

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.

.

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



1848 – Saidee and Alice Stephen, Twins

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

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.

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



1847 – The ball after returning from the picnic party

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

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

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 curricle] 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.

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



1846 – New Post Office, George Street, Sydney

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

Download Image



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)

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



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
Open

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 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.

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



1845 – Dr William Bland

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

Download Image



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

**1843 – Anna Maria Macarthur
(nee King)**

What we see in this image

This front facing 3/4 length portrait shows Anna Maria Macarthur, aged 50, posed in a domestic setting, seated in a high-backed upholstered arm chair draped with a checked shawl. Mrs Macarthur is known to have been of delicate health which is certainly portrayed in this sensitive portrait.

Anna Maria wears a full-skirted, light-coloured [silk] day dress with long sleeves, fitted through the upper arm to the elbow, marked with small puffs, or 'bouffants', full over the forearms and gathered into narrow cuffs at the wrist. The bodice of the dress is shrouded by a sheer, white-work embroidered 'pelerine', or capelet, topped by a small white collar with ruffled edging fastened at the neck with a small rectangular brooch, over which is laid a large blue and white [printed] scarf pinned with a large [enamelled or micro-mosaic] brooch. She wears a wedding ring on her left hand which rests in her lap over a piece of [fabric/sewing], her smoothly centre-parted brown hair dressed in rows of sausage curls over her ears, and covered with a ruffled and beribboned indoor cap of fine white fabric trimmed with artificial flowers and [stalks of wheat].

What we know about this image

This image shows Mrs Macarthur at the height of her social position, just before financial troubles overwhelmed her husband. It was painted in the same year as the artist's somewhat grander portrait of her mother, Anna Josepha King (ML 1192), then in residence with her daughter and son-in-law. William Nicholas (1807-1854) seems to have been the favoured portrait artist of prominent colonial families in Sydney like the Macarthurs, the Wentworths and the Kings.

Anna Maria Macarthur, nee King (1793-1852) was the eldest daughter of Governor Philip Gidley King. She married

pastoralist, politician and businessman Hannibal Hawkins Macarthur (1788-1861) in 1812. The couple settled at The Vineyard, near Parramatta, NSW, which became one of the leading houses of the colony, and raised a family of eleven children (5 sons and 6 daughters); James Campbell Macarthur (1813-1862), Elizabeth Macarthur (1815-1889), Anna Macarthur (1816-1852), Catherine Macarthur (1818-1894), Charles Macarthur (1820-1871), Mary King Macarthur (1822-1898), George Fairfowl Macarthur (1825-1890), John Alexander Macarthur (1827-1904), Emmeline Maria Macarthur (1828-1911), Arthur Hannibal Macarthur (1830-1871) and Emma Jane Macarthur (1832-1866). After her husband's financial collapse during the late 1840s depression, the Macarthurs moved to Ipswich, Qld, where Anna died in 1852.

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



1843 – Anna Maria Macarthur (nee King)

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

Download Image



Creator
Nicholas, William (1807-1854)
Inscription
LRHS: 'W. Nicholas / 1843'
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
Subject is posed in an easy chair, with a checked shawl draped over one arm suggestive of a domestic setting.
Reference
Open 1
Open 2

1842 – Portrait of an unidentified man, on board

ship

What we see in this image

This left facing, 3/4 length standing portrait depicts an unknown young man, aged in his late 20s or early 30s, posed on the deck of ship docked in Sydney Harbour.

He wears a long-skirted, double-breasted frock coat in dark grey cloth with a black velvet collar, wide notched lapels and narrow-fitting sleeves, slightly gathered at the shoulder and ending in split cuffs at the wrist, worn over dark cream trousers, a cream waistcoat with roll collar, and a snowy white linen shirt with a high collar and a sky blue ribbed-silk bow necktie above gold stud buttons, with two long, fine gold chains crossed over his chest (perhaps suspending spectacles). The subject's long dark brown curly hair is parted on the left, his reddish brown whiskers carefully trimmed into a narrow beard with no moustache. His left arm rests on a wood and brass [table] displaying his gold 'pinkie' ring while his right hand, positioned somewhat awkwardly below the hip, holds back the lower front edge of his coat to reveal a light grey [silk] lining.

What we know about this image

Edmund Edgar, or Eagar (1804 – 1854), also known by the aliases Edgar Edmund Bults and Edgar Bult, worked as a house painter, engraver, and lithographer in London, and also as a miniature painter, before being convicted of robbery in 1825 for which he was sentenced to transportation for life. Edgar reached Sydney on 13 September 1826, aboard the convict ship Marquis of Huntly. By special request, he was assigned to the visiting artist Augustus Earle who had recently acquired a

lithographic press and sought Edgar's assistance in the production of his Views in Australia and other lithographs. Edgar also taught painting in Sydney, at Mr Gilchrist's school in the late 1820s.

Receiving his ticket of leave in 1838, Edgar was conditionally pardoned in 1844. From then on he seems to have concentrated on portraiture. In 1847 he was listed in Low's Directory as an artist at Argyle Street, west of Trinity Church, in Sydney's Rocks area. Other details about Edgar's life remain uncertain – he may later have moved to Parramatta though another unconfirmed reference suggests he became a fruit and vegetable vendor in Sydney. He died a pauper at the Sydney Benevolent Asylum in June 1854.

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



1842 – Portrait of an unidentified man, on board ship

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

Download Image



Creator
Edgar, Edmund (1804 -1854)
Inscription
On back in pencil: 'Drawn by Edmund Edgar / Sydney New South Wales / April 1842'
Medium
Watercolour on Card
Background
Subject is posed on the deck of a ship.
Reference
Open

1840 – Edward Gostwyck Cory

What we see in this image

This left facing, full length standing profile portrait shows Edward Gostwyck Cory, aged 40, in street attire. It was painted in England, during Cory's five years residency there between 1837 and 1842.

He wears a knee-length black cloth frock coat with a dark [blue] velvet collar, over a black waistcoat and a white shirt with a high, standing collar wrapped with a black neckcloth, above narrow-fitting, light-coloured [striped] trousers strapped under his boots. In his right hand he holds a large black top hat and cane, with a pair of light-coloured gloves in his left hand. His receding reddish-brown hair is cut short and brushed forward, and he wears mutton chop side whiskers.

What we know about this image

Known as the 'King of Paterson', Edward Gostwyck Cory (1797-1873), arrived at Sydney on the *Allies* in 1823, with his wife Francis, née Johnson. Settling on the Gostwyck estate, on the Paterson River near Maitland, NSW, following the sale of his New England properties Cory returned to England for a 5 year period during which time it is probable that this portrait – one of Dighton's many profiles studies – was made.

ARTIST:

Richard Dighton (1795-1880) was an English artist of the Regency period. Best known for his many satirical profile portraits of contemporary London celebrities and characters, from 1828 he settled at Cheltenham, near Bristol, where he concentrated initially on watercolour portraits, and on lithographic portraits after 1835.

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



1840 – Edward Gostwyck

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

Download Image



Creator
Dighton, Richard (1795-1880)
Inscription
LRH: 'Rich.rd Dighton, Cheltenham'
Medium
Watercolour
Background
To follow
Reference
Open

**1840 – Mrs [Anna Elizabeth]
Walker**

What we see in this image

This left facing, $\frac{1}{2}$ length portrait shows Mrs Walker (aged 37) in mourning for her elder brother, John Marquet Blaxland (1801-1840) who died suddenly on 29 May 1840. The landscape view stretching behind her could be a reference to her home in Tasmania and/or her place among colonial Australia's first generations of landed gentry.

Mrs Walker's recent bereavement is signified by her choice of black garments, further accessorised with appropriate memorial jewellery in the form of jet pendant earrings and an enamelled mourning brooch containing plaited hair of the departed which she has pinned to her corsage. The sheen of the gown suggests it is made of black [silk] satin, rather than the lustreless black materials favoured for mourning after the death of Prince Albert in 1861. It follows the fashionable silhouette for the 1840s, with its shallow, demure wide neckline just revealing the edge of a sheer white chemise, above a fitted bodice trimmed with a series of flat tucks fanning up over the corsage in a V-shape from the pointed waist. The sleeves appear to be tight-fitting at the shoulder with rows of flat tucks over the upper arm, confirming a post-1836 date, and becoming more voluminous below the elbow. Her judiciously draped Turkey red [paisley] shawl is thought to have been a family heirloom and serves a double purpose by concealing Mr Walker's advancing pregnancy – her fourteenth, and last child, Alice, was born soon after her return to Tasmania, in early 1841. She wears her centre-parted dark hair with a knot at the back, her long side ringlets held in place with black [jet] hair clips, or barrettes.

What we know about this image

Thomas Walker arrived at Port Jackson on 13 January 1818, and subsequently built a house at Concord, on the Parramatta River, which he called Rhodes. On 4 January 1823 he married

Anna Elizabeth (1804-1889), second daughter of John Blaxland at St John's Church, Parramatta. The couple had four sons and nine daughters. In 1832, the Walkers left Sydney to make their home at South Esk, near Longford, Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) at the property they also named Rhodes.

In late 1839/ early 1840, Anna Walker travelled with her husband and four of her thirteen children up to Sydney from her home in Tasmania; the unexpected demise several months later of Anna's elder brother, John, extended the Walkers' visit til November/December. As neither of Felton's portraits of the Blaxland siblings is precisely dated by the artist (and only one is signed physically), it is possible only to ascribe approximate dates, ie. after the sudden death of John Marquett Blaxland on 29 May 1840, in his 39th year, at Newington, Sydney, and before Anna's return to Tasmania. The sombre mood of the portrait would seem to bear out this conjecture.

Naval surgeon and artist Maurice Felton (1803-1842) arrived with his family at Sydney in late 1839. He staged his first colonial exhibition in January 1840, perhaps leading Thomas Walker (1791-1861), commissary and settler, to commission this portrait of his wife Anna (nee Blaxland); Felton's other known portraits of the Blaxland clan include Walker's father and mother-in-law, John Snr and Harriott de Marquett Blaxland, and John Marquett Blaxland (1801-1840), their eldest son (ML 423). It is also possible that this work may have been commissioned by Mrs Walker's parents.

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



1840 – Mrs [Anna Elizabeth] Walker

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

Download Image



Creator
Felton, Maurice (1803-1842)
Inscription
On back: 'Mrs Walker painted by Maurice Felton Surgeon Sydney 1840'
Medium
Oil Painting
Background
Subject is posed with landscape view stretching to the horizon behind her, perhaps indicative of her home in Tasmania.
Reference
To follow

**1840 – Mrs Jones, wife of
Richard Jones Esq. M.C**

What we see in this image

This right facing, seated portrait shows Mary Louisa Jones, aged 34, posed in a domestic setting – perhaps suggestive of ‘Bona Vista’, the Jones’ family villa at Darlinghurst, NSW – with a large swathe of green cloth to the right (her husband, known as ‘China’ Jones, was a successful merchant) and her left arm resting on the ledge of a stone (or rendered) balcony with a view behind past a rocky outcrop to boats on Sydney Harbour.

Mrs Jones wears a dinner/evening dress of plain, light-coloured [possibly shot] silk, the neckline cut low off the shoulder and slightly ‘en coeur’ (heart-shaped), above long full bishop’s sleeves set into a short tight sleeve head, and partitioned into sections with narrow bands placed above and below the elbow and confined by slim fitting cuffs at the wrist, below a wide collar, or ‘bertha’, of [blonde, ie. silk] open-worked lace, fastened at centre front with a small square brooch, and spreading over a close-fitting [boned] bodice, covered in drapery folds fanning up over the corsage, above a plain dome-shaped skirt pleated into the pointed waistline. Her dark hair is centre-parted and dressed very low, with a ‘kiss’ curl at the right temple, fastened with clips (or barrettes) above two or three rows of soft curls arranged over the ears.

The overall fashionable effect, all through the 1840s, was of pale gentility and demure simplicity. The lines of the silhouette had begun to droop after 1837, turning away from the earlier wide-shouldered, balloon-sleeved styles to become much quieter in tone, forming long pointed angles in keeping with the ‘Gothic’ taste. The lingering presence of voluminous bouffant sleeves in this image, with evidence of the devices employed to rein in their fullness, further supports an early 1840s date.

What we know about this image

The album in which this image is housed is believed to have been compiled by Richard Jones Jun. (1823-1907) prior to his departure for England in the early 1840s. It includes many contributions from members of the Jones' family social circle including the Ferriters, who had married into the Jones family, the Cowpers and Stuart Donaldson (business partner of Richard Jones Snr).

Mary Louisa, nee Peterson (ca.1804 – 1887) married Richard Jones (1786-1852) in England in 1822. The couple arrived at Sydney in 1823, where Jones became a successful merchant and pastoralist. The couple had eight children including Richard Jun. (b. 1822), Mary Australia (b.1825), Louisa (b.1827), Elizabeth (b.1828), Frances (b. 1842) and Thomas (n.d).

The Jones lived on the corner of Pitt and Hunter Street in Sydney, before moving to 'Bona Vista' (now demolished) on the corner of Kellett St and Bayswater Rd, Darlinghurst, where they resided until the mid-1840s. When Jones was declared insolvent in November 1843, the family moved to Moreton Bay, Qld. Elected to the Legislative Council in 1850, Richard Jones died at New Farm, Moreton Bay, in 1852

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



Mrs. Jones, wife of Richard Jones Esq. M.C.

1840 – Mrs Jones, wife of Richard Jones Esq. M.C

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

Download Image



Creator
Unknown
Inscription
In ink below image: 'Mrs Jones, Wife of Richard Jones Esq. M.C'
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
Subject is posed on a balcony with a view out to Sydney Harbour.
Reference
Open

1840 – Thomas Chapman and

Master Robert Cooper Tertius

What we see in this image

The relationship between the subjects of this unusual colonial double portrait is quite complicated. Sydney draper Thomas Chapman, aged about 44, is shown with his arm around the shoulder of his nephew-by-marriage, Robert Cooper Tertius, aged 10. In 1851, following the death of his first wife Charlotte, nee Cooper, Thomas Chapman married her widowed sister-in-law, Robert's mother Catherine Rutter Cooper, thus becoming his nephew's step-father.

Thomas Chapman is posed in a seated position on the left, facing out of the picture, and looking directly at the viewer. In keeping with his occupation as a successful draper, he wears a moderately-styled but well-tailored ensemble consisting of a 2-piece black cloth suit comprising a double-breasted frockcoat with notched lapels, slightly peaked at the shoulders and closely fitted to the arm above slit cuffs, and narrow-fitting matching trousers, over a single-breasted white [silk] waistcoat with a roll collar and a snowy white linen shirt with [pearl] stud buttons and a black neck cloth wrapped around the high, pointed collar. A set of ornamental gold fobs, including several seals and a watch winder, dangles below his waistcoat. Loosely laid over Chapman's right thigh is a length of patterned and striped textile indicative of his occupation and providing the portrait with its characteristic flash of 'Felton red'.

Perhaps the most notable change to take place in male appearance during the 1840s was a shift away from the curled hair and side whiskers fashionable in the 1830s to more sleek styles of grooming. Mr Chapman is clean shaven but still wears his hair in natural waves. By this date, the frock coat –

varying in length from mid-thigh to just above the knee, skirted all around and cut to fit neatly at waist – had superseded the tailcoat. A double-breasted frockcoat was more usual than the single-breasted style, and remained the correct daytime dress for a draper into the second quarter of the nineteenth century, eventually giving way to the morning coat.

Robert Cooper III stands to his uncle's left, his head posed in right profile, showing off to best advantage his splendid cap with its peaked patent leather visor, chin strap, black [satin] ribbon bow and streamer trim. He also wears a knee-length, dark [olive brown] wool, single-breasted, shawl-collared frockcoat with a wide black belt at the waist, fastened with a triple-pronged metal buckle, above cream moleskin trousers and a white linen shirt with a broad, flat collar and finely-pleated edge, tied at the neck with a black silk scarf.

What we know about this image

This portrait records the fond relationship between Thomas Chapman (ca.1796-1874) and his nephew-by-marriage Robert James Cooper (1830-1910), aka Robert Cooper III (ie. Tertius). It was painted three years before Robert (then aged 13) went to England to finish his education, travelling in the custody his Uncle Thomas.

Maurice Felton's portraits are characterised by detailed, fine rendering of the face and facial features, capturing the texture of the skin and bringing out the character of the sitter without flattery. His depiction of fabrics emphasises the sheen of the materials, and his portrayal of jewellery is also accomplished

Thomas Chapman was a draper (a retailer of textile fabrics) working in Sydney in the 1840s. He had married Charlotte, nee Cooper (1810-1850), in 1834 but the couple are not known to

have had children. In 1851, following the death of Robert Cooper II in Sydney in 1848, Robert's mother Catherine Cooper (1811- 1860) married her brother-in-law and very close family friend Thomas Chapman (of Brisbane Cottage, Kiama) who subsequently became his nephew's step-father. The couple lived at Hartwell House, Kiama, built by Thomas Chapman in 1858. Catherine Chapman died of measles at Kiama on 16 July 1860.

Robert Cooper III was born on 26 Sept 1830 at the Cooper family home Juniper Hall in Paddington, Sydney, the first son of Robert Cooper Jnr and his wife Catherine Newell Cooper, nee Rutter. Robert Cooper III received some schooling at Sydney Grammar School. Training as an engineer at Newcastle-on-Tyne, Robert Cooper III became a licensed surveyor. Only 18 years old when his father died, on returning home he went to work for Peter Nicol Russell at the Sydney Foundry and Engineering Works (1842-1855). He later took up land at Burrill Lake which he called Mia Mia.

On 2 Sept 1871, Robert Tertius married Mary Anne Ilett at Milton, the daughter of Ulladulla farmers Thomas and Sarah Ilett. He inherited 100acres and a house at Rocky Point (now Sans Souci) from Thomas Chapman in 1874, and was an Alderman on the Ulladulla Council for many years, holding the position of Mayor in 1896. He on died 20 September 1910.

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



1840 – Thomas Chapman and Master Robert Cooper Tertius

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

Download Image



Creator
Felton, Maurice (1803-1842)
Inscription
On back: 'Thomas Chapman / & / Master Robert Cooper Tertius / painted by Maurice Felton Surgeon / Sydney Nov.r 1840.'
Medium
Oil Painting
Background
Subjects are posed in an outdoor setting, under a rock ledge and surrounded by native foliage with a landscape view to the distant coast line behind.
Reference
Open

1839 – Hannah Tompson

What we see in this image

This front facing, $\frac{3}{4}$ length portrait shows Mrs Hannah Tompson (aged 36) seated in a drawing room setting. She is posed with her right arm resting on a large turquoise blue [velvet] cushion, placed over the out swept arm of a sofa with matching upholstery, a dark red curtain draped across the brownish-green painted wall behind. She holds a small blue book in her right hand and the black ribbon round her neck may suspend a pair of 'pince-nez' style reading glasses.

Mrs Tompson wears an evening [dinner] gown made of a plain, cream-coloured [silk] satin or taffeta, cut very low off the shoulders to reveal her décolletage. The turn back collar of the neckline, trimmed with a narrow [black] lace edging, extends the fashionably wide silhouette out over large 'bouffant' (puffed) 'gigot' (leg of mutton) sleeves, set low on the shoulder, trimmed above and below the elbow with a pair of lace-edged 'mancherons', or flat oversleeves. Following the dramatic deflating of the sleeve head in mid-1836, the fullness of the sleeves has slipped down below the shoulder to the middle of the upper arm, fitting tightly along the forearm and tapering to the wrist. The form-fitting bodice is set above a full skirt eased into the deeply-pointed waistline with a series of pleats over the hips.

Her dark glossy hair is parted slightly to the left of centre, horizontally-arranged into large 'sausage' curls on each side at the front, with ringlets hanging over her ears below, and braided into a bun set high on the crown at the back of her head which is uncovered. A sheer white 'fichu', or kerchief is draped over her shoulders and she wears a range of jewellery comprising a pair of pendant gold earrings, a small

rectangular brooch pinned to the corsage of her bodice and a gold bracelet set with a blue stone, probably one of a matching pair, worn over the base of her sleeve at the wrist.

NB: During the early 19th century, dinner was served at 5 or 6 o'clock, and considered an afternoon rather than an evening function. A dinner dress was a semi-evening costume often worn with an evening headdress. Evening gowns are typically cut low to show off the décolletage and dinner gowns were typically made with long-sleeves, while ball gowns were short-sleeved.

What we know about this image

Miss Hannah Morris (1803-1874) was born in Sydney. She married public servant and poet Charles Tompson Jnr (1807-1883), at St Matthew's, Windsor, on 12 April 1830. Charles Tompson Jnr was born in Sydney, the eldest child of emancipist farmer Charles Tompson (1784?-1871) and his wife, Elizabeth (née Boggis), and is claimed to have been the first published Australian-born poet. By 1831, the couple were living in Kent Street, Sydney, where Tompson had become a clerk in the colonial secretary's office. He remained until 1836 and, from this time, seems to have eschewed writing poetry, concentrating instead on his career as a public servant.

William Nicholas (1807-1854), watercolourist, etcher and lithographer, was best known as a portraitist. He was in demand soon after his arrival at Sydney in the 'Roslyn Castle' on 25 February 1836. Surviving portraits prove he quickly attracted the colony's social and professional élite. By November 1840 Nicholas was reported as 'conducting Mr Barlow's business' and January 1842, he set up on a grander scale, advertising as a 'miniature painter on ivory and in watercolours, lithographer and draughtsman'. He provided an attiring room for ladies to change into their best clothes at his studio-residence, 6 Elizabeth Street South, and charged

from 1 to 3 guineas for his portrait miniatures. Taking an active part in Sydney's early art exhibitions, Nicholas died in Sydney, aged 48, on 23 June 1854.

Advertisements appearing in the Commercial Journal and Advertiser (Sat 18 Aug 1838, p. 2, Fine Arts in New South Wales) state:

'We have great pleasure in announcing the intention of Mr W. Nicholas to settle amongst us, whose talents as an artist cannot be too highly esteemed by the public. Specimens both of Miniature and Portrait Painting are to be seen at Mr Barlow's Repository, Colonnade, 3 Bridge-street, where orders are received...'

And again in The Colonist (Wed 3 Jul 1839, p.2: Domestic Intelligence):

'Mr Nicholas the artist, whose talents in the limning art afford the best guarantee that...a work will not suffer from any imperfection in the execution...Mr Barlow's of Bridge Street, at whose establishment Mr N. is at present very busily employed in executing portraits in which department of painting he has been very successful...'

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



1839 – Hannah Tompson

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

Download Image



Creator
Nicholas, William (1807-1854)
Inscription
LLHS: 'W. Nicholas. 1839'
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
Subject is posed on a couch with peacock-blue [velvet] upholstery, and a deep red curtain draped behind.
Reference
To follow

1838 Portrait of a surveyor,

possibly Charles Sturt (1795-1869)

What we see in this image

This left facing, full-length seated portrait depicts an unidentified surveyor, his profession implied by the theodolite, or surveyor's level, positioned on the left. The subject is possibly Captain Charles Sturt, aged in his early 40s at the time the image was created. He is posed seated on a [cedar] side chair next to a small, round-topped table with a quatreform base and cylindrical 'gun-barrel' column in the style of the late 1830s-early 1840s, on which are laid a map, a pencil and a compass. The map on the wall shows the recently established colonies at Swan River, WA (after 1830) and Adelaide, SA (as proclaimed in 1834), and the eastern Australian colonies as yet unseparated.

The sitter wears the type of dark clothes which would come to dominate men's business dress after the mid-19th century. His elegantly-tailored three-piece, black wool suit is comprised of a single-breasted, full-skirted frock coat with notched lapels and sloping shoulder line – mirroring the silhouette of female fashions of the day – worn with a matching waistcoat and slim-fitting trousers strapped under the sole of square-toed shoes or boots. His watch and fob are just visible at the waist and he wears a snowy white linen shirt with a frilled front and a black neckcloth. His red hair is brushed fashionably forward in the romantic style and he is clean shaven with long side whiskers.

From the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries 'dandyism' – defined as the outward manifestation of inner perfection – was characterised by fastidious attention to cleanliness of body

and attire. This new development in fashion set the standard in masculine dress, ushering in an era of perfect plainness, understated elegance and refinement which brought a new ethic of restraint into men's dress.

What we know about this image

Captain Charles Napier Sturt (1795 – 1869) arrived in Sydney with a detachment from the 39th regiment, aboard the *Mariner* on 23 May 1827, escorting convicts to NSW. Keen to explore the Australian interior, especially its rivers, Sturt led several expeditions into the interior of the continent, starting from both Sydney and Adelaide. Returning to Britain in 1832-35, he applied for a grant of land intending to settle in Australia. On 20 September 1834, he married Charlotte Christiana Greene. The couple returned to Australia in mid-1835 to begin farming the land granted to Sturt near present-day Canberra. In early 1839, after returning to NSW to settle his affairs, Sturt and his family took up residence in South Australia.

The artist B [enjamin] Clayton (1805 – 54) was a watercolourist, and possible cartoonist, thought to have been a medical practitioner. The only son of the artist Samuel Clayton and his first wife, Jane Maguire, he studied medicine in Dublin from 1826 until his return to Australia in April 1830, where he married Frances Matilda (Fanny) Broughton, in 1834. They settled at Baltinglass, near Gunning, where several children were born.

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



1838 Portrait of a surveyor, possibly Charles Sturt (1795–1869)

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

Download Image



Creator
Clayton, B[enjamin (1805-1854)]
Inscription
'B. Clayton del.'
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
Subject is seated on a [cedar] side chair with a surveyor's level, or theodolite, on the left, mounted on a wooden stand.
Reference
To Follow

1837 – Mary Ellen Betts

What we see in this image

This front facing, 3/4 length seated portrait shows colonial poet, watercolourist and sketcher Mary Ellen Betts, nee Marsden (aged 31) posed within a domestic room setting in the act of painting flowers. She holds a fine watercolour brush in her right hand, and the specimen she is copying [a blooming rose] in her left. Laid out before her, on a small rectangular table covered in a red [plush] cloth, are a [timber/enamelled metal] paint box, complete with watercolours, mixing tray and white ceramic palette, a glass water jar holding down a cream fabric brush wiper, and sketch book. She seated on a carver, or elbow, chair with a caned base [possibly of local or Anglo-Indian manufacture]. The room is fitted with a geometric-patterned floorcloth, and the walls painted a reddish-brown [umber] with a [cedar] window architrave (just visible on the LHS of the image) hung with a dark red curtain drapery.

Mrs Betts wears a day dress of soft [gauzy] green material which appears to have been remodelled [perhaps several times] from an earlier style. The bodice is shirred and piped in vertical channels, with a 'broderie anglais' (white-work) embroidered 'pelerine' collar, or capelet, fastened at the neck with an oval, seed pearl set brooch, and spreading out over the shoulders above the tight-fitting sleeve head which suggests a post-1836 date. Following the dramatic deflating of the 'imbecile' sleeve in mid-1836, the fullness of the sleeve slipped from the upper arm down to the mid-section. In this instance, it has been re-arranged into two flounced 'bouffants' (or puffs) anchored above and below the elbow, and loosely ruched to the wrists. The colour of the gown, and its 'pagoda-like' sleeve puffs, is reminiscent of the taste for Chinoiserie which enjoyed a short revival during the romantic

era. The long gold, rope-like chain hanging down from her neck suspends a small watch, tucked into a small pocket on the LHS of the round waistline her gown which is set at the natural waist and marked with a black ribbon belt.

Her dark hair is arranged in side ringlets and softly braided around a knot set low on the crown at the back of her head which, unusually for a married woman at the time, is uncovered. The red ribbon, looped and tied loosely in a bow at her neck, could imply that she has momentarily let her [straw] bonnet hang behind her back having just come in from the garden in her haste to record a freshly picked specimen.

What we know about this image

Mary Ellen Betts (1806-1885) was the 3rd daughter and sixth child of Rev. Samuel Marsden and Elizabeth, née Fristan, of Parramatta, NSW. She married John Betts in 1830. Betts became a pastoral pioneer, having come out to the colony as a tutor to a gentleman's family who were settled at North Parramatta. The couple had 7 sons and 3 daughters and settled on land in the Bathurst district called Molong Station, 16,000 acres granted to his wife as a marriage gift, situated just west of Orange.

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



1837 – Mary Ellen Betts

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

Download Image



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

1836 – Chs. Tompson Esqur – Clydesdale

Description: *what we see in this image*

This left facing, $\frac{1}{2}$ 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.

Print page or save as a PDF

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, $\frac{1}{2}$ 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.

Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in



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