicks, in far eastern Victoria, is the first feature on the coast of Australia named by Cook. However, from the late 1700s onwards, many surveyors and hydrographers have taken a different view, based on their examination of evidence from Cook's journals, logs and charts. This paper presents a fresh examination of the controversy and of the reasons for its persistence.

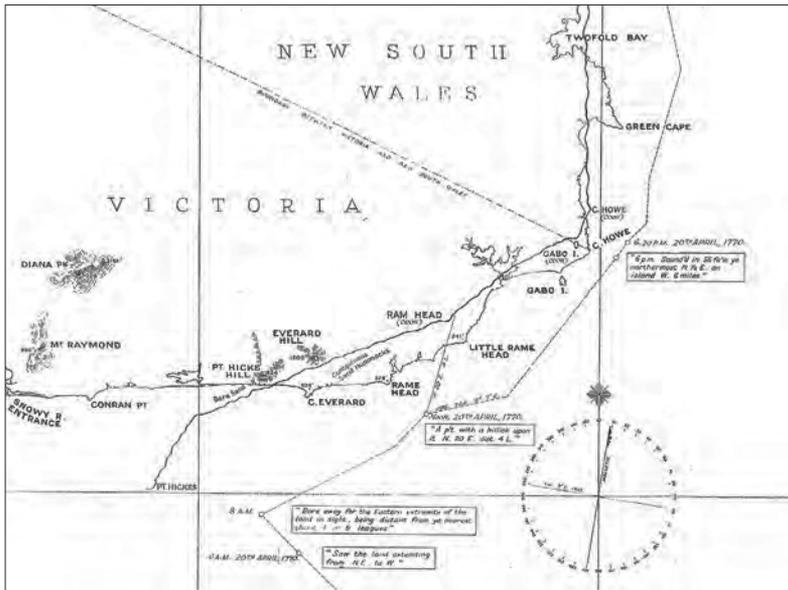
COOK'S ARRIVAL ON THE VICTORIAN COAST is one of the most significant events in Australia's history, as well as in the history of Victoria. As we approach the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary (in 2020) of Cook's arrival on Australian shores, the controversy deserves fresh examination, and an exploration of the reasons for its persistence. The controversy concerns the location of Cook's Point Hicks. Navigators and surveyors have generally found themselves on one side of the argument, and historians on the other.

The essence of the navigators' and surveyors' argument, based on Cook's records, is that, on the morning of 19 April 1770, the crew of *Endeavour* had their first sight of land on the Australian continent, a huge arc appearing to extend from NE by N to W by S. At 8 a.m., Cook named

the southernmost land he could see Point Hicks after Lieutenant Zachary Hicks (who spelled his name Hickes), who was the first to sight land at 6 a.m. Cook's southernmost land would have been the land at the western extent of the arc. The coordinates Cook recorded in his journal and on his chart (38S, 211.7W or 148.53E) place Point Hicks several miles out to sea. Many believed that Cook had mistaken a cloudbank for land. After Cook, early navigators who visited the area appear to have realised his mistake, and Point Hicks does not appear on their charts.

From the 1890s, several influential historians, unable to believe that Cook could have made an error, vigorously maintained that today's Point Hicks (initially named as Cape Everard in 1852) was what Cook saw. This eventually resulted in Cape Everard being renamed as Point Hicks by the Victorian Government in 1970 to commemorate the bicentenary of Cook's *Endeavour* voyage.

Land surveyors Fowler (1907) and Barker (1933), and marine surveyors Ingleton (1970) and Hilder (1970), have each taken Cook's data and plotted it on a modern chart, and all conclude that Cook's Point Hicks is out to



Map 1: Admiralty Chart 3169 with Lt. Cook's Coastline and Track of H.M. Bark Endeavour, L. Barker (1933).
(Courtesy of National Archives of Australia.)

sea and does not exist as a land feature.¹ Map 1, prepared by Barker for the Commonwealth Department of the Interior, shows the coast in the area as laid down on Cook's chart, with the modern coastline superimposed. *Endeavour's* estimated course is shown. There are minor variations between the four plots because of different allowances for currents etc., but their results are essentially the same.

The Point Hicks controversy shows how historical evidence can be distorted by an unwillingness to accept that revered or eminent individuals—including in this case James Cook, Ernest Scott and J.C. Beaglehole—could have got things wrong. Despite a long and often acrimonious debate over many years, the errors of eminent historians are still accepted to this day. An aura of infallibility has clouded the facts for too long.

Navigators Grapple with Cook's Error

In 1798, George Bass was the next navigator after Cook to visit this coast. He could not find Cook's Point Hicks.² Matthew Flinders does not place Point Hicks on any of his charts of the area, and it does not appear on his 1814 or 1822 maps of Australia. Cook's next two named features, Ram Head and Cape Howe, both appear on Flinders' charts. Flinders' example was followed by later map makers, and the name Point Hicks appears on very few maps prior to 1970.

It is clear that Flinders realised Cook's error, but omission of Point Hicks from his charts is the nearest he comes to revealing it publicly. There is no reference to the error in his *Voyage to Terra Australis*. Flinders and other early navigators would have recognised that the 'land' that Cook had seen was in fact a cloudbank. This meteorological phenomenon is not uncommon in this area. Sailing there in 1798, Flinders had a similar experience to Cook: 'This supposed land was visible all afternoon.'³

Next to survey this coast was John Lort Stokes in 1843 in *HMS Beagle*. Point Hicks is not on his chart and there is no mention of it in his journal.⁴ Today's Point Hicks remained nameless until 1852 when it was given the name Cape Everard by George Smythe, a Victorian Department of Crown Lands and Survey surveyor.⁵ Many sources erroneously attribute this naming to Stokes but, as with Point Hicks, it does not appear on his charts or in his journal.

Had any of these navigators found Point Hicks, given its finder and its historic significance as Cook's first named place on the coast of Australia, it seems likely that it would have appeared on their charts, as do Cook's

other place names. The absence of any mention of Cook's error is also significant. It seems that the reverence they had for Cook would not allow them to assert that Cook, and the other members of *Endeavour's* crew, had mistaken a cloudbank for land.

The only sailor of this era to claim to have seen Cook's Point Hicks was James Grant in 1801. He 'saw' Point Hicks from 37.51S, bearing N by E, distant 10 to 12 miles.⁶ According to Fowler (1911), this would put Cook's Point Hicks from 7 to 10 miles north of today's Point Hicks, and many more miles from Cook's recorded positioning of the feature. Fowler comments: 'Grant appears to have been a good sailor but a poor surveyor.'⁷

Cook's Point Hicks Comes Ashore

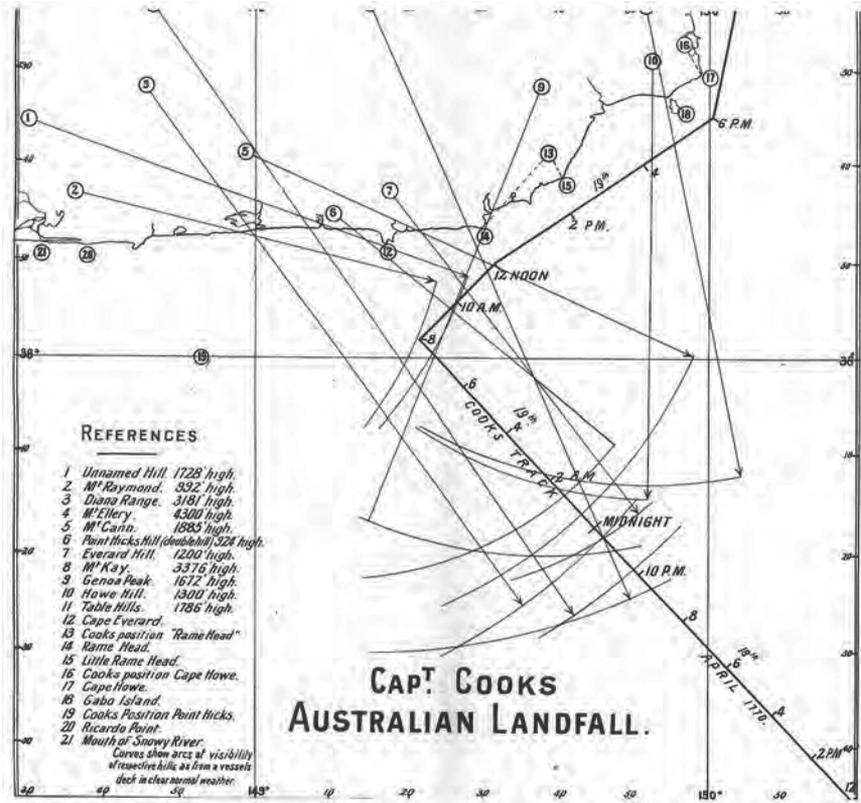
This reverence for Cook, and an unwillingness to assert publicly that Cook had got it wrong, persisted. In 1880, Philip Gidley King, who began his career as a naval officer, and was a grandson of his namesake Governor King, and son of naval surveyor Phillip Parker King, wrote:

Captain Cook ... on the 19th April 1770, discovered, through the morning mist, "land", which he named Point Hicks ... It seems strange that this name is not retained on modern charts. The land seen by Cook was probably West-hill behind Cape Everard, or Coast-hill behind Ram Head, and it would not be an ungracious act of the hydrographer of the present day to alter one or other of those hills to "Point Hicks Hill".⁸

Because of the earth's curvature, the first real land visible from *Endeavour* would have been the tops of hills. From Cook's position when he named Point Hicks and its proximity to land, King concluded that the two hills he mentions were 'probably' those first seen. This is the nearest King comes to saying that Cook's Point Hicks does not exist—he makes no reference to it. His reference to "land" in inverted commas is ambiguous: it could just mean 'land', but it seems more likely that this is code for 'supposed land' and King realised that Cook had seen a cloudbank. Had he suspected an error in Cook's coordinates or a fault in his compass, he would have been more likely to choose hills to the west as those first seen. Fowler's chart (Map 2) shows possible hills.⁹

In a review (1881) of Cook's log on the Australian coast, published by the Government Printer, King did not raise any questions about Cook's positioning of Point Hicks.¹⁰ Like other navigators before him, his loyalty to Cook's name was so strong that he could never bring himself to say outright that Cook had seen a cloudbank.

King's suggestion was taken up and West-hill was renamed Point Hicks Hill (see Map 1). 'Point Hicks Hill (Double Hill)' appears on a British Hydrographic Department chart published in 1900, based on an 1871 survey, so could have been added at any time between 1871 and 1900.¹¹



Map 2: Capt. Cook's Australian Landfall, T.W. Fowler (1907).
(Courtesy of Victorian Geographical Journal.)

It does not appear on the 1872 version of the same survey or on a chart published by James Imray in 1879.¹² This suggests that it would have been added to maps sometime between King's suggestion in 1880 and 1893, when it was mentioned by Wharton (see below).

It is possible that Point Hicks Hill was first added to a map by the Victorian Department of Crown Lands and Survey (VDCLS) staff, though no evidence of this has been found. Since the mid-1800s, the department,

in its various incarnations, and as VICNAMES today, has been the authoritative body for mapping and place names in Victoria. Map makers across the world have taken their lead from this organisation. Their name, Cape Everard, had previously been adopted on British Hydrographic Department charts for today's Point Hicks. Point Hicks Hill now bears the official name, Tamboon Hill.

King focussed the debate on the important question of Cook's actual landfall, the first real coast seen. His suggestion resulted in the naming of Point Hicks Hill, lifting the Point Hicks name out of the sea and placing it on land, and nearer the spot which historians would later decide was its correct position at today's Point Hicks.

Admiral W.J. Wharton was aware of Point Hicks Hill. His edited version of Cook's *Endeavour* Journal (1893) was the standard work on the voyage for more than 50 years, and contains this editor's note: 'Point Hicks was merely a rise in the coast line where it slipped below the horizon to the westward, and the name of Point Hicks Hill is now borne by an elevation that seems to agree with the position'.¹³

Wharton's conclusion that the location of Point Hicks Hill (37.45.07S, 149.09.46E) 'seems to agree with the position' that Cook gave for Point Hicks (38S, 148.53E) is surprising given that he was Hydrographer to the British Navy for twenty years from 1884 (see Map 2). It is a huge leap from King's view of events, and Wharton offers no evidence to support his contention.

Historians Claim Cape Everard is Cook's Point Hicks

Two prominent historians of the 1890s concluded that Cook's Point Hicks was 'apparently' or 'probably' Cape Everard (today's Point Hicks). These appear to be the first published assertions that Cape Everard is Cook's Point Hicks. Bladen's and Macdonald's views assume greater importance since historian Professor Ernest Scott, whose views have proved the most influential in this controversy, later relied on them as 'evidence' that Cook must have seen today's Point Hicks.

F.M. Bladen, editor of the influential *Historical Records of New South Wales* (1893), says that the 'point is apparently identical with that now known as Cape Everard'. A.C. Macdonald (1897), who held several offices in, and wrote several articles for, the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, wrote: 'Point Hicks is probably identical with that now known as Cape Everard.'¹⁴

So how did Bladen and Macdonald come to this conclusion? It seems more likely that they each obtained their views from a trusted source, rather than engaged in primary research on what is a relatively minor point in both works. It is possible that Macdonald's opinion was based on Bladen's as his wording is very similar. No published paper has been found and the source may have been a map or maps.

Most maps of this era follow Flinders and show only Ram Head and Cape Howe on this coast. After 1852, many also show Cape Everard. Three exceptions showing Point Hicks have been located. Arrowsmith's 1846 map shows the name, Point Hicks, on the coast in the area of Cape Everard, but no projection of the coast. The name Point Hicks has been dropped from Arrowsmith's maps of 1847 and 1848, and his maps from the 1850s.¹⁵ James Wyld's map of Australia published around 1867 also shows the words Point Hicks in roughly the area of today's Point Hicks, but the positioning is rather vague and, again, there is no obvious point to which the name is attached.¹⁶ In both cases, the publishers may have worked from Cook's chart or a copy of it, and placed the name in the general area.

The third exception is a more probable source for Bladen. Skene's Victorian Department of Crown Lands and Survey map of Victoria 1872 shows today's Point Hicks as a clearly projecting cape which is labelled 'Cape Everard' in bold, with 'Pt Hicks' beneath, and beneath that 'Cook'.¹⁷ This is a far firmer linking of Point Hicks to Cape Everard than is apparent on the Arrowsmith and Wyld maps, neither of which shows a physical point or uses the name Cape Everard. A briefing note to the Victorian Minister for Lands in 1969 says of the 1872 map: 'This is the first time the name Point Hicks appears on any departmental map.'¹⁸

It was a fleeting appearance, as similar VDCLS maps published in 1875 and 1876 show only Cape Everard.¹⁹ The dropping of the name from later Arrowsmith and VDCLS maps suggests that placing the name Point Hicks on a map was controversial. Significantly, the name Point Hicks does not appear on the 1900 British Hydrographic Department chart which shows the name Point Hicks Hill (see endnote 11). Surveyors and map makers of the time may have been aware of the position that experienced navigators Flinders, Stokes, King and Wharton had taken on the matter. None of them had connected Point Hicks with Cape Everard.

All the evidence suggests that Skene's VDCLS Map of Victoria 1872 is the first map (or indeed source) to clearly link Point Hicks to Cape Everard, and it is a potential source for Bladen. However, the key question is 'Who

put Point Hicks on the 1872 map alongside Cape Everard and why?’ As with Cape Everard and Point Hicks Hill, this was probably a VDCLS initiative. Maps after 1852 often showed Cape Everard as a projection on the coast and anyone plotting *Endeavour*’s course onto a map at this time would quickly realise that it was the nearest point of land to, and north of, Cook’s 8 a.m. position. It would be easy on a quick misreading to conclude that Cook’s reference to ‘the Southermost point of land we had in sight’ was a reference to Cape Everard. Indeed, this was precisely what many historians would later do. Without seeing the 1872 map, Bladen and Macdonald may, of course, have arrived at similar conclusions themselves or from an unknown third party.

Cook’s Error Declared

While many experienced naval surveyors had earlier realised Cook’s error, Fowler’s 1907 article, 137 years after the event, was the first to directly question the whereabouts of Cook’s Point Hicks.²⁰ Land surveyor Fowler follows King and Wharton in seeking hills Cook could have seen. His map (Map 2) shows *Endeavour*’s course with a series of arcs intersecting it. Each arc is connected to a hill, and the point where each arc intersects Cook’s track indicates the time when the top of each hill would have first become visible from the ship.

Naval surveyors might not be prepared to call Cook’s sighting directly into question, but land surveyors were under less pressure. Nevertheless, Fowler approaches the issue of Cook’s error cautiously. Fowler’s appears to be the first published chart (Map 2) to show Cook’s Point Hicks in the sea some miles south of the real coast. Searching for an explanation, he ventured ‘it would appear that the observation was faulty, the compass was in error, or that a bank of clouds was mistaken for land’. Later he conceded: ‘The position is in 50 fathoms of water, and over 12 nautical miles from the nearest shore, whilst there is no prominent headland on the coast to which it can correspond.’

He then turns to two hills which would have been ‘the most westerly land visible from the *Endeavour* at this time’ and suggests that ‘to preserve Cook’s nomenclature’ the highest of these, Hill 1, Unnamed Hill on Fowler’s chart, be renamed Mount Hicks. FitzGerald (1971) later claimed that the second hill, Mount Raymond, was, as the result of a compass error, the feature Cook named Point Hicks.²¹

Point Hicks Hill appears on Fowler's chart, but his proposal is not the same as King's nearly 30 years earlier. King accepts that Cook's Point Hicks does not exist and seeks to identify his actual landfall. Fowler thinks Cook's Point Hicks might exist and is searching for a feature to the west, which Cook might have seen had he not made some sort of error. In doing so, Fowler seems to reject the cloudbank hypothesis.

Later (1911), Fowler was more definite on the matter, concluding that there must have been a compass error of some 30 degrees, 'the only other alternative being that the great navigator mistook a bank of cloud for land, a supposition which, in view of his great experience, is very unlikely'.²² Reverence for Cook had influenced his conclusion.

Fowler's three possible explanations for Cook's Point Hicks being in the sea—observation error, compass error and a cloudbank—are all advanced by one or more protagonists. Though Fowler, a land surveyor, dismisses the cloudbank hypothesis, all of the navigators before and after him, except Wharton, appear to accept it as the explanation.

Observation error would result from either the point from which the observation was made being incorrect, or an incorrect statement of Point Hicks' coordinates. The first is ruled out by the fact that we have, from Fowler's plot, a fairly precise location for Cook at 8 a.m. (later confirmed by Barker, Ingleton and Hilder). The estimated coordinates of Point Hicks are the same in Cook's journal, on his chart and in the journals of others aboard *Endeavour*. All this data puts Cook's Point Hicks well out to sea.

The possibility of compass error cannot be entirely eliminated. Such errors can vary from place to place, from onboard and geomagnetic sources. However, Map 1 shows that Cook's chart places the line of coast fairly accurately with the exception of his Point Hicks. So it would be strange if Cook's positioning of Point Hicks from south of Cape Everard produced a result so markedly different.

Historians Awed by Cook

Fowler's conclusions were robustly disputed by the eminent Australian historian Professor Ernest Scott (1912). Scott's views are central to the Point Hicks controversy. They have influenced the debate for more than a century and merit close examination. Scott rejects the idea that the feature that Cook named as Point Hicks is out at sea. His main contention is that today's Point Hicks is what Cook saw at 8 a.m. on the morning of 19 April 1770. Scott argued: 'Cook stated that he gave the name Point Hicks to

“the southernmost point of land we had in sight” ... Point Hicks, or Cape Everard, is “the southernmost point” observable from Cook’s situation at the time.²³

But Scott quoted Cook out of context. What Cook says, in Wharton’s edition of the journal on which Scott relied, is ‘The Southermost point of land we had in sight, which bore from us W $\frac{1}{4}$ S, I judged to lay in the latitude of 38.0 S and in the Long. of 211.7 W’ (see Map 2).²⁴

Today’s Point Hicks would indeed have been the southernmost point of *real* land nearest to Cook’s position. It would have been N 20 degrees W of his position. But it would not have been ‘observable from Cook’s situation’, as he was too far away for this low-lying land to be visible. However, and most importantly, Cook clearly says the southernmost point of land he saw lay W $\frac{1}{4}$ S of his position at 8 a.m., not to the north as Scott insists.

Scott’s reverence for Cook is indicated by the following passage. He just could not believe it possible that Cook had got it wrong:

Mr Fowler’s suggestion that ‘a bank of cloud was mistaken for land’ would be fantastic, even if the observer was an amateur; but he was James Cook, the greatest navigator of his age, and one of the greatest of all time, the idea that he mistook a clot of mist for a cape is staggering. Cook made mistakes in reckoning ... But we may be quite sure that when Cook named ‘a point of land’ it was a point of land and not a meteorological freak.²⁵

Nevertheless, Scott does concede that Cook may have made a different sort of mistake:

The signal merit of Mr Fowler’s contribution to this subject is his exposition of the error in Cook’s reckoning [i.e. Fowler showing that Cook’s Point Hicks was out at sea]. The position latitude 38S, longitude 148.53E is, he shows, in the open strait in 50 fathoms of water and is over 12 nautical miles from the nearest shore. It is this manifest mistake which accounts for Mr Bladen’s cautious use of the word ‘apparently’ and Mr A.C. Macdonald’s ‘probably’. But due weight must be attached to Cook’s words ‘I judged it to lay in the latitude of’ ... There are scores of precise ‘observations’, but only this one guess. That the guess is wrong is abundantly plain from Mr Fowler’s demonstration. But the miscalculation does not vitiate the clearness of the description of ‘the southernmost point of land then in sight’ which can be no other than Cape Everard—Point Hicks of our modern maps.²⁶

So Scott accepts Cook’s positioning of Point Hicks as being offshore, but questions his use of the word ‘judged’, raising the possibility of an observational error. Fowler (1916), in a belated and detailed response to

Scott, suggests that the reason Cook used the word 'judged' was because he was only able to take one observation of the point he believed he had seen.²⁷ Usually a feature would be fixed by two or more observations taken as the ship moved along a coast.

However, even if Scott was right, Cook's 'guess' would be very seriously out. Cook's observation is just south of due west, when Scott would have the feature 76 degrees away at almost due north. Surely not the sort of error 'the greatest navigator of his age' would make. While Scott does not raise it, there is still the possibility of compass error. Fowler says it might explain 'some discrepancy, but probably not of 30 degrees', far less than 76 degrees.

Further, Cook estimated the distance of Point Hicks from his 8 a.m. position as 22 sea miles, whereas today's Point Hicks is only 13½ sea miles. Cook's chart shows the coast in the vicinity of today's Point Hicks reasonably accurately, but his Point Hicks is shown not on the coast where Scott says it is, but more than 20 miles south-west of it (see Map 1).

Scott was certain that today's Point Hicks is what Cook saw: 'The cape is there; there is today a lighthouse upon it. Stokes had no difficulty in placing it making his Admiralty survey; there is in the plan room of the Lands Department, Melbourne, an excellent manuscript plan of it drawn by G.D. Smythe in 1852.'²⁸

Yes, today's Point Hicks certainly exists as a topographical feature on these charts, but this does not alter the fact that it is not what Cook named. Stokes does not name it on his chart and, on Smythe's, it appears as Cape Everard. Scott agrees that it does not appear on any maps as Point Hicks for a long period after Cook, but 'On many maps issued by Victoria's Department of Lands and Survey since 1871, and on all issued since 1890, the name of Lt Hicks has been restored, an act of righteous restitution which we hope may be perpetuated'.²⁹

It is difficult to fully assess Scott's claim today. As we have seen, Skene's VDCLS map of 1872 was the first to associate Cook's Point Hicks with Cape Everard. The remnants of the VDCLS maps of the period reside in the Public Records Office of Victoria and the date of many of the maps is unclear. Six maps of the area from the period 1841 to 1918 all show the feature as Cape Everard. The National Library of Australia (NLA) collection has five additional VDCLS maps dating between 1893 and 1910, and all show only Cape Everard, not Point Hicks as Scott claims.³⁰

There are numerous other maps of the area from this period in the NLA collection and none of them shows Point Hicks.

Despite Fowler's comprehensive refutation of Scott's claims, Scott's insistence that today's Point Hicks is Cook's Point Hicks has been repeated by subsequent historians. Hilder (1970), himself a very experienced Pacific navigator, observed: 'Ernest Scott's objections to Fowler's proof by plotting are so much hot air ... Had Cook himself passed through Bass Strait on one of his later voyages, he would have deleted it from the chart without hesitation.'³¹

Historians Work to 'Correct' the Record

Scott's view continued to be zealously promoted by historians for the next 60 years, eventually resulting in the renaming of Cape Everard as Point Hicks in 1970. It is remarkable that none of Scott's successors seemed to take the trouble to examine his arguments, along with those of Fowler and the opinions of navigators since the time of Cook. Reverence for Scott not only duped historians, but his spurious arguments would also convince both the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments of the merits of his case.

In 1924, historians K.R. Cramp, honorary secretary of the Sydney-based Royal Australian Historical Society, Professor E. Scott, and Professor G.A. Wood of Sydney University, persuaded the Commonwealth Government to erect a plaque at today's Point Hicks. Wood had earlier claimed, citing Scott, that 'It seems that Point Hicks is the cape which Stokes in 1843 unfortunately named Cape Everard'.³²

The plaque is still in place on the obelisk at today's Point Hicks and, using the words proposed by these historians, reads 'Lt James Cook RN of the Endeavour first sighted Australia near this point which he named Point Hicks after Lt Zachary Hicks who first saw the land. April 19th (ship's log date), April 20th (calendar date) 1770'.³³

Following this officially endorsed, but erroneous, proclamation of the name Point Hicks at Cape Everard, the proponents continued their campaign. In 1939, K.R. Cramp again took up Scott's torch, and in a newspaper article headed 'Point Hicks Mystery. Disappears from the Map. Cape Everard as Substitute', observed that Point Hicks Hill 'appears on some maps'. Cramp noted: 'This compromise is unsatisfactory, and reputable opinion mostly favours the view that Everard and Hicks are one', citing Bladen, Macdonald and Scott.³⁴ 'According to Captain F.J. Bayldon's tracing of *Endeavour's* course, Point Hicks was the portion of the coast

nearest the vessel at 8 a.m. ... and doubtless the point named by him ... One duty yet remains ... that is, to restore the original name in place of the usurper, Everard'. Several articles by Bayldon appeared in the Royal Australian Historical Society journal in this period, but no article on the Point Hicks issue has been located.

In support of Cramp's article, historian Brigadier General Sir Percy Sykes (who had himself written a letter to the *London Times* in 1934 urging the renaming of Cape Everard as Point Hicks), wrote to the Australian High Commissioner in London in July 1939: 'I was shocked to see the treatment meted out to Lt Hicks', and requested that the original name be restored.³⁵

Sykes' request was forwarded to the Prime Minister's Department in Canberra, where it was referred to the Property and Survey Branch. This elicited a sketch map which had been prepared by the Branch in 1933 (Map 1), with the guarded conclusion that 'This information, undoubtedly, has some bearing on the naming of the cape in question'. However the Branch had also consulted the Parliamentary Librarian, Mr Binns, on the matter. 'Mr Binns appears to be definitely of the opinion that the name "Hicks" should be preserved as the name of the cape now shown on published maps as "Everard"'.

The matter was then referred for advice to the Victorian Premier's Department in Melbourne, and onward to the Chief Librarian and Secretary, Public Library, E.R. Pitt. Pitt's response outlined Fowler's contention that Cook's Point Hicks was out to sea, noting:

His contention is supported by the finding of a sub-committee of the Historical Society of Victoria, which met last week and agreed that from the position and drawings by Cook in his log, he could not have been referring to Cape Everard when he gave the name Point Hicks to the 'southermost point of land we had in sight'.

The file does not record the reply sent to Sykes.

Historians Awed by Historians

Scott's most influential successor was Professor J.C. Beaglehole, widely regarded as the most eminent of Cook scholars. Beaglehole edited the Hakluyt Society edition of Cook's journals and his biography of Cook is still highly regarded. In a note about Cook's sighting of Point Hicks in the first volume of the journals (1955), Beaglehole writes:

Some confusion and controversy have arisen over Point Hicks, and even its existence, partly because people have misread Hawkesworth [an early editor

of Cook's *Endeavour* Journal], or Cook, or both, and assumed that Cook gave the name to the land first seen, which of course is not so. ... Hicks no more than Cook says he saw a cape. ... 'The Southermost Point of land we had in sight' however, could not have been in the position Cook assigned to it, for that was in the open sea in 50 fathoms of water and over twelve nautical miles from the nearest shore. The matter has been conclusively treated by Ernest Scott ... The cape is there, says Scott; it was called Cape Everard by Stokes on his survey in 1843 ... and today there is a lighthouse on it.³⁶

Beaglehole's statement has led to confusion. What does Beaglehole mean when he says that people have 'assumed that Cook gave the name to the land first seen, which of course is not so'? In the context of the rest of his statement, 'the land first seen' can only mean Cook's 'land first seen', that is the cloudbank. Beaglehole is saying that Cook did not name the cloudbank as Point Hicks, the same conclusion as Scott. Beaglehole agrees with Scott that the "'southermost land we had in sight" ... could not have been in the position Cook assigned to it'. Beaglehole also agrees with Scott that Cook's Point Hicks is Cape Everard, today's Point Hicks.

Who would dare to question the combined might of Scott and Beaglehole, two eminent and highly regarded historians? Their opinion was to become the conventional wisdom and influences the views of historians and their readers to this day.

Cape Everard Officially Becomes Point Hicks

Given the confusion caused by Scott and Beaglehole, it is little wonder that, as the bicentenary of Cook's voyage approached, the Government of Victoria decided in 1969 to rename Cape Everard as Point Hicks.

The decision was not without controversy. The Victorian Place Names Committee discussed the issue and advised the Minister for Lands that *Victorian Historical Magazine* papers

throw some doubt as to the exact point of land which was sighted by Cook, and the controversy has not yet been resolved... It is the Committee's belief ... that it was Cook's intention to name the point of land first sighted Point Hicks, to honour the officer of his ship who made the sighting, but this would not carry sufficient weight to prevent argument and controversy, should it be decided to alter the existing name.³⁷

It appears that the Committee and Department of Lands staff were among those not convinced that Cape Everard was Cook's Point Hicks. The Committee on the Bicentenary Celebrations asked them to investigate

the matter further. Place Names Committee chairman Surveyor-General Middleton advised the Minister of Lands:

I wish to point out that a thorough investigation to prove whether the land first sighted by Cook was actually the area now known as Cape Everard would be a lengthy task costing a considerable amount of money, and in the end may not be conclusive ... the matter may have to be resolved finally as a political question, even if it could be proved that the land first sighted was Cape Everard.³⁸

Others were impatient for action. The Minister for Local Government wrote to the Minister for Lands on 6 October 1969: ‘Cabinet has decided that Cape Everard should be renamed with the title originally given to it by Captain Cook. The proper name is “Point Hicks”’.

The final decision appears to have been strongly influenced by L.J. Blake, President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, and a member of the Cook Bi-Centenary Committee of Victoria. The announcement of the renaming event reopened the debate in the press.

Maritime historian Geoffrey Ingleton reaffirmed that Cook’s Point Hicks was out to sea and concluded that Cook saw a ‘cloud formation giving the illusion of land’ and ‘the false Point Hicke was placed on Cook’s charts. Naturally, when the early Australian navigators began to traverse the coast, Cook’s mistake was readily understood and the false feature, “Point Hicks” expunged from the charts’. Two hundred years after Cook, Ingleton was the first to state publicly that what Cook had seen was a cloud formation.³⁹

Norman Wakefield was also uncomfortable with the renaming, calculating that Cook’s Point Hicks lay further to the west; ‘let us not assert that the explorer gave the name concerned to the feature we are now choosing for it’.⁴⁰

L.J. Blake, responding to Ingleton and Wakefield, suggested that the difference of opinions resulted from Cook’s latitudes and longitudes varying from those on modern charts, and that ‘Those interested in the location of Cook’s first landfall may be assured that a series of thorough studies of all the evidence ... preceded any decision to rename the headland Point Hicks’.⁴¹

In reply, Wakefield argued that the discrepancies between Cook’s positions and his true latitudes and longitudes did not affect the claims of those who believed that Cook’s Point Hicks was to the west and out at sea: ‘Cook’s map shows Cape Howe, Gabo Island and Ram Head all some miles

north easterly from their true positions, but his Point Hicks is placed many miles south-westerly from the new Point Hicks (alias Cape Everard)'.⁴²

All of these last minute warnings were ignored, and, on 20 April 1970, a renaming ceremony was held at today's Point Hicks. Cook's journal records that he was on this coast on the morning of 19 April 1770, but, as he had crossed today's international date line, the date was in fact 20 April. Cook knew this and, following the convention of the day, made the adjustment of the date at his next port of call, Batavia.

At the renaming ceremony, Sir Henry Bolte, premier of Victoria, acknowledged the controversy, but announced:

In 1770 Captain James Cook named the Point on which we stand Point Hicks. In 1843 Commander John Lort Stokes, R.N., named the headland Cape Everard and this is the name it has carried ever since. My Government feels that it is appropriate in 1970, on the 200th anniversary of the sighting of this coast to revert to the original name which Captain Cook gave it.⁴³

L.J. Blake was invited to speak by the Deputy Premier, Sir Arthur Rylah, Chairman of the Cook Bi-Centenary Committee of Victoria, as 'he has been the man largely responsible for the plaque'. Blake explained that:

Arguments of course have long been rife in connection with the naming and location of this particular headland. The exact location has been argued by historians and navigators, but Professor Scott, a long time ago, and Professor Beaglehole more recently, identify the land seen that morning as the land on which we are standing. ... When Hicks and Cook saw this land they noticed that the coast trended westward and north-east. Are we to deny the evidence from the men who were actually here on that morning

Thanking Blake, the Deputy Premier acknowledged: 'People will know from what you have said how great is the interest you have taken in this project and we on the Committee are very grateful to you'. It seems that Blake's role in the renaming had been an important one, but the result had been a morning riddled with errors. Blake's reverence for Scott and Beaglehole had again clouded the facts.

Navigators versus Historians—an Elegant Proof

Following the renaming, in 1970, Captain Brett Hilder, master mariner and a past president of the Australian Institute of Navigation, plotted Cook's track on 19 April 1770 onto a modern chart (Map 3).⁴⁴ This was a similar exercise to those of Barker (Map 1) and Fowler (Map 2).

After the Renaming

With Scott's followers' objective of renaming at last achieved, since 1970, the controversy has largely been forgotten, save for a few voices that have recognised the injustice done to Cook. The history establishment has done nothing to right the wrongs perpetuated by Ernest Scott and his followers. Navigators have been ignored, and until now, Scott's claims seem never to have been publically re-examined.

Historians often take the word of earlier writers, particularly eminent ones, and major inaccuracies are perpetuated.⁴⁶ Little blame can be apportioned to most of them. They cannot hope to check primary sources for every minor assertion they make, and, if they are to complete their task, must often depend on what they regard as reliable secondary sources.

The responsibility in the case of Point Hicks lies heavily with Scott, who, against all the evidence, doggedly persisted with his view of events. Paradoxically, in doing so, he has clouded the facts about Cook and done an injustice to a man he greatly admired. Other historians, who followed Scott's lead and caused plaques to be erected, and Cape Everard to become Point Hicks, might have checked their facts before lending their names to his cause.

A century after Scott, it is difficult to find an accurate version of events at 8 a.m. on 19 April 1770. Examples of Cook biographers since Scott (and besides Beaglehole), who have fallen into Scott's error are Alan Villiers (2001), Vanessa Collingridge (2003), Frank McLynn (2012), and Rob Mundle (2013).⁴⁷ Examples of other historians and authors in error on the matter are Manning Clark (1962); Andrew Sharp (1963); and Thomas Keneally (2009).⁴⁸

The VICNAMES website entry for today's Point Hicks implies it is the point Cook named, a view shared by the Captain Cook Society website.⁴⁹ A wider internet search reveals that Scott's is still the dominant view.

Cook's Legacy on the Coast of Victoria

Cook, himself always a stickler for accuracy, deserves better than the treatment meted out to him by historians and governments. What better way to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Cook's first voyage than to ensure that the topographical features which he named are in the right place on today's maps, and that the correct story of his brief time on this coast is better known? Cook left three names on the coast of Victoria (Point Hicks,

Ram Head and Cape Howe) and two of these are in the wrong place on today's maps.

So should today's Point Hicks revert to its pre-1970 name of Cape Everard? It is perhaps ironic that those who have opposed the renaming in most cases support its retention, but there are good reasons for doing so. Hilder's view is that today's Point Hicks was 'certainly part of the land first seen by Hicks and I think it should be left bearing his name to perpetuate the historic landfall'. Haldane has a similar view: 'Cook's intention to name the area of his first landfall after Zachary Hicks has been fulfilled'.⁵⁰

Hicks' first sighting should be remembered somewhere in this area, and today's Point Hicks is also an appropriate place to commemorate Cook's landfall. However, today's visitors and future generations should be under no illusions about what Cook named and why today's Point Hicks is where



*Coast east of today's Point Hicks—Cook's first real landfall on Australia.
(Courtesy of Trevor Lipscombe.)*

it is. An appropriately worded commemorative plaque at today's Point Hicks would serve this purpose and should also point out the importance of Cook's Ram Head. Updating websites is a simple matter, but correcting the mistakes in history books may take a little longer.

Since Cook's Point Hicks does not exist as a land feature, the first place on this coast that Cook named is Ram Head. Fowler, Hilder and others have pointed out that today's Little Rame Head is Cook's Ram Head, and not today's Rame Head as is commonly supposed.⁵¹ Little Rame Head should be renamed as Ram Head as Cook intended. Better access should be provided to this important place in Australian and Victorian history, along with a commemorative plaque recording its story. Cook's mighty achievements and small mistakes deserve our belated recognition.

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CHARLES LA TROBE AND THE GEELONG KEYS

Murray Johns

Abstract

Five keys were found in an excavation several metres deep at Geelong in 1847. Superintendent La Trobe's interpretation of how they got there and how old they were formed the basis of the 'Geelong Keys' story. In 1977, Kenneth McIntyre used that story to support his hypothesis that the Portuguese discovered Australia around 1522. The story is re-examined here in the light of new evidence.

FEW PEOPLE TODAY WOULD HAVE HEARD of the 'Geelong Keys' were it not for Kenneth McIntyre (1910–2004). When he published his book, *The Secret Discovery of Australia*, in 1977, he focused attention on the possibility of Portuguese discoveries in Australia in the 16th century, a topic of ongoing discussion to this day.¹ McIntyre's main hypothesis was based on evidence from the Dieppe maps, which are 16th century French maps, supposedly copied from Portuguese originals that no longer exist. Following from his rather complicated argument involving the limitations of 16th century navigation and cartography, and after applying a series of 'corrections' that he worked out, McIntyre proposed that the Dauphin Map of South-East Asia (one of the Dieppe maps) showed the northern and eastern coastlines of Australia. He argued that a Portuguese navigator, Mendonça, discovered and mapped these in about 1522. Others with expertise in navigation and cartography have criticised McIntyre's conclusions.²

However, McIntyre also gathered evidence from several other sources to support his main hypothesis. For example, he included a chapter about the Warrnambool ‘Mahogany Ship’ in his book. The present author recently reviewed that evidence and concluded that it did not support McIntyre’s Portuguese hypothesis.³ McIntyre devoted another chapter of his book (Chapter 18) to the story of ‘The Geelong Keys’. The ‘Geelong Keys’ story began in 1847, when several keys were found in an excavation for a new lime-kiln at Limeburner’s Point, at the eastern edge of Geelong. Charles La Trobe, Superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales, examined the excavation the next day when he happened to be visiting there and was given some of the keys. His interpretation of how and where the keys were found, and what he observed, became the basis for the story of the ‘Geelong Keys’ story that has repercussions to this day. McIntyre suggested that the keys may originally have been dropped on the beach at Limeburner’s Point by a Portuguese navigator in the 16th century. If that were so, it would strongly support his Portuguese hypothesis. To test that hypothesis, we need to consider the following questions: how old were the keys? How did they come to be where they were found? And who owned them previously?

The aim of the present article is to re-examine the story of the ‘Geelong Keys’, using evidence from a variety of different sources, some of which was not available to McIntyre. First, we shall examine the details of the story and how it evolved after La Trobe’s visit to the site in 1847. To interpret the story, we need background information about local geology and the construction of lime-kilns in the mid-19th century. These matters are at the heart of the mystery.

The Involvement of La Trobe and his Friends

Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801–1875) came to Australia in 1839 when he was appointed Superintendent of the Port Phillip District. In 1851, he became the first Lieutenant-Governor of the newly separated Colony of Victoria. Apart from his official duties, he was an enthusiastic amateur naturalist with an interest in geology. He had been well-educated in England and was a competent writer and painter.

La Trobe visited Geelong during the second week of August 1847.⁴ This was not an official visit, but a geological excursion to satisfy his own interests. Told by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Edward Addis, about a large new lime-kiln being constructed at Limeburner’s Point, La



*An engraving of Charles Joseph La Trobe
by Samuel Bellin, after a painting by Sir
Francis Grant in 1855.
(Courtesy of the State Library of Victoria,
H115575.).*

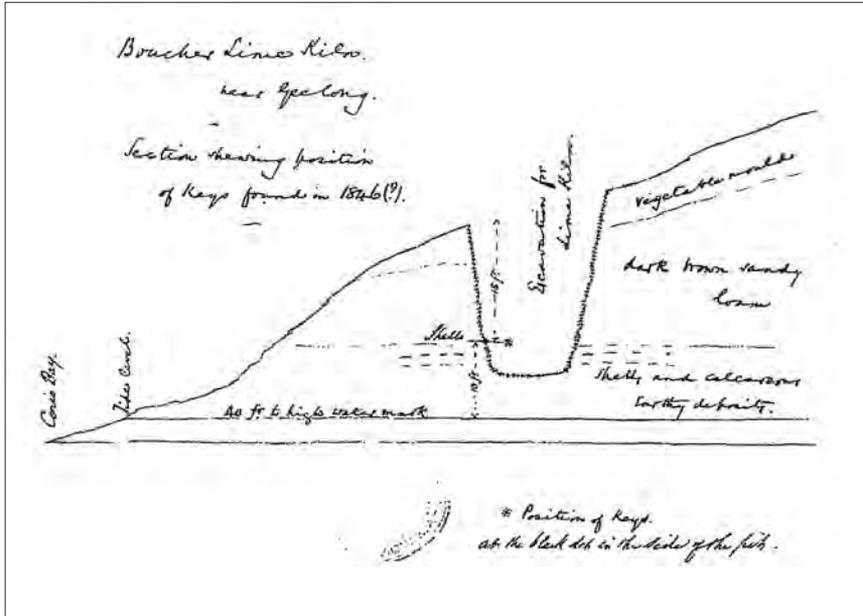
Trobe decided to visit the site to see the geological section revealed by that excavation. As he later wrote, ‘I thought it would give me some further information on the geological structure of that portion of the coast line.’⁵

Lime-burning in Geelong began on the western side of Limeburner’s Point in about 1838.⁶ By 1865, there were four lime-kilns there, as shown in a contemporary map.⁷ James Boucher built one of these kilns in 1847, and it was in the excavation for this kiln that the ‘Geelong Keys’ were found in August 1847, the day before La Trobe arrived.



Map of lime-kilns at Limeburner's Point in 1865. Boucher's kiln was the second from the left, opposite Allotment 12. It was about 300 metres from the jetty at Galena Point. (Courtesy of the State Library of Victoria, 10381/161477.)

Soon after La Trobe entered the excavation, he observed what he variously described in 1847 as ‘a thin layer of shells’ or an ‘inclined stratum of shells’, and, in 1870, as ‘a line of calcareous matter’.⁸ He said it was ‘consolidated’ and much harder than the ‘loam’, either beneath it or above it. It was at head-height in the wall of the excavation (that is, about 1.5 metres from the bottom), as marked in his sketch of 1847.⁹ He thought he saw ‘a cluster of wombat teeth’ and some shells in this ‘calcareous matter’. Then Boucher, the lime-burner, appeared. He told La Trobe that, on the previous day, a bunch of five keys had been found in the excavation. La Trobe understood that the keys had been found in the ‘thin layer of shells’ that he had noticed at head-height. He concluded that those shells ‘marked the position of the shore at a very ancient period’. By La Trobe’s estimate, those shells were then about 10 feet (3 metres) above sea level, and buried beneath 15 feet (about 4.5 metres) of ‘solid undisturbed soil’. The whole excavation was about 25 feet (7.5 metres) deep, which meant that the bottom of it was about 1.5 metres above sea level. Boucher gave La Trobe three of the five keys. His children had already taken one to play with, and he had given the fifth to a passer-by.



*La Trobe's diagram of Boucher's excavation for a lime-kiln, drawn in 1847, but not dated until 1870.
(Royal Historical Society of Victoria.)*

La Trobe faced a dilemma. If the keys had been dropped among shells on a beach that was now well above sea level and covered by many metres of sediment, he understood that they must have been there for a long time. Yet the appearance of the keys belied that. As he wrote soon after, 'I cannot suppose that 50 years had elapsed since they were dropped or washed upon that beach.' There was considerable discussion about the keys among La Trobe's friends, but none of them at Port Phillip knew any more about geology than he did. There was no report of these events in the local press at the time.

One of La Trobe's friends, Alexander Fullerton Mollison (1805–1885), visited Boucher's excavation a day or so after La Trobe. He provided no additional information and simply agreed with La Trobe's observations. Mollison had settled at Tarringower, on the Coliban River near Kyneton in 1837. He became a prominent grazier and colonial activist, with interests in public education. He returned to England in 1851 and stayed there until 1873, after which he returned to Victoria. He is not known to have had

much knowledge of natural history, but he did play an important role in this story (see below).

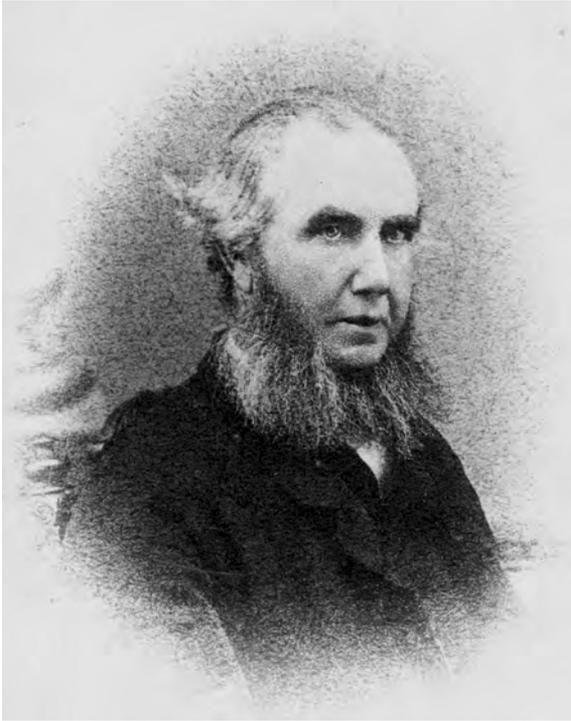


A.F. Mollison.

(Courtesy of the State Library of Victoria, H15532.)

A few weeks after returning to Melbourne, La Trobe received the latest volume of the *Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science*, edited in Launceston by his friend, Ronald Gunn. This prompted La Trobe to write to Gunn on 23 September 1847, including an outline of his story of the ‘Geelong keys’.¹⁰ Ronald Campbell Gunn (1808–1881) was a very experienced and astute observer of natural history, particularly of Australian flora, about which he became a world authority. He first came to Tasmania in 1838 as Assistant Police Magistrate, but then became Private Secretary to the Governor, Sir John Franklin, in 1840–41. Gunn was a regular visitor to Port Phillip

and published his 'Observations on the Flora of Geelong, Port Phillip' in 1842.¹¹ He sent plant specimens to W.J. Hooker in Glasgow for several years. Gunn was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1854 and was also a Fellow of the Linnean Society in London. He edited the *Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science* from 1842 until 1849. Later, he was a member of the Tasmanian Parliament.



Ronald Campbell Gunn, ca 1855.
(Courtesy of the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage
Office, PH31/1/229.)

A few months after the 'Geelong Keys' were found, La Trobe wrote to Gunn again, commenting that he had 'secured one of the keys' for him and expressing the hope that he would come to Port Phillip to see the site for himself.¹² Gunn did not visit La Trobe in Melbourne until the end of September 1849, when he saw two of the keys. La Trobe planned to take Gunn to Geelong to see the site of Boucher's lime-kiln on 4 October, but

had to cancel that at the last minute. Instead, he asked Addis to escort Gunn to Limeburner's Point the next day. This was two years after the keys had been found. The construction of Boucher's lime-kiln would have been completed by then, with a lining of firebricks (see below). This meant that Gunn would not have been able to inspect the inside of the excavation, as La Trobe had done.

Gunn specifically questioned Boucher about the discovery of the keys. As he described in 1875, he ascertained that the keys had not been picked 'out of the stratum of shells' at head-height—which La Trobe had focused on—and as he had shown in his diagram.¹³ They had been found 'at the bottom of the hole, mixed with some shells'. It seems that Boucher had wrongly assumed, and had then misled La Trobe into thinking, that both the keys and the shells had been dislodged from higher up. Gunn concluded, 'I have little doubt that they had been dropped by some inhabitant of Geelong, lay in the grass for some time—not very long—and fell to the bottom of the hole from the surface after the excavation was made.' He told La Trobe about his observations and conclusions when he returned to Melbourne, and he 'thought that the whole question had been considered as settled'. That was not to be the case.

La Trobe retired to England in 1854 and the story of the 'Geelong Keys' lay dormant for several years. Then, in April 1870, La Trobe met Mollison in England, and they talked briefly about the 'Geelong Keys'. La Trobe sent Mollison the sketch he had made in 1847, and also some notes that he had recently dictated, under the title 'The Boucher Lime Kiln, near Geelong, and a Memorandum about Three Keys found there'.¹⁴ La Trobe had not put the date on the sketch when he drew it in 1847. In 1870, he was unsure of the date, and he incorrectly thought it was 1845 or '46. He also thought he had communicated with Gunn at the time, but wasn't sure. By 1870, La Trobe's health was failing, especially his vision, and he relied on his daughter as his scribe. He sent his 'memorandum' to the *Australasian* newspaper in Melbourne, where it was published (without the diagram) on 3 June 1871. La Trobe died in 1875.

In the same edition of the *Australasian* in 1871, James Harrison (1816–1893), who had been editor of the *Geelong Advertiser* and was the inventor of commercial refrigeration, commented on La Trobe's story of the 'Geelong Keys'. He had not seen Boucher's excavation or the keys. He suggested that the keys may have been placed purposely in the excavation by a local person, to see if the iron became coated with copper. He cited

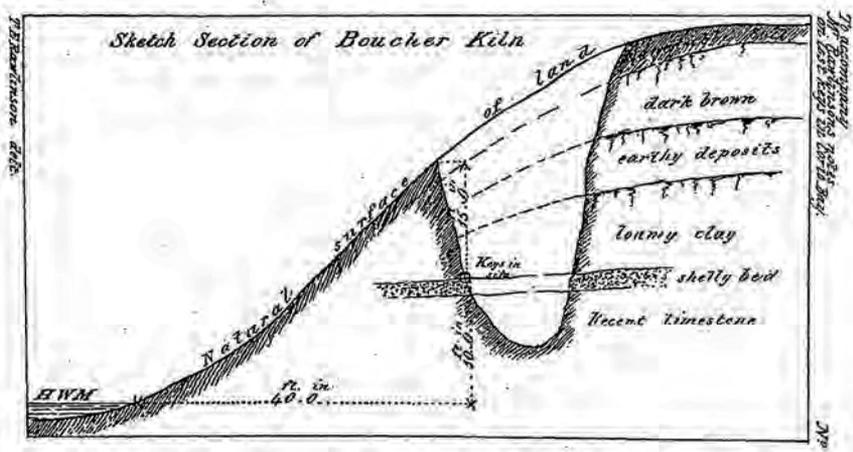
an example where a man left his spade in a pool of water overnight in a quarry near the banks of the Barwon, and it was supposedly coated with copper next day. Harrison went on to say that no copper deposit was ever discovered and this was an 'imaginary find'. Nonetheless, he thought that some people may have been tempted to repeat the test in Boucher's excavation. This seems unlikely, given that there was no water in which to immerse the keys in the bottom of Boucher's excavation, as there had been in the quarry.

In 1870, Mollison had written to Sir Charles Nicholson in London, asking him about his recollections of the Geelong keys.¹⁵ Nicholson had been a prominent landowner and member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, representing Port Phillip. He replied that he had 'a very distinct recollection of the incidents connected with the keys', which made 'a deep impression' on him. Nicholson was convinced that the keys provided evidence for European visitors to Port Phillip before colonial times. However, when he presented that idea to R.H. Major, who was writing a book about the discovery of Australia, published by the Hakluyt Society in 1859, Major regarded it as unsubstantiated. Mollison eventually brought La Trobe's sketch and letters back to Australia. In Melbourne, he told Thomas Rawlinson about the 'Geelong Keys' in 1874.

Rawlinson was a civil engineer of some note in Victoria. He had co-authored a report on the proposed location of infrastructure in Victoria in relation to water supplies, ports and railways.¹⁶ He was also actively interested in natural history, as an amateur, and wrote several scientific papers on a variety of subjects, including zoology and meteorology. In 1874, Rawlinson read a paper at the Royal Society of Victoria, of which he was a Life Member. Titled 'Notes on the Discovery of Some Keys in the Shore Formation of Corio Bay, Near Geelong', it was later published in the transactions of the Society.¹⁷ Most of the article simply reproduced La Trobe's 'memorandum', already published in the *Australasian*. However, Rawlinson also included his own observations and speculations about Boucher's excavation. He canvassed La Trobe's idea, that Port Phillip Heads had once been closed off, and that the whole of Port Phillip Bay had been a large freshwater lake with water levels high enough to explain the shell-beds occurring above sea level.

In 1874, Rawlinson visited the site of Boucher's kiln, which by then had been abandoned, with only 'the remains of an old excavation' visible. However, he saw the sequence of sedimentary rocks in the cliff nearby.

He showed samples of those rocks and ‘the old sea beach shells from the locality of Boucher’s kiln’ to the assembled audience at the Royal Society meeting, which would have included McCoy, the palaeontologist. They concluded that the shells were of marine origin, deposited on an old beach. However, they also recognised that the overlying clay, silt and sand at Limeburner’s Point was an alluvial deposit, formed in the fresh water of a river or swamp, whereas the underlying limestone had been deposited in a freshwater lake. This was a complicated geological section. Rawlinson included a ‘Sketch Section of Boucher Kiln’ in his paper.



Rawlinson's interpretation of the geological section through Boucher's excavation.
(*Transactions of the Royal Society of Victoria*, 1874–5.)

At first sight, this may seem to be a copy of La Trobe's diagram, but it is not. Rawlinson included measurements of distance and elevation that he had evidently copied from La Trobe. However, Rawlinson's also includes his interpretation of the geological sequence in Boucher's excavation, inferred from his observations of the cliffs nearby. The sketch shows a 'shelly bed', with 'keys in situ', at a height of 10 feet above sea level. Unlike La Trobe's diagram, Rawlinson shows 'recent limestone' beneath the 'shelly bed'. However, he has confused the 'shelly-bed', which he had observed nearby, with the 'calcareous matter' that La Trobe had observed at head-height in the wall of the excavation. This diagram added to the general confusion about the 'Geelong keys'.

Rawlinson faced the same dilemma as La Trobe. He could see no alternative but to extend the time necessary for the geological processes to occur (change of sea level and deposition of several metres of sediment) 'from 200 to a little over 300 years back'. In so doing, Rawlinson was extending the age of the keys to accommodate his ideas about the timescale of geological processes. Rawlinson's ideas of that timescale, like La Trobe's, were grossly in error. Nevertheless, he went on to speculate that the keys may have been dropped by 'buccaneers' from pre-colonial days, about which he said, 'we know that some of them visited Australia in their wanderings, and it is almost a certainty that many of them left little trace of their presence, except in traditions of lost ships and ruined towns'. The story of the 'Geelong Keys' was taking a new and imaginative turn.

Soon after Rawlinson had read his paper at the Royal Society of Victoria, the Secretary of that society, Frederick J. Pirani, wrote to Gunn, who was then living in retirement at Launceston, to seek his understanding of the 'Geelong Keys' story. Gunn wrote back in May 1875, giving his version of the story as outlined previously. However, Gunn's letter was not made public until more than a century later, when it was brought to light by Ian McKiggan in 1987.¹⁸ McKiggan rejected all of Gunn's evidence, because he thought he had been a hostile witness, with ongoing antipathy towards La Trobe. This is a criticism which, to the present author, seems quite untenable. Gunn was a very reputable scientist. He had been a friend of La Trobe for many years, and their families had exchanged visits. La Trobe had written to Gunn more frequently than to most other people when he was in Port Phillip. It is unlikely that a difference of opinion over the interpretation of scientific evidence would remain a source of great antipathy between them.

In 1970, and again in 1975, the historian L.J. Blake brought La Trobe's version of the 'Geelong Keys' story to public attention.¹⁹ He was evidently not aware of Gunn's evidence. Blake also published La Trobe's original sketch of Boucher's excavation and reproduced his 'memorandum', and Rawlinson's discussion of it from a hundred years earlier. That is how McIntyre came to hear the story of the 'Geelong Keys'. However, he heard only La Trobe's version of the story. It seems that McIntyre did not know about Gunn's very different interpretation of the story, which ran counter to McIntyre's ideas about 16th century Portuguese visitors to Port Phillip.

Descriptions of the Keys

The five keys found in Boucher's excavation in 1847 were initially tied together, but they were quickly separated. The day after their discovery, Boucher could find only three of the keys to show La Trobe. By 1870, long after the event, and probably with failing memory, La Trobe thought there had only ever been three keys. He vaguely remembered giving them to the Mechanics Institute, which evidently lost them. Today we have no drawings or photographs of the keys, and the only descriptions of them came independently from La Trobe and Gunn.

When La Trobe saw the keys initially, they had some 'soil' adhering to them, consistent with them having been in the clay at the bottom of the excavation. That would not be consistent with the keys having been embedded in limestone. Both La Trobe and Gunn said that the keys had very little rust on them. Neither of them stated specifically that the keys were made of iron, but the reference to rust implies that they were. The absence of much rust is good evidence that they had not been buried for very long, especially not for many years, or several centuries. La Trobe described the keys as 'about two inches in length' and 'very similar to those of the present day, except that they were a little longer in the shank, and the wards smaller than is now usual'. They were the kind of keys that were 'still used for a box or trunk, or seaman's chest'.²⁰ Similarly, Gunn described the keys as 'small, about the size ordinarily used for chests of drawers, of very modern make'.²¹ In retrospect, it seems extraordinary that, with such evidence about the likely age of the keys, based on their condition and shape, the story of the 'Geelong Keys' was perpetuated. La Trobe's description of Boucher's excavation for a new lime-kiln at Limeburner's Point in 1847 played a crucial role in that story. To better understand that, we need to know more about the geology at Limeburner's Point, and how lime-kilns were constructed in the middle of the 19th century.

Knowledge of Geology: Then and Now

In 1847, the discipline of geology was in its infancy. Many geological concepts had yet to be developed, and few people would have been able to work out local geology from their own observations. The age of rocks, in terms of years, was largely unknown. Different rocks were ascribed to geological Eras (for example, Cainozoic), with subdivisions into Periods (for example, Tertiary) and Epochs (for example, Pleistocene), based on their relative stratigraphic positions, their chemical and mineral

composition, and their fossil content etc. That is still the case today. Their age was not calibrated in terms of years until the second half of the 20th century, when isotopes could be measured. In 1847, most people believed that the earth was only about 6,000 years old, based on biblical genealogy. For them, it would have been unthinkable that some of the rocks around them were more than a 100-million-years-old.

Charles Lyell, one of the founders of geology, had published his monumental work, *The Principles of Geology*, in three volumes between 1830 and 1832. The institution that became the Geological Survey of Great Britain was only established in 1835. There were no experts in geology in the Port Phillip District in 1847, as La Trobe would lament. It was not until 1851, after gold had been discovered, that La Trobe wrote to Earl Grey in London requesting that an expert geologist be appointed to the new colony of Victoria.²² Alfred Selwyn (1824–1902), who had several years' experience working in the Geological Survey of Great Britain, was appointed, and he arrived in Melbourne in December 1852. Selwyn and his small team of pioneer geologists produced the first geological map of the whole of Victoria in 1860, as well as more detailed maps of particular Parishes. The first geological map of the Geelong district was published in 1863, and many more details of the local geology have been identified since.²³ None of that information was available to La Trobe in 1847.

In the foreshore cliffs near Limeburner's Point today, there is a shell-bed, approximately 1.5 metres above sea level, overlying limestone. The shell-bed, in turn, is overlain by poorly stratified alluvium of variable thickness, up to several metres, with soil at the top. The shell-bed includes well-preserved marine fossils, loosely embedded in a layer of dark grey clay and silt. Whole shells can easily be removed from this sediment by hand. It is only 10–20 centimetres thick, but it is quite extensive in the area and extends to the north of Corio Bay. It can still be seen in parts of the cliff on the western side of Limeburner's Point, close to where Boucher's kiln was located, although much of the original landform there has been altered by the dumping of waste from the lime-kilns and, in more recent years, by earthworks to make the road. This shell-bed extends to, and is more continuously visible on, the eastern side of Limeburner's Point. It is an old beach deposit formed when sea levels were higher. It is geologically recent (Holocene), 2,360-years-old (plus or minus 50 years), by radiocarbon dating of the shells.²⁴

By contrast, the limestone beneath the shell-bed is much more consolidated. It was formed in a freshwater lake after a basalt flow blocked the ancestral Barwon River about one and a half to two million years ago (Lower Pleistocene). There is a similar limestone deposit at Lara, north of Geelong, which formed in another lake after basalt blocked the ancestral Hovell's Creek. These limestone deposits include some fossils, such as freshwater mollusc shells and the remains of extinct mammals, including the teeth of an extinct wombat and a Diprotodon.²⁵ Those fossils do not occur either in the shell-bed or the overlying alluvium. The limestone is



The shell-bed sitting on top of limestone, which was quarried to make lime. The shells are loosely embedded in dark grey clay, some of which is adhering to the geological hammer. The shell-bed is overlain by alluvium and soil.

(Photo: M. Johns, 2012)

Pleistocene, and approximately one million-years-old. The sea encroached on that area of land about three thousand years ago after worldwide sea levels rose by about one metre.²⁶ Previously, the upper surface of the limestone had been eroded to form a wave-platform upon which the shell-bed was deposited on an old beach. Sea level subsequently fell to its present

level, which is why the shell-bed at Limeburner's Point is now above sea level. Very little of that geology would have been known to La Trobe.

Construction of Lime kilns in the 19th Century

The quarrying of limestone, and then its heating in special kilns to produce quicklime (known generally as lime), had been widespread in Britain and Continental Europe for centuries. The lime was mixed with water and sand to make lime-mortar, used in building since Roman times. It was not until the 1880s that lime-mortar was largely replaced by cement. In the middle



The present-day remains of one of the lime-kilns built on the eastern side of Limeburner's Point, ca 1870. The arched tunnel at the bottom of the kiln can be seen heading into the cliff face. The metal frame was not part of the original kiln, but was installed in recent years to protect the structure.

(Photo: M. Johns, 2012.)

of the 19th century, lime was still very much in demand in the developing colonies of Port Phillip and elsewhere.

In recent years, remains of the lime-kilns at Limeburner's Point have been studied archeologically and partially conserved, as described by Harrington.²⁷ Such lime-kilns were usually built into the edge of a steep rise or cliff, close to the source of limestone, which in Boucher's case was only a few metres away. The kiln had to be above the watertable to operate efficiently, which meant that it would not be constructed near a spring, where the watertable would be at the surface. It is very unlikely, therefore, that a kiln would be built at the site of an old water well, whether dug by aborigines or Europeans. This is important when considering any suggestion that the 'Geelong Keys' may have been dropped down a water well by an early European visitor to Port Phillip, to be uncovered later by Boucher's excavation at the same site.

Nothing remains of Boucher's kiln, but we can assume that it would have been similar to the one in the photograph showing the remains of one of the lime-kilns constructed on the eastern side of Limeburner's Point around 1870. It is likely that bricks and other material from Boucher's lime-kiln would have been salvaged to construct these newer kilns. The excavation for such a lime-kiln would have been two or three metres in diameter and six to eight metres deep, depending on the height of the cliff. The excavation would subsequently be lined with bricks, and the whole structure would be supported and further insulated by the sediments surrounding the bricks. There would be an opening at the top of the kiln through which alternate layers of fuel and limestone would be loaded. Access to the bottom of the kiln would be a horizontal tunnel that went several metres into the cliff.

The lime would have been scraped from the bottom of the kiln through the small hole that also provided access to the air necessary for the fuel to burn. The lime would be put into bags and shipped away, mainly to Melbourne, but with some going interstate, particularly to Launceston. Wood, and sometimes coal, was used for burning the limestone, and that had to be brought to the kiln site from elsewhere. All these kilns had ceased working by the 1880s.

During construction of such a lime kiln, which in this case would have been in the edge of a steep rise about 10 metres high, there would not have been a winch or bucket operating from the top to remove spoil, as there would have been if it were a vertical mine shaft. Nor would there have been ladders down which workers climbed into the excavation. Access to



The present-day remains at the bottom of one of the kilns at Limeburner's Point, at the end of the tunnel into the cliff. The hole through which the lime was scraped is partially covered by loose bricks.

(Photo: M. Johns, 2012.)

the excavation would have been via its open front. Perhaps 30 or 40 cubic metres of spoil would have been shovelled out through the front of the excavation. Finally, the interior would have been lined with bricks, the front of the kiln and the arched tunnel would have been constructed from bricks, and then covered with some of the spoil. The entrance wings of the kiln would be made with stone blocks (local basalt) to hold back the remainder of the spoil.

Sorting out the Evidence

La Trobe gives a false impression of Boucher's excavation in his diagram of 1847. He shows it as a vertical pit or shaft rather than an open excavation, facing Corio Bay. La Trobe confirmed that he had walked into the excavation 'from below over the rubbish which had been thrown out'.²⁸ Both La Trobe and Addis gained ready access to this excavation after arriving there unannounced, which suggests that anyone else who visited the area at the time could have done the same. This has important implications when it comes to deciding whose keys they may have been, and how they got into the excavation.

La Trobe's sketch also fails to distinguish clearly between the shell-bed and the underlying limestone at the bottom of the hole. He wrongly implies that the shell-bed extends up to head-height. When Boucher's excavation had reached a level that was 1.5 metres above sea level, it would have encountered part of the same shell-bed (shown in the photograph of the shell-bed). When Gill and Alsop showed by radiocarbon dating that other shells from the same shell-bed were 2,360-years-old (plus or minus 50 years), they concluded that the 'Geelong Keys' could not possibly have been incorporated into the shell-bed when it was being formed. We can now add that the keys could not have been embedded in the solid limestone when it was being formed either, because that occurred about a million years ago.

According to Gunn's interpretation of the story, the keys were found among shells at the bottom of Boucher's excavation. That is where the excavation would have intercepted the shell-bed. There is no comparable shell-bed at an elevation of 3 metres above sea level, the level at which La Trobe said he saw a 'thin layer of shells' at 'head-height' in the wall of the excavation, and from which he thought the shells in the bottom of the hole had come. It seems that he was wrong about that; but what was it that he saw in the wall of the excavation at head-height?

There are several clues in La Trobe's brief descriptions from 1847 and 1870. He wrote of an 'inclined stratum of shells' with 'loam' above and beneath it. It was a consolidated 'line of calcareous matter' that was very hard to break up. He thought he saw 'a cluster of wombat teeth' in it. None of those characteristics would have applied to the shell-bed at the bottom of the excavation. However, they were all characteristics of the limestone which lay a few centimetres beneath the shell-bed, of which La Trobe does not seem to have been aware. It is likely, therefore, that La Trobe

was looking at a slab of the limestone that had originally come from the bottom of the hole, and which had been shovelled up to head-height as part of the spoil near the open front of the excavation. La Trobe made no distinction between the sediments *in situ* and the spoil that was created when those sediments were moved during excavation. He misunderstood the local geology and misrepresented Boucher's excavation, and that has been a source of confusion ever since.

Conclusions

The story of the 'Geelong Keys' is largely attributable to La Trobe and his misunderstandings. He was an educated man, in a literary and artistic sense, and he had a desire to learn more about geology, but he did not have any local experts to help him. He failed to understand the fundamental relationship between the shell-bed and the underlying limestone in the area. On the basis of what Boucher had told him, he assumed that the shells and the keys had been dislodged from the wall of the excavation, at about head-height, or about three metres above sea level. In fact, they were found at the bottom of the hole, where the excavation intercepted the shell-bed overlying the limestone, about 1.5 metres above sea level. La Trobe wrongly assumed that the keys were as old as the shells, whereas we now know that the age of the shells has nothing to do with the age of the keys. La Trobe discounted his own observations about the apparent age of the keys (their modern appearance, with little rust) and tried to reconcile those observations with his idea of a geological timescale in years, which was grossly in error.

By contrast, Rawlinson's error was in thinking that the shell-bed he had seen in the cliff nearby (as in the photograph) was what La Trobe had seen in the wall of the excavation. Gill made the same mistake in 1985 with his diagram of the geological section.²⁹ Both Rawlinson and Gill perpetuated that aspect of La Trobe's misunderstanding, which is now clarified for the first time. Other commentators, such as Blake, McIntyre and McKiggan, were presumably not in a position to assess La Trobe's evidence from a geological point of view.

Gunn is vindicated in much of his explanation for the 'Geelong Keys'. He was an eminent scientist who made a lasting contribution to Australian botany. However, he was not particularly interested in La Trobe's dilemma about geological processes. Gunn concluded that the keys were dropped into Boucher's excavation from the top, *after the hole had been dug*. To

him, the keys were mainly of interest to the person who had lost them. The evidence presented here suggests a similar explanation. However, rather than the keys being dropped down a shaft from the top, they were dropped at the bottom of an open excavation by someone who walked into it in 1847, as La Trobe had done. The keys were probably discovered only a few hours or days after being dropped there, not years or centuries later, as La Trobe and Rawlinson, and later McIntyre and others, have suggested.

It is unlikely that the keys had been dropped by an early colonial visitor to Port Phillip, such as Bowen, Murray, Flinders, Grimes, or Tuckey (or even unnamed British or American sealers and whalers), as some have suggested.³⁰ Any of those people could have dropped a bunch of keys somewhere along the coast of Corio Bay when they visited there in the early 19th century, but not at the bottom of a hole excavated at Limeburner's Point in 1847. We may never know who owned the keys originally, but it was most likely someone from Geelong who walked into the bottom of Boucher's open excavation as a matter of curiosity, and who dropped the keys there by accident. That is entirely consistent with descriptions of the keys and their condition. This is the first time that historical evidence about the keys has been reconciled with local geology and with the history of lime-kiln construction, both of which are very relevant to the story.

By contrast, McIntyre summarized the issue of the 'Geelong Keys' as follows: 'anything of European origin discovered in Geelong in 1847 could not have been more than forty-five years old, unless some other European navigator had preceded the British into Corio Bay'.³¹ His mistake, therefore, was in believing that the keys must have been more than forty-five-years-old, based on La Trobe's misinterpretation of what he had seen, and his erroneous ideas of a geological timescale. McIntyre evidently made no attempt to assess the validity of that evidence. There is no plausible evidence to suggest that the 'Geelong Keys' had anything to do with Portuguese mariners from the 16th century, as implied by McIntyre.

In recent years, a stone monument has been erected near Limeburner's Point, with a bronze plaque which reads (inter alia), 'Some believe the keys to be a relic of a Portuguese expedition under Cristovao Mendonça which visited the coast in 1522'. By its very existence, that plaque gives credence to McIntyre's point of view, which is challenged here. The ongoing argument about the Portuguese discovery of Australia should be decided on its own merits. However, the story of the 'Geelong Keys' is no longer relevant to that argument.

NOTES

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- 4 *Geelong Advertiser*, 14 August 1847.
- 5 La Trobe sent his 'memorandum' to Mollison in 1870. It was published in *The Australasian* in 1871 and was presented again at the Royal Society of Victoria by Rawlinson in 1874.
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- 8 La Trobe 'memorandum'.
- 9 La Trobe's sketch of Boucher's limekiln excavation, 1847, is in the archives of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria; also in L.J. Blake (ed.), *Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe*, Victoriana Series no.1, Government of Victoria, 1975, p. 74.
- 10 Letter from La Trobe to Gunn, 23 September 1847, in Blake (ed.), pp. 24–6.
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- 19 Blake, 1970, pp. 238–43; L.J. Blake, 'The Mystery of the Keys', *Investigator*, June 1975, pp. 34–8.

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- 23 D. Spencer-Jones, ‘Geology of the Geelong District’, in J. McAndrew and M.A.H. Marsden (eds), *Regional Guide to Victorian Geology*, 2nd edn, University of Melbourne, 1973, pp. 53–8; J.J. Jenkin, ‘Port Phillip Sunkland’, in J.G. Douglas and J.A. Ferguson (eds), *Geology of Victoria*, Geological Society of Australia, Special Publication no. 5, 1976, pp. 305–9.
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- 27 Harrington, pp. 32–6.
- 28 La Trobe, ‘memorandum’.
- 29 Edmund D Gill, ‘On the McKiggan Theory of the Geelong Keys’, in Potter (ed.), pp. 83–6.
- 30 A.G.L. Shaw, *A History of the Port Phillip District*, Melbourne, The Miegunyah Press, 1996, p. 10. Shaw suggested that the keys had been dropped by Tuckey in 1803.
- 31 McIntyre, p. 252.

ATTEMPTS TO DEAL WITH THISTLES IN MID-19TH CENTURY VICTORIA

John Dwyer

Abstract

Although other weeds were present in Victoria in the 1850s, the general perception was that thistles were the weeds most to be feared, and in need of an effective response. In 1850, Superintendent La Trobe reacted to public concern by publishing a Notice calling for measures to control the spread of Milk Thistle. In January 1856, a petition was presented to the Legislative Council repeating the call. The immediate response was the Thistle Prevention Act (1856), which was to become the model for weeds legislation until the 1920s. The quick solution failed. The plants involved and reasons for that failure are considered in detail.

WHEN EUROPEAN COLONISTS introduced farming methods to Victoria, in addition to their crops and farm animals, many common weeds came with them by accident or by design. Victoria's thistle problem was part of a worldwide migration of invasive plants. In addition to European species, weeds from the Cape (South Africa) and from the Americas also migrated. John Josselyn noted in *New-England's Rarities Discovered* (1672) that English weeds had sprung up in the American plantations.¹ Charles Darwin and his contemporaries, Alphonse de Candolle and Dr Asa Gray, were aware of the movement and naturalisation of plants around the world following European colonisation and sought to understand 'the principle of naturalisation through man's agency in foreign lands'.²

It was not until Charles Elton published *The Ecology of Invasions by Plants and Animals* (1958), which included the statement: ‘We must make no mistake: we are seeing one of the great historical convulsions in the world’s fauna and flora’, that the scale of the phenomenon began to be fully understood.³ Since Elton, invasion ecology has attracted many scientists, and a vast literature has arisen, including notable studies such as Alfred Crosby’s *Ecological Imperialism* (1986) and Thomas Dunlap’s *Nature and the English Diaspora* (2000).⁴ The *Encyclopedia of Biological Invasions* (2011) provides an overview of different aspects of biological invasions.⁵ Charles Elton’s legacy has been celebrated in *Fifty Years of Invasion Ecology* (2011).⁶ Tim Low has provided an Australian analysis in *Feral Future* (1999) and in *The New Nature* (2002).⁷ These studies document how the thistle problem in Victoria in the 1850s was a small part of the large, worldwide and increasing problem of invasive introduced plants.

Less than twenty years after the first colonists arrived in the Port Phillip District, many well-known British weeds had become established in the colony. Between September 1852 and August 1853, Ferdinand Mueller conducted a survey of the plants he found in the colony. His *Systematic Index to the Plants of Victoria*, appended to his *First General Report of the*



Thistles near Kyneton, Victoria, 2006.
(Courtesy of John Dwyer.)

Government Botanist on the Vegetation of the Colony (1853), included 57 introduced species that were, he wrote, ‘not only naturalized beyond the possibility of extirpation, but even overpower the more tender indigenous plants’.⁸ Most of these were well-known weeds, including several species of thistle: *Silybum marianum* Gaert. (Milk or Variegated Thistle), *Onopordon acanthium* L. (Scotch or Heraldic Thistle) and *Centaurea solstitialis* L. (Yellow Star Thistle). Mueller’s list is substantially confirmed by Samuel Hannaford’s *Jottings in Australia: or Notes on the Flora and Fauna of Victoria. With a Catalogue of the More Common Plants, their Habitats and Dates of Flowering* (1856), and by Joseph Hooker’s essay, ‘On Some of the Naturalized Plants of Australia’, published as part of the Introductory Essay to *Flora Tasmaniae* (1860).⁹ Hooker’s catalogue of 139 naturalised plants was ‘chiefly compiled from the Melbourne collections of F. Adamson, Esq, to which are added the species enumerated in Mueller’s Reports and Gunn’s MMS’. Hooker dedicated *Flora Tasmaniae* to Ronald Gunn in acknowledgement of his extensive use of Gunn’s botanical specimens and notes.¹⁰ Many of the plants listed by Hooker were simply described by him as ‘Britain, weed of cultivation’, or ‘Britain, fields and roadsides’.¹¹ To the thistles listed by Mueller and Hannaford, Hooker added *Cnicus arvensis* Hoffm. (Creeping Thistle), *Cnicus palustris* Willd. (Marsh Thistle), and *Cnicus lanceolatus* L. (Spear Thistle), noting regarding *Cnicus lanceolatus*, ‘Found at Melbourne, but has not spread much ... A pest in Tasmania.’ The name *Onopordon* used by both Mueller and Hooker is now usually given as *Onopordum*.¹²

Introduction of Thistles to the Colony.

Variegated or Milk Thistle (*Silybum marianum*) may have been introduced to the Port Phillip region as a cultivated plant by the late 1840s, as it had been in South Australia. Dr Richard Schomburgk (1811–1891) was director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens from 1865 until his death. In his pamphlet, ‘On the Naturalised Weeds and other Plants in South Australia’, published in 1879, Schomburgk wrote of its introduction to South Australia, using the name given by Linnaeus, *Carduus Marianus*: ‘Variegated Thistle—*Carduus Marianus*, Linn. A native of South Europe also wrongly styled Scotch Thistle, is said to have been introduced as a garden plant in 1846, and has spread to the same extent as the foregoing (Scotch Thistle).’¹³

An explanation for the introduction of *Silybum marianum* may be its long history of medicinal use or its use as a food. Culpeper considered it

a good remedy against jaundice;¹⁴ and it is still used today as a liver tonic. The plant was cultivated in England where it escaped to hedge-banks and waste ground. Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (1828) described in detail its culinary uses:

*The milk-thistle, or our lady's thistle, is the Carduus Marianus L. ... When very young, the leaves are used as a spring salad; and blanched, are used in winter salads; stripped of their spines, they are sometimes boiled and used as greens; and the young stalks peeled, and soaked in water to extract a part of their bitterness, are said to be excellent. Early in spring of the second year, the root is prepared like salsify or skirret; the receptacle of the flower is pulpy, and eats like that of the artichoke.*¹⁵



Carduus marianus, from F. Mueller, *Illustrated Description of Thistles*, 1893.
(Courtesy of Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.)

The *Geelong Advertiser* in 1849 carried a warning about the Scotch Thistle in the Port Phillip District. The article was headed simply ‘Thistles’:

It is much to be regretted that although it cannot fail to be extensively known, that the rapid propagation of the Scotch thistle has been productive of incalculable injury in the neighbouring colonies, yet our colonists appear totally indifferent to the matter, although year after year rich pasture lands have become over-run with these vegetable plagues, and have been suffered to spread over the country without any efficient means being adopted for their extermination. The thistle was probably imported in the shipments of hay once so frequent from Van Diemen’s Land, and made its appearance first in the neighbourhood of the flag-staff hill, Melbourne, from whence it soon spread to Keilor, but may now be found so far up as the Wardy Yallock, and unless the settlers set to work in earnest and speedily check their progress, thousands of acres of our most valuable lands will be rendered totally unfit for either pastoral or agricultural purposes. ... One settler declares that on his station the thistles have incurred the expense of twenty additional men, and another states that a mob of cattle in one locality remained in a small flat until nearly starved rather than break through the barrier of thistles which alone separated them from abundance of good food ...¹⁶

Despite this contemporary assertion that the thistle was probably imported from Van Diemen’s Land, deliberate introduction for horticultural, medicinal or culinary use cannot be excluded. There are many reports of Scotch Thistles being deliberately cultivated by immigrants from Scotland as a memento of ‘home’.¹⁷ P. W. Michael quoted a letter of 1861 attributing the Scotch Thistle in Bathurst to a patriotic Scotch lady, who had planted it in her garden.¹⁸

This New South Wales experience was repeated in Victoria. Georgiana McCrae (1804–1890), daughter of the Duke of Gordon, arrived from Scotland with her husband, Andrew, in March 1841. Her diary for 13 July 1843 listed the plants in her garden at Mayfield on the Yarra River, including ‘Thistle from Fyvie Castle and Whins (otherwise known as Gorse) from Hill of Gourden’.¹⁹ Fyvie Castle was the home of William Gordon with whom Georgiana was on affectionate terms.²⁰ Georgiana must have brought seeds with her as a memento of her Gordon heritage, but, in doing so, she transferred weeds to her new homeland.

According to Ray Wright, in *The Bureaucrats’ Domain*, the problem thistle in Victoria in the 1850s was the Scotch Thistle (*Onopordum acanthium* L.).²¹ Noting that its introduction had yet to be accurately dated, Wright suggested, on the basis of contemporary newspaper accounts, that



Onopordon acanthium, from F. Mueller, Illustrated Description of Thistles, 1893.
(Courtesy of Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.)

the weed was first found in Melbourne during the summer of 1848–49, ‘almost certainly having been carried from Van Diemen’s Land’. He continued: ‘the thistle rapidly colonized many parts of Victoria. By the early 1850s ... the thistle problem had grown acute ... Cleared land, furrowed paddocks, building allotments, sheep washes, grazing lands, river banks, roadside verges, improved pasture and extensive tracts of Crown land were impenetrably covered; even the Melbourne parklands were overrun’.²²

Confusion about ‘Scotch Thistle’

Although many introduced weeds were naturalised in Victoria by the 1850s, the plants causing most concern in the colony were thistles, often called ‘Scotch Thistles’. The name ‘Scotch Thistle’ has long been a source of confusion, not least because it has been applied indiscriminately to various different thistles. Botanists give *Onopordum acanthium* L. as the scientific name for the Scotch Thistle. That species is, however, native to the Mediterranean region and west central Africa, and not uncommon in central Europe and all across Russian Asia, but has not naturalised in Scotland, despite being the plant selected to represent the Scotch heraldic thistle on the insignia of the ancient Order of the Thistle.²³ It is a handsome plant, grown in gardens in England and Scotland, and has been the national emblem of Scotland since the 15th century.

An example of the confusion associated with the use of ‘Scotch Thistle’ is provided by the New South Wales Select Committee of 1852, which had been set up to inquire into the plant. The Committee concluded that the thistle then troublesome in many Districts was ‘the *Carduus benedictus* now *Silybum marianum*’, rather than the Scotch Thistle.²⁴ This conclusion added its own confusion, because two different species of thistles were referred to as if they were synonyms. *Carduus benedictus* Steud., also known as *Cnicus benedictus* L., has been called the Holy, Blessed or Sacred Thistle. It is a different species from *Silybum marianum* L.

Carduus benedictus was introduced early to Australia. In a 1798 letter, Governor King requested Sir Joseph Banks to send seeds²⁵, probably for medicinal or culinary use, since both *Carduus benedictus*, the Blessed Thistle, and *Silybum marianum*, the Variegated Thistle, have long been used as herbal remedies.²⁶ They were traditionally grown in English gardens, and it is likely that both were also deliberately imported into colonial Victoria for medicinal use, although direct evidence is not available.

Onopordum acanthium was naturalised in Victoria by the 1850s. The *Flora of Victoria*, which prefers the common name ‘Heraldic Thistle’, said that it was ‘widespread in central Victoria, often in pastures and on roadsides, and a declared noxious weed in the State’.²⁷

One reason for the confusion in identifying thistles, and in distinguishing between species, may be their similar appearance. The flowers of Scotch Thistle and Variegated Thistle are both purple. Apart from the variegation in the leaves of *Silybum marianum*, from which the common name, Variegated

Thistle, has been derived, the leaves are also similar. The Scotch Thistle is thornier.

The thistles referred to in the *Geelong Advertiser* in 1849, despite being called Scotch Thistles, may well have been Variegated or Milk Thistles (*Silybum marianum* Gaertn. syn or *Carduus marianus* L.), which were the subject of the first official measure against weeds in the Port Phillip District, the Government Notice of 1850.

Thistle Proclamation 1850

The thistle problem was considered sufficiently serious for Superintendent La Trobe to issue a Government Notice, dated 21 October 1850, seeking measures to control the spread of the large ‘Milk Thistle.’

THISTLES

The attention of the public generally and of the occupants of purchased sections in the vicinity of Melbourne more especially, is drawn to the urgent necessity of timely measures being taken to check the growth and spread of the large ‘Milk Thistle’, of which various patches are at this time to be found scattered over the country, more particularly in the vicinity of Melbourne, and along the course of some of the confluent of the Yarra Yarra River; both within the precincts of purchased land and of unsold Crown Lands. On the part of the local Government it is considered imperative at the present time to make every practicable effort to clear and destroy the larger beds ... but it will be manifest that unless these efforts are seconded by the holders of private property, and by lessees of the Crown, as far as practicable, and that, before the plants of the present season arrive at maturity, the hope of readily checking, and perhaps eradicating what must assuredly otherwise proved [*sic*] a serious evil, may be almost abandoned.²⁸

The Notice is a curious document. While it supports the view that the Milk Thistle was a serious problem, its publication would seem unlikely to achieve a solution. Further, as the Notice confirms, the problem extended to unsold Crown lands. As well as publishing a Notice, administrative action to manage the thistles on Crown lands was required. Whether there was any improvement in the weed situation as a result of the Notice is unknown, but Variegated Thistles would prove to be an enduring weed problem, still persistent 164 years later.

Thistles in the Botanic Gardens

At about the same time, in 1850–51, the newly established Botanic Gardens were invaded by what was described as ‘Scotch Milk Thistle’. Writing in 1982, Pescott suggested that it had been successfully tackled:

The necessity for taking measures against the establishment and spread of weeds became pressing during this summer with the Scotch milk thistle [*sic*] making its appearance in considerable numbers. A successful method was adopted: ‘on the ground where they were cut before seeding and then raked together and burned, they were not nearly so numerous, and this seems to be the only effective method of destroying them’. This must surely be one of the first recorded instances of the successful control of introduced weeds in the new colony.²⁹

Pescott may have been unduly optimistic. The quotation he gave is from the honorary secretary and member of committee, Henry Ginn, in his *Report on the Progress and Present State of the Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, from the 30th September, 1850, to the 30th September 1851 Inclusive*.³⁰ Ginn refers to an area treated differently where the thistles were numerous: ‘A large space of ground which was much infested with the Scotch Milk Thistle last year, was cleared but not effectually, for at the present time they are nearly all in a growing state.’ When the whole passage is read, it seems that Ginn’s *Report* did not really provide evidence of successful thistle control.

Reference to Ginn’s *Report* does show it as the origin of the confusing description, ‘Scotch Milk Thistle’. The true identity of the plant which invaded the Gardens is uncertain. The plant referred to in Ginn’s *Report* was probably *Silybum marianum*, the Variegated, Spotted or Milk Thistle, the same plant referred to in the Government Notice of 1850 as ‘Milk Thistle’.

Introduction of a Bill

A Bill to Prevent the Spread of the Plant or Weed Known as the Scotch Thistle was introduced into the Legislative Council in July 1852 by Mr Rutledge, the Member for Villiers and Heytesbury in the Western District.³¹ The bill lapsed without debate.

There was, however, mounting public concern. For example, the *Argus* of 26 December 1855 contained two long letters, published under the heading ‘The Scotch Thistle Again’, that referred to frequent letters on the matter. One, from Patrick Reid of Hazel Glen on the River Plenty,

called for ‘steps for the suppression of this great and growing evil, which is advancing by rapid strides into the interior of the colony’.³²

Thistle Petition and Act (1856)

In January 1856, a petition to the Legislative Council was presented to Mr Peter Snodgrass MLC:

The Memorial of the undersigned Agriculturalists and others Humbly Sheweth that your memorialists view with great apprehension the spread of the Thistle plant throughout the Colony, and believe that unless immediate measures are taken to prevent the further spreading, that a great loss will be entailed upon all classes of the rural inhabitants of this Colony.

Your memorialists therefore pray that your Honourable House will take the subject of this Memorial into your consideration, and adopt such measures, or steps, as you may consider best, to arrest the evil complained of ...³³

On 18 January 1856, Snodgrass moved that the petition presented by him on the 16th ‘from certain Agriculturists and others relative to the spread of the Scotch Thistle in the Colony’ be referred to a Select Committee of which he was chairman, the question being put and passed.³⁴ The speed with which the matter passed through the Legislative Council suggests that Snodgrass was not simply responding to the petition, and that its presentation was expected.

The 6 February 1856 *Report from the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Scotch Thistle* stated that the committee ‘agreed to adopt the Act of the South Australian Legislature for preventing the further spread of the Scotch Thistle as the basis for legislating upon the same subject in this Colony’.³⁵ The South Australian legislation referred to appears to be the 1851 Thistle Act.³⁶ Although a Select Committee of the New South Wales Legislative Council had earlier reported on the Scotch Thistle and Bathurst Burr in 1852, legislation does not appear to have been enacted.³⁷

Snodgrass introduced the Thistle Bill on 8 February 1856.³⁸ Mr Fawkner is reported as pointing out at some length the importance of at once eradicating the thistle, which was already becoming an evil, the extent of which could scarcely at present be seen. Most speakers agreed that the thistle needed to be destroyed but said that the bill in its present form was unsatisfactory. Mr à Beckett denounced the bill as too tyrannous and arbitrary. Mr Wills said that the sooner the destruction of the thistle was set about the better, for if left much longer, it would be useless, or next to useless, to attempt the task. The measure might be arbitrary, but

it was necessary to be despotic in such a case. Mr Goodman was of the opinion that the less the Council had to do with such measures the better, for, by doing so, they gradually lessened the price of property, as no person going to England would hold property in this colony when subject to such measures as that now before the House.³⁹

The bill was considered in committee on 22 February, and again on 14 March. The debates, which were fully reported in the *Argus*, show the extent of community concern about the thistle problem. A letter signed 'Disgust', published in the *Argus* of 5 March 1856, confirmed the spread of thistles and expressed scepticism as to whether anything would be achieved by legislation.

Sir, The hon. members of the Legislative Council are, I perceive by the notice in the *Argus*, to consider the Thistle Bill in committee this day. If, Sir, the whole of their colleagues shared with Colonel Anderson, Captain Pasley, and Mr Goodman, who reside at South Yarra, the advantage of a ride or walk into town by the Gardiner's Creek-road, or through the Domain, they would have had the opportunity of ocular testimony this morning of more millions of seeds spreading through and over the Botanical Gardens, and for miles and miles around, conveyed by the strong westerly wind, as thick as flakes of snow, from a nursery of about half-an-acre of thistles in the Richmond Paddock, in the bend of the Yarra, exactly opposite the gardener's red cottage on the knoll within the Botanical Gardens gate ...

A fire stick made use of by ... persons living on the very spot or by any of the garden people opposite, would have been more benefit to the Botanical Garden and entire colony, than all the acts of Council which hon. Members can pass, or the Government Gazette proclaim.⁴⁰

The letter writer understood that effective action would be required to manage the thistle problem, and that legislation without action would achieve nothing.

The arguments advanced during the debates in the Legislative Council contained a number of themes that would be repeated in opposition to Thistle Acts in subsequent debates:

- Thistles cannot be eradicated and it is pointless to try;
- Thistles make good fodder for cattle and farm animals;
- To proscribe thistles infringes landholders' freedom;
- It is too hard to tell whether a plant is a declared thistle;
- The wrong thistles are being proscribed;
- Land values will be adversely affected.

While such arguments did not prevent the legislation from passing, the underlying attitudes may have made its success less likely if landholders were reluctant to adopt its measures and authorities to enforce the legislation.

On 17 March, the bill was read for the third time and passed.⁴¹ *An Act to Make Provision for the Eradication of Certain Thistle Plants and the Bathurst Burr*, otherwise known as the Thistle Prevention Act was assented to on 19 March 1856.

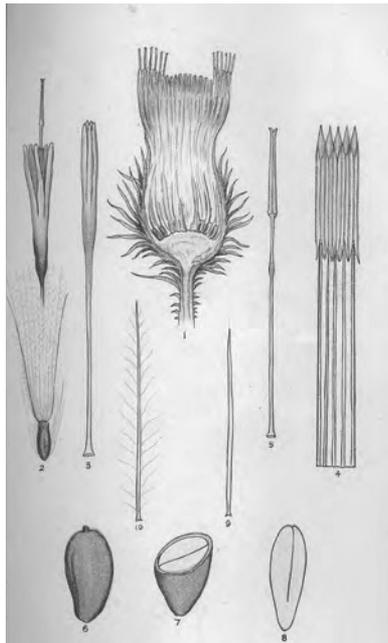


Carduus lanceolatus, from F. Mueller,
Illustrated Description of Thistles, 1893.
(Courtesy of Special Collections,
Baillieu Library, University of
Melbourne.)

The Proscribed Thistles

The preamble to this Act referred to ‘great injury and loss’ occasioned ‘by the spread of the plant known as the thistle’. Section 1, which imposed a penalty for not destroying thistles after notice, concerned land upon which ‘any of the plants commonly known as the thistle shall be growing’. Thistle was defined for the purposes of the Act: ‘thistle’ shall be held to mean and include the plants known by the botanical names of ‘*Carduus Marianus*’ ‘*Carduus Benedictus*’ ‘*Carduus Lanceolatus*’ ‘*Onopordum Acanthium*’ and ‘*Xanthium Spinosum*’ or ‘Bathurst Burr’.⁴² This may be compared with Section 11 of the South Australian Act:

in the construction of this Act the words ‘Plants, commonly known in this Province as the Scotch Thistle shall be held to mean, and include (in addition to all other plants so commonly known), the variegated thistle, and the plants commonly known by the botanical names of “*Carduus Marianus*” and of “*Carduus Benedictus*”’.



Carduus lanceolatus, from F. Mueller,
Illustrated Description of Thistles, 1893.
(Courtesy of Special Collections, Baillieu
Library, University of Melbourne.)

Definitions were needed because of the uncertain identification in the words ‘commonly known as the thistle’. The Victorian solution was more certain, in that it avoided the ambiguous term ‘Scotch Thistle’, but it did require landowners, lessees or occupiers to be able to identify thistles by their Latin names.

Why these Thistles?

Why did the Act specify only certain thistles and the Bathurst Burr (*Xanthium spinosum*) and make no reference to other weeds established in the colony? The basis on which the plants were specified was not discussed in the Legislative Council debates. The Victorian government botanist, Ferdinand Mueller, was away in northern Australia with the Gregory expedition from July 1855 until May 1857 and unavailable to advise on which plants should be proscribed.⁴³ His *First General Report* was, however, available as a published government paper had anyone cared to consult it.

The inclusion of *Carduus marianus*, and perhaps *Onopordum acanthium*, seems sensible enough. *Carduus marianus*, now usually called *Silybum marianum*, was considered a serious weed from about 1850. According to Hooker, *Carduus marianus* L. had spread amazingly along ‘the great road up-country, and at Melbourne, preferring the richest soils’, and was also a pest in Tasmania.⁴⁴ It seems likely that this species was at the heart of the thistle problem that provoked the legislation.

In 1909, Ewart and Tovey described the true Scotch Heraldic Thistle (*Onopordon acanthium* L.) as rare, so the case for its inclusion in the definition may never have been strong, even though it was naturalised.⁴⁵ The distribution map for *Onopordum acanthium* in the *Flora of Victoria* shows it is less widespread today than *Silybum marianum*, but it is still described as ‘[w]idespread in central Victoria, often in pastures and on roadsides’.⁴⁶ It may not yet have reached the limit of its distribution in Victoria, and the recent history of the weed in Tasmania and New South Wales suggests that it could become even more troublesome.⁴⁷

Although *Silybum marianum* is not today as widespread as *Cirsium vulgare* (Spear Thistle), according to the *Flora of Victoria*, it is still ‘Scattered widely through much of the State, often in moist situations, on roadsides, wasteland and pastures’.⁴⁸ Spear Thistle was included in the statutory definition as *Carduus lanceolatus*. The basis for including this species in the definition is uncertain. Although Parsons wrote that it

was naturalised in Victoria in the early 1850s, neither Mueller (1853) nor Hannaford (1856) had recorded it.⁴⁹ It was listed by Ewart and Tovey under the name *Carduus (Cirsium) lanceolatus* Scop. and recorded as naturalised in 1866 in Bentham's *Flora Australiensis* vol. III.⁵⁰

P. M. Kloot suggested that Spear Thistle was the most troublesome thistle species in South Australia, and the plant referred to in that state as 'Scotch Thistle'.⁵¹ Its South Australian reputation may have been known in Victoria. Ewart and Tovey provide confirmation that it was 'often wrongly termed the Scotch Thistle'.⁵² Spear Thistle has been a declared noxious weed in Victoria ever since the 1856 Act. The *Flora of Victoria* describes it as '[w]idespread and common across much of the State, usually along roadsides, in pasture and wasteland, mostly on heavier, more fertile soils'.⁵³

There may have been no better reason for including *Carduus benedictus* in the Thistle Prevention Act than its mention in the South Australian Thistle Act 1851 and the New South Wales report of 1852. None of the 1850s weed lists referred to earlier included *Cnicus benedictus* L. syn. *Carduus benedictus* Gars. (Blessed Thistle). Although the plant was a very early introduction to Australia, as noted earlier, it is doubtful whether it was naturalised in Victoria in 1856. Mueller did not record it in his *First General Report*. Hannaford did not record it either.

It seems likely that there was never any real need to proscribe Blessed Thistle (*Carduus benedictus*). Although the plant has been recorded in Victoria, and has at times been a proclaimed noxious weed, in 1972, Willis expressed the view that it had died out: 'Accepted as naturalized in Ewart's *Flora of Victoria* (1931), was noted in the Wangaratta and Springhurst districts between 1904 and 1916; but it has not been collected again during the past 50 years and is now presumed to have died out.'⁵⁴ The *Flora of Victoria* does not include the species. Its inclusion demonstrates that not all of the plants named were troublesome in Victoria. Plants known or believed to be pests elsewhere may have been named to avoid their becoming naturalised.

Bathurst Burr (*Xanthium spinosum* L.), although present in Victoria and included in Mueller's *First General Report*, is not a thistle and in 1856 may not yet have been widespread. Its inclusion in the Thistle Prevention Act may have been based on the 1852 *Report of the Select Committee of the New South Wales Legislative Council*. Considerable evidence was put before that Committee about the problem created by the burr, which had been introduced into New South Wales in the tails and manes of horses

imported from South America. Howitt wrote of the Bathurst bur [*sic*] as ‘ruinous to the wool of the sheep’ near Albury in March 1853.⁵⁵ But he made no mention of it growing in Victoria. Hannaford did not record it in 1856. Hooker included it as first observed in April 1857 in isolated patches near Melbourne.⁵⁶

The New South Wales experience made it prudent to legislate against the plant, but doing so did not prevent its increased proliferation. Parsons wrote in 1981: ‘Bathurst Burr now occurs in most areas of the state, although it is more common in the north than the south.’⁵⁷ The *Flora of Victoria* has a similar description: ‘Widespread in Victoria, mainly in the west and north, often in agricultural land, pastures and roadsides and particularly prolific after flooding or high summer rainfall.’⁵⁸

The omission of *Centaurea solistitialis* (St Barnaby’s Thistle) from the 1856 Act is, perhaps, surprising, since Mueller listed it as naturalised. The species was later proclaimed for the Shire of Wodonga in 1899, and for the whole state in 1908. It remains a declared noxious weed, ‘occurring on roadsides and degraded pasture, mostly between Hamilton and Myrtleford’.⁵⁹

Close examination of the Thistle Prevention Act reveals a lack of understanding of the weeds naturalised in Victoria and no appreciation of how they could be dealt with. The desire to do something about the problem led to the quick adaptation of the South Australian Act without too much thought about the matter.

Machinery of the Act

Although Wright wrote that the Act ‘ruled that landowners and licensees had to destroy all thistles found on their land’, there was no provision in the Act to that effect.⁶⁰ The Act provided a penalty for not destroying:

any of the plants commonly known as the thistle within 14 days after service of a notice on the owner lessee or occupier of land. Recognising the difficulty in destroying all the thistles growing on land, a proviso made it lawful for the justices dealing with the matter to suspend any conviction upon its being proved to their satisfaction that the person so receiving such notice has used and is using reasonable exertions to destroy such plants.⁶¹

The service of the notice was the key to effective action. But who was to give the notice? The Act simply provided for the notice to be signed by ‘any justice of the peace’, but did not specify who could request a justice

to sign. Justices of the peace did not normally act on their own initiative, but on matters brought before them.⁶²

If thistles were not destroyed within seven days of notification, justices could authorise parties to enter land for the purpose of destroying and eradicating them, with the expense recoverable from the owner, lessee or occupier. The effect of these provisions was that anybody could obtain a notice and take action for non-compliance by obtaining an authority from a justice of the peace. This threw the onus back on the community. No government officer was charged with enforcing the legislation. Everybody and nobody were responsible.

The South Australian legislation on which the Victorian act was based also provided a penalty for not destroying thistles after notice. There was, however, a significant difference in terms of who could give the notice. Under the South Australian Act, the notice could be signed 'by any Chairman of any District Board of Roads, or of any district Council or by any Clerk of such District Board or District Council or by any Justice of the Peace'. The other provisions of the Act also gave powers to District Boards of Roads or District Councils. The South Australian Act clearly considered that responsibility for enforcing the Act would rest with local government authorities. Perhaps local government was more advanced in South Australia, although some local government was in operation in Victoria in 1856 and rates were struck in 14 municipal districts.⁶³

The *Thistle Prevention Act* of 1856 provided a clear demonstration that the passing of legislation would be ineffective unless administrative action was taken by a responsible authority under the legislation.

How Effective was the Thistle Prevention Act (1856)?

Whatever may have been intended when the Act was passed, it seems that the 1856 legislation did not result in vigorous efforts to eradicate thistles. In 1857, the *Victorian Agricultural and Horticultural Gazette* contained a report on foreign plants observed in the neighbourhood of Kew, including:

a fine plant of *Xanthium* from South America. The latter plant is better known in the Northern Districts as the 'Bathurst Burr.' A few years back, this handsome and showy plant, but otherwise a pestilent weed, had so completely overgrown the various sheep-runs, in the Bathurst District, as to compel the owners of stock to abandon their stations, and seek others in the far North, at Moreton and Wide Bay. The writer observed a solitary plant of the *Xanthium*, during a recent visit to Geelong; the enclosed is a specimen

of the plant. It is highly necessary, that the attention of the authorities should be directed to this subject, as by timely attention to its destruction, a serious evil may be checked.⁶⁴

There was no reference to the fact that *Xanthium spinosum* was one of the plants dealt with by the 1856 Act. Isolated occurrences were, therefore, unlikely to be dealt with by getting a justice of the peace to sign a notice directed to the relevant landholder.

The *Argus* of 22 November 1861 reprinted the following report from the *Daylesford Express* of the previous day:

The spread of the Thistle appears to have ceased to be regarded as a dangerous nuisance, as the obnoxious weed is now allowed to spread without check of any kind within and without the municipality. This is entirely a matter to which the municipal council and the road boards might, with advantage, direct their attention ... if we are not much mistaken, the required authority to act in the matter is already in their hands.

The author of this report was correct. Local government bodies could proceed under the 1856 Act, even though not expressly empowered.

The records of the Victorian parliament reveal several attempts to get something done. In 1856–57, there was a motion in the parliament calling for instructions to police officers to deal with the spread of thistles, and motions for the eradication or extermination of thistles in 1859–60, 1860–61 and 1861–62. In 1864, there was a motion for a grant to carry out the provisions of the Act. Inadequate provision of funds to support thistle eradication meant no serious attempts were made.

Ray Wright has stated in *The Bureaucrats' Domain* that, despite widespread acceptance that thistles needed to be destroyed, 'the Act was a failure'. In his view, the reason was not lack of will, but the lack of attention to thistles on the waste lands and reserves of the Crown. He cited a letter from William South, of Mount Shadwell near Mortlake, to the Department of Crown Lands in 1859, which pointed out that the settlers could not 'keep their lands clear until the Government has cleared theirs'; and the notation on the file: 'Inform Mr South that at the present time there are no funds at the disposal of the Government for the purpose of destroying thistles.' Wright found, from a perusal of the parliamentary records, that financing a thistle eradication program became something of a parliamentary perennial: 'Throughout the late 1850s an average amount of 2000 pounds per annum was placed on the estimates for thistle control, a sum ridiculed as being too

low: as early as December 1857 expenditures as high as 20,000 pounds per annum were being suggested.⁶⁵

Under the Thistle Prevention Act, thistles ‘growing upon any waste and unoccupied lands of the Crown’ could be the subject of a notice, signed by a justice of the peace requiring destruction, left at the office of the surveyor general for Victoria, with provision for the cost out of ‘any vote of the Legislature for such purpose’.⁶⁶ The scope of this provision was, however, reduced by a proviso that ‘where such waste lands shall be included within the boundaries of any corporation or municipal district ... the mayor of such corporation or the chairman of a municipal district ... shall be taken to be owners and occupiers’. The proviso also dealt with land held under lease or licence from the Crown, making the occupant responsible.⁶⁷

As Wright put it, this provision resulted in ‘members of the Department of Crown Lands and Survey who bore the brunt of settler frustration ... [being] deluged with hundreds of angry letters, notices from justices of the peace threatening fines if certain areas were not cleared forthwith, and independent pleas for work and offers of labour’.⁶⁸ Wright concluded: ‘Perhaps it can be claimed that the public interest was defeated not by a lack of resolve, for that had existed since the early 1850s, but by an inadequate appreciation of both the scope of the problem and the extent of the monetary investment needed to control the plant.’⁶⁹

This analysis assumes that defeat was not inevitable. But legislative attempts to control weeds in other jurisdictions in the 19th century fared no better. The South Australian Act was regarded as a failure. Schomburgk, writing in 1879, thought that the Thistle Acts had been ineffective: ‘This stringent measure, it is true, has decimated the plants, but without effecting the object desired. Although thousands of pounds have been spent for the purpose, the destruction of thistles is generally commenced too late to prevent the dispersion of the developed seed.’⁷⁰

Similar legislation in various provinces in New Zealand in the 1850s was ineffective. As Thomson wrote: ‘The early settlers were great law-makers, but also great law-breakers, for it is of no avail to make laws which cannot be kept or at least enforced, and in a great many of these restrictive ordinances, Nature was too strong for the settlers and beat them frequently.’⁷¹

Mueller had described the naturalised plants listed in his *First General Report* as ‘naturalized beyond the possibility of extirpation’. Eradication of

the thistles was never likely to be successful, no matter what expenditure was devoted to it. But the limited funds provided made failure inevitable.

Conclusions

Given the largely ungoverned nature of the colonisation of Victoria⁷², and the habit of both explorers and early settlers of introducing plants at will and without heed to the foreseeable consequences, it was perhaps inevitable that serious weed problems would develop in less than 20 years from the first permanent European invasion.

Lack of understanding of the problem, the desire for a quick solution, insufficient funding and the lack of a responsible authority made the Thistle Prevention Act a failure. Thistles growing unchecked on Crown lands meant that the efforts of private landholders were futile. But the problem may well have been beyond the resources of the colony; once the weeds had been introduced and had naturalised, it was probably impossible to extirpate them. Mueller's judgment in 1853 that the thistles were 'beyond the possibility of extirpation' was correct.

NOTES

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SO NEW AND EXOTIC!
GITA YOGA IN AUSTRALIA FROM THE 1950s TO TODAY

Fay Woodhouse

Abstract

Though exported to Europe and America decades earlier, the ancient Indian practice of Hatha yoga was first taught in Australia in the 1950s. In the 1960s, a small but enthusiastic public embraced the health benefits of yoga and relaxation and, in the 1970s, exotic swamis in robes established schools in Australia. Hatha yoga was transformed when the precise, athletic and intense Iyengar method became the fashion of the 1980s and 1990s. By the 2000s, yoga teaching in Australia had become a million-dollar business. This article contextualises the arrival of yoga teaching in Australia and profiles Michael Volin, Margrit Segesman and Roma Blair, who were the first to establish schools here. It explores the first sixty years of Melbourne's first full-time yoga school, the Gita School of Yoga.

ALTHOUGH YOGA HAS BEEN TAUGHT IN AUSTRALIA for sixty years, a comprehensive history of yoga teaching, or histories of individual yoga schools, is yet to be written, and only limited dependable resources are available. My initial research on this topic was limited to a series of articles published in 2002–2003 in the *Australian Yoga Journal*, which provided scant and sometimes inaccurate details of the history of yoga teaching in Australia.¹ From the 1920s, when the export of yoga from India to America and Europe first began, many articles syndicated from British and American papers on the subject of yoga and meditation were published in the Australian press. Although one or two

Australian teachers began producing instruction manuals on yoga in the 1960s and 1970s, they failed to describe the journey of yoga from India to Australia. Articles written between the 1980s and 2000s about the early teaching of yoga in Australia were based on oral testament, written without undertaking primary research. Much of the more recent literature on yoga teaching has reproduced the same information. Documentary evidence of yoga teaching in Australia has, therefore, been limited to contemporary accounts, including articles and advertisements in newspapers and magazines. The National Library of Australia's *Trove* newspaper search facility has proved to be a fruitful resource. A small number of academic theses and research papers, and personal memoirs have been accessed.² Additionally, the scientific basis of the benefits derived from practising yoga and meditation as a health regime has recently become an area of study in Australia.

From 1950, when yoga teaching began in Sydney, several publications, including *Australasian Post*, *Australian Beauty and Fashion* and *People*, as well as the *Australian Women's Weekly* and *New Idea* all carried stories about yoga. Presented as either the newest fitness craze or as a quasi-religious sect, stories about yoga teachers and students, yoga's health benefits, or, alternatively, sensational stories about its evils, were regularly published in major newspapers and magazines. By the early 1960s, instructions for yoga postures were published in the form of pamphlets, often included in the *Australasian Post* and *People* magazines. In 1963, Michael Volin and Nancy Phelan began publishing their own books and instruction manuals on yoga and meditation. Although these books do include a brief history of yoga and its Indian origins, they do not discuss the arrival of yoga teaching in Australia, which was very recent. Consequently, minimal information about the authors and their experience of yoga teaching was included in these books.

Yoga schools were established across the suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney from the 1960s onwards. Not all survived. Many schools were run from the teachers' own homes; other teachers hired school, church or community halls and ran classes there. Only the largest schools, with a steady stream of students, were viable for any length of time. Apart from brochures or advertisements for their school, during their early years of teaching, few teachers wrote about themselves, and to my knowledge only Roma Blair has published her memoirs.

Australia's first yoga teachers' support organisation, the International Yoga Teachers' Association (IYTA), was established in 1968. Since it will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2018, the IYTA's history is being recorded as a series of oral history interviews with its members. Today, the peak advocacy organisation, formed in 1999, is Yoga Australia. It has not published a history of yoga in Australia, but does include a brief history of its own organisation on its website.

As well as utilising the limited resources discussed above, I have conducted a number of oral history interviews. However, because of the advanced age of many of the interviewees, all former yoga teachers, these accounts have often proved to be unreliable. Therefore, reliable sources with which to write a comprehensive history of yoga teaching in Australia are extremely limited.

Underpinning my research is the fact that the subject of yoga has, in the last decade, emerged as a new field of academic research. The concept of yoga's timelessness and unchanging nature, the physical risks and rewards of yoga practice, the view of yoga as a secular religion and its iconic status in India, have been, and no doubt will continue to be, investigated and challenged. Indeed, in the last decade academic historians have also hotly contested the origins and nature of modern yoga teaching in both the East and the West.

Historian Mark Singleton investigated yoga's postural practices and questioned the commonly held belief that the system is 5,000 years old, timeless and unchanging. In 2010, in *Yoga Body: the Origins of Modern Posture Practice*, he proposes that yoga asanas as we know them today were in fact created by the teacher Jaganath Gune in the 1920s from a mixture of calisthenics and a modernised form of yoga postures. This system of yoga emerged from India in the 1930s and is what we know today as hatha yoga.³ Singleton argues that, contrary to popular belief, there is no evidence in the Indian tradition of the health and fitness-oriented asana practice that makes up the global yoga scene in the 21st century.

The health and fitness aspects of yoga were challenged and debunked by William Broad in his 2012 book, *The Science of Yoga: the Risks and the Rewards*.⁴ His title refers to the major yoga text, *The Science of Yoga: a Commentary on Patanjali's Sutras*. Written in 1961 by I.K. Taimni, it explores the science and physiology and the tangible health benefits gained by yoga practice. Broad distrusts the 'science' and works to disprove claims of yoga's physical benefits. An excerpt of his book entitled 'How Yoga

Can Wreck Your Body' appeared in the *Sunday New York Times* magazine in 2012, sparking controversy amongst yoga teachers and students alike. Rather than seeing yoga as a cure-all and a risk-free health and fitness regime, Broad warned of injury, of the commercialisation of the regime and of 'charismatic hustlers'. As a practitioner for more than 30 years himself, Broad offered ideas about how the ancient practice might be improved and physical injury minimised.

In her case study of Iyengar Yoga, Elizabeth de Michelis explores this style as one of the most influential and popular forms of modern postural yoga today. She proposes a four-fold typology of 'Modern Yoga' and analyses it by adopting a framework of modern Psychosomatic, Meditational, Postural and Denominational forms of yoga. Her conclusion proposes that, in addition to the usual belief that yoga practice physically and emotionally benefits practitioners, a typical modern postural yoga class may be interpreted as revealing the forms and contents of a healing ritual of secular religion.⁵

Joseph Alter, the author of the 2004 publication, *Yoga in Modern India: The Body between Science and Philosophy*, discusses yoga as an icon of Indian culture and civilisation. His work is based on extensive ethnographic research and an analysis of both ancient and modern texts. Alter examines the history of yoga, focusing on its emergence in modern India in the 20th century and its dramatically changing form and significance. He argues that yoga's transformation into a popular activity idolised for its health value is based on modern ideas about science and medicine. Joseph Alter concentrates his analysis on examination and interpretation of the seminal work of an Indian guru, Jaganath Gune, also known as Swami Kuvalayananda (1883–1966).⁶ He explores current interpretations of yoga and considers how practitioners of yogic medicine and fitness combine ideas from biology, physiology and anatomy with those from metaphysics, transcendence, and magical power. He does not explore yoga as a secular religious cult, something it was accused of being in the early 1960s and in the so-called dawning of the 'Age of Aquarius' in the 1970s and 1980s.

In direct contrast to the modern view of yoga, European travellers to India during the 17th, 18th and late 19th centuries saw 'yogis' as roaming and unkempt men drifting around the country. They performed yoga postures for alms; some were holy men, but the vast majority seen by Europeans were vagabonds and thieves. By the early 20th century, this was considered a poor image for the Hindu religion.⁷ In the period following the First

World War, the Hindu Nationalist Movement began agitating to unleash India from its colonial masters.⁸ The new-look, sanitised yoga developed by Gune was adopted by the Hindu Nationalist Movement as a physical fitness regime associated with the Hindu religion and was widely promoted in the bid for an independent India.

Alter, Broad, Singleton, and de Michelis all agree that it was Jaganath Gune's efforts that were responsible for the reformed and modernised ancient yoga practices that began in the early 20th century. A concerted effort to export yoga from India to the West began in the 1920s when Swami Yogananda settled in the United States of America. In their histories of yoga, Broad and de Michelis propose that in order to 'market it' effectively for the purposes of the Nationalist Movement, in modern parlance, Indian yoga needed a 'makeover'. Gune's book, *Asana*, a manual of yoga postures, published in 1931, was his rewriting of Indian yoga textbooks.

The history of yoga in the United States of America is usually dated from the World's Parliament of Religion in Chicago in 1893.⁹ At this meeting, the Indian Swami Vivekananda, who later published the seminal work, *Raja Yoga*, addressed the audience on the Hindu religion, meditation, positive thinking and pranayama (breathing practices).¹⁰ He did not, however, explicitly speak about yoga asana. Swami Yogananda, author of *Autobiography of a Yogi*, who settled in America in 1920, contributed greatly to the promotion of modern yoga in the West.¹¹ One so-called 'Indian yogi' known as 'Swami Oom', was born in Iowa as Perry Arnold Bake. He published books on yoga and enjoyed a large following and a lucrative business.¹² Yoga in America in the 1920s and 1930s was a luxury for the rich and famous, and Swami Oom enjoyed 'rock star' status in New York. By the 1950s, yoga was well-established as an alternative health and fitness regime in America. The English Wheel of Yoga, established in the 1940s, appears to have been the first major yoga school in the United Kingdom. In the 1950s, B.K.S. Iyengar travelled to London and established his first school there. His classes were popular and he held regular workshops and seminars as well. The history of yoga in Britain is covered extensively by Elizabeth de Michelis.¹³

The modern regime of yoga practice was introduced into Australia about a decade later than in Britain and several decades after it had begun thriving in the United States and Europe. The Englishman, Sir Paul Dukes (1889–1967) was a British spy in Russia and on the northern borders of India after the Russian Revolution. Following the Russian Revolution, and

possibly sympathising with the Indian Nationalists, he developed a strong interest in yoga.¹⁴ After making a series of broadcasts for the BBC on yoga, Dukes toured Australia in the 1940s. The Melbourne yoga teacher Bette Calman recalls that, as a 12-year-old, she pleaded with her father to allow her to attend Dukes' lectures; this early experience whetted her appetite to learn yoga in the 1950s.¹⁵ In the post-war period, the Australian government actively promoted physical fitness. Boys and girls were encouraged to participate in gymnastics and calisthenics, as well as other sports. In her work, *Strong, Beautiful and Modern: National Fitness in Britain, New Zealand, Australia and Canada*, Charlotte MacDonald explores national fitness in the predominantly Anglo-Celtic British dominions.¹⁶ A program of national fitness was introduced in the 1940s and sustained support in Australia until the 1970s. Typically, boys practised gymnastics, utilising equipment such as pole vaults, the vaulting horse and the rings, while girls were encouraged into the calisthenics movement. In his history, Singleton concentrates on the similarities between yoga and calisthenics. He argues that modern posture practice is derived from a combination of calisthenics movements and traditional postural yoga.¹⁷ Determining whether the reinterpreted yoga postures were indeed a combination of traditional yoga asanas and the physical culture and calisthenics movements of the early 20th century must be the topic of another paper.

The Popularisation of Yoga in Australia

In 2006, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that 1.7 per cent or 268,700 of the adult population participated in yoga, making it as popular as Australian Rules football for men. The figures also indicated that 90 per cent of participants were women. While participation in other physical activities declined, yoga was the 13th most popular activity, just ahead of Australian Rules.¹⁸ A national survey undertaken as part of his Masters thesis by yoga practitioner Stephen Penman in 2006 also revealed that, despite a perceived increase in take-up by males, the typical yoga practitioner was a 41-year-old, tertiary-educated, employed, health-conscious woman. Overall, 85 per cent of his survey participants were women.¹⁹ Notwithstanding the statistics, anecdotal evidence suggests that tram drivers, footballers, ballet dancers and politicians alike practise yoga and are attracted to its physical, emotional and spiritual benefits in varying degrees.

The three people responsible for yoga's popularity in Australia from the 1950s to the 1980s were two European yogis, the White Russian, Michael

Volin (1914–1998), Swiss national Margrit Segesman (1905–1998), and Australian Roma Blair (1923–2013). Volin and Segesman arrived in Australia in 1949 and 1954 respectively. In 1957, Roma Blair (1923–2013), who had studied yoga in South Africa, returned to Australia. This small zealous group were passionate about yoga and were determined to teach it to Australians. Although there may have been other individuals who taught yoga at this time, no records remain.

Michael Volin established the Sydney Yoga Centre in 1950. After he published ‘A Step-by-Step Guide to the Practice of Yoga for Everyone’ in *People* magazine, explaining the benefits of yoga, demand for his classes increased.²⁰ He was soon teaching five days a week in Sydney and the suburbs and made regular television appearances demonstrating yoga. In 1963, in collaboration with one of his students, the novelist and artist Nancy Phelan, Michael Volin published his seminal work, *Essence of Yoga: Physical Yoga Arranged in the Form of a Lesson*.²¹ While living in Paris in 1957, Nancy had been introduced to hatha yoga and when she returned to Sydney the following year, she became a pupil of Michael Volin, ultimately becoming his first assistant teacher. Nancy and Michael’s yoga books were the first Australian yoga publications, treasured by students of the 1960s.²² In the late 1960s, Michael Volin was probably the first Australian yoga teacher to take groups of students to India to Swami Gitananda’s Pondicherry ashram, which offered a six-month Intensive Residential International Yoga Teachers Training Course. He also taught in New York and Europe before returning to Australia. He died in 1998 and Nancy Phelan in 2008.

Roma Winsome Blair was born and raised in New South Wales. As a young wife and mother, she lived in Java. Following the fall of Singapore, she became a Japanese prisoner of war for three years.²³ After returning briefly to Australia, the family moved to South Africa, where she studied yoga with Swami Yogeswarananda. Returning home, she attended Margrit Segesman’s classes while in Melbourne and Michael Volin’s classes in Sydney. Because ‘Yoga was so new and exotic to Australians at that time’, she demonstrated it to friends and began teaching.²⁴ In 1962, Roma established the Roma Blair Yoga and Health Centre in Pitt Street, Sydney. She wrote *Relaxing with Roma* to appeal to housewives and presented a television program of the same name for 14 years. From the 1960s, Roma Blair played a pivotal role in promoting the benefits of yoga, especially for women.

Margrit Segesman (1905–1998)

Margrit Segesman was born on 22 April 1905 in Madretsch, an area of the Swiss Canton of Bern.²⁵ From what little she told of her early life, Margrit's family seems to have been aristocratic. Certainly Lucille Wood's memoir of Margrit Segesman, *I Am a Yogi*, states that 'Margrit was wellborn (a Baroness), [and] well educated, (the daughter of a Swiss Bank owner)'. Wood also refers to Margrit's father as Baron Von Segesman, although this title has not been proven.²⁶ The Segesman [also spelt 'Sägissenman'] family seat was Wattenwil, a tiny rural settlement 70 kilometres from Biel in the Canton of Bern. Birthplace and the family's place of origin are important and differentiated in Switzerland, and the two details are always noted on official documents such as passports. They are noted on official documents contained in Segesman's immigration file.²⁷ However, despite extensive searches of the Swiss National Archives, Margrit's birth certificate has not been found.

In her late teens, soon after her fiancé died of meningitis, Margrit contracted a virulent form of tuberculosis and began treatment in a sanatorium in the Swiss Alps where she remained for about six years.²⁸ During her illness, she became interested in breathing and relaxation techniques. Eventually her condition improved and after leaving the sanatorium in 1925, she embarked on a world tour with her Aunt Rolande and Uncle Henry before settling in Paris.²⁹ From 1930 to 1940, she worked as a house model for Lucien Lelong and Christian Dior in Paris.³⁰

Margrit returned to Switzerland in 1940 where she was diagnosed with osteoarthritis.³¹ Notwithstanding this diagnosis, she resolved to pursue her interest in yoga and the expansion of consciousness. The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, a friend of Margrit's father, suggested she study yoga and yogic philosophy and read *The Science of Breath* by Yogi Ramacharaka.³² Through her study of breathing, she developed her own progressive yoga relaxation technique, which enabled her to endure the radical and painful treatment she required, such as gold injections and lung cauterisation. She later incorporated these breathing practices into her classes.³³

In 1945, to the distress and shame of her family, she set off at the age of 40 on a trek to India. Once in India, she travelled the country and stayed in a number of ashrams seeking a guru. She eventually found her personal guru at Rishikesh on the Tibetan border where she lived in a cave as an ascetic.³⁴ Margrit's travel documents indicate she spent from 1947 to 1954 in India.³⁵ As her accounts differ, it is unclear exactly how long Margrit

actually lived in the cave near her guru. In her memoirs, she recalled that: ‘for years I knew nothing else but meditation, raja yoga, hatha yoga, the intense practices of kriya and tantra, [and the] study of cosmology and evolution’.³⁶

As she chose not to divulge the name of her guru, his name remains a mystery and a matter of speculation. Although Margrit was content with her life, in 1953, her guru sent her back to civilisation to prepare for teaching. Part of her mission in returning to the West was to ‘break the guru tradition’.³⁷ Adjusting to a normal life could not have been easy; she had to grow her hair and gain weight before attempting to sail to the other side of the world. She departed Bombay on the *Stratheden* ‘in transit’ to America and arrived in Melbourne on 21 October 1954 on a six-month visa.³⁸ Anecdotal evidence records that she sensed Melbourne was where she was meant to be.³⁹

With her experience in the fashion industry in Paris, Margrit quickly found work at the furrier, Seymour’s, in Collins Street, Melbourne.⁴⁰ She then began teaching yoga in the evenings in her apartment in St Kilda, naming her school the Margaret Segesman School of Yoga.⁴¹ Melburnians, she discovered, were keen to embrace yoga and for five years, she taught in her St Leonards Avenue flat. However, in 1960, following a radio interview



*Gita premises at Alfred Place.
(Courtesy of Gita International Yoga Pty Ltd.)*

about her relaxation technique, Margrit was inundated with students and so decided to teach full-time. She relocated her school from St Kilda to the ‘Paris’ end of Collins Street. It opened as the Gita School of Yoga at 21 Alfred Place, Melbourne, on 20 September 1960. The Gita School of Yoga was Australia’s first full-time yoga school with its own permanent premises, offering classes each weekday and night.

The Gita School of Yoga

Located in the perfect place to attract office workers and others interested in yoga and meditation, ‘Gita’, as it became popularly known, was a haven at the top end of Collins Street. Announcing the opening, the *Melbourne Age* reported that:

When Melbourne’s Gita School of Yoga opens this afternoon in Alfred Place, guests will enter the modern studios over a courtyard of stepping-stones set

a haven away from the tensions of modern living

THE GITA SCHOOL OF YOGA



At last! You can learn to relax, look smooth and enjoy life the Yoga way. This remarkable system of exercising gives you a healthy, limber body and a calm, serene outlook. Yoga relieves stress, relieves your tension... improves confidence. Yoga is not a religion, but a way of life. At the Gita School of Yoga you'll find a haven from the hurried stress of modern living. You have serene surroundings rich with deep repose and the mood for relaxation. This is a special invitation to come and see what Yoga can do for you. You'll find us at 21 Alfred Place, opposite The Delphi, off 100 Collins Street. Drop in tomorrow.

GITA SCHOOL OF YOGA

21 ALFRED PLACE, OFF 100 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE
 PRINCIPAL: MARGRIT REIDEMAN, PHONE 41431, 41370, 41388

MIXED CLASSES — ALSO SEPARATE CLASSES FOR MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN

OPEN 9 A.M. - 9 P.M. MONDAY TO FRIDAY, 8 A.M. TO NOON SATURDAY

*Poster for the opening of Gita.
 (Courtesy of Gita International Yoga Pty Ltd.)*

amidst river pebbles—in shoeless feet! The studios, of which a remarkable woman, Margaret Segesman is principal, are being dedicated as a yoga centre in Melbourne and all who pass the threshold must remove their shoes, and neither smoke nor drink liquor within the precincts. Margaret Segesman was once crippled with arthritis ... She travelled to India where she spent 5 years in study.⁴²

Stories about Margrit's extraordinary life and advertisements for Gita appeared frequently in the Melbourne press.⁴³ Nevertheless, many in the community remained wary of yoga, believing it was a quasi-religious cult. Newspaper articles and features in magazines such as the *Australasian Post* and *Melbourne Truth* emphasised the cult status, while other articles praised the benefits of relaxation and meditation techniques.⁴⁴

Physical fitness as a concept had swept through the community in the post-war period, and was heavily endorsed by all state governments. Calisthenics, gymnastics, marching and other group sports were popular and encouraged from the 1930s onwards. Staff from department stores especially enjoyed this group activity.⁴⁵ For the school student, National Fitness Camps for the twelve-to-eighteen-year-olds became the most popular form of physical training from the 1940s. National fitness facilities became part of the larger 'modernising mechanisms' sanctioned by Australian commonwealth and state governments.⁴⁶ Bette Calman, who saw Sir Paul Dukes in the 1940s, was keenly aware of physical fitness as a necessary regime for growing girls and young women.⁴⁷ Yoga was an exciting and appealing alternative to fitness camps and institutionalised exercise.

In 1959, in her article about yoga, the young journalist Judy Ann Ford contrasted the relatively new regime of yoga with calisthenics. Ford emphasised the differences between the two disciplines: 'Yoga movements are slowly controlled and concentrate on breath control.'⁴⁸ Ford's article was one of many appearing in popular newspapers and magazines at the time, encouraging women to try the new form of physical fitness. It was also promoted as a means of relaxation and stress relief. The late 1960s in Australia represented a period of social upheaval and changes in thinking, marked particularly by women's liberation and the protest against Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. The mantras of 'love' and 'freedom' were typical of the time, heralding the arrival of the 'Age of Aquarius'. This was the 'new age' and the decade of the swami guru. The direct association with Indian yoga teachers, especially the many



*Visit of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi to Gita.
(Courtesy of Gita International Yoga Pty Ltd.)*

swamis who visited Australia in the 1970s, encouraged a 'guru culture' in yoga schools.⁴⁹ The popularity of yoga and meditation was assisted by the Beatles' visits to the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's ashram in India between 1966 and 1968. Yoga and the guru culture were drawn into sharp focus in Melbourne in 1967, when the Maharishi visited Melbourne, and the Gita School of Yoga hosted his tour.⁵⁰

When B.K.S. Iyengar's instruction manual, *Light on Yoga*, was published in 1965, his focus on precision of postures and athletic style took the yoga world by storm. So enthusiastic were Australian students about this new phenomenon that, during the 1970s, dozens of students and teachers travelled to Pune in India to learn his particular style and to qualify as teachers. By the 1980s, Iyengar classes all over Melbourne were filled with people who were energised by the highly athletic, precision-based yoga. In an Iyengar class, students sought physical and spiritual harmony through the rigorous regime. At the same time, equipment such as the use of floor mats, props such as belts, and special yoga clothing such as wide-legged pants, allowed freedom of movement. With these additions to the traditional quiet and contemplative yoga classes, yoga had moved from demure to dynamic by the late 1980s.



Margrit Segesman, 1955.
(Courtesy of Gita International Pty Ltd.)

Meanwhile, Margrit's teaching at Gita embraced elements of Iyengar's style, and she conducted seminars and workshops on his teachings. However, her classes retained their fixed format and her students and teachers retained the traditional black leotard and tights in which to practise. Classes began with standing and seated limbering exercises followed by the practice of a yoga mudra: ten of the traditional yoga asanas or variations on them, focusing on the brain, spine and adrenal systems and concluding with a breathing or relaxation practice. Margrit Segesman taught the classical postures as she had learned them in India and continued refining her own individual teaching style, philosophy and practice. One of the differences between Gita and other yoga schools was its rejection of props and other devices. Gita yoga advertised that its classes were 'gimmick free'.⁵¹

Two of the newer yoga styles to arrive in Melbourne around the year 2000 were Dru Yoga and Bikram's Hot Yoga. Dru Yoga, based on soft, directed breathing and visualisation, embraces a fluidity of rhythmic

movements where postures are combined and choreographed to create sequences aimed to clear mental and physical blockages.⁵² By contrast, Bikram's Hot Yoga is a therapeutic hatha yoga sequence of 26 postures and two breathing exercises.⁵³ The Bikram class is practised in extreme heat, emulating the heat of India. Clothing is minimal and one of the aims of the class is to sweat all the accumulated impurities out of the system.

Statistics for participants in yoga classes for the period up to the 1990s are difficult to find, though few yoga schools in Melbourne are considered to have had the same extensive client base as Gita. When promoting her school in the 1960s, Margrit claimed to teach 600 students each week.⁵⁴ Margrit may have used a little poetic licence here; it is more likely that class attendances totalled 600 each week. Then and now, many students attend one or more class per day, two or three days per week. While the personalised styles of Iyengar, Desikachar, Astanga, Satyananda or Oki-Do yoga classes were gaining traction in Melbourne and the suburbs in the 1970s and 1980s, Gita's classes remained well-attended. Current statistics reveal that there are an average of 250 class participants per week.⁵⁵ It appears that the consistency and stability of Margrit Segesman's class structure remains one of the major factors in retaining and increasing student numbers.

Another distinguishing feature of the Gita School of Yoga was its teacher training courses. From 1965 onwards, Gita trained the first generation of Melbourne's widely known teachers, including Jill Campbell, Joy Spencer and Adrienne Cook. Until the late 1970s and early 1980s, the IYTA, Roma Blair and Michael Volin's Sydney schools, as well as the Gita School of Yoga, were regarded as the Australian schools from which to gain a teaching qualification. Today, in *Yoga Australia*, at least twenty yoga schools advertise teacher training courses varying in duration, cost and level of qualifications.

Margrit's teacher training course replicated the way she had been taught in India—master or guru with apprentice. In the 1970s and 1980s, under her direction, prospective students were informed that it was necessary to attend at least three classes per week for a period of at least two years, taking hatha yoga, raja yoga, relaxation, kriya yoga and special teacher training classes.⁵⁶ In addition to these classes, the student was expected to attend the free lectures, training exercises, healing and meditation, study groups and kriya yoga (full meditation).⁵⁷ Teacher training assessment

and hundreds of hours of supervised teaching are now required before certificates or diplomas of teaching are issued.⁵⁸

Gita was not the first organisation to offer yoga teacher training courses in Australia: the IYTA began running its own course in 1973. Michael Volin and Roma Blair also offered teacher training, using the apprenticeship model. The Gita teacher training courses were highly regarded and trained many teachers, albeit through its somewhat informal system. In the early 1970s, students began to expect more from their courses, and trainee teachers began to demand a diploma that clearly quantified the level of training that the teacher had reached. By the late 1970s, certificates were issued that reflected competency levels.

Prior to her retirement due to ill health, Margrit Segesman spent several years preparing two students, Lucille Wood and Di Lucas, to take over the teaching at Gita. Although they had informally taken over a few years earlier, they purchased the business and became joint principals in July 1983.

On the Move

In 1983, as Lucille Wood and Di Lucas took over the Gita School of Yoga, the country was experiencing significant social and political change. The Australian dollar had been floated, but unemployment and interest rates, both at record high levels, were impacting on the community.

Against this backdrop, in their first year as joint principals, Lucille and Di began to initiate change at Gita. They replaced the apprenticeship model of teacher training with a formal, structured course. In 1984, the Gita Gold Diploma Teacher Training Course was established as a weekend seminar held monthly for 16 months. Gita's principals believe they were the first school to offer such an intensive diploma course. When a trainee passed the written and physical examinations, they were awarded a certificate and entitled to wear the Gita symbol on their leotards or t-shirts to signify their status. Under this training scheme, Gita's first students graduated in 1985. Ensuring that all trainee teachers consistently reached the highest level of achievement was an essential component in building the Gita 'brand'. To the formal teacher training course, a postgraduate course was added in 1986, something unique in Australia then. A postgraduate diploma is now mandatory for teachers joining Australia's largest yoga organisation, Yoga Australia. In addition to the postgraduate course, Gita also began a prenatal course and classes for children.

Travel to India to experience yoga in an ashram setting had been popular with Australians from the late 1960s, so it was surprising that Lucille and Di chose Egypt as the destination for their overseas study tours. Yoga had, after all, been marketed as Indian, not as Egyptian. In their book, *Yoga for You*, Lucille explains that cave drawings of 5,000 years ago depict the same yoga postures as those found in early Indian drawings.⁵⁹ Despite their unexpected destination, Lucille saw the necessity of travel, because the tours ‘were Gita’s way of energising: spiritually, intellectually and physically’.⁶⁰ Also breaking new ground, in 1986, Gita established The Khuti Foundation—a philanthropic outreach ‘creating the blueprint for the peaceful evolution of humanity’. Five years later, The Khuti School for children, antenatal to six years, was established. Lucille and Di indicated that establishing the foundation and the school was difficult at the time because there were no precedents in their field. Large corporations and individual trusts were more likely to have philanthropic arms than the foundation they hoped to build, attached to a yoga school. Gita may be the only yoga school supporting a philanthropic foundation.⁶¹

In 1988, after Gita had been established for twenty-eight years at 21 Alfred Place, the building was sold and the school moved into the basement of an old warehouse in Flinders Lane.

With yoga now a mainstream physical regime, people’s expectations rose. By popular demand and in line with other yoga schools, the first progressive relaxation tape was recorded, enabling students to purchase a copy for use in their own time, a vital and a welcome tool. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, Australia was in the grip of ‘the recession we had to have’. Like all recessions, it had a profound impact on society. Rates of alcoholism, drug abuse and depression increased rapidly. In response, Gita began running corporate classes in stress management. Other forms of teaching and community outreach were embraced as the deadly AIDS virus took its toll on the population. The Khuti Foundation supported various outreach classes, including an AIDS outreach, a program for the terminally ill, and a Prisoners Early Release program.

After the peace and tranquillity of Alfred Place, the noise level in the Flinders Lane building during relaxation sessions was aggravating. When the studio’s ceiling collapsed, it was clear that Gita needed to move. In 1994, Lucille and Di purchased 16 Hoddle Street, Abbotsford. The same year, they published their first yoga manual, explaining the Gita style,

Yoga for You and also launched a Distance and Overseas Teacher Training Program using videos and travelling co-ordinators.

The year 1995 was especially memorable as Gita's founder, Margrit Segesman, celebrated her 90th birthday. On this occasion, she spoke to the Teachers' Guild at their August meeting, her last public appearance. The yoga community in Australia mourned Margrit Segesman's death on 25 May 1998. Later in the year, the Gita School of Yoga changed its name to Gita International. This name change reflected Gita's growing global reach. Not only was Gita running annual overseas tours and courses, but Gita graduates were teaching in many parts of the world.

After more than a decade of running tours to the Middle East, Gita changed locations for their annual retreats, largely due to the changing political situation in Egypt. Their new site, closer to Australian shores, was the tranquil island of Bali, the tropical location of choice for many yoga schools since the 1990s. Their first retreat to Ubud was held in 2006. Today, many of the Gita postgraduate diploma courses are held in Bali as a two-week intensive course.

Images of beautiful young and slender bodies posed in harmonious settings are almost exclusively used in advertising to signify the benefits of practising yoga. A wide range of health, fitness and yoga magazines promote individual yoga schools, teacher training courses, clothing and yoga equipment. Along with the hundreds of other yoga schools in Australia, Gita International advertises its classes and teacher training courses in this manner. This style of advertising emphasises the fact that yoga today is a multimillion dollar business in Australia. However, for their 2005 calendar, Gita deviated from this style. Rather than utilising idyllic locations, Gita selected familiar scenes around Melbourne as backdrops to ordinary individuals striking poses. The yoga models on this occasion were the everyday 'mum and dad' students, many of whom had been practising yoga for decades. In this major departure from the usual image of a yogi, this publication signified that yoga is more than beautiful bodies.

Conclusion

In 2014, yoga is taken for granted as a mainstream fitness regime; indeed, it is a rebatable health expense through some private health insurance schemes. Yoga classes are available in dedicated yoga studios as well as in gyms, school or church halls and neighbourhood houses throughout Australia. There are as many yoga styles as teachers. It is easy to find

classes in yoga dance, acro-yoga, hoop yoga, yoga chi gung, anti-gravity yoga and stand-up surfboard yoga. Yoga Olympics have been held. These new types of yoga have taken the traditional yoga practice to a new level. Yoga tourism is also well-established; for a specialised holiday, it is easy to find a retreat in Bali, Byron Bay or Blackburn. The images of beautiful women and men in spectacular settings posing in advanced postures continue to sell the vision and the ideal that the ancient practice of yoga will bring happiness and tranquillity.

It is still commonly taught that our current regime of yoga practice belongs to a 5,000-year-old system, timeless and unchanging. Yet this is not necessarily the case. Academic research in the last decade has challenged this view. It is now argued by some historians that what we know today as 'yoga' may have been devised in India as recently as the 1920s from a combination of classic yoga postures and calisthenics.

Researchers also suggest that, from the 1950s, yoga has moved through three stages—popularisation, consolidation and acculturation.⁶² These phases can be observed in our study of yoga in Australia. When it was first taught in Australia, Margrit Segesman, along with Michael Volin, Nancy Phelan and Roma Blair, all taught a version of yoga they had learned in India or from Indian Swamis. In its introductory phase in Australia, from the 1950s to the 1970s, yoga was seen as either exotic or as a quasi-religious cult. While many students may have been curious about the exotic new practice, after a few classes, most students of the Gita School of Yoga saw how yoga could enhance their lives through fitness and relaxation. Toward the end of the introductory phase in the late 1970s, Indian swamis visited Australia and brought their own brands of yoga from specific ashrams. Some students here in Australia were captivated by the arrival of exotic swamis in robes, while others travelled to India for intensive yoga courses. Margrit Segesman, who professed to abhor 'guru worship', did, in the end, support a visiting swami who taught classes while she wrote her memoirs.

Her studio saw drastically increased numbers of attendances throughout the 1970s. By the 1980s, the student-apprenticeship model of teacher training had been replaced by longer, structured, intensive courses. Hatha, or postural yoga, was transformed when the precise, athletic and intense Iyengar method became the fashion of the 1980s and 1990s. What had largely been an appealing form of exercise for women suddenly became attractive to men. It was during this period that the practice of yoga as

a health and fitness regime, as well as a path to spiritual harmony, was consolidated.

By the 2000s, the practice of yoga had become acculturated. Yoga schools, either privately owned, as part of a gym or to a lesser extent, as part of an ashram, proliferate. Along with conservatism, alternative medicines and other alternative practices such as acupuncture, yoga has become a lifestyle choice. At the same time, franchises have transformed yoga into a million dollar business in Australia and around the world. Throughout its sixty years, Gita Yoga has prided itself on being ‘gimmick free’. Yet, like other yoga schools, to earn additional income, its products include the sale of books, DVDs, retreats in Bali and teacher training courses.

Michael Volin, Nancy Phelan, Roma Blair and Margrit Segesman might be alarmed at yoga’s commercialisation in the 21st century. They might also be surprised that it has become an area of academic research. However, they would be happy that it is now a mainstream health regime practised by hundreds of thousands of Australians.

Postscript: Since this article was written, the influential teacher, B. K. S. Iyengar who died in August 2014, was described in *Vox* as the yogi who revitalised the ancient Indian discipline.

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GREYHOUND COURSING OF LIVE AND TIN HARES AT ALBURY

Noel Jackling and Doug Royal

Abstract

The greyhound coursing of live hares and later tin hares was a popular and socially significant sport that has largely been neglected in historical studies in Australia. This article seeks to partially redress that situation through the example of the border town, later city of Albury, which attracted dogs from Victoria and New South Wales to compete for prize money. In particular, it discusses greyhound coursing of live hares at the Albury Racecourse from 1885 to 1948 and the transition in 1934–35 to greyhound speed coursing, using a mechanical tin hare as a lure.

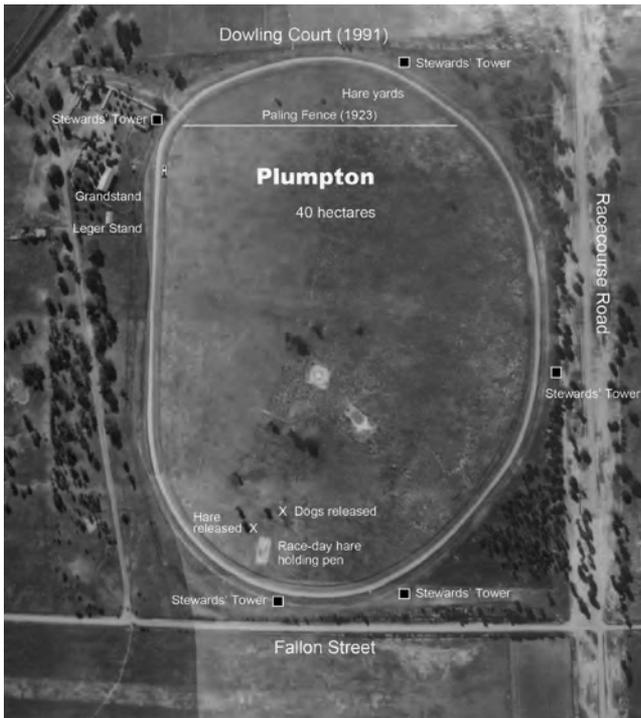
Plumpton Coursing at Albury

GREYHOUND COURSING OF LIVE HARES in an enclosed area is called plumpton coursing after the town of Plumpton in England that first introduced coursing in a fenced-off area, as opposed to an open field. It is conducted in successive courses (or ties) with two greyhounds hunting a single hare. It was a blood sport based on pairs of greyhounds sighting, not smelling, a single hare, and hunting it, while humans gambled on the outcome. Which dog would reach the hare first and force it to turn or grass it or kill it? Would the dog that was the first to reach the hare be the one to grass it? Which dog would kill the hare? Or would the hare evade death by reaching the safety of its own enclosure? Greyhound coursing of live hares in Australia emerged as a sport following

the introduction of hares in 1873.¹ Greyhounds had already been brought out to Australia on the First Fleet in 1788 by the New South Wales governor, Captain Arthur Phillip.²

A judge awarded points for their hunting prowess to each greyhound in the successive pairs, with one greyhound being eliminated each time. Depending on the number of dogs in the fixture, there were successive elimination rounds called ties, before semifinals and the grand final.³ The dog entry fee generally covered prizes, with a prize for first and second dogs, and the owners of the third and fourth dogs getting their money back. Sometimes the first-placed dog won an additional prize for its owner, such as a bracelet or gold cup, which a patron generally donated.

From 1885 to 1897, from 1923 to 1934 and in 1938 and 1948, the central area of the Albury Racecourse (about 40 hectares) was devoted to plumpton coursing.



*The plumpton of the Albury Racecourse.
(Courtesy of City of Albury, based on a 1949 photo in
the Albury Collection.)*

Three parallel fences surrounded the circumference of the central oval area. The middle and inner fences were wooden post and rail fences, the middle one being the running rails of the horse race track, with the inner one defining the outer perimeter of the plumpton, as well as defining the inner perimeter of a track where horses trained. There was only a short distance between the middle and inner fences



The Albury Racecourse in 1937 showing the outer fence, the running rails and the inner perimeter fence for the plumpton coursing. The training track and ambulance road lie between the latter two.

(Courtesy of National Library of Australia, MacRobertson International Air Race 1934 Collection, NLA MS 4792.)

The plumpton enclosure was created by covering the gap under the rails and between the posts of the innermost fence with wire netting, preventing the escape of greyhounds and hares. The plumpton fence was first erected in 1886–7, and was repaired in 1922–3.⁴

A paling fence ran from west to east across the plumpton. There is no known photo of the paling fence at the Albury Racecourse, but it was probably similar to one at Ballarat West in the following illustration. The paling fence on the plumpton of the Albury racecourse had a hole at the foot of twelve of the palings, large enough for hares to get through, but too small for greyhounds. The northern end of the inner racecourse area was called the hare yards and was the safety zone for the hares.⁵



The chicken-wire-covered post and rail fence boundary of the plumpton on 24 October 1934, showing items from the KLM Douglas DC-2 Uiver after its emergency landing.

(Courtesy of Nel Moll.)



Coursing dogs with their handlers, with paling fence behind them, thought to be on the plumpton at Ballarat West (ca 1924).

(Courtesy of Rebekah Mitchell-Matthews.)

At the southern end of the plumpton, there was a race-day holding pen for the hares. A tie was started by a hare being taken from this temporary holding pen and released nearby. Generally, hares were captured in a hare drive in the local district, such as at Jindera, but when there was a shortage of hares, they had to be bought.⁶ The hares were schooled to run to the paling fence and go through one of the twelve holes to the other side where they had learned that they would be safe from the dogs. According to Patrick Ryan, whose father took him to the greyhound coursing as a young boy: ‘the hare would give a buck and a skip and be off. The hares were real smart. They only needed to be taught once to know where to go!’⁷

A greyhound handler, known as a ‘slipper’, stood not far from the race-day hare pen, holding two greyhounds under control by means of a specially designed leash or lead, which was looped over his wrist at one end and held the two dogs in a double collar at the other. The dogs were yapping and straining on the lead—their hunting instinct had kicked in, and they wanted to get after the hare. The slipper ran towards the hare with the dogs still on the lead. Inside the lead was a retractable cable with a ring on it at the slipper’s end. When the slipper decided that both greyhounds had sighted the hare and were equally pulling on their respective collars, he let go the handle attached to the leather lead and collars, whilst at the same time pulling the cable at the end attached to his wrist, which was also attached to the pins holding the double collar. The double collar slipped off the dogs’ necks, releasing them, and giving them an equal opportunity to charge the hare and hunt it down.⁸

The hare had a start, but if the greyhounds loomed close and a kill was imminent, generally the terrified hare would deftly sidestep, and the greyhound would storm past and have to turn in a whirl to get back onto the hare’s trail.

One of the slippers at the Albury plumpton was Jim Royal (1894–1971), a carpenter from Culcairn. Jim was a Master Slipper, who ‘slipped’ greyhounds at the Albury Racecourse for many years. He was the slipper at the second annual Gold Cup meeting on 13 and 14 June 1930 and was reported as having ‘acted as slipper in his usual and efficient manner’.⁹ Slippers did not own the dogs they were slipping. Jim Royal’s grandson Doug Royal can remember his grandfather still lovingly oiling the leather on the dog collars for many years after the sport was banned.

A judge awarded points to each dog, which determined the winner of each tie, and which greyhounds went on to the next round, or won the



Jim Royal slips greyhounds. The photo is marked 'Melbourne Derby 1929' in Jim Royal's handwriting.

(Courtesy of co-author, Doug Royal.)

final. A different coloured cloth around each dog's neck helped the judge to determine which dog was which. A judge's tower was built in 1923, which meant that the judge was able to make decisions from an elevated position. Earlier, they may have been on an elevated platform on the plumption, in one of the stewards' towers for the horse racing or on horseback.

Judges awarded points for the dog being the first to reach the hare, for forcing the hare to turn and 'working' the hare by using its head to roll it over or to flip the hare in the air, possibly catching it in its mouth on its descent. The coursing ended when the judge decided that the dogs had become too tired, when the hare had reached the safety of its yards, or when the hare had been killed.

Hares were considered by Section 12 of the Pastures and Stock Protection Act Amendment Act of 1881 (NSW) to have increased in numbers, and to have the potential to 'inflict serious loss and damage upon owners or the occupiers of gardens orchards cropped or any cultivated lands'.¹⁰ Those wanting to keep hares needed to apply to the governor for a permit. Despite efforts to eradicate them, there is still a remnant population of wild hares at the outlying Albury suburb of Thurgoona!

Early Plumption Coursing at Albury Racecourse

The first meeting of the newly formed Albury Coursing Club began at the Albury Racecourse on Friday 7 August 1885 and concluded the next day in one of Mr Grieve's paddocks at nearby Bungowannah.¹¹ The event was plagued with difficulties. The meeting was planned for Thursday 6 August

1885, but it transpired that this corresponded with the Corowa Show and a meeting of the Local Land Board, so the meeting date was changed to Friday 7 August.¹² Then, on the night of Saturday 1 August 1885, 59 of the 60 hares held in captivity for the meeting escaped by burrowing under the racecourse fence, so the secretary had to go to Melbourne to secure replacement hares, which he did on the following Monday.¹³ The following Friday, the meeting was conducted on the Albury Racecourse in delightful weather, and the coursing was described as brilliant, though ‘towards the close the hares were weak’.¹⁴ The event was not concluded by sunset and needed to be extended into the following day.¹⁵ Due to the sickness and scarcity of hares, a decision was made to run off the remaining ties in the Bungowanah paddocks, where hares were plentiful.¹⁶

On Saturday 8 August 1885, ‘about 200 gentlemen assembled at Mrs Darby’s Bungowanah Hotel at 10:30 a.m., and with horsemen and foot beaters, a line was formed ... Hares being plentiful, the courses were run off quickly and well’.¹⁷ It would seem that women did not assemble at the hotel, although on the preceding day at the racecourse, ‘there was a fair sprinkling of the fairer sex amongst the assembled crowd’.¹⁸

On 26 March 1886, the Albury Coursing Club ‘decided to erect a permanent plumpton at the Albury Racecourse’.¹⁹ This would have obviated the need for the horsemen and foot beaters used at the first meeting. The next coursing meeting was held on 21 June 1887, and from then on, until a meeting on 14 September 1897²⁰, up to three meetings were held each year, mostly at the Albury Racecourse, but a small number at the privately owned Table Top Estate, where hares were plentiful. The success or otherwise of the meetings was dependent on the vagaries of the weather, the size of the crowd, the availability and condition of the hares, described as being strong or weak.

There were no greyhound coursing meetings from 1898 until 1923, for which the Great War can only be a partial explanation. So what was it that caused their sudden demise? A clue may lie in the fact that in 1893, for the first time, a fox was sighted near Albury. Could it be that as fox numbers increased, so hare numbers diminished?²¹ It is also possible that in the depression years of the 1890s, the club ran into financial difficulties, which demanded the sale in August 1897 of its main asset, the wire netting that created the plumpton.²² It appears that the first coursing club in Albury ceased to exist shortly afterwards.

Greyhound Coursing Post-World War I

In August 1922, initial overtures were made to the Albury Racing Club for the use of that part of the Albury racecourse already enclosed by a fence covered with wire netting, quite possibly the original plumpton fence constructed around 1886.²³ By October 1922, a new coursing club, the Albury & District Coursing Club, had been formed, often referred to as the Albury Coursing Club. In February 1923, the club engaged in a hare drive at Jindera. By early May, a paling fence had been erected at the escape end to establish hare yards, and verandas constructed over the twelve escape holes, so the plumpton had practically been completed, except for the hare boxes. Arrangements were in place for the planting of salt bushes, and soon a judging tower was erected. The inaugural event was fixed for Monday and Tuesday 25–26 June 1923. On the preceding Saturday, further schooling of the hares took place, the highlight being two hares jumping right over the high escape fence. Entries exceeded all expectations, and all the stakes were filled several days before nominations were due to close. The first meeting did take place on 25–26 June 1923, and the wife of the club's president had the honour of releasing the first hare. The hares were described as being in excellent condition, so much so, that from about fifty courses, only five or six hares were killed. The dogs were slipped in a skilful manner by the slipper, so they were given every chance, but the hares, by dint of having been perseveringly 'schooled' through the escapes, knew exactly where to go, and naturally, went as fast as they possibly could. A large number of bookmakers were present.²⁴

From 1923 until 1934, with the possible exception of 1931, coursing meetings were held at least once a year, although not without difficulties. Hare drives needed to be held to secure hares for meetings, but at times, hares were scarce and advertisements were placed in the local newspaper in an effort to buy them.²⁵ Hares needed to be obtained in time for the holding of dog trials and hare schooling.²⁶ Conditions could be too dry.²⁷ A further difficulty lay in the multiplicity of coursing clubs in the Riverina, which led to competition for meeting dates, which the National Coursing Association sought to manage.²⁸

In June 1933, the Australasian Waterloo Cup Coursing Carnival was held at the Albury Racecourse. The Australasian Waterloo Cup was the première event on the Australasian coursing calendar and drew entries from afar. The Albury & District Coursing Club conducted greyhound coursing of hares on its plumpton on Wednesday 21 June 1933, Friday 23 June 1933

and Saturday 24 June 1933. The Albury Racing Club conducted a horse race meeting on Thursday 22 June 1933. The main event in the coursing fixture was the Australasian Waterloo Cup held on the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; another coursing event was the Alfred Waugh Class Stakes, sponsored by Albury's mayor.²⁹ Attending the Carnival racing—but not the greyhound coursing—was the first Australian-born Governor-General of Australia, Sir Isaac Isaacs, with Lady Isaacs.

According to Jack Craig of Albury, hares were rarely caught, as the hares would zig-zag to escape the greyhounds before making a beeline back to the safety of their yards.³⁰ Nevertheless, in the heats of the Waterloo Cup: 'The hares, which had been specially trained for the carnival, ran well, and it was only in the last few courses that kills were made'.³¹ Again, on Saturday 24 June: 'Milanor (7/4 on) beat Maharatta (8/1) by two points. Milanor led to the hare and soon after, Maharatta grounded it. The course took 37 secs'.³²

An oval-shaped badge made from copper alloy was issued to commemorate the occasion.



Australasian Waterloo Cup 1933 badge. In the possession of Albury LibraryMuseum.

(Courtesy of Helen Privett.)

The Albury & District Coursing Club held its last coursing event on 4 August 1934.³³

Plumpton Coursing in Victoria

In Victoria, plumpton coursing was widespread, and from time to time took place in Melbourne, at Moonee Valley, and in many country towns and cities such as Benalla, Bendigo, Charlton, Colac, Cressy, Dimboola, Koroit, Kilmore, Kyabram, Kyneton, Horsham, Maldon, Maryborough, Melton, Sale, Shepparton, Stawell, Swan Hill, Tatura, Traralgon, Werribee, Wonthaggi and Yarrawonga. For plumpton coursing in Albury, Victoria was a natural catchment area for competing dogs and patrons. In the 1933 Waterloo Cup, for instance, the competitors included dogs from Rutherglen and Benalla.

The Move to Speed Coursing

The mechanical tin lure was invented in America around 1907 and first used in greyhound speed coursing in the USA in 1919.³⁴ The tin hare was to change live hare coursing into another form of greyhound sport.

Greyhound coursing of live hares was highly controlled in that coursing clubs were only allocated dates for a few meetings each year. In Albury, for instance, the maximum seems to have been three, but often only one meeting was held. Meetings were always reliant on the success of hare drives or on the purchase of 'expendable' live hares. Attendance was variable, as was the weather, and betting opportunities were infrequent and irregular. The introduction of the tin lure meant that frequent and regular speed coursing meetings could be held day or night with an associated increase in betting opportunities.

Regular Saturday night meetings, with a low entry fee and low coin denominations accepted for betting, attracted the working class, who flocked to the tin lure meetings in their thousands. In the roaring twenties, an era of flappers, temperance movements and influential churches espousing Puritanical traditions, it was claimed that this new outlet for public gambling could have negative repercussions on family life. Women and children were reportedly gambling, and working men were neglecting their families to finance their betting activities.³⁵

The early years of tin hare coursing in New South Wales were chequered ones, as betting was initially not permitted, then was permitted, then was prohibited by legislation and finally was permitted by legislation.

Attendance at speed coursing events was reliant on people's ability to place a bet. When the first meeting using the tin hare was held at Epping Racecourse (later known as Harold Park) on a cold Saturday night on 28 May 1927, there was no betting, because the Labor Attorney General Edward McTiernan believed that tin hare coursing was not covered by 'coursing' in the Betting and Gaming Act, 1912 (NSW).³⁶ Unsurprisingly, in between races, the crowd became restless.³⁷ The next two meetings, held on the Monday afternoons of 6 and 13 June were also betting-free and attracted reduced crowds.³⁸ On 27 May 1927, Premier Jack Lang replaced McTiernan as Attorney General with Andy Lysaght. Following consideration of counsel's opinion submitted by the Greyhound Coursing Association, Lysaght decided that coursing by means of an electrically propelled lure *was* 'coursing' within the meaning of the Betting and Gaming Act.³⁹ He allowed betting to take place at the next meeting, on Saturday 18 June 1927, when attendances skyrocketed.⁴⁰

The reversal was short-lived. In October 1927, the Bavin Nationalist government was elected, and it passed legislation, effective 12 December 1927, that banned betting after sunset as a way of curtailing tin hare coursing and its associated gambling.⁴¹ Jack Lang saw this as an attack against the working class, and when he was re-elected in 1930, steps were again taken through the Finance (Greyhound-Racing) Taxation Act, 1931 (NSW) to permit the working class to bet at night at coursing events.⁴²

The passage of this act was the key to tin lure coursing in the country where horse racing entertainment was limited, and by early March 1932, nine country licences had been granted—Albury was not amongst them.⁴³ Nevertheless, in March 1932, an application was made by a syndicate to the Albury Show Society to rent its grounds for £5 per meeting to run 30 to 40 tin hare meetings per year. The application was rejected by 26 votes to 2 on the basis that the meetings would interfere with other local sports, and boys would follow the fortunes of tin hares when they should be at school.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the Albury & District Coursing Club was focused on successfully running the 1933 Australasian Waterloo Cup for coursing of live hares on the Albury Racecourse, and it was not until 21 June 1934 that a meeting of twenty-five interested persons decided to actively pursue the tin hare option. A new club was formed with the name of 'Albury Coursing Club', the name of the original club formed in 1885.⁴⁵

The new Albury Coursing Club was empowered to conduct plumpton coursing, but it is clear that the thrust was towards speed coursing with the

use of a mechanical hare. Of the 25 people who attended the 21 June 1934 meeting, at least three were committee members of the Albury & District Coursing Club. A committee of eighteen office-bearers and committee members was elected, with Mr A. Trenchard, the chairman of the Albury & District Coursing Club, being elected as chairman of the new coursing club.⁴⁶

The mere fact that the establishment of a new club was considered necessary to embrace speed coursing suggests that the move towards speed coursing was not universally popular within the old club. Or perhaps it was simply considered best to start afresh? The new club applied to the Albury City Council for permission to use the Albury Sports Ground, but at its July meeting, Council rejected the application.⁴⁷ The Albury Show Ground was also briefly considered, but, in August 1934, a lease was executed over the United Friendly Societies ground in Borella Road, East Albury, near the Newmarket Hotel.⁴⁸

Then, on 24 October 1934, the KLM Douglas DC-2 *Uiver*, competing in the London to Melbourne MacRobertson International Air Race, an event celebrating Victoria and Melbourne's centenary, made an emergency night-time landing on the Albury Racecourse. The plane became bogged up to its wheel axles, and, after daybreak, the plane was manually hauled to drier ground by Alburysiders using ropes attached to the undercarriage, taxied to the southern end of the racecourse and eventually took off safely.



Furrowing caused by the Uiver's wheels is inspected by a racing or greyhound hare coursing official.

(K.D. Parmentier; In drie dagen naar Australië, Amsterdam, Scheltens & Giltay, 1935, opp. p. 164.)

On 25 October 1934, the day after the *Uiver* incident, the Committee of the Albury & District Coursing Club met, and the minutes of the meeting reveal displeasure, if not anger, at the plumpton damage.⁴⁹ The secretary, Mr G.J. Clark, was instructed to write to the pilot and seek compensation. However, the plumpton lease of the Albury & District Coursing Club expired late in October 1934, so, by early November, when the Club wanted to pursue its claim for compensation, it no longer occupied or had any legal interest in the property. The secretary of the Albury Racing Club, Bertie Peacock, pre-empted any further action by stating that the plane had been on the racecourse by invitation of the Albury Racing Club, to which any right to claim belonged, and that it would not be making any claim.⁵⁰

Work meanwhile progressed in preparation for the first greyhound speed coursing meeting. Mr Winstanley, who was later appointed race starter, was contracted to construct an eight-dog set of starting boxes. A mechanical lure system was installed at the race track. The lure was a tin 'hare', a piece of tin covered with rabbit fur. Just before the race started, the lure was placed on a three- to four-foot long arm attached to a line of heavy duty wire that ran along the side of the track. The lure was roughly in line with the middle of the front of the dog boxes. Also attached to the lure was a long length of cotton line thread. At its other end, roughly 440 yards away, it was attached to a pulling mechanism. This was no more than an upturned bicycle from which the front wheel had been removed and the pedals replaced with long wooden handles, worked by two men, standing on either side of the bike.⁵¹ The men wound the bike 'paddles' vigorously for the duration of the race. The lure was fitted with a light, run by battery power, to allow those operating the pulling mechanism to see the tin hare and keep it about 30 feet in front of the dogs. At the end of the race, the lure disappeared into a trap door where it was safely out of sight of the greyhounds.

On 4 March 1935, the new Albury Coursing Club elected a Committee of Management and appointed officials for the first race meeting.⁵² Early in March 1935, the club was granted a speed coursing licence.⁵³

The inaugural meeting of the Albury Coursing Club was held on the Saturday evening of 23 March 1935. About 1500 people attended, although several hundred artful dodgers gained entry by scaling a fence at the back. One bookmaker was fielding without the consent of the club, but police took the view that they could not remove him as he was a licensed bookmaker and was legally entitled to be on the premises when the club accepted his

admission fee. There were several mechanical breakdowns, presumably of the lure mechanism.⁵⁴

Plumpton Coursing and Speed Coursing in Albury—the Final Yelps

What was happening in the Albury & District Coursing Club after its 25 October 1934 proposal to claim compensation was thwarted? The answer very likely was ‘nothing’. By January 1935, and probably well before, the focus of the key people with an interest in greyhound events was on getting greyhound speed races going, and not on further plumpton coursing. The club’s lease of the racecourse had expired and there were, in any event, no funds to repair the plumpton’s surface. Soon after, on 7 March 1935, the recently formed Albury Coursing Club passed a motion to assume and take over the whole of the liabilities and assets of the Albury & District Coursing Club.

The era of plumpton coursing was not yet quite over, but the winds of change were very definitely blowing. A general meeting of what appears to be another new coursing club, the Albury Coursing Plumpton Club, took place in August 1936. A report stated that, after inspecting the plumpton at the Albury Racecourse, the ground was found to be in good order. The outside fence required a little attention to make it hare-proof, and some work was required to fix the escapes. A working bee was arranged, but there is no ensuing report of a coursing meeting.⁵⁵ Again, on 3 June 1937, there is a report that the ‘Albury Plumpton is now in readiness for a kick off’, but it was reported that in view of the prevailing dry conditions, no announcement of a meeting date had been made.⁵⁶ Trials were held on 25 July 1937 at which ‘the hares were in fine buckle, and only two were grassed’.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the anticipated coursing meeting still did not take place. Talk of a coursing event continued, but, by the annual general meeting on 30 January 1938, there had still been no coursing meeting, and since subscriptions had been fully expended to get the plumpton in order, the question was whether 1937 membership tickets would be valid for 1938. A coursing meeting eventually took place, but not until 23 July 1938.⁵⁸

During World War II, there was no thought of holding plumpton-coursing meetings. The Albury District Plumpton Coursing Club planned to hold a meeting on the Albury Racecourse plumpton on 19 June 1948, but there is no report of it having taken place.⁵⁹ It could have been deferred until 30–31 July 1948, because the *Border Morning Mail* did report a meeting held on that date.⁶⁰ The hares were a speedy and sturdy lot and

not one was killed. This is the last report of a coursing meeting on the plumpton of Albury Racecourse. By 1953, community attitudes towards the killing of live hares in a so-called sporting event had changed, and legislation was enacted to reflect this. Section 2(a)(iii) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Amendment) Act, 1953 (NSW) amended Section 4 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1901–1952 (NSW) and banned coursing of live animals by dogs in New South Wales. The amending Act effecting the ban came into force on 16 December 1953. At least in New South Wales, the era of plumpton coursing was over.

In Victoria, plumpton coursing continued for 13 years longer than in New South Wales. The Police Offences Act 1958 (Vic.) prohibited any killing of an animal by a dog, but contained an exception to permit live coursing conducted under the auspices of the National Coursing Association of Victoria. The Protection of Animals Act 1966 (Vic.) dropped the coursing exception.⁶¹

Plumpton coursing in Albury had run from 1885 to 1897, from 1923 to 1934, and in 1938 and 1948. Greyhound speed coursing in Albury went from 1935 until 2003, with the final race being held on 18 October 2003.⁶² Plumpton coursing had lasted on and off for 63 years, while greyhound speed coursing lasted continuously for 68 years. In Albury, at least, both forms of greyhound coursing had had their final yelp.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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COMMEMORATING JUDGES: STATUES, PORTRAITS, BUSTS AND STREET NAMES

Joanne Boyd

JUDGES IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY were figures of some significance: representing the Crown and British justice. They were often prominent members of the society, active in many charitable and reform enterprises, helping to establish universities, libraries and philosophical societies. When it came to creating historical markers, judges were remembered in many ways: with monuments, with streets, towns and legal chambers named after them, with scholarships and university chairs. But, in the larger Australian historical consciousness, judges are seldom remembered—unless you are Redmond Barry and presided over one of the most well-known of criminal trials in Australian history, that of Ned Kelly.

In *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, Graeme Davison writes about the arrival of the public memorials and statues in public spaces in Australia from the 1880s to the end of World War I, calling this period ‘the heroic age of colonial statuary’.¹ He argued that this was a part of a growing celebration of the Australian colonial achievement. The centennial of European settlement and its attendant commemorations, as well as the Australian colonies’ growing movement towards federation, contributed to the desire to create a distinctly Australian culture.²

Public Memorials

Two of the more celebrated of the judges of the Supreme Court of Victoria, Redmond Barry and George Higinbotham, are commemorated with memorial statues located in central Melbourne. According to the *Argus*, the statue of Redmond Barry in the forecourt of the State Library in Swanston

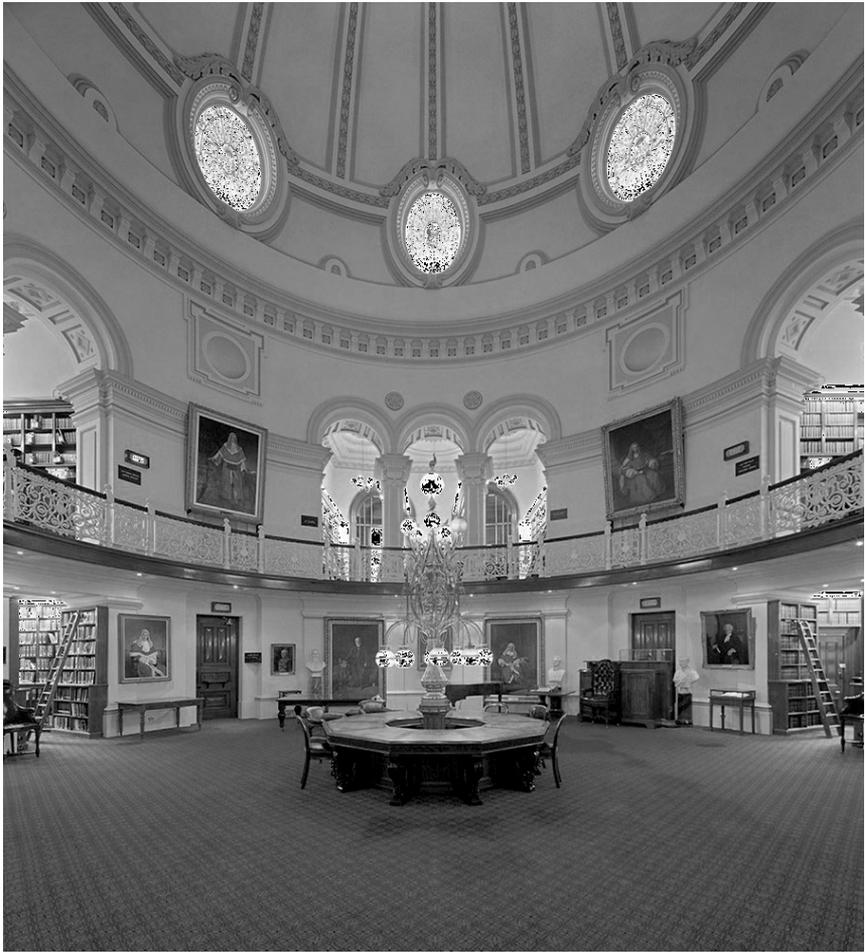
Street was unveiled by the Governor in August 1887, before ‘a large and representative company’. Barry is depicted in his University Chancellor’s robes, not his judicial robes. That choice is significant: the speeches reported in *The Argus* celebrate Barry’s contributions to the library, museum, university and art gallery.³ His contribution on the bench was mentioned, but not emphasised, and, on the dedication on the statue, his position as a Supreme Court judge is listed last. One of the notable things about this memorial is that it was only the second public monument in Melbourne. The first, erected in the 1860s, was of the explorers Burke and Wills.

Speaking in 1887 at the unveiling of the Barry statue, Sir George Verdon, a politician and library trustee, noted that the Barry statue was an early commemorative statue. At the same time, he took a swipe at Sydney, by pointing out that the people of Sydney had recently ‘testified their gratitude to Thomas Mort’ by erecting a memorial, but that Mort had ‘devoted his time and means to the commercial and industrial advancement of his country, while Sir Redmond Barry made the intellectual culture of the people the object of his life’.⁴

Today, Barry is best known in the popular imagination and the historic narrative of Australia as the judge who presided over the Kelly trial. Only those immersed in history recognise his contribution to the library, gallery and museum. Even writers of legal history have trouble according Barry any great or innovative role on the bench or through his judgments.⁵

The second memorial statue, to Chief Justice George Higinbotham, adjacent to Parliament House, was not erected until fifty years after that of Barry. The position of the memorial outside the former Treasury building is not accidental, for Higinbotham’s career as a politician is being commemorated, even though he is portrayed in his judicial robes.

No memorials were erected to Higinbotham immediately after his death in 1893—his family name is celebrated in a Brighton street name—and a federal electorate, as well as a Melbourne University scholarship, were named after him. William Harbison left £2,500 in his will to create the scholarship to perpetuate the memory of George Higinbotham. The statue also owes its existence to a bequest, from Donald Mackinnon, one of Higinbotham’s associates on the bench, who worked with him on the consolidation of the Victorian Statutes. After working with Higinbotham, whom he greatly admired, Mackinnon went on to a distinguished career as a politician and an Australian Trade Commissioner in Los Angeles in the mid-1920s.⁶ Mackinnon had made provision in his will for £2,000



*An image of the library interior.
(Courtesy of Supreme Court of Victoria.)*

for the erection of a statue to honour his mentor Higinbotham. The artist chosen to do the work was Paul Montford, probably best known for his sculptural groups on the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance. It is not clear exactly why the Higinbotham statue was erected in Collins Street or why the judicial robes were chosen. They may reflect the judicial association of Higinbotham and Mackinnon, as well as Higinbotham's contribution to Victorian politics and his work on the Victorian Statutes in particular.

The Supreme Court Library Portraits

Many of the other Supreme Court judges are celebrated through the Supreme Court Library's collection of portraits, busts and judicial memorabilia. By examining the story of the Supreme Court of Victoria library's acquisition of its portraits, I hope to reflect on the acknowledgement of the colonial achievement and the making of history in colonial and early 20th century Australia.

The Supreme Court Library of Victoria has officially been in existence since 1852.⁷ Its existence is largely the work of Redmond Barry after his appointment to the Supreme Court bench in 1852. Barry set about creating a great legal library: in addition to legal texts and reports, he bought widely in history and philosophy. But when and why did the library acquire the portraits, busts and other artefacts and judicial and legal mementos? The first clue comes in the history of the acquisition of Sir William à Beckett's portrait.

Sir William à Beckett was the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria. Previously he had had a busy career at the Sydney Bar, most notably appearing as defence counsel in the Myall Creek massacre case. Following his appointment to the Supreme Court of New South Wales bench, he was appointed Resident Judge for the Port Phillip district in 1846, the fourth judge to hold this position. When separation of the colonies occurred, Sir William was made Chief Justice of the Colony of Victoria, a post he held until 1857, having presided over some of the Eureka trials. His work on *Judgments of the Supreme Court of NSW for the District of Port Phillip* and *Reserved and Equity Judgments of the Supreme Court of NSW during 1845* led to him being described as the founder of systematic public law reporting in Australia. He wrote poetry of little distinction, but also wrote numerous pamphlets advocating the temperance cause and condemning the evils of the gold rush. À Beckett was also the author of *The Magistrates' Manual for the Colony of Victoria*.⁸

John Dennistoun Wood, a barrister and politician, presented the painting of à Beckett to the Court in 1867. In his correspondence with the Supreme Court Library Committee when he was arranging the donation of the portrait, Wood wrote that he hoped the painting would 'hang there [in the Court] in like manner as the portraits of many of the sages of the law are held in the Courts at Guildhall'.⁹ Wood's allusion to the judges' portraits in the Guildhall suggests an attempt to create an Australian pantheon of

similar legal sages, the portrait of Sir William being a modest beginning to this endeavour.



*Chief Justice William à Beckett (1806-1869) by Mosley
(Courtesy of Supreme Court of Victoria.)*

The portrait was probably commissioned by either Sir William or his family, from a relatively unknown Irish artist, Walter Mosley. John Dennistoun Wood purchased the portrait from Sir William and donated it to the library. Early accounts have the painting hanging in a prominent position in the 'old' court house at La Trobe and Russell Streets, the portrait being moved down to the current library space in 1884.¹⁰

The ‘sages of the law’ to whom Wood may have been referring were the portraits of judges and lawyers that were hung in the public spaces of the Inns of Court in the 19th century, as well as the portraits of the ‘Fire Judges’, which hung in the Guildhall in London, but were destroyed during World War II. The fire judges sat after the Great Fire of London in 1666 to decide civil law matters that arose after the fire. Such was the gratitude of the people of London, that they commissioned pictures of the judges in their red robes.

In a recently published study on portraits of judges and lawyers from the late 16th and early 17th centuries, we learn that the judicial commemorative portrait was originally commissioned for the personal aggrandisement of a particular judge, being hung in their private homes rather than in public spaces.¹¹ Judicial portraits, such as those of the Fire Judges, did not enter public spaces until the late 17th century and later were collected by various chambers, inns and courts in the 19th century, as a greater appreciation of their legal forebears and heritage manifested itself in commemorating their achievements.

The Supreme Court Library Committee appear to have taken Wood’s desire for a gallery of judicial ‘sages’ to heart, and, when the Court moved to its new buildings in 1884, portraits were commissioned of three of its longest serving judges: Redmond Barry, Chief Justice Sir William Stawell and Sir Robert Molesworth.¹²

The Barry portrait was posthumous, Barry having died in 1880, a few weeks after the conclusion of the Kelly trial. The stiffness of the portrait reflects the fact that the painting was not painted from life. Barry’s face and pose are similar to those in a 1870s photograph of him now held by the State Library. The Barry portrait was commissioned from Robert Dowling, who had returned to Australia after many years in England. He had a fine reputation and many of his portraits are far more lively and interesting than this one of Barry.

Molesworth and Stawell were still very much alive when their portraits were commissioned (at the same time as the Redmond Barry portrait), although both were close to retirement. At the time of his portrait, Stawell had been on the bench and had been Chief Justice for close to 30 years. The Western District goldfield township of Stawell had been named after him shortly after his appointment. The portrait of Stawell is a rather unfortunate one: he appears stiff, like a waxwork figure. The painting was by Edward à Beckett, nephew of the former chief justice and brother to Justice Thomas

à Beckett. It contrasts sharply with the portrait of Molesworth done at the same time where Molesworth appears to be sinking slowly in his chair.

Both the former Chief Justice Sir John Young, and John Bennett in his study of Stawell in his biographies of Chief Justices, mention that it is a shame that Stawell is not better recognised in historical studies. Sir John thought it unfortunate that Stawell is mainly remembered as the name of a foot race, rather than as an able administrator, someone who set the tone of the Court for over 30 years. Certainly Stawell's long tenure as Chief Justice and the relative lack of controversy during his stewardship goes unremarked.¹³ Around Stawell's former Kew home, d'Estaville, the streets are named Stawell, Sir William, Holroyd, Redmond, Barry, à Beckett, Molesworth and Fellows. Justice Williams, who sat on the bench with Barry, Molesworth and Stawell, does not figure in these judicially themed street names. Nor does the name of the first resident judge, the disgraced Judge Willis, feature in West Melbourne, where the second, third and fourth judges (Jeffcott, Therry and à Beckett) are all commemorated.¹⁴

The portrait of Justice Molesworth was commissioned at the same time as that of Sir William Stawell, and by the same artist, Edward à Beckett. The Molesworth portrait has had a more interesting post-acquisition history than those of the others. Originally hanging in the library with his fellow judges, by the 1970s, Molesworth was being stored sideways on the floor, the painting and the frame having been damaged during a flood. The portrait has since been restored and sits in Court 13 in the Trial Building at 210 William Street, where Justice Molesworth looks balefully across the court at the judges sitting at the bench. At the time of his death, and since, Molesworth has been recognised as settling mining law in Australia through his role as the Chief Judge of the Court of Mines.¹⁵ There is one rather more unfortunate footnote to the memorials of Molesworth. The library used to have a small bust of Molesworth, which apparently disappeared during renovations to the library in the 1990s.

The Supreme Court Library Busts

The Library holds a number of portrait busts. The plaster bust of Redmond Barry was purchased at the same time as the Barry, Molesworth and Stawell paintings were commissioned. Other busts of Redmond Barry are held by Melbourne University and by the State Library. At the same time as the Barry purchase, the Library also purchased a portrait bust of Justice Thomas Fellows, who was only on the Supreme Court bench for six years, after a

relatively successful career in colonial politics. The Barry and the Fellows portrait busts were purchased for £24 from James Scurry, an architectural sculptor best known for his work on the Parliament of Victoria building. The library still has the original receipt from Scurry. In this portrait, Barry appears in contemporary clothing, his features flatteringly romanticised and boasting a rather remarkable amount of hair, when compared with other portraits. In contrast, Thomas Fellows appears as a classical figure swathed in drapery. Both of the busts are made of plaster and are subsequently hollow—they stand on painted plaster columns made to resemble marble.

The other portrait bust held by the library is that of Justice Edward Holyrod. It is of marble, and probably commissioned to commemorate his 20 years on the bench, the bust being signed and dated 1901 on the back. The bust is by artist Charles Web Gilbert, one of his earliest attempts in the medium of marble, which he only began using in 1897.

At the turn of the century, the portraits of the Supreme Court librarian John Schutt, who held the post for more than 50 years, and the portrait of Justice Sir Thomas à Beckett were commissioned from Max Meldrum. The à Beckett portrait was finished in 1916, and given to the Court on the occasion of Sir Thomas's 80th Birthday and his completion of 30 years on the bench. À Beckett, a small white-bearded figure, dressed in his red judicial robes, sits in the centre of the painting, his feet placed on a plush red foot stool. Careful scrutiny of the painting reveals that the canvas was extended, probably to match the dimensions of the Schutt painting.

John Schutt, the only non-judicial figure associated with the Supreme Court to be honoured in the Library portrait collection, was appointed Supreme Court librarian during Redmond Barry's time in 1866. He started work in the Old Court in Russell Street and would have supervised the move of the library to its new and greatly expanded premises in William Street in 1884. As well as being secretary to the Library Committee, he also acted as the Secretary of the Board of Examiners on occasion. After his death in 1919, the *Williamstown Chronicle* noted in its obituary that Schutt was regarded as a *Solon*, an ancient Greek lawgiver famed for his wise advice.¹⁶ Away from the Court, he was a Williamstown councillor for many years, representing the Victoria Ward, now the suburb of Newport. It would appear Schutt Street in Newport was named after him. The portrait of Schutt has him rising from his chair ready to greet a visitor, his hand resting possessively on a pile of books.



*Chief Justice George Higinbotham (1826–1892) by L. Bernard Hall
(Courtesy of Supreme Court of Victoria.)*

The portrait of George Higinbotham, which hangs in the Library, is like the Barry portrait, a posthumous one. Commissioned by the Library Committee, which included the distinguished jurist, Henry Bournes Higgins, the portrait was undertaken by L. Bernard Hall. In 1893, Hall had just recently been appointed the director and principal teacher at the Art Gallery, the forerunner of the National Gallery of Victoria. This was a very early, and prestigious, commission for him. He apparently inspected the other portraits and declared himself willing to ‘paint a full length portrait of the same size and framed in the same manner as these portraits for £315’.¹⁷

Hall has included what are almost domestic touches—the carpet on the floor, a desk, books and a painting on the wall—in contrast to the other portraits that are rather austere and free of extraneous details.

On retirement, all the Chief Justices of the Supreme Court of Victoria have been commemorated with portraits, which were subsequently hung in the library. In contrast to the 19th Century ones, portraits in the 20th Century were paid for, or sponsored by, the legal profession. By these acts of commissioning, the profession was creating its own ‘heroes’ and legal sages and displaying the portraits in a place meaningful to the profession.¹⁸

For an institution like the Supreme Court, and for the broader legal profession, it is important for the prestige of the institution and the profession that the artists commissioned to do the commemorative or official portrait are well-regarded.¹⁹ Accordingly, the foremost portrait painter of his day, Sir William Dargie, the painter of the famous wattle portrait of the Queen, with eight Archibald prizes to his name, painted the two judges who were former World War II military men: Chief Justice Sir John Young and Chief Justice Sir Edmund Herring (Lieutenant General Herring). The portraits, although commissioned twenty years apart, are similar. Both judges are seated, hands resting in their laps, dressed in their red robes and full bench wigs, with a colour palette of red and fawn.

Sitting amongst the portraits of the chief justices is a painting of Sir Leo Cussen, who was acting Chief Justice in the late 1920s and early 1930s. He is portrayed sitting comfortably in his lounge suit. A second portrait commissioned from Sir John Longstaff of Sir Leo at the same time probably explains the lack of judicial robes. The second painting was destined for the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria. Sir Leo Cussen was the trustee for both the Gallery and the Melbourne Cricket Club, which also holds a portrait of him. Judicial robes are an important signifier of the status of the sitter, but are not appropriate in the other contexts where the portraits of Cussen were to be hung.

To reinforce this notion, in his portrait of Sir William Irvine, the Chief Justice of the 1920s and early 1930s, Longstaff has chosen to portray him in his vice-regal clothing. Irvine was rather fond of his role as acting governor and all the pomp and circumstance that went with this. Longstaff too was an Archibald prize winner.²⁰

Do the portraits represent a ‘hall of fame’? Every Superior Court has its ‘rogues gallery’ of judges hanging in courts, in chambers, or in the library. In this sense, they are not dissimilar to portraits adorning municipal chambers,

houses of parliament or universities. This impulse to commemorate the great and good through portraiture appears to have emerged in the Renaissance period after a hiatus from Roman times. Initially, portraits were not made for public consumption, but as keepsakes and to capture likenesses. In aristocratic circles, they could establish a lineage. Royal portraits were more frequently displayed in public spaces, sometimes heavy with allegorical meaning, for example, the statue of Louis XIV in the Place des Victoires in Paris or the painting of James I on the Banqueting House ceiling at Whitehall in London.

The colonial legal profession was attempting to create its own history with the commissioning and acquiring of portraits. A sense of this rise of a colonial historical consciousness can be found in the Bendigo Court House. The Court house is a magnificent building in the French second empire style. The Supreme Court's courtroom (each jurisdiction had their own courtroom), is located at the top of the building at the end of a grand staircase. The windows contain some beautiful etched glass. In addition to the names of pre-eminent English judges and legal authorities, Blackstone, Littleton, Mansfield and Coke, the names of the colonial judges, Higinbotham, Molesworth, Barry and Stawell, are found. No documentation has been found to date about why these particular names were chosen, particularly as they were created after the deaths of all four Victorian judges, but the impulse to commemorate these judges, along with distinguished legal authorities of the past, indicates that an historical consciousness had emerged by the 1890s in colonial Victoria about the role of the judges as legal authorities.

The presence of these statues, paintings and busts and judicial memorials, such as the names of legal chambers or streets, are significant reminders about a public commemoration of the judges. The placing of the portraits, in particular, in the Supreme Court Library is a reflection of a celebration by the legal profession of its history and heritage in a place relevant to them.

NOTES

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- 2 See also R. White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688–1980*, Sydney, George Allen & Unwin, 1981.
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- 4 *Argus*, 24 August 1887, p. 5.
- 5 See Ken Oldis, in *The Chinawoman*, North Melbourne, Arcadia, 2008, about a murder trial presided over by Barry. He does not portray Barry in a favourable light.
- 6 Geoffrey Serle, ‘Mackinnon, Donald (1859–1932)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography*, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mackinnon-donald-7397>, viewed 23 December 2011.
- 7 S. Reynolds, *Books for the Profession: The Library of the Supreme Court of Victoria*, North Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2012.
- 8 J.M. Bennett, *Sir William à Beckett: First Chief Justice of Victoria*, Sydney, Federation Press, 2001.
- 9 Letter held in the Supreme Court Library Correspondence Book, 29 May 1867.
- 10 J.L. Forde, *The Story of the Bar in Victoria*, Melbourne, Whitcombe & Tombs (n.d. early 20th century) p. 79.
- 11 T. Cooper, ‘Professional Pride and Personal Agendas: Portraits of Judges, Lawyers and Members of the Inns of Court 1560–1630’, in J. Archer, E. Goldring & S. Knight (eds), *The Intellectual and Cultural World of the Early Modern Inns of Court*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2011, pp. 157–173.
- 12 Minutes of the Library Committee, 9 April 1884.
- 13 J. Young, *Sir William Foster Stawell*, Carlton, Melbourne University Press, 1989, p. 28; Bennett, p. 193.
- 14 There are two other subdivisions where you can find judges’ names: Coburg, with Stawell, Molesworth, Holyrod, Higinbotham, à Beckett, Webb and Kerferd streets, and Seaford with Molesworth, Holyrod, Barry, Stawell, Fellows, Webb, Madden, Stephen and à Beckett streets all in close proximity.
- 15 Reginald Sholl, ‘Molesworth, Sir Robert (1806–1890)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography*, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/moleworth-sir-robert-4217>, viewed 3 January 2012; Justice Sir Arthur Dean in *Multitude of Counsellors: a History of the Bar of Victoria*, Melbourne, Cheshire Publishing, 1968, p. 48; Molesworth’s obituary in *The Argus*, October 1890, p. 5.
- 16 *Williamstown Chronicle*, 22 February 1919, p. 2.
- 17 Library Committee Minutes, 26 June 1893.

- 18 An interesting analysis of the official portrait can be found in Charlotte Townsend-Gault, 'Symbolic facades: Official Portraits in British Institutions since 1920', *Art History*, vol. 11, no. 4, December 1988, pp. 511–526.
- 19 See Townsend-Gault, pp. 517–9.
- 20 This portrait is held by the Australian War Memorial.

**A NEFARIOUS TRANSACTION:
THE CHARTER OF THE POLYNESIA COMPANY LIMITED OF
MELBOURNE AND FIJI**

Darren Watson

ON 7 FEBRUARY 1868, KARL VAN DAMME penned a letter to the editor of Melbourne's *Argus* in which he corrected a previously published statement concerning the absence of rats in Fiji. Far from there being no rats, wrote Van Damme, there were, in fact, millions—perhaps billions—of rats in Fiji. They were, however, 'rather nice ones, smart, playful little things, hated principally on account of the bad name they bear'.¹

Van Damme's description of Fiji's endearing rats might seem tongue-in-cheek, but presenting an idyllic picture of the islands was very much in his interests. The assertion he was correcting had been attributed to Van Damme's own business partner, William Harry O'Halloran Brewer, who, the previous day, had delivered a presentation to Melbourne's leading mercantile men on the timeliness of, and great potential for, establishing a banking and trading company in the Fiji islands. Clearly, Brewer, carried away by his own puffery, had overstepped the bounds of manifest reality with regards to rats. But if their presence could not be denied, Van Damme (who did not attend the meeting) could, at the very least, strive to portray them as sweetly innocuous.

The notional scheme Van Damme and Brewer had brought to that hastily convened meeting at the Chamber of Commerce was presented in the shadow of international circumstances which lent it an air of urgency. These circumstances had their distant origins in Fijian actions against



Cakobau, August 1869.
(Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons Public Domain.)

American property and persons in Fiji at the beginning of the 1850s, one of the more notable being the burning and looting of the United States Consul's residence. The captain of a visiting United States (US) warship subsequently catalogued the various 'grievances', and, taking a punitive approach to dissuade Fijians from any further anti-American actions, demanded a staggering \$42,248 (approximately £9,000) in damages. A bill of indemnity for this sum was duly presented to Cakobau ('Thakombau' in contemporary sources), the pre-eminent Fijian chieftain whose claim to the title of Tui Viti, or 'King of all Fiji' made him a convenient figurehead for foreigners to deal with.²

Cakobau had evaded paying the money demanded—an amount which he simply did not possess—until June 1867, when a US warship arrived and threatened bombardment of the township of Levuka, while also seizing several choice Fijian islands as security for the debt. Under re-negotiated terms, Cakobau was obliged to pay the indemnity in four yearly sums, with the first falling due on 1 May 1868, or face the possible consequence of the unconditional annexation of the entire archipelago by the United States.

Karl Van Damme had some familiarity with Cakobau's debt problems, and with Fiji generally. A naturalised Swede who had arrived in Victoria in 1853, he ran a tobacco and general merchandise business in Sandhurst before moving to Levuka in 1860 and taking the office of British Vice-Consul.³ He had returned to Melbourne, but his local knowledge and connections were doubtless in play when he encouraged his Albury-based associate William Brewer to visit Fiji in the month following the US warship's visit. Brewer met with William Moore, the chairman of the Wesleyan Mission, with the United States Consul, and with Cakobau himself—the subject of his discussions being the setting up of a monopolistic company that would possess almost sovereign powers and exercise commercial dominance in Fiji through the lands and privileges Cakobau was willing to hand over in return for settling his US debt. According to Brewer, Cakobau was enthusiastic at the prospect, having told Brewer that he considered the whole arrangement 'a fine thing'.⁴

The open meeting at the offices of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce on 6 February 1868 was called in response to a letter from Van Damme, urging the Chamber's consideration of the potentialities of the Fiji situation. Laid upon the table was the prospectus for a 'Fiji Banking & Trading Company Ltd.', with £50,000 capital in £1 shares. The projected company would provide finance for white settlers, as well as purchasing and shipping their produce. Paying partly in trade goods imported from Melbourne would create a perfect circle of profit. The keystone to commercial dominance, though, would be a monopoly on the issuing of bank notes throughout Fiji in return for liquidating the US debt. In addition, Cakobau's government would provide security, or compensation, for the Company's outlay through the transfer of land, either permanently or to be held in trust.

As a result of the meeting, a number of influential Victorian business identities became involved with the scheme. Prominent amongst these were Melbourne merchant Andrew Lyell, Ballarat banker and former MLA William Collard Smith, foundry owner and current mayor of Ballarat

Thomas Davey, and stock and sharebroker and mayor of Melbourne James Stewart Butters.⁵ Another useful recruit was John Lavington Evans, a Flinders Street merchant and commission agent, who had some experience travelling and trading in the South Pacific.

In May 1868, Brewer and Evans departed Sydney for Fiji aboard the steamship *Albion*, bearing with them a charter in draft form. It was a document of breathtaking audacity—in addition to obtaining lands and exclusive banking privileges, the company would have the sole right to impose and levy customs duties on goods entering and leaving Fiji; have the absolute authority to make laws for governing those inhabitants (both native and settler) of the lands ceded to it, as well as laws regulating the trade and commerce of the kingdom as a whole; and establish its own courts and make its own magisterial appointments within its private dominion. A copy of the charter was supplied to the *Argus* which duly published the details on 21 May, the day before Brewer and Evans arrived in Levuka.

Fortunately for them, Cakobau had travelled to Levuka from his home territory of Bau on the day of Brewer and Evans' arrival for the purpose of pleading with the US Consul for a further extension of the deadline for payment (already in default by several weeks), and a meeting with the chief was quickly arranged by the two delegates. A fairly detailed account of what transpired at that meeting, held in the plush saloon of the *Albion* on 23 May, was provided by the Wesleyan missionary John Horsley, who, together with a missionary colleague, served as a witness in the negotiations. Their mission's chairman, William Moore, had proven an enthusiastic supporter of the enterprise since his previous discussions with Brewer, and was now also present in the role of translator. Horsley subsequently felt the need to answer criticism by going to the press with a description of the proceedings that emphasised his disinterest in, and distaste for, the whole affair.⁶

According to Horsley, the two businessmen initially established their credibility with a succession of impressive letters. First, there were separate recommendations in favour of Brewer and Evans from the mayor of Melbourne (Butters) and the mayor of Albury (George Henry Mott, later a director of the company). Next came a letter from Commodore Lambert, the commander of the Australian Squadron of the Royal Navy, which was presented by Brewer in a manner that seemed to imply that the Commodore was well-acquainted with the scheme and favourable towards it. The commodore was due to visit Fiji shortly, and the impression given to

Horsley was that his approval of the charter, as the foremost representative of the British Government on the spot, was assured. (In fact, the acting British Consul later informed the missionary that the letter contained little substance beyond the Commodore's dates of sailing and intended arrival in Fiji). Then a letter from the Governor of Victoria was waved before the chief by the Melbourne men, but, supposedly upon the wishes of the Governor himself, the contents could not be divulged unless difficulties in the negotiations arose, at which point they would supposedly be a powerful facilitator in favour of the promoters. Yet again, the actual contents of the document proved quite different: the Governor's letter was addressed to the consul, and merely attested to Evans' good standing in Melbourne, while expressly denying any wishes or opinions concerning the success of the business he was presently engaged upon in Fiji. Finally, a letter was produced from the US Consul in Melbourne (George Latham, also a director of the company) to the US Consul in Fiji, stating that the bearers were authorised to negotiate with the consul about settling Cakobau's debt.⁷

After these preliminaries were dispensed with, the draft charter was produced. Horsley expressed surprise to see it revealed in so complete a form at this stage, particularly with regards to the concessions that it presumed Cakobau could grant. He also protested that the chief was at least entitled to a correct copy and translation, neither of which was immediately available. These complaints were brushed aside by Brewer and Evans, who explained that to comply could cause a delay of some weeks (presumably necessitating referral back to Melbourne), and a speedy settlement was needed since the *Albion's* stay of departure for Japan was an expense to them. Besides, the charter would not be truly binding until the schedule listing the lands to be conveyed was fully completed, and Commodore Lambert had approved the agreement.⁸ Consequently, Cakobau signed the charter, which encompassed the transfer of 200,000 acres and all of the concessions previously described. On the company's part, there was an obligation to pay the US debt and an annuity of £200 to Cakobau and his heirs, to educate one of his sons in Melbourne, and to aid him in upholding his authority—if necessary with the firepower of the gunboat the company would acquire.

Brewer and Evans' tactics would doubtless have been applauded as sharp business practice in Collins Street, but Horsley (particularly after discovering the misrepresentations that had been perpetrated) seems to have felt himself a participant in a grubby confidence trick. The acting

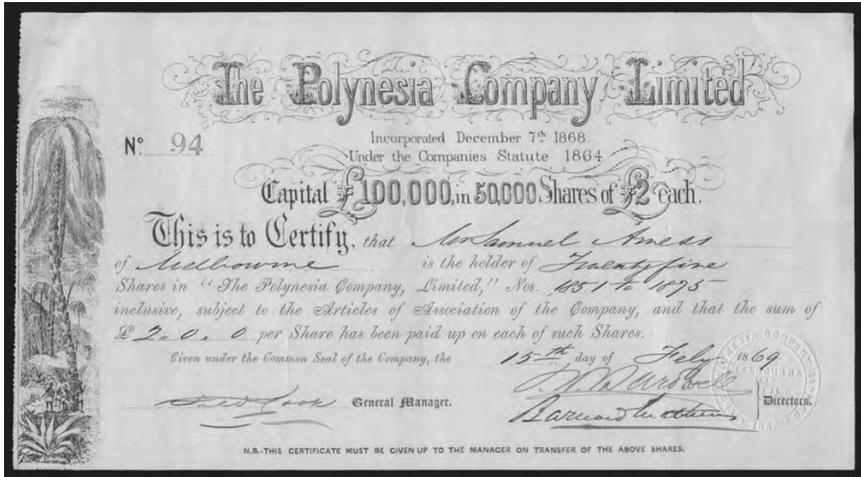
British Consul, John Thurston, would take a similar view, though he was more even-handed concerning who had duped whom. He had been absent from Levuka when a note arrived from the Reverend Moore, sent at the instigation of Brewer and Evans, requesting that he return so that some business could be discussed with him relating to the payment of Cakobau's debt. He returned accordingly on the morning of the meeting, but was then content to linger in his office, confident that the parties would be calling on him before advancing matters. Around noon, Thurston learned that an agreement between the chief and the Melbourne representatives was already a *fait accompli*, and several hours later, the chief stopped by in a supposedly inebriated state. (Thurston's suspicion that the chief was the victim of a generous 'champagne breakfast' provided aboard the *Albion* was, however, repudiated by Horsley.) Finally venturing aboard the *Albion* at 7.30 pm, Thurston at last learnt the full import of what the chief had signed. Two days later, the acting consul sent a strongly worded letter to Cakobau in which he officially protested against the charter on several grounds, including that it proposed to confer lands that 'doth not now, or hath in times past been subject to your authority and control'; and that 'the rights and power conferred by you upon the said Company for ever is to invest it with absolute and despotic control in your kingdom'. Another letter was sent to Brewer and Evans in which he complained about the precipitate manner with which the business was settled (consequently casting doubt on the degree of Cakobau's understanding), and the lack of consultation with himself on a matter which clearly affected the interests of hundreds of resident British subjects. He ordered a cessation of any action relative to the charter pending Commodore Lambert's arrival at the end of June.⁹

As for Cakobau, he appeared to have felt nothing but satisfaction over the agreement. A correspondent of the *Sydney Morning Herald* observed, 'The old king seems like a new man, now that he believes that there is an end of the difficulty of his life.' He apparently casually dismissed the objections of outraged white residents over the infringement of their rights, remarking, 'Oh you *papalagis* (foreigners) are as deep as the sea and can well look after yourselves.'¹⁰ The objections were loud enough, though, that Brewer and Evans shortly felt obliged to modify the terms of the charter by limiting the company's legal and commercial powers, with the exception of the banking monopoly, solely to its own domains. Despite this concession, the two representatives must have come to the conclusion, while they cooled their heels in Levuka waiting on the adjudication of

Commodore Lambert, that the implacable opposition of acting British Consul Thurston and many local settlers weighed heavily against the approval of the charter in its existing form. Thus, when the commodore ultimately arrived and delivered a scathing critique of a charter that was ‘so thoroughly an illegal instrument for the purpose of personal interests’, they were forearmed with a completely revised charter to substitute for the one which was now declared null and void.

The new charter was altogether more restrained in its content: references to the company’s powers in relation to levying customs duties and lawmaking were dropped, and the banking monopoly was limited to twenty-one years. Careful to avoid additional official censure, Brewer and Evans submitted this new document to both the commodore and acting consul for approval. The former was satisfied to leave further scrutiny to Thurston, while Thurston himself, still feeling piqued over being originally sidelined, declined to give any opinion or assistance whatsoever beyond a solemn warning, ‘not to pay a large sum of money to, or on account of, the Chief Thakombau [sic], for which he has not the power or authority to give an equivalent or security’.¹¹ With this virtual capitulation by the acting consul, the path was clear for a renewed approach to Cakobau, and, together with several lesser chiefs, he duly put his mark to the second charter on 23 July. The following day, the transfer of responsibility for the US debt was formally arranged with the US Consul in Fiji, with the £9,000 to be paid by the company in several instalments. Brewer and Evans, now trustees of the lands transferred under the charter, returned to Australia a few weeks later, where they proceeded to downplay the abandonment of the judicial and fiscal powers they had themselves originally sought, glibly claiming these were powers that ‘we would have found difficulty in carrying through, and involving responsibilities we had no desire to undertake’.¹²

On the face of it, there remained more than enough valuable concessions in the revised charter for the success of the enterprise in Fiji to appear assured. The prospectus of the Polynesia Company Limited that appeared on 5 September 1868 went even further, claiming the Fiji islands would be merely the launching point for the company’s commercial exploitation of the wider South Pacific region, and with the British East India Company held up as a business model. It would, however, prove not to be the case. From the beginning, the operations of the new company were bedevilled by a variety of problems. True to Thurston’s warning, Cakobau’s authority over the allocated lands was questionable, and the



*Share Scrip for the Polynesia Company Ltd, in the name of Samuel Amess.
(Courtesy of Noble Numismatics.)*

company surveyors encountered sustained resistance from the native Fijian occupants. Meanwhile, in Victoria, some equally questionable dealings by the company's own directors about the disposal of those lands that had been surveyed led to chronic infighting between the board and outraged shareholders. Ultimately, Cakobau, on receipt of his money, declared the whole arrangement closed, with 110,000 acres still outstanding. In July 1872, a new Fijian Legislative Assembly, largely comprising established white planters and traders, demonstrated its lack of sympathy by passing a bill cancelling the company's latent banking privileges.

After much fruitless lobbying, directors and shareholders alike believed they saw justice at hand when Fiji was ceded to the British Crown in October 1874. However, the incoming imperial administration declined to be held responsible for any debts or liabilities incurred by Cakobau or his government as a general principle—and had a jaundiced view of the legality of the company's charter in particular. The last British Consul in Fiji, F. Layard, was merely expressing the wider official attitude when he referred to the, 'nefarious nature of the whole transaction'.¹³ After years of further petitioning, the Polynesia Company was ultimately wound up in 1897.

NOTES

- 1 Letter to *The Argus*, 8 February 1868, p. 5.
- 2 R.A. Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, 2nd edn, vol. 1, Suva, Government Press, 1950, pp. 133–6.
- 3 George Mackay, *Annals of Bendigo: 1910–1920*, vol. 4, Bendigo, Cambridge Press, 1926, p. 450.
- 4 *Argus*, 7 February 1868, p. 5.
- 5 Evans and Brewer to Commodore Rowley Lambert R.N., 18 July 1868, contained in NAA Series A2218, File [1], ‘Pacific Islands, Printed Papers, vol.1, Fiji 1862–1876’, Correspondence Regarding the Fiji Islands, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, p. 44.
- 6 For Horsley’s letter, see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 September 1868, p. 7.
- 7 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 September 1868, p. 7.
- 8 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 September 1868, p. 7.
- 9 NAA Series A2218, File [1], pp. 34–9.
- 10 *Argus*, 29 June 1868, p. 7.
- 11 NAA Series A2218, File [1], p. 45.
- 12 *Argus*, 10 September 1868, p. 5.
- 13 E.L. Layard to His Excellency Sir Arthur Gordon, 26 August 1875, quoted in *The Claims and Remonstrance of the Polynesia Company of Melbourne Examined and Refuted*, Levuka, 1878, SLV MS10667, Box 2, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, p. 11.

REVIEWS

Starvation in a Land of Plenty: Wills' Diary of the Fateful Burke and Wills Expedition. By Michael Cathcart. NLA Publishing, Canberra 2013. Pp. 213. \$39.99, paperback.

Public consciousness of the tragedy of the Burke and Wills expedition has lasted from their deaths on Cooper's Creek in 1861 until the present. Generations of school students were reared on a diet of Australian explorers that always included Burke and Wills. Their story was the subject of popular writers like Frank Clune, Alan Moorehead and more recently, Sarah Murgatroyd. For Melburnians, the oft-moved Charles Summers' statue and the plaque and cairn in Royal Park at the point of their departure were constant reminders of the ill-fated pair. The expedition inspired many paintings, including those by William Strutt. In more recent times, Burke and Wills' route and their stopping points have become a focus for four-wheel drive tourism.

Ever since the Victorian Royal Commission of 1862, the stories have tried to ascribe blame. The guilty parties have naturally included Burke himself, the Royal Society who chose him and who were too slow in searching for the party, and members of the expedition such as Brahe and Wright, who were deemed to have failed to do their jobs. In most accounts, William Wills, the party's 'surveyor, astronomical and meteorological observer', has been depicted as the sensible partner to the mercurial Burke.

This beautifully produced commentary on the Burke and Wills Expedition focuses on William Wills' diary held by the National Library. From the time of the tragedy, Wills' father was a tireless advocate for his son's worth. Michael Cathcart's account does much to enhance Wills' reputation as a man of courage and competence, albeit in a tale of blunders

and eventual tragedy. The diary documents the difficulties of the expedition but also highlights Wills' loyalty to Burke, its leader. This loyalty led to acceptance of many decisions about the route out and home that were ill-fated. It also partly explains how and why the party failed to associate closely with the Yandruwanda people before it was too late.

Part of the National Library's mission is to make its treasures more accessible. In this case, they have used a skilful writer to frame the account and have selected visual material drawn largely from their picture collection. The result contributes to our understanding of the expedition and its personnel. Its publication is part of a number produced at the time of the 150th anniversary of the expedition, some of which covered new ground in examining its scientific contributions and the medical problems faced by the party, and most of which showed a depth of understanding of the party's contact with Indigenous people. *Starvation in a Land of Plenty* is an excellent introduction to the narrative and analysis of Burke and Wills and the title is an appropriate epitaph to the tragedy/folly.

Don Gibb

Ballangeich and Ellerslie: Bridging the Years. By Robert McLaren. The author, Leopold 2012. Pp. x + 402. \$40; paperback. ***Saving St Brigid's.*** By Regina Lane. Bridin Books, Melbourne 2014. Pp. 242. \$35, paperback. ***The Church on the Hill: a Centenary History of St Brigid's, and Its Irish Australian Community.*** By Helen Doyle. Bridin Books, Melbourne 2014. Pp. 226. \$40, paperback.

Few among the readers of this journal will be familiar with the villages of Ballangeich and Ellerslie, situated nine kilometres apart on the Hopkins Highway between Warrnambool and Mortlake. They are both now tiny; indeed, there is virtually nothing left of Ballangeich, except for the old bluestone school building (long since closed) and a few piles of bricks and stones in the fields. More survives of Ellerslie, perhaps a dozen houses, a hall and a church. Yet possibly more is known of these small communities and the people who have lived there than of any other township in Victoria. The reason for this is an extraordinary book written and self-published by Robert McLaren, a Geelong secondary school teacher, who grew up in Ellerslie.

Frequently academic historians deride local histories as being mere compilations, and there is no doubt that *Bridging the Years* is indeed a compilation. The book lists every farmer, business, school, church, football team, tennis club and so on that has ever existed in the district. There is a list of vicars and a list of managers of the butter factory. Yet the book is far more than just a collection of lists. The author skilfully analyses the impact on Ellerslie and Ballangeich of wider social, political and economic changes, from the first European settlements in the late 1830s and the Selection Acts of the 1860s to the two world wars and the transformation of Australian farming in the 20th century. His understanding of the course and causes of rural depopulation is particularly insightful. For scholars of these events, McLaren's book is a treasure trove of evidence of their impact at the local level.

The book is extensively illustrated with photographs and maps. Some of the photographs, such as those of the 1946 flood, are spectacular, while others provide stark illustrations of social changes. A photo of a Church of England concert in the 1940s shows about 150 people crammed into the Ellerslie Hall. The Church of England closed in 1974 and the building was removed two years later, while the hall itself is now little used.

The area around Ellerslie and Ballangeich is almost exclusively pastoral, with sheep and beef cattle predominating until the 1970s, when dairying became increasingly important. In contrast, the settlers around Crossley, another small settlement south-west of Koroit, replicated the farming practices they had brought with them from south-west Ireland, growing potatoes and other crops on some of the most fertile soil in Australia. Crossley, even more than Koroit, was an Irish Catholic community and the centrepiece of their community since 1914 has been St Brigid's Church, an imposing red brick structure sited to overlook the fields and farms of its parishioners. When planning began for the new church, a local farmer wrote to the Bishop of Ballarat, 'We have decided to build a church. Let us build a good one; one that we can proudly hand down to our children as a legacy.'

When Daniel Mannix opened St Brigid's shortly before the outbreak of war in 1914, none of the large congregation could have envisaged that in less than 100 years the church would be closed and put up for sale. Although hundreds of churches in rural Australia have been closed as populations have dwindled, probably no other closure aroused the same community response as took place in Crossley. The local community,

together with supporters around Australia, launched a massive campaign to 'Save St Brigid's', which after many scares and traumas, succeeded in buying the church.

The story of Crossley, St Brigid's Church and the 'Save St Brigid's' campaign are told in two outstanding books by Helen Doyle and Regina Lane, both of whom have close family ties with the district. Helen Doyle is a long-standing member of the Professional Historians Association and her history of the Crossley church and community is a brilliant example of what a good local history should be. Doyle combines meticulous research and a deep knowledge of the local community with an understanding of wider historical currents and their local impact. For example, she analyses the controversies surrounding the introduction of 'free, secular and compulsory' education in 1873 and the development of the local Catholic schools, and the reaction of the community to the First World War. In 1914, the Catholics of Crossley and Koroit were lukewarm at most in their support of the war and few enlisted in the AIF. Following the Irish rebellion of Easter 1916, lukewarm support became outright opposition and recruiting sergeants came to the district at their peril. In the 1916 conscription referendum, Crossley registered not one 'yes' vote.

Regina Lane's book is very different. It is not a history but a deeply personal account of the campaign to save St Brigid's written with great passion by someone who dedicated years of her life to the fight. Members of the Lane family came to the district from the border of County Clare and County Limerick over an extended period from the early 1840s to the 1860s, and Regina Lane recalls movingly how four generations of her family attended the last church service at St Brigid's before it was peremptorily closed in 2006.

In his foreword, singer Shane Howard, who lives at nearby Killarney and also took a leading part in the campaign, writes that 'Regina's story is a personal journey into the heart of her family culture and her Irish historical culture and what it means to keep that alive or try to give it meaning in an Australian landscape in the twenty-first century ... the story transcends a "local row" to ask the bigger questions about justice and culture, faith and community, and the importance of spirit of place'. Even though I was already familiar with the story, I found this book absolutely gripping and genuinely hard to put down. As a reviewer in the *Age* said, 'it blows your socks off'.

Peter Yule

The Making of Australia: a Concise History. By Robert Murray. Rosenberg Publishing, Kenthurst 2014. Pp. 320. \$29.95, paperback.

Robert Murray has long combined the careers of journalist and historian. He has written regional and local histories, biographies and books about workers, trade unions, politicians, businesses and bosses. His skills are well displayed in this compact summary of Australia's history. So too is his independence of mind.

Murray resists the temptation to set out his reasons for adding this work to the existing collection of brief histories of the nation, but historian Beverley Kingston, in a short foreword, identifies the book as filling the need for a 'clear, comprehensible account' to provide a 'workable sense of the past'.

With a century more to cover, this work is shorter than Ernest Scott's 1916 *A Short History of Australia*. It has fifty years more territory to explore than Manning Clark's 1964 book of the same name and A.G.L. Shaw's *Story of Australia*. Even Stuart Macintyre's *Concise History of Australia* is now 15-years-old, though there is a 2013 edition. For many readers—especially those whom Kingston identifies as 'the occasional overseas visitor or rare self-improving reader', who might seek a dependable overview—Murray's will prove a more accessible account.

Kingston aptly calls it 'a quick march', extending from ancient origins through to the emergence of the Abbott government in 2013, but even the best-read historians can learn from this book. Its strengths lie in its balance and perspective. Throughout, not just in the accounts of foundation years, Murray reminds us of Australia's place in the world. It is a helpful perspective when, for example, he looks at our role in the two World Wars of the 20th century, telescoped into one chapter, 'The Call From Khaki'.

Murray keeps his book even more concise by avoiding footnotes. The reader has to take his sometimes sweeping assertions on trust. A four-page select bibliography and a brief note on sources is small compensation for this.

State politics post-Federation get short shrift. Victorian readers won't find any mention of long-term premiers Bolte or Albert Dunstan; South Australians won't find Playford or Don Dunstan. Still, there is little point with a concise history in complaining about what has been left out, provided

that the author shows a broad understanding and an accurate grasp of detail. Murray passes this test.

Uniquely in a concise history of Australia, the complex and often unedifying story of relationships between Indigenous Australians and the arrivals since 1788 is a theme throughout the book. The index entry on 'Aborigines' extends for a column. Its subheadings—from Alcohol, Art, Discrimination, Disease to Violence and Women—indicate the range of topics discussed.

Murray may generalise, but he emphasises regional distinctiveness in the Indigenous story. Contact in the Northern Territory and outback Queensland differed from that in Tasmania and, again, that in the Port Phillip District. Generalisation is the enemy of nuanced history, but Murray succeeds in showing subtle, but important, differences in period and place, and in the ways that these dramas played out.

Part of the history of Indigenous relationships with whites resides in the historiography itself—the methodology of anthropologists, historians and even artists and storytellers. Murray canvasses the topic and the question of evidence without becoming doctrinaire himself.

More generally, the reader is invited to choose his or her own response to matters of historic controversy. Ned Kelly, criminal or hero? Eureka? Burke and Wills? Reasons for Australian troops being sent to Vietnam? Where there have been controversies in historical interpretation, Murray is prepared to say so without always standing on the sidelines himself.

As the focus of historians turns more and more to the local and the specific, Murray's book reminds us to step back from time to time, to seek the overview. Plenty of illustrations and generous-sized type will appeal to the casual reader, who will forgive the occasional typographical errors. The clever front cover image of the arches of Sydney Harbour Bridge under construction, reaching towards each other in 1930, complements the title *The Making of Australia*. There are plenty of divisions still in the way we Australians see ourselves. One day, the two sides might meet.

Andrew Lemon

Neither Power nor Glory: 100 Years of Political Labor in Victoria, 1856–1956. By Paul Strangio. Melbourne University Press, Carlton 2012. Pp. ix + 380. \$45.00, paperback.

This book has been a long time coming. Not that Paul Strangio took too long to write it, but that anyone set about the task at all. Until recent times, Labor has had a dismal electoral record in Victoria. In the century explored here, Labor's chances of winning majority government and bedding down Labor policies seemed bleak. Scholars, most notably the late, lamented Geoff Serle, longed for a broad narrative of Victorian Labor to equal the works on the ALP in the other states. The books of Rickard, Bongiorno and others on the party's formative years, White's on leading individuals like John Cain Snr. and Murray's on the split of the 1950s, have examined particular periods or people, but this is the first synoptic study of political Labor's first century in Victoria. We should be grateful for the fumbling, factional ineptitude that meant it would not be an official history. Although Strangio had to bear the burden of finding the time and resources to research and write it, the result is much the better for being a work of independent, artisan scholarship.

The early chapters survey the sporadic working class activism that prefigured formal party organisation. They also lay out the structural and cultural impediments to the formation of a distinctive and effective Labor party. As a class-based party, its prospects were circumscribed by the Victorian electoral demography. The inner urban industrial suburbs were too narrow a base on which to build a parliamentary majority in the Legislative Assembly. Besides, many workers were attached to protectionist liberalism with which political Labor had a close, but fraught, relationship until the new century. An egregious malapportionment of the Legislative Council mocked any hope of a majority Labor government. The dependent and uneasy link with the Trades Hall Council was often complicated, as was the role of some of the leading parliamentarians such as Trenwith. Strangio weaves all this and more into an engaging and coherent narrative of how the Victorian ALP stumbled out of the nineteenth century.

In the first decade of the new century, Labor consolidated its organisation and strengthened its inner metropolitan industrial base, but still had difficulty making headway in rural electorates and did less well than other state ALP branches in regional cities. Victoria's distinctive electoral geography was a powerful, underlying problem that became a major impediment. But that

was not all. As Strangio shows, the diverse elements that comprised the party were not always pulling in the same direction. Although there was an overlap in membership, the Trades Hall industrialists and the radicals who formed the Socialist party did not always agree. Women members were becoming more assertive and better organised within the party, but were not fully acknowledged for their contribution. After the arrival of Mannix in Melbourne, the Catholic voice within Labor ranks grew louder and more insistent. By 1910, when Labor governments were appearing all around the country, and the Fisher Labor government won a majority in both federal houses, the Victorians won a respectable share of the total vote, but it was too thinly spread and the party suffered yet another defeat. This served to intensify existing internal tensions.

One of the book's central themes is 'how persistent failure shaped the party's traditions and culture'. After some initial unity at the outbreak of the First World War, the military carnage combined with the civilian privation on the home front widened many existing divisions and amplified the impact of Prime Minister Hughes' conscription proposal to a devastating split that tore both federal and state parties apart and left an enduring rupture in the party's ranks. In Victoria, more so than in other sections of the party, the split and the ensuing defeats came to be seen as a kind of ideological and moral purification. It grew to become part of the culture of consolation and, eventually, part of the Victorian Labor identity. It was certainly there in the aftermath of the following two major splits; over economic policy in the early 1930s and over Catholic Action in the unions and the party from the mid-1940s up to the split of 1955. In many ways, this is the strongest and deepest section of the book. It is clear in the detailed and balanced narrative that Strangio is on his home ground. He has an easy and assured command of both the minutiae and the bigger issues. We can hear and see Santamaria and Evatt pursuing their obsessions or ranting at their enemies. We can almost feel the passion of the protagonists in that great ideological struggle.

It is good that Paul Strangio stuck with this project. He has given us a sound and judicious history of Victorian Labor that is scholarly, engaging and, in its better passages, richly evocative of a complex, absorbing and deeply flawed political outfit.

Peter Love

Melbourne's Water Catchments: Perspectives on a World-Class Water Supply. By James I. Viggers, Haylee J. Weaver and David B. Lindenmayer. CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne 2013. Pp. 144. \$29.95, paperback.

William Davidson is not as well known in Victorian history as he deserves to be. He was a civil engineer and public servant, who, in the 19th century held senior positions in the Public Works Department and the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works. In those roles, from the 1870s, he was a major architect of the expansion of Melbourne's water harvesting and supply system. Where he deserves greatest recognition is for his role in establishing a policy of closed catchments in the areas from which Melbourne's water supply was, and is, drawn. This has bequeathed us not only a supply of pure water, but also an immense ecological richness of old growth forests to Melbourne's north and east that have survived the axe and chainsaw.

Melbourne's Water Catchments is an outline history of the development of Melbourne's water supply from the first European settlement until the last decade. The orientation of the book might be inferred partly from the occupations of its three authors—a former MMBW engineer, a parasitologist and a forest ecologist. They survey the selection and development of each of the sources of water that was diverted into Melbourne. Until the last few years, this essentially involved the diversion and damming of streams, and providing protected catchments around them to ensure high quality outflow—a process that became more difficult over time as suitable streams and catchments became scarce.

An important aspect of the study is the recognition given to the engineers and other public servants who designed and operated the system. William Davidson is one of these, along with others, including James Blackburn, William Thwaites and Edgar Ritchie.

The work does not delve deeply into the murky waters of politics and vested interests that have influenced the history. The scientific evidence for the negative impact on water quality and volume caused by logging is made clear. Nevertheless, closed catchments have had to survive against the efforts of the timber industry and its allies in the Forests Commission, who have fought since the 19th century to gain access to the forests. Rural communities, especially those north of the Great Dividing Range, have also fought against the spread of water harvesting and having 'their' water flushed into Melbourne's toilets.

Besides the threat from logging, some of the most significant sections of the book deal with the modern implications of climate change and their repercussions for reduced water supply and increased threat of fire. This was graphically shown by the post-1996 drought, which emptied the catchments to below the critical 30 per cent mark. The drought climaxed in the horrific Black Saturday bushfires of February 2009, which destroyed large areas of catchments and will result in reduced flows into reservoirs for decades to come. In response to the long drought, new solutions were sought, namely the Wonthaggi desalination plant and the North-South Pipeline. Ironically, neither of these seems likely to supply water for many years, partly because of better rainfall since 2010 and partly because of the financial and political implications of using these sources.

Melbourne's Water Catchments is a welcome and useful addition to the literature for those interested in environmental history and water issues. I have just one minor quibble. While the book is nicely presented and well illustrated, at times, I found it difficult to read because of reflections from the glossy paper on which it is printed.

Don Garden

Coranderrk. We Will Show the Country. By Giordano Nanni and Andrea James. Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra 2013. Pp xvi + 224. \$29.95, paperback.

Historical actors live in the fog of the present, never seeing the big picture clearly and certainly not the future. Who amongst the white observers of Aboriginal people in Victoria in 1881 would have thought the Aboriginal voices of a 'dying race' would be heard 130 years later? And who among the then marginalised Kulin people would have imagined their words spoken in 1881 would live again on stage and page?

This book—the book of a stage production—does just this, by speaking the actual words of the 1881 inquiry into Coranderrk Aboriginal reserve at Healesville, which was then in rebellion against the attempts of the Aborigines Protection Board to break it up and send the people to the Murray River area. The production is in the genre of 'verbatim theatre' and a 'tribunal play', dramatising the words of actual people as they appeared before the inquiry. Of course, we do not hear it all—I once read through the inquiry, its 5,347 questions for over thirty witnesses. So some selection

has been made and some altering of the order of appearance used, to make the narrative of the inquiry work. But that is clearly necessary and it has been well done by the team of a white academic, Giordano Nanni, and Andrea James, a Yort Yorta/Kurnai playwright. This project comes out of an ARC linkage grant between groups at the University of Melbourne and Koori organisations, testifying to the continuing importance of Australian Research Council grants in this age of grant cutbacks.

The book works well on many levels. It has a very good overview of Coranderrk's history, which brings together concisely and clearly what Diane Barwick and others have written over the past generation. It reveals Coranderrk's creation, stemming from Aboriginal demands for land and a humanitarian thrust to protect Aboriginal people; its growth into a thriving farming community where disparate groups formed themselves into a community; and, finally, the attack on it by the Board and an impressive campaign of pushback that led to the inquiry. A penultimate chapter tells the end of Coranderrk's story and its closure in the 1920s.

The main part of the book is 22 chapters, which comprise evidence from 22 witnesses both black and white. Each witness testimony is preceded by a helpful biographical introduction and a theme is created for each chapter. Rev. Strickland gives his idea on race, Edward Curr reflects paternalism with his ideas on Aboriginal people as children, Rev. Hagenauer on the need to remove children to uplift them, and so forth. Aboriginal witnesses also establish themes: Thomas Bamfield on their political agency, Alice Grant on their ability to work well, Barak on their political dream of autonomy and having Mr Green back as their protector/overseer. In this way, the main story of Coranderrk's struggle with the Board is explained in the historical actors' own words and terms—powerfully.

A final chapter discusses how historical documents such as the inquiry can be made useful to the present—freed from the pages of the Victorian Parliament's *Votes and Proceedings*—and brought to modern audiences not willing to sit down and read through 5,347 questions in fine print. The success of the six performances to date and the many more to follow, attest to the creativeness of Giordano Nanni. The book is a faithful representation of the play and provides much context that will inform readers about Coranderrk and its people's struggles. Fine images grace a handsomely designed book by Aboriginal Studies Press.

Richard Broome

Missionaries, Radicals, Feminists: a History of North Yarra Community Health. By Hamish Townsend. North Yarra Community Health, Melbourne 2012. Pp. 158. \$20.00, paperback.

North Yarra Community Health (NYCH), despite its conventional modern name, has a long history that is reflected in the changes of name and of objectives it has undergone as a service provider. Before it became NYCH, it was the similarly named Collingwood Community Health Centre from 1977, and, before that, the Singleton Medical Welfare Centre, but its earliest title was more revealing of its original purpose: Singleton's Collingwood Free Medical Mission Dispensary. Opened in 1869, it was, as Hamish Townsend comments, an 'evangelical venture—a Protestant mission in a suburb of Catholics'. Situated in working-class Collingwood, it has throughout its history been dedicated to a social and, in later years, participatory model of health, stressing social context, accessibility and community accountability. In light of this trajectory, *Missionaries, Radicals and Feminists* can be read as a microcosmic history of community health services in Melbourne, and similar cities, over the past century and a half.

The book has two primary periods of focus—the foundational years (*Missionaries*) under Dr John Singleton, and the reform era (*Radicals and Feminists*) inaugurated by the Whitlam government in the 1970s. The latter period and the new approaches to community health it inaugurated, together with further changes resulting from the rise of different political philosophies over the ensuing decades, occupy seven of the nine chapters. I would have preferred more on the earlier period, but the author judges, probably correctly, that his main readership lies with those working in the field from the 1970s on.

Dr John Singleton, a Dublin-born evangelical Anglican and temperance crusader and a graduate of the University of Glasgow medical school, was heavily influenced by the Dispensary Movement, a late 18th-century response to the health problems of the urban poor. After migrating to Melbourne in 1851, he set up a practice focused on disease, poverty and drunkenness and immersed himself in reforms to alcohol laws and prisons. His dispensary vision came to fruition nearly two decades later as the Collingwood Free Medical Mission Dispensary at 162 Wellington Street. Singleton's, as it became known, was the first dispensary in Victoria, and only the second institution after the Melbourne Hospital, to supply free medical treatment. It came to rely for funds on a subscription system

whereby institutions, individuals or societies purchased access for particular groups of 'deserving' patients. Although this gave Singleton free rein to continue his evangelism, with its stress on abstinence and focus on reform to counter the effects of poverty on his patients' health, it also put him at odds with his medical peers, as did his support for and employment of women doctors such as Constance and Mary Stone. But his following in the local community and his support from church groups, working-class organisations and the Collingwood Council enabled him to build a new dispensary on the same site in 1889, shortly before his death in 1891.

The dispensary was inundated by patients as demand for its services soared during the 1890s and 1930s depressions with their devastating effects on the people of Collingwood, Fitzroy and Carlton. But it also became mired in controversy over the quality of service and the lack of medical qualifications of its personnel, who came to prioritise religious mission over accredited medical treatment. It took the appointment of Dr Ronald Bradbury in 1931 and the dispensary's registration and reconstitution as Singleton's Dispensary and Welfare Centre in 1932 to rejuvenate its medical focus. Thereafter, the Singleton family influence declined and the emphasis on links between health and social decay, especially housing and poverty, were strengthened at the expense of the earlier equivalence of the spiritual and the moral. By the 1960s, however, as Townsend observes, Singleton's 'was sagging under the weight of its own history, neither truly irrelevant nor properly modern'. The conditions of change were created by the election of reform-minded Collingwood Rotarians to the Board and the hiring of a new manager, Jim Goode, in 1972 with instructions to fix Singleton's or shut it down.

The year was important, for 1972 saw the election of the liberal progressive, Rupert Hamer, as Victoria's premier and, later, the victory of the Whitlam Labor government federally. The bulk of Townsend's account deals with the consequences over the succeeding decades for the community health movement: the reform and expansion of services pushed by Whitlam minister Moss Cass; a continuing 'golden era' of community health and integrated health care in the late 1970s when Singleton's gained new premises and a new name as the Carlton Community Health Centre; the challenges that followed the Fraser government's stress on 'individual responsibility', 'mutual obligation' and 'user pays' at the expense of need; the conflict with the St Vincent's-aligned DePaul health centre in Fitzroy, with its hierarchical organisation and conservative approach to women's

reproductive health; the defunding of DePaul and the creation of the Fitzroy Community Health Centre, supported by Cain state government minister Tom Roper and Hawke federal government minister Neal Blewitt in the 1980s; and, finally, the concessions that had to be made to the rising neo-liberal gods of managerialism, amalgamation, government accountability and privatisation that came to dominate the 1990s. Challenges arising from the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and 90s and from the ever-increasing problems of drug addiction and homelessness are integrated into this account, and it is peopled with an array of heroic individuals who devoted enormous amounts of time and energy to the cause of community health. Townsend describes their courage and commitment without ignoring the inevitable conflicts that must arise in organisations that prioritise democratic participation, and he integrates the NYCH's history into the other political battles fought in these inner Melbourne suburbs during the final decades of the twentieth century. As Caroline Hogg, who launched the book in 2012, concludes, NYCH 'flourishes. It is still hugely busy, still creative, still at the forefront of public health'. Its history is well worth reading.

Judith Smart

Bishopscourt Melbourne: Official Residence and Family Home. By Elizabeth Rushen. Mosaic Press, Preston 2013. Pp. x + 350. \$49.95, paperback.

Until recent years, the official residence of the bishop occupied a significant place in the culture and collective memory of an Anglican diocese. In Australia, an episcopal residence was usually named Bishopscourt or Bishop's Court, but there were also variations such as Bishopsthorpe, Bishopsbourne, Bishop's Lodge, Bishop's House, or Lis Escop (in the Cornish language). From the mid-19th century it was seen as fitting that the Anglican bishop of each city or region should live in a large house or mansion that both reflected the social importance of the head of the largest denomination in the Australian colonies and provided plenty of room for guests, servants' quarters, dinner parties and meetings of diocesan committees and organisations, as well as having large and attractive grounds for fundraising fetes and garden parties. An Anglican bishop has always been expected to exercise a ministry of hospitality.

During the last forty years, many of these episcopal residences have been sold because, it was argued, they were too expensive to maintain, inconvenient for modern families and projected an outmoded image of episcopal power and lofty social status. Several times in the history of Melbourne's Bishops court, there have been moves to either sell or subdivide the property. An attempt in 1998–2000 by the diocesan authorities to seek permission to subdivide part of the garden to create four lots for sale created a storm of protest. It was finally thwarted by a ruling from the state's Heritage Council. A proposal in 2005 to sell the property set off another fierce debate, which was defused only when the present archbishop on his arrival announced his intention to live there.

In what is now a much diminished field, Bishops court in East Melbourne is the grandest of Australia's episcopal residences. In this book, Elizabeth Rushen explores its history from the 1850s to the present with a focus on the wives, families and domestic life of the bishops and archbishops who have lived there. It also examines the problems and inconveniences that are inherent in a building that is both a private residence and a public space.

Bishops court was built in two stages. The original building, designed by the architect James Blackburn in the Italianate style and assisted by a substantial government grant, was completed in 1853. However, this was found to be inadequate, so a new wing in the Arts and Crafts style, designed by Walter Richmond Butler, was added in 1903. This section was funded by a public appeal. In the early 1960s, the building was subdivided into three separate houses: for the archbishop, an assistant bishop or chaplain and a housekeeper's flat. The mansion, on a two-acre block, is surrounded by an extensive garden. Some bishops or their wives left a personal imprint by their plantings; others were less interested. Since 2001, members of the Victorian branch of the Australian Garden History Society, led by Helen Page, have done much to restore and rejuvenate the garden.

Quite a lot has been written on the Anglican bishops and archbishops of Melbourne. Five of the thirteen have been the subject of substantial biographies, and those who died before the 1990s have entries in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. However, we know very little about the wives or families of these men. Rushen provides a series of sensitive and perceptive portraits of a group of women who had very little in common apart from the fact that they had married men who were later elected to high office in the Anglican Church, as head of a metropolitan see.

The role of the wife of an Anglican bishop of a major diocese was (and is) a demanding one. She had no inherent status, but was pushed into public life because of the office held by her husband. She was expected to take an active part in philanthropic and charitable bodies and in church women's organisations such as the Mothers' Union, supervise her household staff, and support her husband in all his activities without being pushy, accompanying him on his tours around the diocese, giving speeches and opening fetes, offering hospitality to visiting bishops and other ecclesiastical guests (some of whom stayed for many weeks), being a gracious hostess at meetings, lunches, formal dinners and 'at-homes', and organising outdoor events such as garden parties. Often the latter were on a daunting scale, with some 1200 or 1500 guests: senior clergy chatted over ice-creams and cups of tea with the state governor and cabinet ministers. For many years, the annual synod garden party was a major social event in the Melbourne Anglican calendar.

Some episcopal wives, such as Frances Perry and Edith Head, thrived in this role. Others, such as Winifred Lees and Beryl Booth, were naturally shy and found public duties a strain. Over time, as society's expectations changed, a new style was forged. Jean Woods saw herself as a partner of Archbishop Frank Woods, rather than in the traditional domestic and supporting role. Yvonne Dann was the first wife of an archbishop to continue with her career (though part-time) as a marriage counsellor. Jean Penman studied theology and was later ordained to the priesthood.

The private lives of the inhabitants of Bishops court were not free of tension and tragedy. Emma Goe, Alice Lovell Clarke and Winifred Lees died while their husbands were in office. Archbishop Lees died in 1929 only nine months after he had remarried. Archbishop Head died in 1941 after a mysterious accident when his car left the road. A daughter of Archbishop Booth took her own life shortly before he retired in 1957. David Penman, exhausted from overwork, died in 1989 aged 53 after only five years as archbishop.

This book is generous in its scope. We learn about the interior furnishings of each generation, members of the domestic staff, household pets, the evolution of the garden and more. Some areas are less developed. Perhaps inevitably, there is more about 'upstairs' than 'downstairs' and it is hard to get a sense of the daily life of the servants. Nor do we get much idea of the relationship of Bishops court with the wider community of East Melbourne.

Bishopscourt Melbourne is a substantial work, attractively produced, and illustrated with a wide selection of photographs and other material. Elizabeth Rushen illuminates a significant slice of Melbourne's architectural, religious and social history.

David Hilliard

W. Macmahon Ball: Politics for the People. By Ai Kobayashi. Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne 2013. Pp. xiv + 278. \$39.95, paperback.

From the 1940s into the 1960s, Macmahon Ball consolidated his public and academic eminence as the 'founding father' of the study of East Asia in Australia. As a discredited colonialism and a keener perception of economic inequality spurred nationalist movements from Indonesia to Vietnam, Ball helped Australians comprehend what he saw as a time of 'revolution' in a region that many Australians were only just becoming aware of. It was time, he insisted, for Australians to stop 'living in our history' and to inhabit instead 'our geography'. The imperative seems familiar; Ball's argument, however, still poses its challenges.

This book is not a full biography, but rather an account of 'how one man conducted an intellectual career'. The strength of Kobayashi's contribution is her careful rendering of the phases of that career, as Ball tested, influenced, used and—eventually—was marginalised by, or at least became marginal to, many of the institutions that once enabled him: from broadcasting and journalism through diplomacy and government to academic teaching and research. If Ball was, Kobayashi suggests, 'an exemplary public intellectual', he also provides an instructive example of the ways in which that role is shaped by, rather than simply acted out in, changing circumstances.

Ball offers an almost emblematic synthesis of mid-20th century political culture. The son of a clergyman, born in 1901, who loses his faith but retains a sense of service; a lazy if clever student who finds an outlet for his natural fluency in the new social science disciplines, hoping to reconcile the state to its people; a man who endured the trauma of a failed first marriage and found affirmation in causes centring on independence of thought; who showed a talent for exposition in a world increasingly driven by, and craving, information. Ball rose on the wave of a progressive take

on national and international affairs, but never escaped a chorus of voices sniping at the ‘brilliant superficiality of Mr Ball’. Kobayashi’s judgement follows the counsel of one of his gentler defenders: ‘he was that, but he was much more’.

In the anxious 1930s, Ball saw the origins of international conflict in the economic frustration of national aspirations. Insisting before World War II that ‘the only peace that armaments can provide ... lies in graveyards’, he asked what social injustices fomented political crisis. As Kobayashi concedes, his appeal to ‘reason’ might seem naïve in retrospect, but he framed a position of enquiry that had considerable currency then. The ‘intelligent man’, Ball’s point of reference, was a distinct constituency, whether amongst those attending his crowded Workers’ Education Association classes, the attentive audiences for his regular ABC talks, or the university students engrossed by the lectures in which he pioneered the teaching of political science and international relations in Australia.

‘Politics for the people’ is an apt subtitle, capturing the fit between Ball’s message and that audience. Kobayashi might have reflected further on the ways in which this match was one of movements, networks, faith and conscience, as well as of individual prominence, but her point is still well made. The terms in which Australians have been encouraged to see their region is more than a story of reacting to events, but also of the factors underpinning the ways those events are seen: the ethical, sociable, educational and political contexts in which peoples’ understanding of the world is constructed.

Ball’s career was marked by rapid change in those contexts. From the University of Melbourne, he became, in 1940, Director of Broadcasting Activities in the Department of Information; he was commissioned by the government to undertake a mission to Indonesia in 1945, to represent the British Commonwealth on the Allied Council for Japan in 1946–47, and to build ‘goodwill’ on a fraught tour of South-East Asia in 1948. He was not alone in such wartime and post-war opportunities, but the mix was intense, and brought its own reactions. Ball’s style did not translate well from radio to television, and, in any case, broadcasters opted for ‘diversity’ in the views they presented rather than the authority that Ball rather self-consciously commanded as—according to one critic—‘the last living liberal’. The politics of the Vietnam War saw him despair about the power of informed analysis and when ‘values’ seemed to pre-occupy debate. And as an academic who always valued the role of the expositor,

he fared less well in the research publication imperatives of the 1960s and onwards, and in what he lamented as the change from the enunciation of 'political ideals' to a fetish for 'political processes'.

Kobayashi is scrupulous in avoiding speculation on the incompletely documented aspects of a man whose personality can be as intriguing as his actions. Sometimes, however, there was scope for more explicit authorial guidance as to what to make of a story that is rich in battles fought over political positions, policy settlements, university appointments and access to audiences, but does not always make clear what, fundamentally, was at stake. The turns of his career are covered in detail, but the author is reluctant to assess his influence, or his place in wider patterns. In 1973, for example, Rex Mortimer traced a link between the humanitarianism of Ball's commentary on Indonesia and emerging narratives of economic development and political influence over that 'showcase state'. Subtle as Kobayashi's portrait is of the ways in which 'one man ... facilitated the process, and influenced the transformation, of Australia's understanding of its place in Asia', Ball remains that 'one man'. At times, the focus might have been wider, especially as the issues are still so current.

Nicholas Brown

Marshall-Hall's Melbourne: Music, Art and Controversy 1891–1915.

Edited by Thérèse Radic & Suzanne Robinson. Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne 2012. Pp. xviii + 265. \$44, paperback.

In the writing of Australian history, music has tended to be the 'poor relation' among the arts. It is frequently overlooked in histories of Australia, even the legendary Melba being lucky to get a mention. So it is likely that many will not have heard of G.L.W. Marshall-Hall, conductor and composer, a controversial figure who dominated Melbourne's musical scene in the 1890s and the period leading up to the First World War. In fact, music historians have been interested in Marshall-Hall for some time, though not always certain how to characterise his achievement as a composer, and *Marshall-Hall's Melbourne*, a collection of essays stemming from a 2010 symposium, makes a significant contribution to a re-evaluation of his importance.

Brought out to Melbourne in 1891 as the founding Ormond professor of music at the university, Marshall-Hall did much to raise the standards

of both teaching and performance, but also ruffled middle-class feathers with his Bohemian lifestyle and the mildly erotic and anti-clerical poetry that he insisted on publishing. Concern was expressed that he was not a suitable person to be teaching the young ladies who were attracted to the conservatorium he had established. Although, in 1898, moves on the University Council to dismiss him were defeated, after a protracted and divisive controversy it was decided not to renew his appointment when his five-year term came to an end in 1900. The essays do not revisit this crisis in any detail, as it has been dealt with elsewhere, but rather seek to contextualise Marshall-Hall in terms of the colleagues he gathered around him at his conservatorium, the friendships he developed and the interests he pursued, as well as the kind of colonial society he found himself in, a society which was no longer experiencing the boisterous and prosperous optimism of the 1880s, but rather, beset by economic collapse and depression, had turned inward on itself.

Marshall-Hall's conservatorium was home to an impressive group of musicians. Kerry Murphy tells us about the urbane and experienced German-born pianist Eduard Scharf who, touring the world as accompanist to the Belgian violinist Ovide Musin, met Marshall-Hall in Melbourne, and, offered a job, decided to stay. A loyal friend to Marshall-Hall, Scharf was cruelly victimised because of his German origins by the authorities after the professor's death in 1915. Pamela Niehoff introduces us to Elise Wiedemann and Carl Pinschoff. The Austrian-born Pinschoff was a successful merchant in Melbourne and Wiedemann gave up her European career as an operatic soprano to join him in the colony. Both, like Marshall-Hall, enthusiastic Wagnerians, they had apparently played some part in attracting him to Melbourne University. Cellist Louis Hattenbach, another German, taught Vera, the youngest daughter of Alfred Deakin, himself a strong supporter of Marshall-Hall. Described by Carole Woods as kindly and hospitable, Hattenbach was another civilised addition to the musical community. This German presence in the conservatorium was no accident; this was the musical culture and tradition to which Marshall-Hall related.

Ann Galbally and Christine Mercer sketch in the friendships Marshall-Hall quickly developed with painters such as Streeton and Roberts, though I am puzzled by Galbally's statement that the 1890s were 'a time when people felt curiously stilled'. While some could afford the luxury of *fin-de-siècle* thoughts, in Melbourne, the dominant mood was anxiety caused by high unemployment, rising poverty and an exodus to the Western Australian

goldfields. As Galbally herself notes, some of the painters escaped to Sydney, where conditions were better.

The professor's dalliance in Melbourne's version of Bohemia is in the hands of Stephen Mead. Here we are introduced to the juvenile (male) antics of the Cannibal Club and the more serious concerns of its successor, the Ishmael Club. The Bohemian cast list included Lionel and Norman Lindsay, Max Meldrum, Will Dyson, Hugh McCrae, Randolph Bedford and the hard-working secretary of Marshall-Hall's orchestra, Ernest Moffitt. Norman Lindsay later recalled that when Moffitt died in 1899, Marshall-Hall's 'tormented grief' at the burial was so great that he fled the scene 'leaping graves with his coat tails flying'. He was, on and off the stage, a larger than life character.

At a time when state subsidy for the arts was unknown, private patrons were important. Pinschof and Wiedermann helped musicians and artists and used their Melbourne mansion's large ballroom as a venue for concerts. Another significant patron was Sir James Barrett, described in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* as 'ophthalmologist and publicist'. Kenneth Morgan relates how Barrett's support for the Marshall-Hall cause continued after the conductor's death. He encouraged Percy Grainger's establishment of his museum at Melbourne University in 1938, and facilitated Grainger's purchase for the museum of Marshall-Hall's papers from his widow.

Collections such as *Marshall-Hall's Melbourne* inevitably have a patchwork quality, and Julja Szuster's Adelaide piece on another German musician, Hermann Heinicke, might seem peripheral, but does offer a comparative perspective. There is nothing peripheral, however, about Wilfred Prest's account of Edward Sugden, the Master of the Methodist Queen's College, one clergyman who came to Marshall-Hall's defence in his hour of need; but then, Sugden was himself a considerable musician.

Other essays deal with the theory that Marshall-Hall brought to his understanding of music (Kieran Crichton), his Wagner obsession (Matthew Lorenzon), his relationship with fellow-composers such as Grainger (Jennifer Hill), and an evaluation of his own works (Rhoderick McNeill, Suzanne Robinson, Thérèse Radic and Peter Tregear). In his foreword, Richard Divall, who has edited some forty-five of Marshall-Hall's works, pays tribute to his greatness and the 'striking modernity for Australia' of his compositions, while Robinson sees his one-act *Stella* as 'an unquestionably radical opera'. Radic and Tregear are more cautious in the claims they

make for Marshall-Hall's music. For Radic, his four-act opera *Romeo and Juliet* has value, because 'it offers a door into a contextualising past that needs to be reassessed if we are to consciously shape our cultural future'. Tregear, too, sees no need to apologise for the derivative nature of his music (Puccini was a major influence), because our 'European origins' need to be 'better incorporated into our imagination of Australia'. All contributors are agreed, however, on Marshall-Hall's importance as the driving force in Melbourne's music scene in the nation-building era.

John Rickard

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Joanne Boyd has been the archives and records manager at the Supreme Court of Victoria since 2007. Previously she worked at the University of Melbourne and Heritage Victoria. Joanne completed her studies in history at Melbourne and Monash Universities, back in the 20th century.

Richard Broome, emeritus professor at La Trobe University, is a former review editor of this journal and co-editor of *Australian Historical Studies*. He has published on local history (*Coburg: Between Two Creeks*) and Victorian history (*The Victorians: Arriving*), and his most recent book is *Aboriginal Australians: a History Since 1788* (2010). He serves on the RHSV Council and chairs its Publications Committee.

Nicholas Brown is associate professor in the School of History, Australian National University. Author and co-author of two biographies, he has recently published *A History of Canberra* (2014).

John Dwyer was a leading QC for 20 years before deciding to concentrate on the world of plants and nature. He has worked for 30 years in heritage conservation on the Council of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and the Victorian Heritage Council, and as a member of the Landscape Advisory Committee of the Heritage Council. He was Chairman of the National Management Committee of the Australian Garden History Society from 2009 to 2011. A qualified horticulturist with a PhD on 'Weeds in Victorian Landscapes', he writes about our relationship with nature in gardens and landscapes, and their place in our history. He wants to change the way we care for our environment, how we connect with nature, and what we do about weeds. He has published papers in *Australian Garden History*, *Studies in Australian Garden History*, *Plant Protection Quarterly*, and in several *Proceedings of Australian Weeds Society Conferences*.

Don Garden taught history at the University of Melbourne where he is now an honorary fellow. His books include a history of Victoria, a number of local histories, an environmental history of Australia and the Pacific and a study of the impact of a number of nineteenth century El Nino events. He is President of the RHSV, President of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies and Vice-President of the Kew Historical Society.

Don Gibb FRHSV is an honorary fellow and a former associate professor at Deakin University. He is a former Council member and a member of the Publications Committee.

David Hilliard is an Adjunct Associate Professor in History at Flinders University. He has published widely on the history of Anglicanism in Australia.

Noel Jackling is a retired lawyer and university instructional designer, who has turned to writing history and advocating the restoration of a Douglas DC-2 in Albury that commemorates the successful night-time emergency landing in 1934 of the KLM *Uiver* on the Albury Racecourse. His publications include *Dancing to Damnation?*, a book that describes the attitude of the Methodist Church and Methodists to social dancing and *Classical Music in Albury during the Post-World War II Era*, which describes the impact on Albury of the ABC International Celebrity Concert series 1947–87 and The City of Albury Choral Society 1947–55.

Murray Johns began his professional life as a geologist with the Geological Survey of Victoria. Later, he became a medical practitioner and researcher. He is an adjunct professor at Swinburne University.

Andrew Lemon FRHSV is immediate past president of the RHSV and an independent professional historian and author of many books, particularly on Australian horse racing and on aspects of the history of Victoria. He edited the *Victorian Historical Journal* from 1990 to 1999.

Trevor Lipscombe is a former management educator and consultant with an interest in the history of Australia's European coastal exploration. He is the author of *On Austral Shores—a Modern Traveller's Guide to the European Exploration of the Coasts of Victoria and New South Wales* (2005) and articles on the maritime history of the coast of Victoria.

Peter Love teaches politics and history at Swinburne University of Technology and is a member of the Labor Party and the National Tertiary Education Union. He is also President of the Melbourne Branch of the Labour History Society and a Trustee of the Melbourne Trades Hall and Literary Institute.

Gerald O'Collins, SJ, AC, PhD (Cantab), is a graduate in classics at the University of Melbourne. He spent 33 years teaching at the Gregorian University (Rome) before returning to Melbourne and becoming an adjunct professor of Australian Catholic University and a research fellow of the University of Divinity (Melbourne). He is the author or co-author of 64 books, which include *On the Left Bank of the Tiber* (2013), *The Second Vatican Council on Other Religions* (2013), and *The Second Vatican Council: Message and Meaning* (2014).

John Rickard FAHA has written widely on Australian cultural history and biography. His most recent book is a memoir about his parents, *An Imperial Affair: Portrait of an Australian Marriage* (2013).

Doug Royal is an Albury-based, retired property officer for Charles Sturt University and a curator with the Gustav Pirstitz Gallery in Albury. He has had a keen interest in history for a very long time. Doug holds a Diploma in Australia History from Charles Sturt University, has studied Australian art and, in the 1980s, explored the Burke and Wills' trek. He is knowledgeable about bushranging history in south-eastern Australia.

Judith Smart is a principal fellow at the University of Melbourne and an adjunct professor at RMIT University. She has published on Australian women's organisations in the first half of the 20th Century, as well as on women and political protest, women and religion, and the Miss Australia beauty contest. She is a former editor of the *Victorian Historical Journal* and currently a member of the RHSV Council.

Darren Watson has an M.A. in Public History and is employed as an archivist with the National Archives of Australia. He is currently working on a history of the Polynesia Company.

David Webb is a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and an Associate Professor of Surgery at the University of Melbourne. As well as publishing a textbook of kidney surgery and over 90 scientific papers, his lifelong love of history has resulted in his writing a number of surgical department histories. His fascination with the theory and game of cricket unfortunately outstrips his on-field skills, but has contributed to his research for his article on the foundation date of the Melbourne Cricket Club of which he is a member.

Douglas Wilkie gained his PhD at the University of Melbourne with a thesis entitled '1849 The Rush That Never Started: Forgotten Origins of the 1851 Gold Discoveries in Victoria'. Recent publications include 'Madame Callegari in

Australia: the Identity of Alexandre Dumas's Narrator in *Impressions de Voyage: Journal de Madame Giovanni*', 'Finding Forrester: the Life and Death of Joseph Forrester, Convict Silversmith', 'Eugenie Caroline Lemaire: Woman of Fashion and Influence; or Con-woman?' and 'The Convict Ship *Hashemy* at Port Phillip: a Case in Historical Error'.

Fay Woodhouse has been working as a commissioned historian for the past ten years, writing history and biography for universities, government agencies and individuals. She has written various institutional histories, including two about Australia's oldest wineries: the McLaren Vale's d'Arenberg Wines and Tahbilk at Nagambie. Her most recent publication, with historian Peter Yule, is *Pericleans, Plumbers and Practitioners: the First Fifty Years of the Monash School of Law*. Fay has been practising and teaching yoga for the past thirty years. In her spare time, she is writing the 60-year history of Melbourne's first yoga school, the Gita School of Yoga.

Peter Yule FRHSV is a research fellow in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at Melbourne University. His most recent book is *William Lawrence Baillieu: Founder of Australia's Greatest Business Empire*, and he is currently working on an economic history of Australia in the First World War to be published by Oxford University Press in 2016.

ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

PROMOTING AND PRESERVING THE HISTORY 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 has a large membership base, including individuals, families, libraries, schools and businesses, as well as functioning as the umbrella organisation for over 280 local and specialist historical societies throughout Victoria.

Membership of the RHSV is open. All those with an interest in history are welcome to join.

The Society's core activities encompass a diversity of activities that bring history to a wide range of people. Working with a large number of volunteers, the RHSV conducts lectures, exhibitions, excursions and workshops for the benefit of members and the general public. We also publish the *Victorian Historical Journal*, a newsletter, *History News*, six times a year, and monographs.

The *Victorian Historical Journal* publishes and reviews scholarly contributions to Australian history, with particular emphasis on the history of Victoria. Reviews are by invitation. Guidelines for contributors can be obtained by contacting the Society's office below. Books may also be reviewed in *History News*.

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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 (online and hard copy) scholarly articles on Victorian history, or on Australian history that illuminates Victorian history.
2. The submission of original scholarly articles is invited.
3. The journal often publishes historical notes, generally of 2–3000 words. A historical note contains factual information of significance to themes of Victorian history and to readers of the VHJ, and is different from an article by not being an extended analysis or having an argument. Submitted articles may be reduced and published as historical notes at the discretion of the editor and the Publications Committee, but only after receiving permission from the contributor for such action.
4. Reviews are commissioned by the review editor(s). Suggestions of publications to review are welcome.
5. The Royal Historical Society of Victoria does not pay for contributions to the *Journal*.
6. Articles within the range of 4000–8000 words (including notes) are preferred.
7. The manuscript should be typed or printed in a minimum 12-point serif typeface on one side only of A4 pages, double or one-and-a-half line spaced (including indented quotations and endnotes), with margins of at least 3 cm.
8. References should be supplied as endnotes and should not exceed 10 per cent of the text. They should be devoted principally to the citation of sources.
9. The title page should carry: author's name and title(s); postal address, telephone number, fax and email address where available; word length of the article (including notes); a brief biographical note on the author; a brief abstract of no more than 100 words indicating the main argument or significance of the article.
10. Suitable illustrations for articles are welcome, but initially send clear photocopies and not originals. Digitised images should not be sent on disk or by email. If your article is accepted we will give you further details about sending images.
11. Titles should be concise. A subtitle can also be submitted. The editor reserves the right to alter the title in consultation with the author.
12. Send an electronic copy of your manuscript, either on disk or preferably as an email attachment (.rtf or .doc file format). Email attachments should be sent to office@historyvictoria.org.au. Telephone enquiries to the RHSV office 9326 9288.