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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Hover on image to zoom in



1847 – The ball after returning from the picnic party

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Download Image

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

Medium
Watercolour
Background
To follow
Reference
Open

1836 – Chs. Tompson Esqur – Clydesdale

Description: *what we see in this image*

This left facing, ½ length, seated portrait depicts emancipist convict Mr Tompson (aged 52) as a respectable gentleman farmer of substance.

He is posed in a domestic setting, seated on an elbow, or carver, chair (probably of colonial manufacture) with an elaborately tasselled, deep yellow [velvet] curtain draped across the wall behind him.

He wears a three-piece ensemble of unmatched suiting, as was typical of the period, comprising a long-tailed, single-breasted dark wool jacket or coat, with notched lapels, peaked shoulders and fitted

sleeves with turn back/button-fastening cuffs, over a double-breasted fawn-coloured waistcoat fastening with flat [brass] buttons, notched lapels and two pockets, with a black ribbon watch fob and winding key just visible above a pair of mid grey trousers. His [finely pleated] white linen shirt is high-collared, wrapped with a pleated black stock, or neckcloth, and worn with a small rectangular gold pin set with a brown stone or hair, perhaps a sentimental token. Mr Tompson is clean shaven and his own dark hair has been fashionably groomed and brushed-forward in the romantic style favoured during the early 19th century.

Context: *what we know about this image*

Charles Tompson (1784?-1871), emancipist farmer, was convicted at Warwick, England, in March 1802, and arrived in Sydney in the Coromandel in May 1804. Employed for four years in the office of Commissary John Palmer; he later kept a shop at the corner of Pitt and Hunter Streets, and owned ‘Clydesdale’, a 700-acre (283 ha) farm near Windsor, between 1818 and 1851. Tompson married Jane Armytage on 25 August 1822, following the death of his first wife, Elizabeth, née Boggis.

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Hover on image to zoom in



1836 – Chs. Tompson Esqur. Clydesdale

Open in State Library of NSW catalogue

Download Image



Creator
Read, Richard Jnr (1796-1862)
Inscription
In ink on back: ‘Painted by R. Read, 45 Pitt / Street Sydney New South Wales, / Novr. 1836’
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
To follow
Reference
Subject posed on a [cedar] carver chair with elaborate curtain drapery behind.

1836 – Mrs Jane Tompson – Aged 42 – Clydesdale

What we see in this image

This front facing, ½ length, seated portrait depicts Mrs Tompson (aged 42) as a respectable woman of substance, posed on a double-ended [cedar] sofa (probably of colonial manufacture) with central scrolling carved back and out swept arms, black [sateen/horsehair] upholstery and a pinch-pleated, buttoned bolster. Her elegant day dress appears to be made of fine [silk] taffeta; originally blue in colour the [indigo] paint pigment has faded over time to a light olive green. Following the fashionably wide-shouldered look of the period, this silhouette is further emphasised by elongated, lobed (or van-dyked) 'mancherons' (epaulettes) spreading out over 'gigot' (leg of mutton) sleeves, full to the elbow and tight-fitting along the forearm, tapering to the wrist and marked with long peaked, black [velvet] cuffs. The form-fitting bodice has a series of pleats, rising in a V-shape across the corsage, either side of a centre front seam (possibly piped or boned), above a full skirt gathered into a pointed waistline.

Mrs Tompson's dark brown hair is horizontally arranged in large 'sausage' curls and possibly oiled. She wears an elaborate indoor cap comprised of layered, pleated frills of lace, or finely worked white-work ('broderie anglais') embroidery entwined with bands and bows of pale blue [satin] ribbon falling in long streamers over her shoulders. This cap appears to match her pleated sheer 'fichu', or kerchief, which has been folded to form a wide, flat collar emphasising the width of the shoulder-line of the gown, and fastened at the neck with a small rectangular gold pin [possibly containing a sample of brown hair] maybe a sentimental token or mourning brooch.

With its exuberantly romantic attention to upper half of the sitter's ensemble, overloaded with details of ribbons and lace, the pointed waistline of Mrs Tompson's gown is indicative of a taste for the gothic after 1832, while its massive balloon-sized 'imbecile' sleeves clearly pre-date the

dramatic mid-1836 change in mode which saw the collapse of the sleeve head and subsequent shrinking of the upper half of the silhouette.

What we know about this image

Jane Tompson, nee Amytage (1794-1871) was the second wife of emancipist farmer Charles Tompson (1784-1871), whom she married on 25 August 1822. The couple lived at ‘Clydesdale’, Windsor, until the property was sold in 1851. This portrait (as dated) would have been painted between the birth of two daughters in May 1835 and 1838.

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1836 – Mrs Jane Tompson – Aged 42 – Clydesdale

Open in State Library of NSW catalogue

Download Image

Creator
Richard Read Jnr (1796-1862)
Inscription
On back as above; and ‘Painted by R. Read, 45 Pitt / Street Sydney New South Wales, / Novr. 1836’
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
Subject is posed on a black [horsehair] upholstered doubled-ended sofa, possibly of colonial manufacture.
Reference
To follow

1833 – Mrs Cooper

What we see in this image

This right facing, ¾ length, portrait shows a young woman posed in a domestic setting seated on a tablet-backed [cedar] side chair with scroll supports (probably of colonial manufacture), holding a handkerchief in her right hand on her lap, her left arm resting next to an open book laid face down on a square-cornered table with a blue [felt] cover decoratively bordered with braid.

Mrs Cooper's elegant day dress appears to be made of fine [silk] taffeta in a light olive green colour. It has a high, closed neckline, in-filled with a white muslin habit shirt, or 'chemisette', with a [white-work embroidered] double-ruff at the neck, above a flat, turn-back, notched/triangular contrasting collar in black, edged with a narrow pleated olive-green band, with black and olive bows at the centre of the corsage and on the shoulders, over the smooth-fitting bodice above a full skirt, set into the round waistband seam with pleats, at the slightly-raised waistline. Following the fashionably wide-shouldered silhouette of the period, panels of gauging (tucks) at the sleeve head, edged with black piping, form large 'bouffant' (puffed) 'gigot' (leg of mutton) or balloon sleeves above the elbow, fitted tightly along the forearms above contrast turn back cuffs in black with olive-green pleated trim.

Her red hair is elaborately arranged with large 'bows', or 'sausage' curls set in horizontal rows, either side of a centre-parting and drawn back into a high bun at the crown fixed with [tortoiseshell] comb. She also wears a small square brooch, pinned to the centre of her corsage, pendant [filigree-work] earrings and a long watch chain, looped up at

the waist and suspending a watch with several fobs including a seal.

What we know about this image

1. Sarah May (1802-1863) married in Robert Cooper Snr (the distiller) of Juniper Hall, South Head Rd, in 1822 and was his third wife.

2. Charlotte (aged 32) wife of Henry Cooper, architect, Darling Harbour.

3. Mrs Mary Cooper owned and let a house in Cumberland St.

By 1833 there may have been others: Mrs Thomas Cooper, mother of Sir Daniel, arrived by George Canning on Dec. 23 1828; in 1830 Miss Catherine Newell Rutter (1811-1860) married Robert Cooper Jnr, by 1833 she was aged 22 and between pregnancies: Robert III (1830), Charlotte (1832), William O (1835). She later married Thomas Chapman, widower of her sister-in-law Charlotte Cooper.

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1833 – Mrs Cooper

Open in State Library of NSW catalogue

Download Image



Creator
Read, Richard Jnr (1796-1862)
Inscription
‘Mrs Cooper, painted by R. Read, no. 89 Pitt St, Sydney, New South Wales, April 1833.’
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
Subject posed seated on side chair with left arm resting on table on which an open book is shown face down.
Reference
To follow

1832 – Jane Penelope Atkinson

What we see in this image

This right facing, ½ length miniature portrait shows Mrs Jane Atkinson (aged 25) wearing a bright cobalt blue [silk] dinner or evening gown typically low-necked and long-sleeved at this time, while ball gowns were short sleeved. In the pelisse-style, wrapping across the front (from right to left) like a coat, the low, wide v-shaped neckline is left partly open to reveal her youthful décolletage, modestly in-filled over the bosom with a shirred muslin 'tucker' or chemisette. Its fashionably wide silhouette is extended over the shoulder line by broad notched, or 'van-dyke', lapels spreading out over the top of large 'bouffant' (puffed) 'gigot' (leg of mutton) sleeves. The sitter carries a watch, suspended from a long double-stranded gold chain looped up on either side and tucked into a small pocket on the LHS of the narrow round waistline of her gown, marked by a self-fabric belt fastened with a deep oval-shaped gilt buckle. She also wears long gold pendant earrings.

Her glossy black hair is centre-parted and arranged in tight ringlets on the sides, and drawn smoothly back into a high bun at the crown fixed with a [Chinese lacquer ware / tortoiseshell] comb.

In mid-Nov 1832, Mrs Atkinson left Sydney with her family to live in Launceston, Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania). It is highly likely, therefore, that this portrait was painted in the days just prior to her departure, perhaps as a memento for her mother Mary Reibey – the artist's dating of this image would seem to bears this out.

What we know about this image

Jane Penelope Atkinson, nee Reibey (1807-1854), was born in Sydney, the 3rd daughter of Thomas Reibey (1755 – 1811) and emancipist merchant Mary Reibey, nee Haydock (1777-1855). On

11 Sep 1824, aged 17, Jane (known as Penelope) married merchant and auctioneer John Atkinson (1795 – 1893). The couple settled in Wilberforce, NSW, on one of Mary Reibey's properties, before re-locating to Launceston, Van Diemens Land (now Tasmania) in mid-November 1834. The couple produced 6 children in NSW before 1832, and 12 children in total. Jane Atkinson died (aged 47) at Launceston, Tasmania, on 9 October 1854.

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1832 – Jane Penelope Atkinson

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Download Image

Creator
Read, Richard jnr (1796-1862)
Inscription
‘Painted by / R. Read / No. 89 Pitt Street / Sydney N. S. Wales / Novr 1832 / Mrs Jn[?] Atkinson’
Medium
Watercolour on Ivory
Background
To follow
Reference
To follow

1832 – Fashion Plate, ‘Lady’s Magazine’

What we see in this image

This plate shows a woman and a girl (perhaps a mother and daughter) seated in a domestic [garden] setting. Le Follet

Courrier des Salons Journal des Modes (1829-1882) was one of the longest running 19th century fashion magazines. Initially specializing in scenes of ladies at the opera and soirees, all the best fashion plate artists worked for Le Follet in the 1840s and 50s and the high quality of Le Follet plates is a testament of their skill. Later issued in English and American editions, from August 1830 Follet plates were subtitled ‘Modes’ below the image with the title ‘Lady’s magazine’ varying several times between 1832 and 1838.

The woman in this image wears a sky blue dress of ‘mousseline’ (a fine light woollen cloth of a muslin-like texture) with large balloon-sleeves, tight-fitting from elbow to wrist trimmed with pointed gauntlet-style, ‘white work’ embroidered cuffs extending over the hands, and a wide low cut neckline, in-filled with a fine muslin ‘chemisette’ or habit -shirt with a pleated, ruffle collar standing above a black [satin] ribbon tied in a bow. The dress has a plain, smooth fitting bodice above a round waistline, worn with a tan-coloured ornamental apron of embroidered ‘Gros de Naples’ (type of Italian silk with a ribbed surface) with patch pockets and edged with cord which has been wrapped around the waist, the knotted and tasselled ends dangling decoratively in her lap, over a full skirt reaching to just above the ankles revealing cloth walking boots with narrow, square black leather toe caps. She has a floral printed shawl draped over her right shoulder and her hair is arranged in an elaborate coiffure with bunches of side curls and a high bun with a corsage of wheat. The child is seated on an X-frame stool and wears an ensemble of matching dress, cape and pantalettes made of yellow ‘Jacconnas’ (sic) (Jacconnet: a thin cotton fabric like muslin) with balloon-sleeves, tight-fitting from elbow to wrist, the ruffled collar of a chemisette or habit shirt is visible at the cape neckline tied with a dark pink ribbon. She wears blue cloth walking boots with narrow, square black leather toe caps and her dark hair is plaited and coiled into a bun with bunches of side ringlets.

One of the manufacturers named on this plate is listed at a fashionable address on the Boulevard Italien; running east west between the 2nd and 9th Arrondissements of Paris, its famous cafés and restaurants offered popular meeting places for the elegant elite throughout the 19th century.

What we know about this image

The sheer prettiness of the clothes of the 1830s make the highly ornamental fashion plates of this romantic era a delight to behold. A fashion plate is an illustration (a plate) showing fashionable styles of clothing. Fashion plates, as they were known during the height of their popularity, were first circulated at the end of the 18th century in England. These images do not depict actual or specific people but rather offer generalized portraits, intended to indicate the style of clothes that a tailor, dressmaker, or retailer could make or sell and/or to demonstrate how different materials might be made up into clothes. Through the centuries, the fashion plate has continued to provide a link between the wearer and the maker of clothes. Though fashion plates can trace their origins back to the 16th century, this method of disseminating fashionable styles remained popular through the 19th and early 20th centuries only to be largely superseded by fashion photography.

The Lady’s Magazine began publishing in 1770 and was one of the first distributors of fashion plates in magazines, spreading the trend across Europe. In France, La Galleries des Modes was a pioneer in fashion plate publication with magazines distributed irregularly during 1778 and 1787. After 1800 the increase in the number of lending, subscription and public libraries fostered a new reading public and many types of magazines flourished. Some magazines included illustrated fashion articles which were often their most attractive feature; fashion engravings, and later lithographs, were often

coloured by hand. In 1809, the London print firm of Ackermann began to publish ‘The Repository of Arts, Letters, Commerce and Manufactures Fashion and Politics’. This magazine had a broad content scope with illustrations of good quality; a special feature of the Repository was the inclusion of small samples of new textiles which were pasted alongside the text which named and described them.

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Le Follet Courrier des Salons.

Lady's Magazine.

N.° 201



Modes

On s'abonne au Magasin de Musique Boulevart des Italiens Passage de l'Opéra N.° 2.

Tablier en gros de naples brodé, des Mmes. de Mme. Armand, Rue du Cloître St. Jacques l'Hopital &c.

Robe en mousseline—Robe d'enfant en Jaconnas.

L'administration du Journal, Rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth, 25.

Published by Page 112 Fetter lane London.

1832.

1832 – Fashion Plate, ‘Lady’s Magazine’

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Download Image

Creator
To follow
Inscription
Le Follet Courrier des Salons’, No.201, ‘Lady’s Magazine’, 1832. Modes – Tablier en ‘gros de naples brode’ de Mr & Mrs Armand, Rue du Cloitre St Jacques l’Hopital. Robe en mousseline – Robe d’enfant en Jacconnas. Fetter Lane, London, 1832.
Medium
Hand-Coloured Engraving
Background
To follow
Reference
To follow

1830 – George Prince

What we see in this image

This right facing, full-length profile portrait is painted in watercolour on paper and shows a standing male figure posed on shore, with a pair of mercantile maritime vessels (flying red ensigns) out to sea behind him. He wears a three-piece, single-breasted dark suit (perhaps a type of marine uniform) trimmed at the cuff with gold buttons, also fastening the short jacket and waistcoat, worn over a white linen shirt and a black neckcloth, matching trousers and black leather boots or shoes with pointed toes and a slight heel. The man also wears a narrow brimmed ‘stove-pipe’ style top hat and holds a telescope or spy glass in his left hand.

What we know about this image

Nothing is known of the subject of this naïvely-drawn profile portrait, beyond an identity (suggested by descendants) of Mr George Prince (1795-1853), eldest son of the late George Prince of Canterbury, Kent, England. It is one of a pair.

Black painted ‘profile’ portraits or ‘silhouettes’ were known by various names during the 18th and early 19th centuries; ‘shades’ or ‘shadow portraits’ were the most common terms during the 18th century, with the term ‘profile’ becoming more common by the early 19th century and ‘silhouette’ only in common use in the 1830s. By the late 1820s interest in full length profile portraits, the work of artists known as ‘profilists’, rivalled earlier bust-length versions. This profile form of portrait, sometimes embellished with watercolour details, persisted through the 1840s when the silhouette’s position, as a cheaply available form of rapid

portraiture, was threatened by the invention and introduction of photography.

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1830 – George Prince

Open in State Library of NSW catalogue

Download Image



Creator
To follow
Inscription
To follow
Medium
To follow
Background
To follow
Reference
To follow

1830 – Mrs George (Eliza Sophie) Prince

What we see in this image

This left facing, full length profile portrait is painted in

watercolour on paper and shows a female figure in a standing pose. She holds a small book in her right hand, and wears a black gown with a gathered bodice and a round waistline, sitting slightly higher than the natural waist, with a large white-work embroidered collar, or pelerine, emphasising the wide shoulder-line which extends over the large balloon-shaped sleeves of the early 1830s, full to the elbow and tight-fitting along the forearm, above a tubular skirt reaching just to the instep to reveal black, pointed-toe slippers. The lack of fullness in the skirt suggests an early 1830s date, before the silhouette widened at the hem to balance out the shoulder line. The woman also wears a frilled and beribboned indoor cap, over her brown hair which is arranged in a face-framing row of narrow, tightly-curled, sausage-shaped ringlets.

What we know about this image

Nothing is known of the subject of this naïvely-drawn profile portrait, beyond the identity (suggested by descendants) of Elizabeth Sophie (1793-1885), wife of Mr George Prince (1795-1853), eldest son of the late Mr George Prince of Canterbury, Kent, England. It is one of a pair.

Black painted ‘profile’ portraits or ‘silhouettes’ were known by various names during the 18th and early 19th centuries; ‘shades’ or ‘shadow portraits’ were the most common terms during the 18th century, with the term ‘profile’ becoming more common by the early 19th century and ‘silhouette’ only in common use in the 1830s. By the late 1820s interest in full length profile portraits, the work of artists known as profilists, rivalled earlier bust-length versions. This profile form of portrait, sometimes embellished with watercolour details, persisted through the 1840s when the silhouette’s position, as a cheaply available form of rapid portraiture, was threatened by the invention and introduction of photography.

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1830 – Mrs George (Eliza Sophie) Prince

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Download Image



Creator
To follow
Inscription
To follow
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
To follow
Reference
To follow

1830 – Elizabeth Rouse

What we see in this image

This right facing, 1/2 length miniature portrait of Elizabeth Rouse (1772-1849) is thought to have been painted between 1825 and 1830. Mrs Rouse appears to be aged in her 60s and she

wears an ensemble of everyday garments comprising a dark-coloured [cotton] dress with a gathered bodice, the shoulders and neckline largely obscured by her light-coloured [wool] shawl, with a white-work embroidered [muslin] collar pinned at the neck with a square brooch. Her brown hair is covered with an indoor cap of sheer muslin or [embroidered] net trimmed with bands of white [satin] ribbon, elaborately arranged in a series of frills and bows over each ear.

What we know about this image

Elizabeth Adams (1772-1849) married Richard Rouse in 1796. The couple migrated to Sydney in 1801, where Rouse became Superintendent of Public Works and Convicts at Parramatta.

This miniature portrait has been set into a brooch which bears an inscription on the reverse dating from the year of the sitter’s death in 1849. A similar portrait (possibly a copy), painted by William Griffith (ca. 1808-1870) in 1847, is held by Sydney Living Museums in the Hamilton Rouse Hill Collection.

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1830 – Elizabeth Rouse

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Download Image

Creator
To follow
Inscription
‘Mrs E Rouse / Obt 26th Decr 1849 / At 76 Years’
Medium
Watercolour on Ivory
Background
To follow
Reference
To follow

1828 – Mrs Jane Penelope Atkinson

What we see in this image

This front facing ½ length miniature portrait shows the young Mrs Atkinson (1807-1854) at about 21 years of age. She wears a rather informal style of dress which is an unusual choice for

a portrait.

Her dark blue day dress (perhaps a type of riding habit) has a plain high-necked bodice fitted with a wide, contrasting turn-back collar of cream fabric bordered with a narrow red stripe and tied in a soft bow at the neck like a scarf above long, full sleeves making it a practical and comfortable garment for more active pursuits. Her dark curly hair falls in ringlets around her face, either side of a centre part and below a ring of plaited hair supporting a [tortoiseshell] comb in the shape of a crown. She also carries a gold watch and fob, linked by a heavy gold chain, across the front of her gown at the natural waistline.

What we know about this image

Jane Penelope Atkinson, nee Reibey (1807 – 1854), was born in Sydney, the 3rd daughter of Thomas Reibey (1755 – 1811) and emancipist merchant Mary Reibey, nee Haydock, (1777-1855). On 11 Sep 1824, aged 17, Jane (known as Penelope) married merchant and auctioneer John Atkinson (1795 – 1893), in Sydney. Between 1826 and 1832, the couple settled on one of Mary Reibey's properties in Wilberforce, NSW, and had 6 children and before their departure for Launceston, Van Diemens Land in mid-November 1834. Jane Atkinson died (aged 47) at Launceston, Tasmania, on 9 October 1854.

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1828 – Mrs Jane Penelope Atkinson

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Download Image



Creator
Read, Richard jnr (1796-1862) attrib.
Inscription
To follow
Medium
Watercolour on Ivory
Background
To follow
Reference
To follow

1826 – Captain John Piper

What we see in this image

This life-size, left-facing, full-length, standing ¾ profile portrait depicts the 53-year-old Captain John Piper in a commanding pose. Its landscape setting is immediately

identifiable as the eastern foreshore of Sydney Harbour, with a distant view to Henrietta Villa, Piper's recently-completed prestigious waterfront home at Point Piper, forming an appropriate backdrop.

Piper is shown in a civil uniform of his own design, thought to have had custom-made for him in London by a leading tailor. As befits the owner's position and bearing, this outfit is cut along naval lines and made-up in a dark blue woollen cloth, the double-breasted jacket with standing collar and gold epaulettes at the shoulder, fastening with two rows of large brass buttons, worn over a fine white linen shirt with a peaked collar, slim-fitting trousers and fine leather shoes, or boots, with an ornamental gilt dress sword slung from the left hip, and holds a black top hat in his left hand. A gold watch and chain, set with pendant fobs, is also visible hanging down below the cropped front edge of his jacket at the waist.

What we know about this image

Following a long and successful career as a colonial administrator, Captain John Piper (1773-1851) was appointed chief customs officer for Sydney in 1814; in lieu of a salary he received 5% of all monies collected. At the peak of his service he was receiving thousands of pounds a year. As one of the wealthiest individuals in Sydney, Piper could now afford to indulge in the level of living he had always wished for and a home worthy of his newly-acquired eminence. In 1818 Governor Macquarie granted Piper 190 acres [77 hectares] of land to be known as Point Piper. Henrietta Villa, built between 1816 and 1822, was completed at a cost of at a cost of £10,000 and considered to be the most elegant house in Sydney at the time.

Piper's star was only in the ascendancy for a few short years. He proved lax in his duties as naval officer, and was suspended from his position by Governor Darling, who demanded the customs deficiency be made good, and Piper was forced to

auction off his property and belongings in May 1826.

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1826 – Captain John Piper

Open in State Library of NSW catalogue

Download Image

Creator
Earle, Augustus (1793-1838)
Inscription
Unsigned
Medium
Oil Painting
Background
Subject is posed with a distant landscape view to his home, Henrietta Villa at Point Piper, Sydney.
Reference
To follow

1826 – Mrs Laycock

What we see in this image

This right facing ¾ length miniature portrait of Mrs Laycock is the earliest surviving, authenticated colonial portrait by Richard Read Junior.

Hannah Laycock (aged about 68) has been posed seated on a cedar carver chair. She wears a high-waisted, fawn-coloured day dress with an ‘epaulette’ shoulder detail extending out above long loose sleeves with three self-fabric bands at the wrist to bring in their fullness. The style of the bodice of her dress is obscured by a sheer [spotted] lace ‘fichu’ or kerchief with a scalloped edge, draped over her shoulders and reaching to a point below her waist, covering a separate linen collar. She has a sky blue, fringed shawl wrapped across her back and around her arms and wears a ‘corvette’ (bonnet-type day cap) of sheer white fabric, tying under the chin and gathered over the crown, trimmed with band of pale blue ribbon and a rosette, the soft double-frilled brim framing her dark brown hair which is arranged in short curls around her face. Mrs Laycock wears small pendant earrings, several rings, and long gold chain from which two ornaments are suspended.

What we know about this image

Hannah Laycock, née Pearson (1758-1831) was married to Thomas Laycock (1756?-1809), Quartermaster of the NSW Corps. She arrived in the Gorgon in September 1791, and left again for England in about 1805. She returned to the colony in 1810 after her husband died. The Laycocks had three sons and three daughters, including Thomas Laycock. An early land grant recipient in the Canterbury area, Hannah Laycock settled on her 500-acre grant named ‘King’s Grove’ (after Governor Philip

Gidley King), now Kingsgrove, NSW, but is also listed as residing in Pitt Street, Sydney, at the time this portrait was made.

The miniature portrait of Mrs Laycock by Richard Read Jnr (1796-1862) reveals the artists characteristically prosaic approach to portraiture. The majority of his portraits are either half or three-quarter length. Using a sparse, elegant design with cool, matt colours, the sitters are set against a plain background and appear detached, almost solemn. The greatest attention is given to the face which is built up from strokes of watercolour or pencil and, on occasion, he also used white body colour to model costumes and details. Richard Read Jnr rarely signed the face of his portraits but often inscribed them in some detail on the back. Read Jnr operated from 89 Pitt Street between 1826 and 1835, and then from 45 Pitt Street. According to his ad in the Sydney Monitor, in November 1826, R. Read junior's miniature portraits – 'painted on Ivory in a superior style' – could be acquired for prices 'from One Guinea to Five'. Most of Read's surviving portraits date from this time onwards.

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1826 – Mrs Laycock

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Creator
Read, Richard Jnr (1796-1862)
Inscription
LLHS: ‘R. Read, 1826’; in ink on back: On back in ink ‘Sydney Sept. 29th 1826. Painted by R.Read Jnr, No. 61 Pitt St. Sydney, New South Wales. Mrs Laycock’.
Medium
Watercolour
Background
Subject posed on a [cedar] carver chair.
Reference
To follow

1826 – A Government Jail Gang, Sydney N. S. Wales

What we see in this image

This streetscape records fourteen portrait figures, mostly convicts waiting for the day's work duty allocation, standing outside the Hyde Park Barracks, on Macquarie Street in Sydney. Opening in May 1819, the Barracks housed a diverse and motley crew of repeat offenders. Augustus Earle's finely observed view records a wide array of convict garb worn by Barracks inmates including details of the cut and construction of 'punishment' trousers worn by chain gang convicts which were made to button on the outside of each leg to enable their easy removal over leg irons, as well as the manner of wearing leg irons when walking. Some convicts used their leisure time to make cabbage tree hats (as worn by the third, fifth and eighth convicts) which were cooler on the head and gave protection from sunburn than the standard issue woollen hats (seen second from the left) which offered no sun protection, or the leather caps with semi-circular flaps (mid-foreground) which could be pulled down to give some sun protection but absorbed the heat. Convicts sent to the Hyde Park Barracks weren't always lucky enough to be issued with socks or stockings and there was also a chronic shortage of shoes as evidenced by the number of bare ankles and feet in this image.

What we know about this image

According to evidence supplied to the Bigge Royal Commission in 1819, on landing in NSW each convict received a clothing issue comprising a coarse woollen jacket and waistcoat of yellow or grey cloth, a pair of duck (cotton) or cloth (wool) trousers, a pair of worsted stockings, a pair of shoes, two cotton or linen shirts, a neck handkerchief and a woollen cap. In the 1820s the Board of Ordnance took over the supply of convict clothing and all items made or used by government convicts were marked or stamped with broad arrows or the letters 'PB' (Prisoners Barracks). Convicts sent to the Barracks received a further issue of two striped shirts which clearly distinguished the wearer as a repeat offenders, and

convicts names and numbers were also written on their clothes to discourage theft or barter.

This work is dated from the time of Augustus Earle's stay in Australia (1825-1827). It was published in his 'Views in New South Wales and Van Diemens Land: Australian scrap book' (1830) with the accompanying text:

'Every person in England is aware that for certain offences men are transported to New South Wales but there are few, except those who have visited the colony, know how they are disposed of after they reach their places of destination. When they land they do not go to gaol but are assembled in the Prisoners Barracks Yard and there inspected by the Governor, Superintendant (sic) of Convicts and the Officers of the Ship which brought them. And it is truly astonishing to see such men, under such circumstances and after so long a voyage, look and behave so well. They are immediately assigned to such Settlers as may want them, and they accompany their new masters, in the capacity of servants; their ration and clothing is arranged by the Government, and generally speaking they are comfortably off: but for any fresh offence Government take them back, and then they are placed in gangs, and toil at the public works, where they have harder duty, less liberty, and reduced rations and for still repeated crimes, are banished to remote penal settlements. The annexed subject is one of the Government gangs being told out of the barracks for the daily work, and given in charge of a soldier who acts as overseer.'

During the first years of settlement in Australia, clear categories of distinctive convict dress or uniform were never satisfactorily enforced due to irregularities of supply from England. As a result, convicts and free working class people in the colony all wore very similar kinds of clothing largely consisting of basic, uniformly drab, ready-made garments known as 'slops' which was the term for any type of coarse loose-fitting mass-produced clothing and the standard dress of the

urban working classes at the time. A lack of distinguishing dress meant discipline was difficult to maintain in the colony and this was further exacerbated by the assignment system.

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1826 – A Government Jail Gang, Sydney N. S. Wales

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Download Image

Creator
Earle, Augustus (1793-1838)
Inscription
Imprint LLHS: ‘A. Earle, 1830’
Medium
Hand-coloured [engraving]
Background
Subjects posed outside Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney.
Reference
To follow

1826 – Ann Piper and her children

What we see in this image

This family portrait is typical of the style of painting known as a ‘conversation piece’, which traditionally showed a landed gentry family informally posed in the home or on their estate. This rare, life size, colonial example shows Mary Ann (nee Shears), wife of Captain John Piper, and four of her ten children. Mrs Piper had turned 35 on 2 August 1826, and would

appear to have everything that colonial Sydney could offer; wealth, social position, a charming healthy family, fashionable imported clothes and a grand house on the best site in Sydney. Although there are numerous pictures of the exterior of the Piper family home, Henrietta Villa, Augustus Earle's portrait of Mrs Piper and her children is one of the few surviving views of its interior.

For her family portrait Mrs Piper has chosen to wear a sheer, red gauze gown with short, puffed sleeves and a gathered bodice over a long-sleeved, white underdress with a wide, flat collar and tucked edges. The high waist is marked with a belt, fastened on the left hand side with a rectangular gold buckle, above a long, tubular skirt falling to her ankles, its sheerness revealing the pin-tucked bands on her underdress extending from just below her knees. She also carries a white shawl, which may have of borders of 'broderie anglais' (white work) embroidery, and wears an elaborate indoor cap, trimmed with ribbons, silk flowers, lace and sheer gauze streamers. Mrs Piper wears several rings on each hand, pendant earrings and a gold watch, suspended from a long gold chain looped up and tucked into a small pocket concealed in the round waistband of her gown.

The interests or pastimes of each family member indicated by their clothing and possessions. The children in this image are aged from approximately four to ten years. Thomas Piper (b. 21 September 1816), on the far left, wears a brass-buttoned, black schoolboy outfit, or 'skeleton suit', with a white neck ruff and carries an archer's bow. In the centre of the image the youngest boy, William Sloper (b. 25 August 1822), who beats a drum, is dressed in an unusually tailored, and jauntily militarised, version of the type of frock and pantaloons worn by little boys until they were breeched at about the age of five. The two girls wear identical outfits – coral necklaces with white muslin dresses, their high-waists marked by pale pink sashes – and are shown with more

devotional interests; the large book on the stool closest to Eliza Anne (b. 26 July 1818) is perhaps a bible, while the pair of service books lying on the table nearest to Anne Christa Frances (b. 24 June 1820) would be carried to church on Sundays – the Pipers were devout Presbyterians.

What we know about this image

Mary Ann Shears married Captain John Piper, military officer and public servant by special licence in 1816. It is believed they had met and formed an attached during Piper's term of service on Norfolk Island in about 1806.This happy family picture must have been completed after the birth of John and Mary Ann's tenth child, and eighth son Frederick Octavius, on 2 June 1826 but before his death three months later in Sept 1826. Several other Piper children born before 1826 are also missing from this painting, including Hugh Hewitt Piper (b. 1813) who had been killed in a riding accident on 8 July 1825, which explains why the painting could not have been commissioned in 1825; Ann would never have worn a red dress so soon after the death of a family member.

A number contemporary accounts give clear impressions of Henrietta Villa, including that of the artist, Augustus Earle, in his 'Views of New South Wales' (1830):

The interior of the building corresponds with the taste displayed in the gardens, and the grand saloon is not only unrivalled in this Colony but would rank high as a chaste specimen of architecture in any part of the world. . . At every turn you see comfort and splendour, and one is much in doubt which most to admire – the elegance of the building as a work of art or the comfort of the house as a residence.

Joseph Lycett, published his 'Views of Australia' in London in 1824, and also described Henrietta Villa:

The interior of the Villa is filled up in a style that combines elegance and comfort. The principal apartments are a

spacious Dining Room, a Banqueting Room and a Drawing Room; all furnished in the most tasteful manner.

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1826 – Ann Piper and her children

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Download Image

Creator
Earle, Augustus (1793-1838)
Inscription
Unsigned
Medium
Oil Painitng
Background
Subjects are posed in front of a [stone] chimney breast, in a domestic setting suggestive of their home, Henrietta Villa, at Point
Reference
To follow