

1857 – ‘Anne Namoi [Ann Naomi] & Jane Nobbs’

What we see in this image

This $\frac{3}{4}$ length double portrait shows Jane Agnes Nobbs, aged 21, and Ann Naomi Nobbs, aged 19, great-granddaughters of Bounty mutineer, Fletcher Christian. The image is one of a series of photographs of the Pitcairn Islanders taken, following their removal to Norfolk Island in June 1856, at the time of the visit of the Governor-General Sir William Denison in late 1857; the specific circumstances of this quite extraordinary photographic session, on 25 September 1857, are described in a letter from the photographer to the Rev. Thomas Boyes Murray, dated 27 November 1857.

In this portrait, Jane Nobbs is seated on the right, with Ann standing on the left. Both sisters wear loose-fitting day dresses of printed cotton made with a square yoke set in across the shoulder line, with a centre front button closure and narrow band collar, over a voluminous front panel gathered into the yoke above the bust to create a cascade of fabric falling to the floor. In a surprising concession to current trends, the $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeves are cut in the fashionable ‘pagoda’ shape and the women wear their dark hair in the popular ‘bandeau’ style, with smooth front sections wrapped over their ears and pinned behind into a low bun at the nape of the neck. They also wear a plain or patterned scarf tied around their necks. Perhaps to aid the photographer in achieving sufficient contrast in the image, Jane has draped a plain dark [silk/polished cotton] shawl around her shoulders.

According to the Rev. T.B. Murray, ‘The features of the Pitcairners, both men and women, were more strongly European

than I had expected. They were tanned and brown skinned, but most were no darker than sunburned, brown-haired Englishmen. The women looked more Polynesian than the men... [and] wore loose cotton dresses..', Pitcairn – The Island the People and the Pastor, 1859, London, England.

From the early-nineteenth century, missionaries introduced Pacific communities to highly modest versions of a type of European women's 'undress' known as the 'Mother Hubbard' – so called after the nursery rhyme illustrations of 'Old Mother Hubbard' published from 1805 – in the belief that the adoption of such clothing by indigenous groups was a sign of civilised Christian behaviour. These long, loose-fitting dresses with full sleeves and a high- yoked neckline were customarily made from dark serviceable materials for weekday wear and white for Sundays. Designed to be worn unbelted, this relaxed style of 'housedress' eliminated the need for restrictive corseting and was routinely worn indoors by most women, especially during pregnancy, and invalids. It helped revolutionize women's fashion through its reference to freedom of choice for women, not just in fashion but also in other spheres of life.

What we know about this image

Ann Naomi Nobbs (1838-1931) and Jane Agnes Nobbs (1836-1926) were two of the ten children of George Hunn Nobbs (1799–1884) and Sarah Christian (1810-1899), grand-daughter of Bounty Mutineer, Fletcher Christian. On December 25, 1857, Ann marry Caleb Quintal (1837-1873) on Norfolk Island, raising a family 9 children; Jane married John Quintal on August 25, 1861; the couple had 7 children.

George Nobbs had first arrived on Pitcairn Island on 5 November 5, 1828, at age 28, and married Sarah Christian in Tahiti on 18 October 1829. By 1838 he had become the acknowledged leader of the Pitcairn community. For over twenty years he taught the youth, ministered to the sick and consoled

the dying on the Island. Travelling to England, he was ordained as a minister in 1852.

It was largely on the advice of Nobbs and Admiral Moresby (father of the photographer) that the Pitcairn community elected to migrate to Norfolk Island on 8 June 1856, following the suggestion of the Colonial Office that Norfolk Island was 'fit for the reception of a small body of settlers now existing at Pitcairn Island'. Sir William Denison (1804-1871), Governor-General of Australia (1855 to 1861), was authorized to control the removal and resettlement of the whole community of 194 persons.

On 25 September 1857, the 'Iris', arrived at Norfolk Island with Sir William Denison and naval officer and photographer Matthew Fortescue Moresby (1828-1918) aboard. Denison recorded that, since 'Moresby had brought a photographic apparatus on shore, I decided to get good likenesses of as many of the islanders as we could ... After a good deal of trouble we got several groups of both males and females; and here and there single photographs'.

Moresby had visited Pitcairn Island several times during the early 1850s, and enjoyed 'taking walks over the Island, sketching, talking and singing', becoming very fond of the Pitcairners: 'truly a more innocent and delightful race could not exist'. On this occasion Moresby himself reported that, 'I turned Mr Nobbs' study into an impromptu dark room and then took some pictures. Of course in taking groups with children, some of them moved'. In 1859, the Rev. T.B. Murray, confirmed that 'ten well executed photographic groups and simple portraits, accomplished by Mr Fortescue Moresby under the above disadvantages, have since reached the author's hands'.

Nobbs continued his former work as pastor and teacher on Norfolk Island until 1859, when Denison sent Thomas Rossiter to act as schoolmaster and store-keeper, increasing Nobbs's salary as chaplain. A century and a half later, the

descendants of Nobbs and his wife Sarah are among the largest and most influential of the 'founding father' families which still dominate most aspects of life on this self-governing island territory.

Ref: (See ML A 2881: G. H. Nobbs papers, 1836-79, <http://archival.sl.nsw.gov.au/Details/archive/110362728>

Pitcairn Island Recorder, 1838 (SLNSW)

Sir William Denison was Governor General of Australia from 1855 to 1861. Married in 1838, to Caroline, nee Hornby, daughter of a naval officer, Denison took up the post of Lieut. Governor of Tasmania In 1847, bringing with him to Australia his wife and four children, including the sketcher Mary Charlotte Denison.

PHOTOGRAPHER:

Matthew Fortescue Moresby (1828-1918) (known as Fortescue or 'Forty'), sketcher, amateur photographer and clerk, was the second of the three sons of Admiral Sir Fairfax Moresby and Eliza Louisa, née Williams, of Bakewell, Derbyshire. Sir Fairfax was commander-in-chief in the Pacific in 1850-53 and all his sons served in the region. Moresby was secretary to his father on board HMS Portland in 1852-53, and

In 1856-60 Moresby was based at Sydney, as paymaster-in-chief under the command of Commodore William Loring of the flagship 'Iris', where he seems to have begun taking photographs; it is not known from whom he learned the art of wet-plate work but it may have been from his friend E.W. Ward.

NB: Photographs taken by M.F. Moresby on a number of South Pacific islands visited with the Iris, including the Solomon's, New Hebrides and the Pitcairners of Norfolk Island are found in the Macarthur Family's Camden Park albums: ML PXA 4358/Vol.1: Album of views, illustrations and Macarthur family photographs, 1857-66, 1879, by various photographers. <http://archival.sl.nsw.gov.au/Details/archive/110326756>

[Two unidentified groups on a veranda possibly Pitcairn Islanders]

[Four unidentified groups possibly Pitcairn Islanders]

These were, however, not the first photographs to be taken of the islanders. (See A.P.R. October 1956, pp. 588-597 for an illustrated article on Moresby by K. Burke.)

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Ann Namoi & Jane Nobbs

1857 – ‘Anne Namoi [Ann Naomi] & Jane Nobbs’

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Download Image



Creator
Matthew Fortescue Moresby (1828–1918)
Inscription
Lower edge: M F M
Medium
Photoprint
Background
To follow
Reference
Open

**1857 – Troughton sisters: (l)
Amelia Dorcas Ormrod, (c) Mrs
[Mary] Carr, (r) Clara
Troughton**

What we see in this image

This delicately hand-tinted ambrotype portrait is highly unusual as the date and location of the photograph can be confirmed by the presence of a copy of the 1857 Sydney Post Office Directory, quite deliberately positioned to ensure its legibility, in the lap of the woman seated on the left identified as Amelia Dorcas Ormod, nee Troughton. For their front facing $\frac{3}{4}$ length group portrait the three female members of the Troughton family (thought to be sisters) wear very similar styles of day dress, with jacket-style bodices and full skirts. All the dresses have sloping shoulder lines and three-quarter length pagoda sleeves, trimmed at the elbow with ruched or fringed oversleeves and worn with ruffled and flared white undersleeves, with loose pleats (which may or may not conceal centre front fastenings) fanning up the corsage from the waist and spreading over the shoulders. Amelia, aged 22, wears the plainest gown with a white peter-pan style collar and a ribbon tie, and two rows of braid trimming the edges of her sleeves. Her sisters, [Mary] and Clara, standing to the right, wear dresses of light-coloured checked cotton and dark silk taffeta respectively, both with shirred panels at the waist, Clara's silk gown with matching silk fringed trim on the edges of the sleeves. All three women wear their hair in the popular bandeau style of the mid-1850s, for which smooth front sections of hair have been wrapped over the ears and drawn back to the nape of the neck, the remainder arranged behind in a longer and deeper roll; the sheen of their hair suggests that it has probably been oiled. Perhaps to accommodate the tightness of the pose, their unornamented dome-shaped skirts are somewhat lacking in fullness, despite being finely 'gauged' (ie. cartridge pleated) at the waist, and would appear to be worn without the customary 4 or 5 layers of crinoline (ie. horsehair) petticoats necessary – before the advent of the sprung-steel cage crinoline in 1856 – to achieve the fashionable 1850s silhouette.

What we know about this image

The three women are believed to be the daughters of James (c.1809-1873) and Dorcas (c.1808-1880) Troughton of Parramatta. James Troughton may have been a minister. An inscription on the back of the framed portrait identifies the woman on the left of the group as Mrs Amelia Dorcas Ormrod, nee Troughton (1835-1914) with Mrs [Henry] Carr of Mudgee at the centre and Clara Troughton on the right. Though no wedding rings are visible in this image, Mrs [Henry] Carr, nee [Mary] Troughton, had married in 1855, and by 1858 Amelia Troughton (see MIN 99) was married to Sergeant William Ormrod (see MIN 103) who had served in the Crimean War (1853-1856), and died in 1878, he is buried in the graveyard of St Anne's Church, Ryde.

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1857 – Troughton sisters: (l) Amelia Dorcas Ormrod, (c) Mrs [Mary] Carr, (r) Clara Troughton

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Creator
Glaister, Thomas fl.1854–1870 attrib.
Inscription
On reverse:
Medium
photograph
Background
N/A
Reference
N/A

1857 – James Johnson, survivor of the wreck of the Dunbar

What we see in this image

This right facing $\frac{1}{2}$ length photographic portrait shows Irish

Able-seaman James Johnson, aged 25, posed in front of a plain studio backdrop. The sole survivor of the clipper Dunbar which ran aground outside Sydney Harbour, below South Head, on the night of 20 August 1857, Johnson was rescued from the cliff face two days later and became a known personality in the colony. This large format hand-coloured ambrotype would have been much too costly for the sitter to commission. Its unusual close-focus suggests it was probably taken for promotional purposes by entrepreneurial photographer Thomas Glaister, to entice Sydney citizens curious about the tragedy to the display of famous faces at his Pitt Street Excelsior Photographic Galleries. Johnson wind-burned cheeks and chapped lips provide stark evidence of his ordeal. He is simply clothed in a thick, woollen single-breasted pilot's coat with a built-in shoulder cape and narrow turn-back collar, over a white shirt and scarf neck tie, presumably all brand new and supplied 'ready-to wear' by a Sydney outfitter. His thick, dark wavy hair has a right parting and his whiskers are trimmed into a full fringe beard. Before 1860 only wealthy people could afford to commission portraits which makes this an exceptionally rare photographic record of the appearance of a mid-nineteenth century working class man.

What we know about this image

The tale of the wreck of the Dunbar is part of Sydney's history. It led to both massive outpourings of public grief and developments in maritime safety. At least two other Sydney photographers were eager to cash in on the short-lived celebrity of James Johnson (1837-1915) the sole of the Dunbar shipwreck; J.W. Denslow photographed Johnson in a casually seated pose while Freeman Bros. advertised a 'collodiotype on paper' (SMH, 29/8/1857, p. 8). For many years after his ordeal, Johnson was the lighthouse keeper at Newcastle and, while in that position, succeeded in saving the lives of others. He died at his home in Dulwich Hill at the age of 78. SHIPWRECK: The Dunbar was named after its wealthy owner Duncan

Dunbar, and said to be the largest vessel ever built at the Sunderland shipyard in north-eastern England. Completed in 1854, when the Australian gold rushes created a demand for passenger ships, it was used as a troop ship for the Crimean War prior to its first voyage to Sydney in 1856. On the night of Thursday 20 August 1857, after 81 days at sea, the Dunbar arrived off Sydney Heads just before midnight, to treacherous weather conditions with heavy rain squalls impairing vision and obscuring the cliffs at the entrance to Port Jackson. Captained by James Green, a veteran of eight previous visits to Sydney, in conditions of such poor visibility the Dunbar collided with a cliff near South Head, several hundred metres north of the Macquarie lighthouse. The impact brought down the topmasts, mounting seas stoved in the lifeboats and the Dunbar was heaved broadside to the swells. Lying on its side, the ship began to break up almost immediately. One crewman, James Johnson, found himself hurled onto the cliffs where he managed to gain a finger hold. Scrambling higher, he became the sole survivor amidst a sea of bodies comprising the remaining 58 crew, and all 63 passengers many of whom were established residents of Sydney. Dawn gradually unveiled the enormity of the tragedy to the community of Sydney. Thousands were drawn to the scene and the morbid task of identifying relatives, friends and business associates soon began. James Johnson clung to his precarious hold on the rock ledge until the morning of 22 August, two days after the ship wreck, when he was noticed from the cliff top with the shout: 'A Man on the rocks! A live man on the Rocks! There he is! there he is!' Johnson was rescued 'with not as much as a scratch about him and otherwise quite well'. He later explained that his greatest fear was that [as there were a great many bodies near him...] he would not be seen/found and he would be starved. (SMH, 24, 25/8/ 1857) INQUEST TESTIMONY: 'Coming into Sydney under topsail a few minutes before twelve o'clock on Thursday night Captain Green must have taken the bluff at the north end of the Gap for North Head and in ordering the helm to starboard when the ship struck the rock and almost immediately

broke up. About thirty years of age and a strong and powerfully built Irishman, Johnson with the old boatswain and two Dutch seamen were about the last who were washed from the wreck, they four holding on a piece of plank from which the two Dutchmen were soon washed, a huge sea then threw Johnson and the boatswain on shore amongst some pieces of timber from which Johnson scrambled to a higher shelving rock to avoid the next sea, which he did but the old boatswain, less active, was carried away and perished. Johnson then climbed to a higher still position and being much exhausted laid down and slept. The next day he saw a steamer go into the heads, he signalled but was not seen. Friday night passed in this state. On Saturday morning he endeavoured to get along the rocks he could see people on the cliffs above but could not make himself seen until a brave lad (Antonio Wollier, an Icclander) who had gone down Jacob's Ladder and along the rocks, noticed Johnson waiving a handkerchief relief came and he was soon after hauled up to the cliffs which were about 2000 feet high.'

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1857 – James Johnson, survivor of the wreck of the Dunbar

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Creator
[Glaister, Thomas fl.1855-1870, attrib.]
Inscription
n/a
Medium
Photograph
Background
Subject in posed in front of a plain studio backdrop.
Reference
Open

1856 – Possibly Francis Rawdon Hume & his wife Emma, nee Mitchell

What we see in this image

This $\frac{1}{2}$ length seated double portrait is a rare record of a prosperous colonial couple, smartly and expensively attired in fashionable outdoorwear suitable for paying formal afternoon

calls. It is believed to show Mr and Mrs Francis Rawdon Hume. The sitters in this image face towards each other, a conventional pose for married couples. They appear to be aged around 50 and 40 years, conforming to the known age difference of about 12 years between Mr and Mrs Hume, which would seem to support this attribution.

Mr Hume wears a double-breasted, dark woollen [sac] coat with notched shawl lapels and the newer style of looser fitting sleeve seen after 1854, over a single-breasted dark waistcoat and fawn coloured trousers, and a crisp white shirt with high-standing shirt collar points rising out of a black neck cloth. His silk top hat is placed on the table, resting upside down on its crown as it would be in a drawing room situation. He wears his greyish blonde curling hair brushed back from a receding hairline above clean shaven cheeks and a fringe beard.

Mrs Hume wears a fashionable spring bonnet in the face-framing, shallow-brimmed style of the mid-1850s. Fitted with a fine black hail spot net/lace veil to protect the face against wind and sun, it is set back far enough on the head to display the inner brim filled with lace frills. Curving close to the face, but sufficiently flared to show off her strawberry blonde hair arranged in the smooth 'bandeau' style, a pair of pale silk ribbon strings attached with loops at ear level are tied in a crisp bow under her chin.

Her pale [silk] day dress has a form-fitting bodice in the popular jacket style, the centre front opening marked with a [ruched] trim. She wears a dark silk shawl draped around her shoulders, tucked under the elbows and over the forearms in the approved manner, revealing flaring white undersleeves and a heavy gold bangle above her hands, clad in snug-fitting, fawn-coloured, wrist-length kid-gloves, clasped in her lap over the scalloped and pinked edges of a flounce, likely to be one of a series arranged in tiers, over the length of her full skirt.

What we know about this image

Francis Rawdon Hume (1803–1888) was born at Toongabbie, NSW, a son of Andrew Hamilton Hume who had arrived in Sydney to take up agriculture and other colonial appointments in 1790, and a younger brother of Hamilton Hume, the explorer.

F.R. Hume was a farmer with successive land holdings in the NSW Southern Tablelands. On 12 October 1830, he married Emma Mitchell (1815-1887), daughter of Mr. William Mitchell, a fellow Southern Tablelands landholder at Brisbane Meadow. The couple had 14 children (8 daughters and 6 sons), the youngest of whom was born at 'Castlesteads' the Hume family's property at Burrowa, NSW, in March 1854. Mr and Mrs Hume died at Burrowa within 12 months of each other, aged 85 and 73 respectively.

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**1856 – Possibly Francis Rawdon Hume & his wife
Emma, nee Mitchell**

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Creator
Unknown
Inscription
n/a

Medium
Photograph
Background
To follow
Reference
To follow

1856 – Cricket ground, Richmond, Victoria

What we see in this image

This image shows the large groups of spectators attending the first inter-colonial cricket match between New South Wales and Victoria, which was played on Wednesday 26 March 1856; the crowd displays little interest in the game as a fieldsman desperately chases the ball to the boundary.

The people in this image are dressed in an array of clothing typical of the era. The male spectators all wear tall hats and suits or unmatched sets of long line 'sac' jackets and trousers, with or without waistcoats, over white shirts and dark neckties. The small boy standing in the centre of the

image, watching the game with his back to the artist, wears a blouse and knicker suit and a tasselled cap.

The women and girls wear an assortment of jackets or capes and bonnets – one also carries a tiny, fringed [collapsible carriage] parasol to shade her face from the sun – and light-coloured dresses with dome-shaped skirts held out by numerous stiffened petticoats. From 1852, there was a fashion for flounces arranged in horizontal tiers to enhance the fullness of the skirt circumference, which could reach up to four or five yards (4.5m). There was also a marked preference for lightweight fabrics made 'a disposition', ie. dress lengths woven or printed with a narrower version of the motifs and borders of the overall textile design for use on flounces, sleeves and bodice trimmings.

The fashionably dressed group in the left foreground have been identified as Commissary-General Coxsworthy and family. Ferguson Thomas Coxsworthy (1799?-1874), 'long resident in Canada', was appointed Officer in Charge of the NSW Commissariat under Governor Fitzroy, arriving in Sydney with his wife Julia, nee Godard (1806 -?) and five daughters, on 16 November 1852. By 1856, Coxsworthy had been promoted to Commissary General and relocated to Melbourne. The tall young man walking between the two smaller girls maybe James Coxsworthy, the couple's second eldest son, who died at sea, off the coast of Tenerife, in 1857.

What we know about this image

With tickets priced at 1 shilling, and ladies free of charge, 5000 people are known to have gathered in Richmond Park, at the outer eastern end of the current Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), to watch the first day of play between New South Wales and Victoria which saw the NSW team ultimately victorious.

The MCG Committee had made great preparations to ensure the

comfort of the crowd. In addition to the clubhouse with veranda which had been built in 1854 (seen on the left in this image), newspapers reported that 'the ladies will find marquees [out of view in this image on the right of the wickets], a band and the establishment of Woolcott and Mansfield, the confectioners, besides seats to enable them to view the play without fatigue...' (The Age, 26/3/1856, p.3). The band is shown playing under the shade of a large tree, in centre of the image, and was provided by the 40th regiment which was stationed in Victoria at the time

The artist, John Black Henderson (1827-1918) was a late colonial-era painter, sketcher, comic illustrator, amateur photographer and surveyor, who migrated to Victoria in 1851, where he worked on the Ballarat goldfields for several months before joining the Victorian Government Survey Office in Melbourne. Henderson is best known for his retrospective watercolour of the Eureka Stockade Riot at Ballarat, 3 December 1854 (DG SSV2B/Ball/7) – 'painted from sketches done on the spot a few hours after the event, the dress of the miners and the uniforms of the soldiers being accurate'.

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1856 – Cricket ground, Richmond, Victoria

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Creator
Henderson, John Black (1827–1918)
Inscription
LRHS pencil in later hand: '1855'
Medium
Watercolour Drawing

Background
In the foreground of this sketch are several notable persons of the period of whom the family of Commissary-General Coxsworthy may be specially mentioned. The band playing is that of the British regiment stationed in Victoria' (See The Home, 2/10/1934, p.32.)
Reference
Open

1856 – Unidentified family group

What we see in this image

This unidentified albumen photoprint was taken from an album which bore the signature of public servant, author and painter John Rae, a self-taught early amateur colonial practitioner of collodion photography. The subjects of this unknown family portrait are posed, either seated or standing, in a domestic garden setting with the wall of a building and a plain dark drop sheet forming a backdrop. All appear to wear comfortable, well-worn clothing reflective of informal everyday dress in the mid-nineteenth century.

The family group is comprised of eight people (two parents and

six children) from left to right:

a girl [aged 8], standing in right facing profile, wearing an ankle-length plain [cotton] day dress, the full skirt worn without petticoats and the fitted bodice with a closed neckline trimmed with a separate narrow white band collar, above a corsage of gathered pleats, fanning up from the waist over the shoulder, and 3/4 length pagoda sleeves with a fitted sleeve head worn without undersleeves;

a mother, seated on the left, wearing a plain silk/sateen day dress with an unornamented full skirt worn with minimal petticoats, and an open bodice with a fan front rising from a deeply pointed waistline, trimmed with looped passementerie braid which also trims the edges of her full length 'pagoda' sleeves, worn with closed undersleeves of matching fabric gathered into a cuff at the wrist, her lace-edged collar fastened at the neckline with a gold brooch. She wears her centre-parted hair with a side curl over each ear, anchored at the temples with barrettes, the crown of her head covered with a [mesh cap] trimmed with artificial flowers;

two older (teenage) daughters, standing behind their parents, one leaning left arm on father's left shoulder, both wearing similar styles of plain [cotton] day dress with bodices gathered into pointed waists and fan fronts trimmed with scalloped and Vandyked edges respectively, opening over either a white or self-fabric chemisette, closed at the neck with a ribbon tie or white collar band fastened with a brooch, their 3/4 length pagoda sleeves worn with and without undersleeves above bead or [seed] bracelets (possibly homemade). The girls have also chosen slightly different hair styles, one with waved sections of hair laid over the temples above a pair sausage curls, the other following the popular bandeau style of wrapping smooth sections of hair over her ears and drawn back to the nape of the neck;

a father, seated at centre, with an older (teenage) son, standing behind leaning his right arm on his father's right shoulder, the eldest son seated on his father's right, and the

youngest son [aged 10] standing in left facing profile, wearing a type of short jacket, cut along the line of female fashions, reserved for juveniles under the age of 12. The other male members of the family wear an array of single-breasted, narrow-sleeved woollen jackets and trousers over white shirts with pointed collars, individualised by their choice of waistcoat (either in velvet, brocade or cloth) and neck cloths or silk bow ties of varying magnitude and stylishness. The two older men wear square-toed, elastic-sided leather boots and display their fob chains, anchoring pocket watches, draped across their torsos. All wear their hair with low right hand partings.

What we know about this image

John Rae (1813-1900) migrated to Australia from Scotland in 1839 to work in Sydney. By 1843, he had been appointed Sydney's first Town Clerk and later occupied in various public works positions. He was also a talented amateur artist, painting watercolours of Sydney streets and making a camera obscura to contribute to his panorama of Sydney Harbour – perhaps his best-known work is his 1850 watercolour of the turning of the first sod for the first railway. In the 1850s Rae became interested in, and taught himself photography, initially to record details for later paintings. In September 1855 he gave two lectures on the subject of photography at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, subsequently excerpted in the Sydney Morning Herald (see 14/9/1855, p.8; 21/9/1855, p.2.) encouraging other amateurs to take up collodion work.

MLMSS 6998: John Rae – Letterbook, 1840-1854

In these letters Rae writes about his personal affairs, his lectures at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, and his experiments with various photographic techniques. There are also sketches by Rae of the camera he designed (p.678).

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1856 – Unidentified family group

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Creator
[Rae, John]

Inscription
To follow
Medium
Photograph
Background
Removed from album with John Rae's signature. See also: P1 / 2039: a4447039
Reference
To Follow

1856 – A primrose from England

What we see in this image

This coloured lithograph of 'A Primrose from England' was created in 1856, engraved from the original oil painting first exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1855. The central feature in this painting is a larger-than-life primrose in full flower. The artist Edward Hopley was inspired to create his painting by reports of an actual event: he transportation of a primrose from England to Melbourne made possible – to the profound excitement of the colonial populace – by the

invention of the Wardian Case in 1933. The image was so popular when it was exhibited that it was quickly made into a lithograph print for the mass market.

Though the original painting was created in England, the artist has been careful to craft an image that offers a richly layered narrative on the dual theme of immigration and colonization, using his subject as a vehicle for exploring the emotions associated with the nineteenth century emigrant experience. He portrays a diverse and multi-racial, cross-section of migrants, each stereotypical of his or her class or station in life, gathered round the Primrose, with individuals from different social strata intermingled in a potentially chaotic space, while others crowd the doorway anxious to gain access to the colony's latest European import.

Standing on deck (the smoke stack of the steamship just visible in the top left hand corner) from the far left:

a flashily-dressed continental gentleman [possibly French – suggested by the blue ribbon cockade on his hat] pays his silver coin entry fee;

a sailor [indicated by his black-tarred boater style hat] collects the coin sitting at the entry way barred with a double-barrelled shotgun held by a tall, bearded man in shirt sleeves and waistcoat, standing against the door marked 'STORE';

a cluster of people fill the doorway with a bespectacled older man, a younger man, a servant class woman and a Chinese man (his plaited 'queue' wrapped around his head) and the headgear of others visible including a soldier's shako, the rim of a woman's straw bonnet and a man's top hat.

Inside the store room, near the door and standing along the back wall, from left to right are:

a Scotsman [denoted by his 'scots' bonnet or tam-o-shanter] holding up a little girl with gold ringlets wearing a [coral] necklace and cream dress cut low across the shoulder line and

trimmed with a band of striped ribbon;
an elderly man wearing an apron [probably a shopkeeper] with a battered top hat and spectacles;
two sea-faring types in knitted caps and sweaters;
a tall, dark-bearded [adventurer/pro prospector] twirling his moustache, wearing a light straw hat and a striped jersey under a coarse wool coat sashed at the waist [over a pair of pistols], a black leather gilt-buckled belt slung around his hips;
an Indian man with a moustache wearing a striped turban and double-breasted wool coat, left unbuttoned to reveal his western style clothing;
an Indigenous man wearing a blanket-like garment and carrying a tall staff.

In the foreground, from the right to left:

an emigrant family of five comprising a mother seated on an ornately carved chair wearing a floral-trimmed bonnet and shawl over a green dress;
her older son seated on a striped carpet bag at her feet, wearing a straw boater style hat with a ribbon band and a warm, woollen coat over a cotton shirt, cuffed trousers, striped socks and black patent leather ankle-strapped shoes;
the father seated on an expensive looking brass-studded steamer truck and clad in the practical [earth-coloured moleskin] clothing of a farmer including a round-crowned [leather] hat and a shawl-collared coat and trousers, his watch fobs dangling below a double-breasted, collared waistcoat, with a blue scarf tied in a bow at the neck;
his legs are wrapped around the torso of his young daughter who wears a red dress cut low across the shoulder line, with a yellow and blue striped scarf draped around her neck, above white socks and black ankle-strapped shoes;
another, smaller boy in a boater style hat is yet to be breeched, and wears a dress under his velvet cape with a hood, above striped socks and ankle-strapped patent leather shoes;
an [agricultural] labourer [perhaps a shepherd] wearing a

reddish brown felt cap and travelling with his a black and white collie dog tethered to a plaited leash.

In the centre of the scene, gathered around the flowering plant in its terracotta pot, on a steamer trunk functioning as an altar, are the three women including:

a golden-haired 'Madonna-like' girl wearing a blue dress kneels, her hands clasped in adoration, her head and shoulders draped in a cream shawl with a deep paisley border;

and two women opposite – [a mother and daughter or sisters] the elder, leaning over to admire the bloom, wears a pale pink bonnet of shirred silk, its inside edges trimmed with white flowers, above her ensemble of matching yellow silk gown and jacket/cape with 'pagoda' sleeves, trimmed with fine black lace, her arm around the waist of her younger companion who is bare-headed, revealing her stylishly-arranged dark hair and long gold pendant earrings, above an elegant day dress of [shot] purple [silk] with wide 'pagoda' sleeves and white, ruffle-edged undersleeves, open at the wrist to reveal slender forearms and an ornate gold bangle set with red stones.

What we know about this image

English artist Edward Hopley (1816-1869) knew a winning story when he read about the Melbourne primrose; his painting (now in the collection of the Bendigo Art Gallery) was displayed at 1855 Royal Academy Exhibition with an explanatory text:

'Dr Ward mentioned to the Royal Institution, that a primrose had been taken to Australia in a covered glass case and when it arrived there, in full bloom, the sensation it excited as a reminiscence of 'fatherland' was so great, that it was necessary to protect it by a guard'. (GLEANINGS, Mount Alexander Mail, 9/9/1854, p.7.)

The 'Wardian Case' had revolutionised the transportation of plant specimens throughout the British Empire; the glass case

enabled plants, such as the primrose, to survive the long sea journey to Australia with a minimum of watering. The arrival in the Australian colonies from England of a primrose in perfect health gave British migrants a belief in the future of their adopted country; if the fragile the primrose could flourish in the new land, so too could other English life forms such as the women, at the centre of the image, who are themselves symbols of European civilisation, domesticity and fertility.

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Hover on image to zoom in



1856 – A primrose from England

Open in State Library of NSW catalogue

Download Image



Creator
Dicksee, J.R. (1817–1905), after Edward Hopley (1816–1869)
Inscription
Title and imprint: ‘From the original picture in the possession of T.W. Kennard Esq.’
Medium
Hand-Coloured Lithograph
Background
To follow
Reference
Open

1855 – Maria Isabella Bligh, nee Fennell

What we see in this image

This right facing $\frac{3}{4}$ length seated portrait shows Maria Bligh, aged 29, her right arm resting on a small round 'posing table' covered with the brightly-patterned plush cloth that identifies it as a prop of the American and Australian Daguerreotype Gallery, Thomas Skelton Glaister's (1825-1904) studio of located at 100 Pitt Street, Sydney, from April 1855. Glaister was trained as a professional photographer in New York and concentrated his studio portraiture on Sydney society's elite. Although Glaister's photographs were expensive, he offered hand-colouring for no extra charge and quickly garnered a reputation for high photographic standards, producing portraits which were guaranteed never to fade.

Mrs Bligh wears a light-coloured [silk] day dress seemingly well-suited to a Sydney summer, though perhaps not best suited for a daguerreotype portrait which, according to Glaister's advice, recommended:

Dark dresses of any material...are preferable for Ladies and Children...figured dresses, with strong contrasts take well; dresses with much lustre take brighter than those with none...Bonnetts seldom should be worn, as they shade the face...A figured shawl or mantilla gives a pleasing effect to the picture...

Maria's dress has a plain, wide-spreading pleated skirt with the bodice, or corsage, left open to the waist, its front edges probably fastening with hooks or buttons but folded back to form revers and worn over a chemisette of white eyelet-

worked [cotton] with a pointed, turn-down collar fastened with a gold brooch. The $\frac{3}{4}$ -length 'pagoda' sleeves are open and full, with ruched self-fabric trimming the cuffs, worn with a pair of white [cotton] undersleeves fitted over the forearms and closed at the wrist.

She wears a dark-coloured shawl of light-weight silk draped around her shoulders, folded in half to create a doubled triangle with two rows of scalloping trimmed with fine lace, the lower edge forming a border, and held demurely in place by her crossed arms. Daguerreotypes, being positive mirror images, are laterally reversed – which means wedding rings customarily worn on the left hand (as seen in this image) will appear to the viewer to be worn on the sitter's right hand.

Her dark hair is centre-parted with side loops, brushed smoothly over each ear and spreading onto her cheeks (perhaps a side effect of wearing a close-fitting bonnet), the remainder coiled/braided into a soft bun pinned at the back of the neck.

What we know about this image

In February 1847, at Scone, NSW, Maria Isabella Fennell (1826-1867) married Richard John Bligh (1819-1869), eldest son of Richard and Elizabeth Bligh and a grandson of Gov. William Bligh. The couple had 8 children: their first born in Nov 1847 at Warialda, NSW, where Bligh worked as a Commissioner for Colonial Lands (C.C.L.) and magistrate (1847-1856) attempting to bring justice to bear on white settlers who killed Aboriginal people. Bligh had arrived at the new settlement in the Gwydir squatting district in 1845, erecting a camp on the banks of the Reedy River. At least one other daughter Edith (March 1853), and a son Neville (March 1855-1891) were also born at Warialda.

In about 1856, Bligh moved with his family to the Twofold Bay

area, where he worked as a doctor and Medical Attendant to the Twofold Bay Benevolent Asylum; a lengthy testimonial in Nov 1859 (SMH) noted the much lamented departure for Sydney of Dr Bligh and his family after five years in the district. He is later listed in Sydney [SMH, 1862] as 'Richard Bligh Esq. Surgeon, Paddington'. On 5 June 1867, Maria Bligh died, aged 40, at her home at 163 Kent Street Sydney. Richard Bligh of 'Riverstone, Clarence River' died two years later.

PHOTOGRAPHER:

On Tuesday 4 Dec 1855, Thomas Glaister advertised his 'American and Australian Daguerreotype Gallery' on the front page of Sydney's The Empire newspaper describing his:

splendid Photographic Rooms, with one of the best arranged and largest skylights in the colonies, at 100, Pitt-street, next door to the Royal Victoria Theatre, where he is now producing likenesses which are pronounced by good judges to be vastly superior in delineation, boldness, and the most lifelike to any ever before taken in this colony...Mr. G. has one of Haydon and Co.'s quick working cameras (the quickest now made), the only instrument of the kind in this country, by which pictures are taken in one fourth of the time required by other cameras...

On 5 January 1856, The People's Advocate reported:

Having recently paid a visit to Mr. Glaister's American and Australian Portrait Gallery, next door to the Victoria Theatre, we must pronounce it as the most complete and best arranged studio for taking likenesses in the photographic style, we have yet seen in Sydney...

DAGUERREOTYPES:

The process of making a hand-coloured daguerreotype starts with a silver-plated copper plate. Once the plate has been sensitised and exposed, the image is developed, fixed and washed. The surface of the daguerreotype to be hand-coloured is coated with a thin film of gum arabic and left to dry. The

colourist then breathed on the treated plate to make it sticky and applied dry powdered pigment with a fine paintbrush onto the image surface. The finished daguerreotype portrait was then covered by a sheet of protective glass, sealed to prevent tarnishing and marking of the delicate surface, and mounted either in the customer's choice of decorative frame or leather-bound case lined with dark velvet, plush or satin which served the dual purpose of providing a matt surface to reflect back onto the mirror-like plate to aid viewing and to protecting the glass cover.

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1855 – Maria Isabella Bligh, nee Fennell

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Download Image



Creator
Glaister, Thomas, fl. 1854-1870, attrib.
Inscription
Ink on plush lining of case: 'M.I. Bligh/Dec 1853' (sic)
Medium
Photograph
Background
To follow
Reference
Open

1855 – Sarah Scarvell

What we see in this image

This right facing $\frac{3}{4}$ length oil portrait shows Sarah Scarvell, aged 18, posed in a verandah setting, seated on an upholstered [chair or sofa] with an out swept arm, a white [marble or

plaster] classically-inspired column with a red curtain drapery behind on the right, and a non-specific landscape view stretching to the horizon on the left. This painting is one of a series of eight known portraits of the Scarvell family by the artist Richard Noble; it may have been painted as a pair to the left facing portrait of her sister, Elizabeth Mary Scarvell (1840-1907) (ML 1195), as both sitters wear very similar dresses – one red and one white.

Sarah's evening dress is made of a soft, light-weight, gauze-like white fabric arranged in loose pleats across the bodice, or corsage, fanning up from a narrow, pointed waistline into which the full skirt is tightly pleated. The moderately low neckline is cut wide across the shoulders and trimmed with a fine, van-dyke pointed bobbin lace edging, also used on the short, ruched sleeves. The gown is further embellished with wide picot-edged ribbons of pink and gold [shot silk] gauze wrapped around the waist, and tied in bows on each shoulder with floating ends. Sarah also carries a matching gauze scarf [perhaps imported from India] draped behind her waist and twisted around her right forearm. She holds a red rose in her left hand and wears a heavy chain-link bracelet of chased yellow gold on her left forearm, set with a large faceted [citrine] (perhaps a birthstone), and three fine-gauge gold chains around her neck, one suspending a locket.

Her centre parted dark hair is waved naturally, or artificially crimped with heated tongs, looped over her ears and somewhat puffed at the sides, and twisted into a knot at the back of her neck.

The artist has posed the sitter in a very similar manner, and an almost identical setting, to his portrait of the Hon. Mary Caroline Stewart (Mrs Keith Stewart), nee Fitzroy (1823-1895), daughter of Governor Charles Fitzroy (OGH, National Trust, NSW). However, although both women wear remarkably similar gowns, Mrs Stewart's portrait exhibits a far more overt celebration of the female form better suited to the more worldly and married woman. Mrs Stewart was chatelaine of

Government House, Sydney, following the death of her mother Lady Mary Fitzroy at Parramatta in 1847, and her portrait is believed to have been commissioned to mark the occasion of her return to England in 1855.

What we know about this image

Captain John Larking Scarvell (1791-1861) commissioned artist Richard Noble (1806-82) to paint individual portraits of his family in 1855. Noble's portraits almost invariably reveal a keen interest in the depiction of fabrics, laces and ribbons, as exemplified in this work; all his surviving works are oil paintings, most are signed 'Richard Noble' and inscribed with the date and, occasionally, with the place of execution.

Over the course of the year, while residing at Clare House at Pitt Town near Windsor, NSW, Noble completed portraits of Sarah Winefred Scarvell, nee Redmond (1809-1873) (ML 1251) and John Larking Scarvell (ML 1250), and the six eldest Scarvell children: John Redmond Barnes (1830-1855) (ML 1194); Sidney (1832-1875); George (1834-1877); Edward Augustus (1835-1883); Sarah Winefred Isabella Mary (1837-1929) (ML 1339); and Elizabeth Mary (1840-1907) (ML 1195). According to family tradition, Noble had formed a romantic attachment to Sarah Winifred Isabella Mary Scarvell (then aged eighteen); another family tale is that he had only one arm.

SCARVELL FAMILY:

Sarah Redmond had married John Scarvell at St James's Church, Sydney, in March 1828. It was the second marriage for Captain Scarvell; his first wife, Isabella (nee Campbell), had died at sea and was buried in St Philip's Church, Sydney, in January 1828. Scarvell retired from the East India Company shortly after his marriage to Sarah and extended Clare House (previously Killarney) for his family in the late 1820s and 1830s.

The Scarvell family were very close to the Cape family, with several members of each family marrying into the same generation of the other; both the younger Scarvell sisters married Cape brothers – Elizabeth Mary Scarvell to William Frederick Cape in 1863, and Sarah Winefred Isabella Mary Scarvell (1837-1929) to Alfred John Cape in 1871. This portrait later passed to Sarah Scarvell's daughter, Jessie Cape. At her death in 1963 it passed to Jessie's niece, from whom it was acquired by the Library in 2004.

ARTIST BIO:

The artist Richard Noble is thought to have arrived in NSW by 1847, though the first documented evidence of his colony career is found early in 1855, when he was commissioned to execute the Scarvell family portraits. He is first listed as an artist in Cox & Co.'s Sydney Post Office Directory for 1857, at 246 George Street. A painter who dealt mainly in portraiture, Noble is known to have exhibited his works in various exhibitions and painted portraits for many of Sydney's leading residents.

Tue 26 Aug 1856: pleasure of walking round the studio of Mr Noble in George Street, nearly opp. the Post Office...another artist of first-rate talent has taken up his abode among us...though not yet much known here is an artist of considerable European experience, having studied under some of the the most eminent men of is profession in Flanders and the Royal Academy in London.

Following the death of his wife, Harriett, (nee de St Pierre, b. ca. 1835 – d. Nov. 1857), aged 42, of a painful and lingering illness at her residence, Devonshire St, Strawberry Hills, Noble lived in Sydney and Goulburn until 1868, when he returned (disconsolately) to England.

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1855 – Sarah Scarvell

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

Download Image



Creator
Noble, Richard. P. (fl.1828–1865)
Inscription
RHS: 'Rich.d Nobel 1855'
Medium
Oil Painting
Background
To follow
Reference
Open

1854 – George Walker Johnson and his family

What we see in this image

This whole plate daguerreotype shows George Walker Johnson,

aged 43, his wife Ann, nee Ellison, aged 25, and three of their 13 children: from left to right, George William, aged 3, Elizabeth, aged 6, and John Simpson, about 12 months. The photograph appears to have been taken in summer – the short sleeves of both boys' dresses show distinct tan lines on their upper arms and all the children wear socks rather than stockings. It can be dated quite precisely, based on the ages of the children, between late 1854 and the death of little George Jnr on 30 January 1855 (South Australian Register, 31/1/ 1855, p.2).

To minimise movement through the long exposure time, the Johnson's have been carefully arranged by the photographer who has seated the parents (probably with posing clamps fitted to their necks) at either end of an ornately-carved rococo revival style sofa holding the younger children in their laps to keep them still.

George Jnr nestles into the crook of his father's arm and leans his head back against his shoulder, holding onto his skirt to keep his hands still. He wears a light-coloured [cotton] dress with dark piped trim at the neckline and edges of the narrow 'mancherons' and short sleeves, above a loose-fitting pleated bodice and striped/piped skirt. His short hair is brushed into a side parting signifying his gender, and he wears short white socks and square-toed, dark [leather] shoes with buttoned ankle straps.

George Snr wears an unmatched ensemble of business clothes comprising a [double-breasted] dark wool jacket with black waistcoat and lighter coloured trousers, over a crisp white shirt with a winged collar and loosely tied [silk] neck cloth. His face is deeply-tanned, his cheeks clean shaven above a fringe of beard, his dark hair with a side parting carefully combed back from his forehead and curling over his ears.

Elizabeth, in the centre of the image, wears a plain [cotton] full-skirted dress with a pleated bodice and a high, round

neckline edged with a narrow white-work frill above its dropped shoulder line and pagoda-shaped sleeves trimmed with dark piping and a broderie-anglaise edging. Her dark hair is centre-parted, pulled back smoothly behind her head. She wears [gold] sleeper earrings and short white socks with her squared-toed, dark leather, ankle-strapped shoes.

Ann Johnson's plain [cotton] dress also has a wide-spreading skirt and pleated bodice, fanning up and over the shoulders from a shirred, peaked panel at the waist. The front of the corsage probably fastens with hooks or buttons but has been left open, with the edges tucked in, over a white [cotton] 'chemisette', or undershirt, with a [false] button and placket opening below a pointed, turn-down collar with a pale ribbon tie and brooch. Her $\frac{3}{4}$ length 'pagoda' sleeves are trimmed with two rows of dark piping and worn with Vandyke-pointed white-work embroidered [cotton] undersleeves, left open at the wrist above a pair of [jet] bracelets. She wears her centre-parted dark hair with side loops wrapped high over her ears, fitted with gold earrings, forming a somewhat horned appearance.

Baby John wears a dark [cotton] short-sleeved dress with fitted bodice and full skirt trimmed with lighter [silk] ribbon trim and short white socks with dark [leather] button-fastening baby shoes.

Compared to the more formal attire usually recorded in the early photographic era, the Johnson family appear somewhat casually dressed – they actually look hot, sticky and even a little grubby – which could suggest that the image was the result of an opportunity seized rather than a carefully planned visit to the daguerreotypist's studio. The whole plate option would also have been an expensive choice at the time.

What we know about this image

This rare image does not record famous people but rather an

average nineteenth century family. Fortunately, it has survived with extensive family detail supplied by descendants.

George Walker Johnson (1811-1902) belonged to an old Lincolnshire family. A builder and contractor in Manchester, he immigrated with his first wife to Adelaide 1839 where he started a timber yard and Adelaide's first quarry and was also engaged in contracting and farming. Following his wife's death, he married 18 year old Ann Isobel Ellison (1829-1904) on 18 March 1847, at his residence in Mt. Barker, South Australia. Ellison, aged 11, had arrived in South Australia with her family in the early 1840s. The Johnson's had three children in Adelaide including Elizabeth (1848-1924) and George William (1851-1855) before the outbreak of the 1850s gold rushes in the eastern colonies.

In 1852, the Johnsons travelled overland to Kyneton, Vic., a major supply town for the diggings, where the family settled and John Simpson was born on 19 November 1853. Johnson worked as a contractor; he had carrying business in Melbourne, a grocery business in Kyneton and owned the Ellison estate on the Coliban River. A freemason, Johnson was also prominent in municipal affairs; a member of the Kyneton shire council, he was elected as Kyneton's first Member of Parliament in October 1856.

George W. Johnson Esq. M.L.A. lived with his wife and family at his residence Innisfree (1863-64) (later Gainsborough House), located at 66 Jennings Street, Kyneton, which remains architecturally and historically significant at local level, as one of the oldest houses in the town and its shire. Mr and Mrs Johnson celebrated their golden wedding on 18 March 1897, and died at Kyneton within two years of each other in 1902 and 1904.

TROVE REFERENCES:

– Family Notices, South Australian Register, Wed 31 Jan 1855, Page 2: Died on 30th January 1855, George William, eldest son

of Mr G. W. Johnson, aged three years.)

– JOHNSON-ELLISON (Golden wedding) The Australasian, Sat 29 May 1897

On the 18th Mar, 1847, at Parkside, South Australia, by the Rev. T. Q. Stowe, George Walker Johnson to Ann, eldest daughter of William Ellison, Glen Osmond, S.A.

– Ann Ellison Johnson, d. 16 July 1904, a colonist of 64 yrs. The Argus, Tue 19 Jul 1904.

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1854 – George Walker Johnson and his family

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Creator
Unknown
Inscription
To follow
Medium
Photograph
Background
To follow
Reference
Open 1
Open 2

1852 – Picnic at Mrs Macquarie's Chair

What we see in this image

This large genre painting records the Anniversary Day Regatta on Sydney Harbour in about 1852, and also depicts the picturesque rock formation jutting into the sky known as Mrs Macquarie's Chair, with its rough-hewn seat, located at the extreme end of the Domain to the east of Farm Cove. The first Anniversary Day (or Foundation Day as it was originally known) Regatta was held on 26 January 1837, to mark the 49th anniversary of the landing of the First Fleet, and continues to this day. Before long the Anniversary holiday was being observed by government departments and private employers, freeing 'persons of all classes' to join the harbourside throng.

A familiar spot to almost everyone who has ever visited Sydney, Mrs Macquarie's Chair has always been a popular vantage point for crowds drawn from all levels of society, and this much-loved image captures the colourful scene. Boats and steamers ran between Garden Island, Battery Point, and Farm Cove throughout the day with masses of well-dressed, eager spectators gathered in the foreground set against a backdrop of the harbour covered by a fleet of boats of all sizes.

Men, women and children, some even with their pets, are seen enjoying a day picnicking and cavorting in groups on the foreshore, clustering around refreshments and entertainment tents where victuallers dispense food and drink from allocated booths – including that of the Royal Oak Hotel [perhaps the Royal Oak Family Hotel 305 Pitt Street] – while pie-men hawk their wares among the crowds, and fraudsters spruik their dubious games of chance to the unsuspecting.

This painting is of further significance for flags experts (vexillologists) as it shows the NSW Ensign (the unofficial flag for Australia from the mid-19th Century) being flown on land, rather than from a vessel.

What we know about this image

The artist of this important 1850s painting of Australians enjoying their national holiday is not known. The success of this image is, however, largely due to the artist's having paid attention to '...the proper drawing, disposition and grouping of figures...[being of] more consequence in communication of life and verisimilitude to a sketch of natural scenery than some landscape painters are willing to allow...' (SMH, 15/2/ 1850, p.2.)

The basis for the 1855 date on the original mount of this painting is also not known. Costume features such as tiered skirts suggest a date of c. 1852-1860. A separately issued lithograph based on this painting was produced in about 1870, by Sydney artist and surveyor John Black Henderson (1827-1918), and captioned 'Picnic held at Lady Macquarie's Chair Sydney N S Wales in 1852'.

This painting was further reproduced in the Sydney Mail (30/1/1897) – at which time the original oil was still in the hands of John C Lovell, 'furniture, warehousemen and fine art dealers' George Street, Sydney, before it was purchased by Sir William Dixson – and later republished in the Anchor (5/10/1911) possibly based on the 1870s lithograph with the caption: 'Anniversary Regatta 1850 – View by Mrs. Macquarie's Chair (from an old Engraving)'.
<https://www.daa0.org.au/bio/alfred-clint/biography/>

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1852 – Picnic at Mrs Macquarie's Chair

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[Download Image](#)



Creator
Unknown
Inscription
Unsigned, dated on original mount
Medium
Oil on canvas
Background

See also: ML V1/Par/Dom/5: Mrs Macquarie's Chair about 1855, J.B Henderson, lithographer. Hand-coloured print: 47.6 h x 68.2 w cm sheet
Reference
Open

1852 – Martha Hogg and her son Samuel Nisbet

What we see in this image

This front facing 3/4 standing portrait shows Martha Hogg, nee Crook, aged 37, with her arms around her infant son, Samuel Nisbet, aged about 3. Given their recent first-hand experience of nineteenth century infant mortality rates, it's not surprising that the Hogg's seized this opportunity to have a portrait made of the latest addition to the family; their 'eldest and only remaining son' Thomas William Pascoe Hogg (aged 4 and 2 months) had succumbed to malignant cholera in Madras nine years previously, and they would lose a ten months old daughter two years later.

Mrs Hogg wears a [2-piece] day dress in a plain pale blue fabric and comprising a matching jacket style 'basque' bodice with a pointed waist and full, gathered skirt held out with

numerous petticoats. The form-fitting bodice has wide, pagoda sleeves and a deep v-neckline opening worn over a sheer white chemisette, or undershirt and fastened with a small brooch to, the edges of the centre front opening and sleeve cuffs trimmed with white [ribbon] ruching. She wears her dark hair with a centre parting, arranged in loosely curled ringlets hanging over her ears

Samuel wears a knee length dress, customary attire at this time for all children during their toilet training years regardless of sex. His short-sleeved frock is made of a light-coloured cloth with self-fabric trims on the bodice and cuff, the full skirt has a wide hem or tuck at the knee, perhaps to allow it to be let down. He wears flat, square toed, black patent shoes with ankle strap fastenings, and his short, fair hair is combed in to a side-parting – a useful indicator of his gender in an era when all girls wore a centre parting.

What we know about this image

Martha Hogg (1815-1890) was Miss Martha Crook, a daughter of Revd William Pascoe Crook, chaplain to the colony during the Rum Rebellion. Born in Jamieson Street, Sydney, Martha married Thomas Alexander Hogg, a Surgeon in the East India Company's (EIC) service, in December 1837. The couple moved to India where at least two sons were born, including Samuel Nisbet Hogg (1849-1934).

Retiring from the EIC, Thomas Hogg brought his family back to Sydney in about 1850, where he continued to practise his profession as a medical-man in and about Sydney for many years. He died in his 86th year at Darlington Newtown Road Sydney. Samuel Hogg entered the service of the Bank of New South Wales, where he remained until his retirement. Honorary treasurer of the Balmain Hospital and the Balmain Benevolent Society, he was also a local historian and published author.

He died at Wahroonga aged 85.

William Nicholas (1807-1854) was known for his delicately rendered watercolour portraits and seems to have been the favoured portrait artist of prominent colonial families in Sydney like the Macarthurs, the Wentworths and the Kings.

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Hover on image to zoom in



1852 – Martha Hogg and her son Samuel Nisbet

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Download Image



Creator
Nicholas, William (c.1807-1854)
Inscription
LRH: 'William Nicholas / 1852'
Medium
Pencil and watercolour drawing
Background
See also ML 254 & 255
Reference
Obituary, S.N. Hogg, SMH, Wed 18 Apr 1934, Page 10.

1851 – E.H. Hargraves, the

gold discoverer of Australia, returning the salute of the gold miners

What we see in this image

This full length standing portrait shows Edward Hargraves, aged 35, posed on top of a mountain with a valley and open country stretching into the distance behind him, his right arm raised in salute holding a top hat in his right hand, with the reins of his horse in his left hand. An imposing figure, standing about 2 metres tall and weighing around 110kg, the so-called 'gold discoverer of Australia' is depicted as the conquering hero returning to the scene of his triumph, signalling to his fellow prospectors at the Summer Hill Creek (later known as Ophir) diggings, having made his discovery known to the Australian authorities and the general populace in Sydney.

Hargraves is shown wearing the colourful garb of a typical nineteenth century gold prospector, described by a reviewer in Sydney's Empire newspaper as 'the very picturesque style of habiliment affected by our gold-hunter'. His bright red, long-sleeved smock, or over shirt, is probably made of wool flannel. Layered over a white shirt with a black neck scarf, it is belted at the waist – the black leather belt fastened with an unusual gold hook and loop mechanism – and reaches mid-thigh above light khaki [moleskin] trousers and well-worn black shoes or boots.

Gold mining was demanding work and miners needed durable clothing to withstand exposure to harsh weather and rough conditions. Work shirts came in variety of materials including

linen, cotton, cotton flannel and wool. Popular in patterns and solid colours, dark blue and red (known as Garibaldi shirts after 1860), were often worn in layers especially during the cold months, with a large kerchief knotted around the neck to allow the miner to wipe his brow while working.

This portrait was said to have presented a good likeness of Hargraves, however his top hat seems an unsuitable choice of headgear for an expedition into the Australian interior. Such an inappropriate accessory may have been included to lend an air of authority to the subject and counteract his otherwise ungentlemanly appearance. Flat-crowned wide felt hats were the more common choice of miners, and often light-coloured to reflect the scorching summer sun away from their faces. At a time when untrimmed beards were unusual in fashionable society, Hargraves is shown with a lot of hair on his face and head in keeping with the practice of goldfields men who sported long beards of 'Samson-like vigour and moustaches of Turkish proportions' (Maynard, p.).

What we know about this image

Edward Hammond Hargraves (1816-1891), the so-called 'gold discoverer of Australia', was the subject of many triumphant portraits including, most notably this one by Thomas Tyrwhitt Balcombe (1810-1861).

Early in 1851 Hargraves had undertaken a prospecting trip in the Bathurst region of NSW, with the intention of discovering gold in the area. On the way, he persuaded local settler, John Lister to guide him to Lewis Ponds Creek with the promise that he would show Lister how to find gold. Arriving at Lewis Ponds and Summer Hill Creek on 12 February 1851, Hargraves instructed Lister in the techniques of gold panning and cradling he had learnt on the Californian gold fields, and returned to Sydney. Between 7 and 12 April 1851, Lister,

working with brothers William and James Tom, recovered about 4 oz of payable gold from the site valued at about £12, including one 2oz nugget.

Arriving back at Summer Hill Creek on 5 May, Hargraves purchased the men's gold finds, sending some by mail to the Colonial Secretary, Sir Edward Deas Thomson. Announcing himself as the discoverer of payable gold in the district, Hargraves began a publicity campaign and claimed the government's £10,000 reward, and an annual pension of £250 (after 1877). Soon after, thousands of gold seekers left Sydney and Melbourne to join the first gold rush.

In 1853-54 Hargraves visited England, lived in style, met the Queen and published *Australia and its Gold Fields*, which was probably ghost written, in 1855. He entertained lavishly on his return to Australia and was virtually penniless by the early 1860s. Although Hargraves claimed the credit, exaggerating and falsifying his role, it was soon clear that others had done the work. But, despite the fact that Lister and the Tom brothers were undoubtedly the first discoverers of gold obtained in Australia in payable quantity', the legend of Hargraves still persists.]

CRITIQUE:

On 11 and 14 August 1851 the Sydney Morning Herald advertised an oil painting for sale by the artist Thomas Tyrwhitt Balcombe (1810-1861) of 'Mr E.H. Hargraves, the Gold Discoverer of Australia Feby 12th 1851 Returning the Salute of the Gold Miners on the 5th of the ensuing May' at the George Street Rooms of Messrs. Woolcott and Clarke:

'...The Australian Gold Discoverer is the best of his production we have yet seen. Mr Hargraves is represented on the summit of a craggy eminence, holding the bridle of his horse...The face is very ably treated, but we cannot help thinking that in the management of the costume and the colouring of it, there is somewhat of failure; that the very picturesque style of

habiliment affected by our gold-hunter, is scarcely made as much of as it might have been....And it has all the depth of colour, the capacity to afford a bright contrast, in connection with what is in technical phrase termed 'breaking a picture up'... This matter of costume, so far as regards Mr. Balcombe's picture, can, from the nature of the subject – that of a portraits – little interfere with its general merits, and is perhaps in the main, more a question connected with individual taste for, the picturesque in effect, than anything else...[The] background is positively beautiful. It is a wild, craggy scene; bluish, hazy, with bluff mountainous shapes and loomings, in a cold, free atmosphere, full of poetry and vigour of touch...' The Empire, Mon 18 Aug 1851, Page 3

Several months earlier this image had been reproduced as a lithograph, being advertised for sale in the Sydney Morning Herald of 13 June 1851 with a companion print, 'Gold Diggings of Ophir'. The Mitchell Library holds all three versions of this image which has been described by Bernard Smith as 'one of the best drawings that has been preserved of this period'.

ARTIST:

Thomas Balcombe had come to Sydney aboard the Hibernia in April 1824 with his family, his father having been appointed Colonial Treasurer of NSW. He later joined the Surveyor-General's Department under Thomas Mitchell in September 1830 as a draughtsman. His position as a field surveyor allowed Balcombe to travel extensively, and provided him with many opportunities for landscape sketching. As his artistic talent blossomed, he enjoyed considerable success as an illustrator and made numerous genre works dealing with life in Sydney and beyond. On 2 June 1849, the Sydney Morning Herald critic declared that Balcombe had, 'long been known in the colony as a very spirited animal painter, but he has now taken a higher flight, and this picture affords an undoubted proof of his ability as a painter of the human figure. It is without exception the best attempt in this style and on this scale

that we remember to have seen from the hand of a colonial artist'. His last known works are dated 1857 and Balcombe's emotional instability intensified in the late 1850s and, on 13 October 1861, he shot himself in the head outside his home in Paddington.

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1851 – E.H. Hargraves, the gold discoverer of Australia, returning the salute of the gold miners

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

Download Image



Creator
Balcombe, Thomas (1810-1861)
Inscription
Front: titled, dated & attributed from inscription on canvas.
Medium
Oil Painting
Background
To follow
Reference
Open 1
Open 2

1850 – Turning the first turf of the first railway in the

Australasian colonies at Redfern, Sydney, N.S.W.

What we see in this image

Taken from the outer periphery of the official proceedings, John Rae's ambitious history painting of this important contemporary colonial event offers a panoramic north-easterly perspective over the scene, recording wintry blue sky conditions despite heavy rain on the day. Rather than focusing on the ceremony, the artist's view looks from Redfern, on the western boundary of the Cleveland Paddock (now Prince Alfred Park), across the Sydney skyline with glimpses of Darling Harbour on the far left. Hyde Park Barracks sits solidly on the horizon to the right with the steeple of St James' Church rising at the centre. In the mid-ground, Cleveland House stands on the far right with cattle grazing nearby, while a yellow and black carriage, horse and driver move towards the centre of the paddock.

The artist has concentrated his attention on documenting the vast crowd of 10, 000 spectators reputed to have been in attendance. Thousands of tiny figures fill the distant view to the water, with the VIP area marked by red, white and blue bunting on the left. A wide cross-section of colonial society cluster in the foreground including:

a group of Indigenous people seated on the ground, the women draped in petticoats or blankets and the men in various combination of cast-offs garments – one standing figure, holding a spear, wears a hat and shirt, or smock, tied at the waist with a red sash.

men roam around on foot in groups and pairs or singly, or on horseback, and are mostly civilians with some red-coated

military personnel.

couples and families stand together or apart: the men in tall hats, unmatched jackets and trousers, one (perhaps a hawker) with a heavy basket, several with walking sticks or canes; the women in bonnets and domed-skirted dresses, with shawls wrapped around their shoulders, some carrying infants or baskets or tiny parasols. Hatted and bonneted children hold hands or stand close to adults, one boy carries a hoop, while dogs bark excitedly in the crowd.

What we know about this image

This watercolour painting of the Turning of the First sod for the First Railway in 1850 is perhaps his best-known work. Public servant, author and painter John Rae (1813-1900). Symbolising the beginning of the age of industrial progress in the colony, thousands of Sydneysiders gathered in Cleveland Paddock, Redfern, on Wednesday 3 July 1850 to watch Mrs Keith Stewart, only daughter of Sir Charles Fitzroy (1796-1858) K.C.B. Governor of NSW (1846-1855), turn the first sod of earth for the construction of Australia's first railway.

Mary Caroline Stewart, née Fitzroy (1823–95) assumed the role of first Lady of NSW, and chatelaine at government house from arrival in Sydney in August 1849 – following the death in 1847 of her mother Lady Mary FitzRoy (1790–1847) in a carriage accident in the grounds of Government House, Parramatta – until her return to England in 1854.

On the day of the ceremony the governor and his daughter had arrived at Cleveland Paddock at one o'clock. Rain bucketed down as proceedings got underway. Mrs Stewart grasped the tulipwood handle of the handsome ceremonial spade, beautifully engraved with emu and kangaroo and, with 'a pretty foot pressed down on a dainty spade', dug into the damp earth, lifting from it the first piece of turf cut for the

construction of Australia's first steam-operated public railway.

ARTIST'S BIO:

John Rae (1813-1900) arrived in Sydney on 8 December 1839 and was appointed Sydney's first full-time town clerk in 1843, beginning a 50 year public service career; he became secretary to the railway commissioners on 25 July 1857, and was appointed under-secretary for public works and commissioner for railways on 15 January 1861. A talented amateur artist, Rae painted watercolours of Sydney streets and combined his technological and artistic interests by creating large panoramic watercolour sketches, made with the aid of a camera obscura which he constructed to ensure 'absolute fidelity' to nature. As early as 1883, Rae's panoramas were considered to be 'well worth preserving among the pictures in our Art Gallery, not only for their excellence, but as records of our colonial life and progress'.

BACKGROUND NOTES:

Proposals to build railways in New South Wales had first emerged in 1841. From the outset the primary aim of the colony's railways was to assist inland primary producers to transport their produce to the port of Sydney for export and to open the country up for closer settlement. The plan was to build the line to Parramatta in the first instance. Charles Cowper MLC, decided that the terminus should be in the 'government paddock, by Cleveland House', an area of undeveloped land on the periphery of the city boundary, situated between Devonshire and Cleveland streets, where teamsters who transported goods into and out of the city rested their horses and bullocks.

Until the mid-19th century, the coming of the railway and the subsequent use of the area as the showground for the Agricultural Society, Cleveland Paddocks (later Prince Alfred Park) was an Aboriginal camp site for Sydney's Indigenous people living west of the city centre.

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**1850 – Turning the first turf of the first railway
in the Australasian colonies at Redfern, Sydney,
N.S.W.**

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

Download Image



Creator
Rae, John (1813-1900)

Inscription
LRHS: 'John Rae 1850'
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
<p>A lithograph version (V1/RAI/3) is dated 1877 and titled: 'Ceremony of turning the first turf of the first railway in the Australia, by the Hon. Mrs Keith Stewart daughter of His Excellency Sir Charles Augustus Fitzroy, Governor-General, at Sydney, on 3rd July 1850. From an original sketch by John Rae, Esqre. Commissioner for Railways, Sydney.' Other copies are located at V1/RAI/4-6.</p>
Reference
Open

1850 – Uncle George's likeness [Mr George Garling]

What we see in this image

This finely-rendered left facing, full-length watercolour portrait shows young George Australia Garling, aged about 5,

in a standing pose holding a telescope in his right hand. He wears a full-skirted, knee-length dress, typical attire for boys during their toilet training years, before they were breeched, ie. put into breeches or trousers, at about 5-6 years of age.

George's dress is made of a suitably jaunty red, blue and green striped fabric, worn with a white collar and black ribbon tie and a matching long-sleeved bolero, with ornamental gilt/brass bobble buttons and bands of dark braid or piping, the curved front edges and cuffs trimmed with self-fabric binding. His spreading skirts extend out over a white cotton petticoat and knickers with light-blue blanket-stitch embroidered trim, above short socks knitted in a red and white marled yarn and square-toed, black leather slippers with ankle straps. His short blonde hair has been brushed into a side parting, a useful indicator of gender in an era when all girls wore their hair with a centre parting.

What we know about this image

George Australia Garling (1846-1927) was the fifth son of Frederick Garling Jun. (1806-1873) and his wife Elizabeth nee Ward (1810-1880), in a family of eleven children (seven sons and four daughters).

Frederick Garling Jun. had arrived in Australia with his parents in the Francis and Eliza in 1815. Appointed a landing waiter in the Customs Office in Sydney in 1827, at £250 a year, Garling married Elizabeth Ward on 13 Oct 1829:

On Saturday last, the 10th instant, by Special Licence, at the Church of St Philip, Sydney, by the Rev. W. Cowper, Frederick Garling, jun. Esq. of the Customs to Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the late Lieutenant Ward of the 1st Regiment of Royals and niece to the late General Hawkshaw in the Hon. East India Company's Service.

Promoted to acting landing surveyor in 1847, Garling continued to work as a customs official for the rest of his career, based at Sydney's Customs House. An entirely self-taught as an artist, most of Garling's work was in watercolour and is generally unsigned. With only early mornings and weekends to spend on his painting and specializing, naturally enough, in marine subjects, he was regarded as one of Sydney's most prolific marine painters, said to have painted every ship that entered Port Jackson during his lifetime.

George Garling married Kate Elvina Wright at Murrurundi, NSW, on 27 Sep 1876. The couple is believed to have had a large family and newspaper reports stated that George worked as a station manager in New Zealand, where he lost a great deal of money. Returning to Australia, his last years were marred by a succession of larceny charges. He died at Waverley in 1927.

POVERTY AND CRIME. METROPOLITAN QUARTER SESSIONS. SMH, Wed 30 Nov 1904.

George Australia Garling, aged 53, and formerly a station manager, pleaded guilty to the theft, on October 6, of three watches, the property of H. R. Ward. Garling was employed by Ward, and pawned the watches for £5 13s for the sake, he said, of providing for his family, numbering 11. He had been unemployed for some months, and had had two operations performed on him in hospital recently. On his promising to make restitution, his Honour sentenced him to one month's imprisonment, the sentence to be suspended on his own recognisance to be of good behaviour for 12 months.

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1850 – Uncle George's likeness [Mr George Garling]

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Download Image



Creator
Unknown
Inscription
On back in pencil: 'Uncle George's likeness [Mr George Garling]'
Medium
Watercolour and pencil drawing
Background
See also: P2 / 432: similar portrait of George's eldest brother, Frederick Augustus (1833-1910) inscribed in the reverse: 'Frederick Garling Drawn by his Ma'.
Reference
Open

1848 – Saidee and Alice Stephen, Twins

What we see in this image

This rare full-length double portrait records the Stephen twins at about four years of age. The girls are shown standing side by side, their bodies turned toward each other in a front facing pose, each holding a flower in one hand [perhaps a red and a white rose] with another bloom lying on the floor between them.

The girls wear identical outfits comprising knee-length pale pink dresses, the ruffled edges of their white chemises visible around low necklines set wide on the shoulders above tight-fitting elbow length sleeves, with bands of ruched trim at the edge, and form-fitting bodices with v-shaped, ruched centre front panels, and round waistlines above wide, pleated full skirts worn with black low cut, square-toed, flat slippers without stockings – perhaps as a concession to the heat of an Australian summer. They wear their shoulder length blonde hair centre parted and gently curled over their ears.

Throughout the Victorian era, girls' clothing closely followed that of their mothers. From early childhood this meant dressing in form-fitting garments, often worn over tightly-laced underbodices cinching the torso and waist, in training for adulthood. In the 1840s, small boys and girls of all ages wore dresses with elaborately shaped low cut bodices, revealing bare necks, shoulders and arms, tight-fitting sleeves and full skirts held out by four or five petticoats. Pantaloon were often visible below mid-calf length skirts, usually worn with stocking or socks and flat slippers or boots.

What we know about this image

Born on 18 Feb 1844, Alice Mary Stephen (1844-1902) and Sarah (aka Saidee) Consett Stephen (1844-1932) were the twin daughters of Sir Alfred Stephen (1802-1894) and his second wife, Lady Eleanor, nee Bedford (1810–1886); the eleventh and twelfth of Sir Alfred's eighteen children, and the fourth and fifth of nine children born to Eleanor, his second wife. The arrival of Alice and Saidee was followed by the birth of twin boys in 1847, one of whom did not survive. Although the girls are not dressed for mourning, it is possible that commissioning of this unusual portrait was occasioned by this recent bereavement, with the single fallen flower between them indicative of an innocent life lost.

NB: The female fertility rate at the middle of the nineteenth century was equivalent to six babies for every woman, with the infant mortality rate at 125 deaths/1000 births – 27 times higher than the rate of 4.63 deaths/1000 births today.

In 1842 the Stephen family moved to Lyon Terrace (demolished in 1900) in Liverpool St, near Hyde Park and close to St James Church. The twins were born the same year their father became the colony's third Chief Justice; he was knighted in 1846. While the Stephen boys were sent to boarding school, their mother oversaw the girls' education at home, employing the services of a superior governess and following a strict curriculum. In this busy and crowded household, Lady Stephen supervised the girls music practice before breakfast, and escorted them to dancing lessons and extra language lessons several mornings a week. In 1866, the Stephens moved to 'Orielson', a large, elegant and comfortable house in Ocean St, Woollahra, with harbour views.

As the 'home daughters' of their father, Sir Alfred Stephen, the twin sisters, who were almost indistinguishable, were inseparable companions doing most things in common, especially following the death of their mother in 1866. Both were

enthusiastic musicians. Saidee was also a gifted linguist, able to speak five languages fluently. For many years in the earlier part of her life, she had acted as confidential secretary to her father, handling all his correspondence and assisting him in his legal work. She died at the age of 90 years at her home in Woollahra. Alice had died 30 years previously.

MIN 200; MIN 201: 1/6th plate ambrotypes: The sisters are similarly attired in off-the-shoulder dinner dresses with pointed waists, pleated skirts, and white chemises visible at the edges of their short sleeves and neckline. Their hair is tied back and both girls wear identical cross pendants, and jet brooches pinned to the centre front of their corsages.

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1848 – Saidee and Alice Stephen, Twins

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Download Image



Creator
Nicholas, William (c.1807-1854)
Inscription
LRHS: Front: 'Nicholas / 1848' Verso: 'Saidee and Alice Stephen'
Medium
Watercolour on card
Background
To follow
Reference
To follow

1847 – The ball after returning from the picnic party

What we see in this image

This sketch shows the scene on the deck of the HMS Rattlesnake on the evening of Saturday 4 September 1847; the time of day is indicated by the candles in their be-ribboned chandeliers which appear to be lit. It records the occasion on which the expeditioners invited a large number of their Sydney friends to a 'pleasure party', comprising a trip in row boats down Sydney Harbour to Camp Cove for a 'picnic repast and ramble about', returning some hours later to the ship, 'the deck of which had in the meantime been converted, by a tasty arrangement of the flags, into a ballroom, in which dancing was kept up until near twelve o'clock (midnight)'. (SMH, 6/9/1847)

The naïve watercolour records a large group of people – some taking part in the dancing while others gather together to engage in ballroom conversation. Of the people clustered in the foreground, three members of the ship's company wear white trousers and short blue jackets characteristic of naval apparel, while several male guests wear tail coats of varying shades of brown; all are shown in social interaction with female guests, many arrayed in brightly coloured and/or patterned gowns typical of late 1840s sartorial taste; interestingly, most still wear their hair in side ringlets and topknots more consistent with early 1840s modes.

At this time fashionable detail was mainly concentrated on the skirt which had become progressively more decorated, with a

preference for double skirts and flounces especially with scalloped edges. A host of shot silk fabrics had appeared on the market – colours shot with black being the most in vogue – with a marked taste for printed muslins and materials with horizontal stripes, as well as striped and checked (plaids) taffetas. Examples of all these textiles these can be seen in this painting. Several of the dresses also exhibit slightly bell-shaped full sleeves and some show the new ‘waistcoat’ corsage.

The fullness of the skirt would continue to increase throughout the 1840s, especially for summer weight cottons and silks; the urge to increase the size of the lower half of the costume was only delayed by the practical difficulty of how to keep the skirt properly distended – a problem which would not be alleviated until the invention of the crinoline in the early 1850s.

What we know about this image

Amateur on-the-spot artworks like this are invaluable for their idiosyncratic detail and observations that professional artists would most likely edit out in preference for more sophisticated composition and rendering techniques.

This is one of the many sketches compiled by naval officer Owen Stanley (1811-1850) while in command of the survey ship H.M.S. Rattlesnake, a 28 gun frigate of the Royal Navy. Stanley had developed his talent as a draughtsman and watercolourist during his twenties, serving on board on the Adventure where there was a regular school of artists including the commander P.P. King. His topographical watercolour albums are a valuable record of early Australia, providing a comprehensive and personal record of the antipodes and its inhabitants, confirming Stanley’s lively interest in the people and places he visited.

Stanley was given command of the surveying ship, Rattlesnake, in 1846 and ordered from England to conduct an extensive marine survey of the Great Barrier Reef and New Guinea waters, taking with him naturalists John MacGillivray (1821-1867) and Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895). The Rattlesnake arrived at Sydney on 16 July 1847, where Thomas Huxley met and later became engaged to Henrietta Heathorn; the couple were subsequently married in England in 1855.

In his diary entry of November 25, 1847, Huxley records that the ship's arrival in Port Jackson had, 'began a round of humbug – ship scrubbing, painting, calling, and being called upon – Govt. Balls and the like. If I remember right I managed three balls and two dinners in the course of a week. For the nonce it was an agreeable change enough, and I justified it to myself on the principle of the expediency of acquiring a few pleasant acquaintances – perhaps even one or two friends...'

On Mon 6 Sep 1847, the Sydney Morning Herald (p.2) reported the following event:

PLEASURE PARTY- On Saturday, Captain Stanley and the officers of H.M.S. Rattlesnake invited a large number of friends to a party of pleasure. The guests assembled on board the ship about twelve o'clock [midday] and shortly afterwards proceeded in boats to Camp Cove, where a splendid repast had been prepared, of which all partook with an appetite sharpened by the pull down the harbour. After rambling about and enjoying the scenery for a short time; they returned to the Rattlesnake, the deck of which had in the meantime been converted, by a tasty arrangement of the flags, into a ballroom, in which dancing was kept up until near twelve o'clock [midnight] when the party broke up, all declaring that they were indebted to their gallant hosts for a most delightful day's amusement.

The ship's initial stay in Sydney was protracted to a period of nearly three months. Finally, during the fall and winter,

1847-1848, the frigate conducted its cruise to make the Inner Passage off north-eastern Australia safe for British shipping. From April, 1848 to February 1849, the expedition continued its hydrographic explorations of the Inner Passage to New Guinea. On April 29 1848, the Rattlesnake again departed from Sydney, for a voyage to the Barrier Reef, reaching its home base Rockingham Bay in the spring of 1848.

On 13 March 1850, at the age of 38, Owen Stanley died suddenly aboard the Rattlesnake in Sydney Harbour, of an illness contracted while surveying the Louisiade Archipelago. The ship returned to England in November 1850.

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1847 – The ball after returning from the picnic party

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Creator
Stanley, Owen (1811–1850)
Inscription
Lower edge: 'The ball after returning from the picnic party'

Medium
Watercolour
Background
To follow
Reference
Open

1846 – New Post Office, George Street, Sydney

What we see in this image

This lively streetscape depicts the mid-morning bustle along George Street, the city of Sydney's main thoroughfare, in 1846. The view is taken from the western side of the road, looking onto the brand new facade of the General Post Office with its classical portico, supported by a series of six elegant Doric columns, bearing a crested pediment and the all-important town clock prominently displaying a time of 11.25am.

In the foreground, from left to right, nine pedestrians are portrayed:

a delivery boy, brandishing a parcel, in dark blue trousers and shirt with a boater-style straw hat;

a young woman with a spaniel dog carrying a pagoda-shaped parasol and wearing a fitted, knee-length black jacket over a pale pink dome-skirted dress with a matching deep-brimmed, flower-trimmed, silk-covered bonnet;

a family group comprising a child in matching bonnet and red coat/dress with light-coloured pantaloons visible below the hem, an older woman wearing a 'coal-scuttle' straw bonnet with black ribbon ties and a knee-length black cape over a light-coloured dress, a bearded man in a black top hat and a long-line pale blue cloth coat, with black lapels, over checked trousers, and a second (perhaps younger) woman with red ribbon ties on her straw bonnet, and wearing a red and white diagonally-stripped fringed shawl over a light-coloured dome-skirted gown;

an indigenous man, identified as Bungaree in his characteristic garb of cast-off military dress jacket, battered hat and ragged trousers;

a bearded soldier in regimental dress with a blue cap, a short fitted jacket of bright blue wool, with gilt epaulettes and red collar, cuffs and facings, worn over red and black panelled trousers with white side stripes, a regimental [pouch] and a sword/sabre slung from one hip;

a food vendor, identified as Sydney character William Francis King, aka 'The Flying Pieman', carrying a portable stand, or podium, and a cloth-lined wicker basket wearing his customary a jockey-style ensemble of white breeches, stockings and leather running shoes, a long-sleeved brown and white striped shirt, and matching striped jockey cap;

Three horse-driven vehicles also travel along the street including:

an official mail coach designated by the government crest on the door carrying one female (inside) and two male passengers (outside);

a gig [or box curricule] driven by a smartly attired young man wearing a colourful suit of matching frock coat and trousers with blue flap pocket and a black top hat;

a transportation cart (labelled 'Sydney to Campbelltown') with one female occupant;

Promenading along the pavement and standing on the steps outside the post office are a strolling

couple, a man in a brown coat, a soldier, a woman standing in profile, two business men in conversation, with a sailor or workman leaning against one of the columns;

What we know about this image

The publication of this lithograph, showing the intended new facade to the General Post Office, was noted under 'Local Intelligence' in Sydney newspaper paper, The Sentinel, on Thursday 7 May 1846:

The Fine Arts – We have been presented with a new lithographic design, representing the proposed new front of the old Post Office, George Street. It consists of a handsome pediment of the Roman Doric order ornamented with the Royal Arms and supported by pilasters (sic) – the foreground is enlivened by several spirited characteristic sketches, mail coaches and etc. Altogether the design and execution are credible to Colonial talent ... (p.3)

The architectural detail in this lithograph was drawn by Frederick George Lewis (1822-1853), second son of Mortimer Lewis, the NSW Colonial Architect (1835-1849) who was the designer of the building, F.G. Lewis died on 1/12/1853: 'leaving a wife and three children and a large circle of friends to deplore their loss.'

The figures and horses in the foreground of this image were drawn by Edward Winstanley (1820-1849) who was probably taught to paint by his father William. Winstanley had come to Sydney with his family in the Adventure, arriving on 2 May 1833. In

October 1834, he joined his father in the partnership of 'Mr. Winstanley & Son' as scene-painters at Sydney's Theatre Royal. By the age of 23, Edward had established a new reputation as a sporting artist. He is best known for his images of racehorses and sporting scenes and was an artistic contributor to the New South Wales Sporting Magazine during the late 1840s.

GENERAL POST OFFICE:

J. Fowles, Sydney in 1848, (July 14, 1848)

We now arrive before one of the most important buildings of the colony, not merely as regards the structure, but as being the centre and focus, the heart, as it may be termed, from which the pulse of civilization throbs to the remotest extremity of the land. We mean the Post Office...works have not yet progressed beyond the erection of a handsome portico. Six Doric columns support an appropriate entablature and pediment, with the royal arms (executed by Mr. Abraham, an able sculptor resident in the colony,) in the centre of the tympanum. The whole effect is chaste and severe, and much more befitting the aspect of a place of business than a more ornamental and gaudy design would be...

Despite several alterations to the Post Office on George Street, by 1851 the colonial government had established a special Board of Enquiry which concluded that 'the building [is] very ill-adapted for the business required to be carried out in it...'. By 1863 the situation had worsened such that Mortimer Lewis's Doric building had been entirely abandoned and a larger temporary wooden structure erected to serve as a temporary post office in Wynyard Square. James Barnet, recently appointed as NSW Colonial Architect, was instructed to prepare plans for a new General Post Office on the Martin Place segment of the present George Street site.

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1846 – New Post Office, George Street, Sydney

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Creator
Lewis, Frederick George (1822-1853) and Winstanley, Edward (1820-1849)
Inscription
LHS signed: 'F. G. Lewis & E. Winstanley'
Medium

Hand-coloured Lithograph
Background
The first publication of this image was noted in The Sentinel (Sydney, NSW) on 7 May 1846.
Reference
Open

1845 – Caroline Lawson and son Thomas James

What we see in this image

This $\frac{3}{4}$ length daguerreotype portrait shows Caroline Lawson, aged 43, smiling somewhat uncertainly into the camera as she stands with her right arm wrapped around the shoulders of her youngest son, Thomas James, aged $3\frac{1}{2}$, holding him close by her side to minimise movement and subsequent blurring of the image during its lengthy exposure.

Mrs Lawson wears a dark-coloured [woollen] dress with a moderately high, shallow neckline cut wide across the shoulders, draped in a black lace shawl above long narrow-fitting sleeves trimmed below the elbow with small, bell-

shaped oversleeves and worn with wrist-length black gloves. The tightly-fitted bodice is pinned with a gold and black enamel mourning brooch, probably housing a sample of woven hair, above a central braid-trimmed 'plastron' (v-shaped) panel with a ruffled flounce extending over the shoulders, and a full skirt pleated into a pointed waistline. Caroline wears her long, greying blonde hair centre-parted, arranged in a pair of lobed rolls set high over her ears, fitted with black-enamelled earrings, the remainder of her hair pinned up in a plaited and coiled bun on the crown of her head.

Thomas wears a full-skirted, short-sleeved, dark-coloured dress. Typical attire for children of both sexes during toilet training years, before boys were breeched at the age of 5-6 years, it is cut wide across the shoulders, leaving his white undergarment visible at the neckline. His short blonde hair has been brushed into a side parting, a useful indicator of his gender, in this era when all girls wore their hair with a centre parting.

What we know about this image

The Lawson's had recently borne the loss of two infant children – a 16-month-old daughter Frances, known as 'Fanny' (April 1843- Aug 1844), and Charles Samuel (1844-Dec 1844) – which may explain the dark, sombre appearance of this portrait commissioned by grieving parents anxious for an image with their youngest surviving child.

Born on 23d September, Thomas James (1841-1877) was the second son of William Lawson, the younger (1804-1861) and his wife Caroline Icely Lawson (1802-1875) who had married in 1832. The couple had 10 children (5 daughters and 5 sons).

In April and May of 1845, at the request of 100 subscribers, photographer George Goodman had travelled to Bathurst, NSW, where he spent three weeks at the Victoria Hotel taking

daguerreotypes.

On the way back to Sydney, in May 1845, Goodman took a series of photographs of the William Lawson family, probably made at their property 'Veteran Hall' in Prospect, NSW, producing a suite of exquisite daguerreotype portraits, six of which survive in the Mitchell Library.

Advertisement, 'Photographic Portraits, Taken by the Reflection of Light', *The Australian*, 9 December 1842:

The Proprietor of the Reflecting Apparatus by which faithful likenesses of the human countenance and person are won from the hands of nature in the short space of a few seconds respectfully announces to the inhabitants of Sydney that this extraordinary process will be open to the public at the Royal Hotel in which the Photographic apparatus will be in daily operation from ten till five. The price of each portrait is ONE Guinea exclusive of the frame. (p.1)

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1845 – Caroline Lawson and son Thomas James

Open in State Library of NSW catalogue

Download Image



Creator
Goodman, George Baron (d. 1851)
Inscription
Accompanying note in contemporary hand: 'Mama and / Thomas James Lawson / 3d May 1845 / Born 23d September 1841'
Medium
Photograph
Background
Subject is posed seated in a chair surrounded by scholarly props (ie. anatomy textbook, a sculpture, writing materials) with a lavish curtain drapery behind.
Reference
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1845 – Dr William Bland

What we see in this image

This front facing, 3/4 length portrait shows emancipist convict Dr William Bland, at 49 years of age. He is posed in a room setting seated in a high-backed [cedar] arm chair with buttoned brown [leather] upholstery and scrolling foliate carved [uprights], a white [plaster] statue of a classical male figure on the left behind him, and the carved [cedar] architrave of a door or window on the right covered by an elaborately tasselled cascading curtain drapery. Perhaps commissioned as an occupational study or professional portrait, the doctor appears to be caught in act of research and writing. He holds a sharpened quill pen in his right hand, his arm resting next to a sheaf of notes on a square table with rounded corners covered in a light brown cloth with a scrolling foliate pattern, on which is set a small decorative [bronze] inkstand with an unlit candle and a pile of leather bound books – one large volume is propped upright and open to reveal an anatomical drawing of a [human] skull and the spine at the base of the neck.

Dr Bland wears an eminently professional two-piece suit of plain black cloth, comprising a knee-length, double-breasted frock coat fastened to the waist with five pairs of covered domed buttons, the narrow, fitted sleeves with slit cuffs buttoning above the wrist, worn with matching trousers and a high-collared white shirt with a white neck cloth. He is clean shaven, his white hair left naturally curly, and wears no jewellery.

What we know about this image

This unsigned watercolour of emancipist convict and surgeon Dr William Bland (1789-1868) has been attributed to Richard Read Jnr (1796-1862) after comparison with others of his drawings. It has been dated between the year in which the daguerreotype portrait of Dr Bland (MIN 350) – on which this image was based

– was mentioned as having been taken by George Baron Goodman (SMH 14/1/1845) and the year of its possible exhibition in Sydney in 1849 by the Society for the Promotion of Fine Arts.

William Bland was a transported convict, medical practitioner and surgeon, politician, farmer and inventor in colonial New South Wales, Australia. Convicted of murder (as manslaughter) as a result of a duel in 1813, Bland was transported to Van Diemen's Land for seven years. Later transferred to Sydney, aboard the Frederick on 14 July 1814, he was pardoned on 27 January 1815 and became the first doctor to establish a private practice in Australia. Admired 'as much for his benevolence as for his skill', in 1832 Bland was the first Australian surgeon to ligate the innominate artery to treat an aneurysm; his report of the procedure was only the seventh in the world.

Bland was an elected as the member of the NSW Legislative Council twice (1843-1848, 1849-1850) for the City of Sydney, and appointed to the NSW Legislative Council (1858–1861) after the introduction of responsible government. In February 1846, by then a widower, Bland married his second wife Eliza Smeathman. Declared a bankrupt in 1861, Bland continued in active medical practice until his death in 1868.

A philanthropist, whose genius, whose time, whose fortune were for 50 years the property of every wretch who had a bodily ailment, a mental sorrow, or an empty belly – a patriot who was fearless when all or nearly all were cowards, who was loud in speech for the right when the timid were dumb, who spoke and wrote, and acted, as no man in the country dared to speak, write, and act...

William Bede Dalley, 1868.

Another version of the Goodman daguerreotype, a lithographic drawing by William Nicholas, was published as 'Portrait of Dr. William Bland, the philanthropist' on 18 December 1847, in William Baker's Heads of the people (Vol. 2, no. 10, plate facing p. 67, Q059/H). Probably produced between November 1844

and early January 1845, Dr Bland's daguerreotype would appear to be a product of Goodman's new studio at 49 Hunter Street, Sydney (SMH, 5/8/1844), created before the introduction of hand colouring (SMH, 9/1/1845) and before the introduction of decorative backgrounds (SMH, 25/4/1846). Stylistically, it also matches the Lawson family daguerreotypes, two of which are dated in a contemporary hand at 3/5/1845.

Read and Nicholas both exhibited their portraits of Dr Bland at the 1849 Society for the Promotion of Fine Arts Exhibition in Sydney, which were described as 'staring likenesses, evidently daguerreotypish' by the Sydney Morning Herald reviewer of 2 June 1849.

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1845 – Dr William Bland

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Creator
Read, Richard Jnr (1796-1862) attrib.
Inscription
LRH:
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
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