A MODERN VISION
Charles Bayliss, Photographer, 1850–1897

Helen Ennis
A MODERN VISION
Charles Bayliss, Photographer, 1850–1897

Helen Ennis
This catalogue was published on the occasion of the exhibition of
*A Modern Vision: Charles Bayliss, Photographer, 1850–1897*,
curated by guest curator Helen Ennis, ANU School of Art.
The exhibition was on display at the National Library of Australia
from 11 July to 26 October 2008.

The exhibition was presented as part of *VIVID: National Photography Festival*,
which was held in Canberra from 11 July to 12 October 2008.

Members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are advised that
this book contains images and names of deceased persons.

Published by the National Library of Australia
Canberra   ACT   2600

© Helen Ennis and the National Library of Australia, 2008

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:

Author: Ennis, Helen.

Title: *A modern vision: Charles Bayliss, photographer, 1850–1897*/ Helen Ennis.

ISBN: 9780642276674 (pbk.)

Notes: Bibliography.


Other Authors/Contributors:
Bayliss, Charles, 1850–1897.
National Library of Australia.

Dewey Number:  770.92

Project manager: Kathryn Favelle
Publisher’s editors: Jan Borrie and Paige Amor
Designer: Kathy Jakupec
Printed by Lamb Print, Western Australia

Cover: Charles Bayliss (1850–1897)
*L. Looking South from Dunlop Range, Overlooking Louth, Darling River 1886
albumen print; 21.2 x 28.9 cm
nla.pic-vn3968207*
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan Fullerton, AO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Space of Modernity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Ennis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected Images from the Exhibition</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Checklist</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Reading</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nettle Cave Showing Devil’s Coach House
1880s
albumen print
23.3 x 28.3 cm
nla.pic-vn4218346
The National Library of Australia has one of the largest and most important photography collections in the country. It encompasses the work of many eminent Australian photographers, including Charles Bayliss (1850–1897). Bayliss is widely regarded as one of Australia’s greatest nineteenth-century photographers. He photographed the city, especially Sydney and its environs, leisure activities and the landscape, particularly in relation to tourism, and the National Library holds an extensive collection of his work.

A Modern Vision: Charles Bayliss, Photographer, 1850–1897 is the first exhibition to feature the full range of Bayliss’s output: portraits, architectural photography, panoramas of Sydney and landscapes. It encompasses his apprenticeship with Beaufoy Merlin, owner of the American & Australasian Photographic Company from 1870–1873; his work for the famous German-born entrepreneur B.O. Holtermann from 1873–1875; and his independent career from 1876 until his death in 1897 at the age of 47.

The exhibition is built around the National Library of Australia’s considerable holdings of photographs by Bayliss, with selected loans from other institutions. Also on display is a selection of images from an extraordinary private collection whose existence only recently became known. These works have not been seen for more than 130 years and they provide new insights into Charles Bayliss’s crucial early years as a photographer and the pictorial representations of Australian colonial life. I would like to thank all the exhibition lenders for their generous support of this exhibition.

As well as the images displayed in the exhibition and reproduced in this catalogue, the National Library has digitised a significant number of Bayliss’s photographic works. Digitisation of photographs and other images in the Library’s Pictures Collection has become an integral part of our strategy to make the visual documents of Australian life and culture more widely accessible. I encourage you to view more of Bayliss’s work through the National Library website, www.nla.gov.au.

This exhibition is also the National Library’s major contribution to the inaugural VIVID: National Photography Festival. I am delighted that the National Library has been able to support this innovative festival and to work with so many of Canberra’s cultural organisations in its development.

Jan Fullerton, AO
Director-General
National Library of Australia
Winding path through the Botanic Gardens, Sydney, New South Wales, 1880s
albumen print
15.0 x 19.8 cm
nla.pic-vn4278274
There is something quite curious about the photography of Charles Bayliss, though it cannot be described easily. ‘Emptiness’ comes close but ‘spaciousness’ is perhaps more accurate. Even when people are included in his photographs—as they often are—Bayliss seems far more interested in the space around them than in the people themselves. This phenomenon can be seen not only in his photographs of cities and towns but in his landscape photography—his chosen area of specialisation from 1876 onwards.

Charles Bayliss’s construction of space and evocation of spaciousness were not simply products of his own acute visual intelligence and unique visual style, they were embedded in a particular historical moment. Above all else, Bayliss was a photographer of the modern period. His work coincided with two key interrelated events: the dramatic increase of Australia’s population in the second half of the nineteenth century after the gold rushes, and the rise of what is known as the view trade. His images registered—indeed celebrated—the impact of modernisation on the colonies of Victoria and New South Wales. Like those of his contemporaries, Bayliss’s photographic views of Australian scenery, civic buildings, gardens, engineering feats and so on were acquired eagerly by a newly prosperous clientele. Even now, such photographs can seem unambiguous and enormously assuring, confirmation of the rapid progress made in less than a century of European colonisation.

The space within Bayliss’s photographs was the space of modernity but he was not concerned solely with the physical and material aspects of modernisation. Unusually, he dealt also with a less tangible aspect of modernity—that is, with the construction of an individual subject. This is central to the continued relevance of Bayliss’s photography. Not only is it visually complex and formally elegant, it is very idiosyncratic. An overview of his 27-year career reveals a coherent set of predilections and preoccupations, underpinning which are his highly subjective responses to place. In contrast with earlier generations of photographers who came to Australia as adults, Charles Bayliss grew up here, having migrated from Suffolk, England, with his family at the age of four or five. It is tempting to suggest that he is the first photographer to have occupied the space of the urban and natural landscape physically and imaginatively—to have interiorised it.

Bayliss’s chosen field of photography was quintessentially modern and he showed his receptiveness to the latest technological developments, capitalising on them at different stages of his career. He frequently used a wide-angle lens for his view photography, which gave the foregrounds such a distinctive appearance, and he mastered dry-plate photography in the early 1880s, which made working in the outdoors infinitely easier.

His understanding—and use—of the photographic medium is, however, modern in another more profound way: its self-consciousness. Bayliss’s picture making displays a debt to prevailing pictorial conventions, such as the topographic view and the aesthetics of the picturesque and sublime, but it also confidently declares its innovatory nature. This can be seen, for example, in the choice of unexpected vantage points and the creation of complex compositional structures that have the effect of making the viewer conscious of the photograph as a purposefully constructed image, as artifice. Bayliss’s interest in narrative—which is evident in the production of series and carefully arranged sequences of images—also prefigures later developments in photography.

In his day, Bayliss’s work was highly regarded and he received numerous prestigious government commissions (one of the most fruitful in his career was undertaken for the Royal Commission on Water Conservation in 1886). His photography has been praised since but the focus has been on separate bodies of work rather than his oeuvre as a whole. This is the first exhibition to attend to the various strands of Bayliss’s photographic practice, encompassing
his apprenticeship with Beaufoy Merlin from 1870 to 1873, his work for B.O. Holtermann from 1873 to 1875 and his independent career from 1876 until his death in 1897 at the age of 47. It is arranged into groupings dealing with the modern city, especially Sydney and its environs; modern leisure; and the landscape, particularly in relation to tourism. Other images of modernity relate to health (from a series on the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital) and the evolution of the flying machine (Lawrence Hargrave's pioneering experiments with flight). Also included is a group of Bayliss's photographs of Aboriginal people that has come to light only recently.

A Modern Vision is built around the National Library's considerable holdings of photographs by Bayliss, augmented with a small number of important loans from other institutions. The National Library has also been fortunate to access a collection of previously unknown photographic prints from 1872–75, which includes examples of Bayliss's earliest work undertaken for Merlin's American & Australasian Photographic Company, in addition to views of New South Wales and Victoria commissioned by Holtermann. A selection of these photographs is being exhibited and published for the first time, providing new insights into Bayliss's crucial first years as a photographer.

It is not surprising—given the time that has passed and the dearth of surviving historical records—that there are gaps and inconsistencies in the biographical account of Charles Bayliss's life. Nor is it surprising that a tale or two in circulation could be apocryphal. Here, for example, is the photographic historian Jack Cato's description of the young Bayliss's introduction to photography, which was published in 1955, nearly 60 years after Bayliss's death.

One day, when … [Charles Bayliss] had just turned sixteen, Beaufoy Merlin drove his caravan to the Bayliss home in a Melbourne suburb to photograph the family group. Young Charles fell under the spell of the camera from that moment.¹

According to Cato's colourful account, 'long discussions' with Bayliss's mother ensued until she finally gave consent for her son to join Merlin's photographic enterprise. This was the rather grandly named American & Australasian Photographic Company (the A & A Photographic Company), which the English-born Merlin had established in Victoria in 1866.

Whether Bayliss's apprenticeship to Merlin began as Cato described it in 1866—or about 1870, as is more commonly agreed—one fact is certain: Merlin had an enduring impact on the shape and direction of Bayliss's career. While some details of Merlin's life remain unclear, he has long been recognised as a disciplined and talented photographer. In Cato's estimation, he was 'one of the greatest documentary photographers in the world', whose technique was perfect.¹ By the time Merlin took on the young Bayliss, he had already developed his specialisation in outdoor photography, photographing residents in country towns in Victoria standing in front of their houses,
shops and businesses. The images he made were effectively dual portraits, of individuals and their property, which were sold as the relatively cheap, small-scale photographs known as *cartes-de-visite*.

Merlin was responsible not simply for giving Bayliss a thorough technical training; even more consequential was the ambitiousness and conceptual basis of his practice. Merlin’s goal—consolidated and probably extended once Bayliss joined his enterprise—was to photograph comprehensively each town they visited in Victoria and New South Wales. By the time they arrived in Sydney in September 1870, they claimed that they had photographed every ‘building of any importance in every town in Victoria’, in addition to ‘all Yass, Braidwood, Queanbeyan, Goulburn, and, 800 views of Parramatta alone’. This encyclopedic approach distinguished the A & A Photographic Company’s efforts from those of other travelling or itinerant photographers who were a feature of the Australian scene in the 1860s and early 1870s; they travelled with their horse-drawn darkroom caravans to regional areas, keen to secure more clients.

The American & Australasian Photographic Company was at pains to inform its public that its extraordinary documentary project was not motivated merely by the prospect of financial gain. Its advertising material in 1870 stated that ‘these negatives are not taken for the mere immediate object of sale’ but rather as a way of forming ‘a novel means of social and commercial intercourse’. Copies could be purchased by those who appeared in the photographs or had a direct connection to them, and also by ‘any of those parties residing in any part of the colonies wherever the Company’s operations have extended’. As photographic historian Alan Davies has observed, Merlin and Bayliss were unusually self-reflective, and their advertising revealed ‘a considered understanding of the photographic medium and an intellectual approach to their work’.

Two ships seen from Darling Harbour with Balmain and Millers Point in the background, c. 1874–1875 albumen print 22.8 x 28.8 cm Private collection Courtesy Josef Lebovic Gallery and the Holtermann family
The photographers’ commitment to comprehensiveness entered a new phase about March 1872 when they left their Sydney studio and relocated to the New South Wales town of Hill End after the discovery of gold in the region. Continuing to operate as the American & Australasian Photographic Company, they began their now famous documentation of the goldmining towns of Hill End and Gulgong. This material came to light dramatically in 1952 after photographic historian Keast Burke discovered nearly 3600 of the company’s glass-plate negatives in a garden shed in Sydney. They belonged to descendants of the famed German-born entrepreneur Bernard Otto Holtermann and were subsequently donated to the Mitchell Library, in the State Library of New South Wales. A selection of the images was featured in Burke’s book *Gold and Silver: An Album of Hill End and Gulgong: Photographs from the Holtermann Collection* (1973).

If Merlin and Bayliss’s Hill End and Gulgong images have had two lives—in their own time and in the years after the discovery of the glass-plate negatives—they are now about to have a third. In November 2007, the existence of a stunning, large collection of nearly 1000 photographic prints from late 1872 to 1875 became known, having remained with Holtermann’s descendants (members of the same family who originally owned the glass-plate negatives retrieved by Burke). The newly discovered material includes more than 700 small photographic prints, mainly *cartes-de-visite*, presented in album and loose form, as well as 250 larger prints of New South Wales and Victorian subjects. They date from a critical period not only in the development of Charles Bayliss’s own oeuvre but in the history of Australian photographic practice and Australia’s colonial history, especially as it relates to life in the goldmining era.
The reappearance of the photographs underlines a key point about the specific qualities of photography in colonial Australia, particularly in the first decades from the 1840s until the early 1870s. Early Australian photography reflected the processes of colonisation; it was shaped by local conditions and circumstances and in turn responded to them. Merlin and Bayliss’s activities were in many respects typical of the time, following the lines of European settlement and flows of population to the goldfields. Their images gave physical occupation a visual form with the documentary and evidential authority of photography being deployed for maximum effect. In contrast with work produced in the United Kingdom, France and other European countries in the same period, a great deal of early Australian photography—including the carte-de-visite work undertaken by the A & A Photographic Company—appears modest, more preoccupied with prosaic than with picturesque qualities.

The recently discovered Holtermann family collection, however, also illuminates a crucial point of transition in the operations of the American & Australasian Photographic Company. It encompasses the beginning of Merlin and Bayliss’s association with B.O. Holtermann—which has been much discussed by Keast Burke and others—as well as the emergence of Bayliss as a solo photographer. In the collection, two cartes-de-visite of Hill End subjects are inscribed with the initials ‘CB’, which could be Bayliss’s earliest declaration of authorship. More spectacularly, the collection includes photographic prints from the period 1873–75, when Bayliss’s work for Holtermann was in full swing.

Merlin and Bayliss had probably already completed a great deal of work at Hill End and Gulgong before becoming involved with Holtermann. Continuing with their earlier concerns, they photographed the full range of buildings in the towns—civic, commercial and residential—invariably with townspeople standing in front of them. Sometimes the people included in these outdoor images were bystanders whose presence was serendipitous rather than planned, a fact the A & A Photographic Company promoted in its advertising. In a concerted initiative, however, the company also embarked on studio portraiture of townspeople at the Hill End studio (as can be seen in the glass-plate negatives retrieved by Keast Burke and now in the Mitchell Library). Jack Cato registered the change of emphasis in Merlin’s practice, noting that at Hill End, the subjects were ‘newly arrived miners [who] were nomads with little interest in homes or estates. Their conceit was in themselves—they wanted … portraits.’

Crucial details about Holtermann’s collaboration with the American & Australasian Photographic Company have yet to be determined but the salient facts to date are these. Holtermann arrived in Sydney in 1858 as a gold seeker but did not achieve financial success until 1872 when the Star of Hope mining company—with which he was associated—extracted an enormous 145-kilogram nugget from the mine at Hawkim’s Hill in the Tambaroora area. Holtermann owned the land on which the A & A Photographic Company’s studio at Hill End was built and was immortalised in Bayliss’s image of him posing with the giant gold nugget that secured his fortune. Bayliss’s working method for this well-known photograph is now revealed in the sequence of prints in the recently discovered album in the Holtermann family collection. It is probable that this encounter with the A & A Photographic Company signalled Holtermann’s introduction to photography’s possibilities as a documentary and promotional tool. The new Holtermann family album opens with a sequence of photographs almost certainly produced for
Holtermann; they comprise views of the Hawkin’s Hill mine, portraits of miners and close-ups of the various gold nuggets that had been discovered.

The collaboration with Holtermann—which probably began in late 1872—appears to have moved to a more formal arrangement by early 1873. Merlin and Holtermann clearly shared an entrepreneurial streak and devised an ambitious project that extended the A & A Photographic Company’s operations and placed it on an international footing. The aim was to promote the wonders of the colonies internationally and to encourage migration to Australia through a scheme named ‘Holtermann’s Travelling Exposition’. Along with photographs, the exposition was to include ‘any specimens of any sort of colonial manufacture … any work of colonial art, science, or produce’.\(^1\) Merlin—already greatly experienced in comprehensive documentation—was to be in charge of assembling the items for the venture.

Holtermann’s inspired patronage brought immediate benefits. It gave Merlin and Bayliss access to superior equipment and resources; apparently they imported a special lens from Germany and began to use a larger camera.\(^2\) As a consequence, they scaled up the size of their negatives, routinely working with negatives measuring 25 by 30 centimetres each (numerous examples of these are in the recently discovered Holtermann family collection) rather than the small *carte-de-visite* size.\(^3\) Production of large, wet plate-glass negatives was extremely difficult: each sheet of glass had to be coated with a mixture of collodion that contained light-sensitive salts, then sensitised in a bath of silver nitrate before being exposed in the camera while still wet. After exposure, the negative had to be developed quickly.

Jack Cato states that Holtermann also provided Merlin with a new caravan purpose-built to enable the handling of large, wet plate-glass negatives; Merlin travelled with it to Sydney and a number of New South Wales country towns, where he made ‘a magnificent series of exposures’.\(^4\)

The title ‘Holtermann’s Exposition Victorian Scenery’ appears on some of the early works in the exhibition, including the panoramas of Stawell and views of Ballarat taken in 1874 and the panorama of Melbourne
circa 1875–76. Their author was not, however, Merlin, as originally intended; it was Bayliss. Beaufoy Merlin died prematurely at the age of 43 in September 1873, at which point the 23-year-old Bayliss became the sole photographer for Holtermann’s project.¹⁵

Anxious about the costs involved in assembling items for the exposition and the rate of progress, Holtermann issued an appeal for help from the public. In a letter headlined ‘A Scheme to Promote Immigration’ published in the Argus newspaper on 10 March 1874, he explained in the third person that:

He has, at an enormous outlay, succeeded in making a very large collection of photographs and specimens as set forth, but … he wishes the public, for whom he has been working, to be aware that however much he may be inclined to expend for the general good, his means are not altogether inexhaustible, nor is he ubiquitous, so that the collection must be necessarily incomplete without assistance. Therefore he asks all who have the means and the inclination to help in this entirely patriotic purpose (for in no case can any pecuniary benefit arise).¹⁶

Despite the strain Holtermann might have been experiencing, 1874 proved to be an extraordinary year for Charles Bayliss. It marked the end of the style of work and production of carte-de-visite that had been the staple of the A & A Photographic Company’s operations. Bayliss emerged triumphantly as a solo photographer and the quality of his work improved phenomenally, catapulting him into the first rank of photographers then working in Australia (his only rivals were Charles Nettleton in Melbourne, J.W. Lindt in New South Wales and Townsend Duryea and Captain Samuel Sweet in Adelaide; Richard Daintree had returned to England in 1872). The recently discovered photographs reveal that Bayliss produced outstanding views of Victorian towns—mostly of architectural subjects—as well as other contemporary scenes. One of the most memorable of the latter effectively represents a form of modern leisure at Sydney’s waterside. The composition is radically pared down into three
main elements: the jetty, with its disposition of modern citizens in the foreground; the water, which occupies the expansive middle section of the composition; and the horizontally aligned ships at the top.

As Bayliss travelled through Victoria on his own, his induction into Merlin’s rigorous and structured way of working began to pay dividends. He appears to have adopted the panoramic format with alacrity at this time. It provided a means of obtaining even more extensive and realistic coverage than the single frame-by-frame documentation he and Merlin had undertaken earlier. While the A & A Photographic Company’s photographs offered very good rendition of detail and texture, Bayliss amplified these effects in the exceptionally large individual prints he began to produce and in the panoramas he created, all of which achieved a heightened sensory appeal.

Look, for example, at the photographs taken in and around Ballarat in autumn 1874, each measuring approximately 43 by 43 centimetres. They are immensely satisfying on what could seem like contradictory levels: giving a broad, expansive view and at the same time an incredible amount of fine detail. They also embody a narrative tension evident in the panoramas of Sydney taken the next year. While there is an extraordinary stillness in the images, delineating the features of the built environment with exactitude, they anticipate movement as well—the flux of human activity. It is possible to peer into the streets of the booming town with every expectation that someone will appear in a doorway or in their backyard. Now and then the photographic smudge of chimney smoke introduces an ephemeral element.

Then there is the stunning Middle Head Defences, also from 1874, which is as much an intellectual feat as a technical one. Bayliss apparently had to construct a slide for the camera so that the separate exposures could be aligned to form a continuous view (in Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century panoramas were generally created from a sequence of separate negatives rather than through the use of a special camera). His success goes further than this; it is not simply his command of photography that is so amply demonstrated, it is his grasp of picture making. Here in this enormously assured three-print panorama he introduced what would become a recurring pictorial device: the convergence of strong diagonal lines that run from either side of the composition to meet in a ‘blank’ area at the centre. In this instance, the diagonals lead to the smooth expanse of the sea lying between the Heads.

Middle Head Defences is also typical of Bayliss’s strongest work, with its dynamic relationship between horizontal and vertical elements. The great horizontal stretch of the scene at Middle Head is counterbalanced by the pole on the left-hand side of the composition, which extends beyond the framing edge, and by the figure posed on the right. Curiously—and Bayliss later repeats this strategy—the man’s gaze is not directed towards the main
view; instead, he leads the viewer’s eye in a contrary direction back towards the settlement of Sydney, which is out of the frame.

For a settler culture, *Middle Head Defences* does of course have potent associations. The viewer of Bayliss’s panorama is positioned on terra firma, amid the fortifications that formed part of the defences safeguarding Sydney from invasion from the sea. Beyond the fortifications are the edges of the continent, beyond that nothing, only a view of the Pacific Ocean.

What was also different about Bayliss’s photographs undertaken for Holtermann during 1874–75 was their projected audience. With people invariably emptied out of the frames there was no direct connection to the individuals who might purchase them. The imagined appeal of the images was generic rather than specific. The photographs also differed fundamentally from the ‘views’ that were proliferating as part of the view trade in the 1870s. The size of the prints made for the Holtermann Travelling Exposition alone illuminate this fact: they were oriented towards public display instead of domestic consumption, which was the raison d’être of view photography.

If Bayliss’s work from 1874 was outstanding in volume and quality, in 1875 it was even more exceptional. Extending the gains made previously, he succeeded in producing the most famous works in nineteenth-century Australian photography: panoramas of Sydney taken from the 27-metre tower Holtermann had had specially constructed at his home at St Leonards on Sydney’s North Shore.

In the diary he kept during 1875, Holtermann wrote of the lead-up to the panorama project:

Charles Bayliss. 10 May 1875 from Melbourne, by the You Yang arrived at North Shore.
3 men at work for two days to fix the frame of top of tower
1 making temporary camera and a slide 2 days.
2 ... [making] baths and other things for each 1½ days.

Once preparations were completed, the room at the top of the tower became a giant camera where Bayliss and Holtermann exposed wet-plate glass negatives of at least three different sizes and orientations.
The largest negatives measured about 1 by 1.5 metres (each sheet of glass weighed 16 kilograms); the whereabouts of the resultant panorama is unknown but some of the negatives are in the Mitchell Library. The National Gallery of Australia holds another panorama of Sydney, 52.2 centimetres high and nearly 10 metres long. The smaller panorama in this exhibition—which is being displayed for the first time—was deposited as part of Holtermann and Bayliss’s application for a patent and is in the collection of the National Archives of Australia.20

*A Modern Vision* also includes one section of a two-part panorama of Melbourne taken from the top of Government House a few months after the Sydney panoramas had been completed. Melbourne’s flat topography made the task difficult and the resultant images were lacking in drama. At the time, they were considered less satisfactory than the Sydney versions, with the *Argus* newspaper reporting that although the negatives ‘are of an unusually large size and very well taken’, the details ‘do not come out quite as clearly’.21

The reference to size was pertinent, reflecting the ranking of size with success that was common in the period. The mammoth negatives now in the Mitchell Library were the largest wet-plate negatives produced in the world at that time; they were a source not only of national pride but of international acclaim—veritable proof that Australia could take its place on the world stage. Holtermann took parts of his exposition to the United States of America in 1876, where it was awarded a bronze medal at the Philadelphia Centennial, and then to Europe; the panoramas were awarded a silver medal at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1878.

Subsequently Bayliss appears to have produced few large-scale panoramas. The main exception is an extended view taken from the lantern of the dome of the nearly completed Garden Palace built to house the Sydney International Exhibition of 1879 (the building was completely destroyed by fire in 1882). It was featured in the exhibition in a large display of photographs devoted to Holtermann’s collection and met with an extremely favourable response. According to one Sydney writer, it was

> the best panorama of Sydney we have ever seen … forming an extensive representation of the city and its suburbs … As a specimen of photography it is almost faultless, the clearness and completeness is surprising … the cleverest work that has issued for a very long time from a colonial gallery.22

Over the years there has been considerable speculation about Holtermann’s role in the partnership with Bayliss and the production of what have become legendary works. There is no doubt that Holtermann was a photographer himself; the press of the day referred to him as ‘a wealthy amateur photographer’, he recorded details of his photographic activities in his diary and examples of his stereographs are in the Mitchell Library’s collection. There is, however, nothing to suggest that he was either Bayliss’s equal as a photographer or an equal partner in the creation of the panoramas. Bayliss’s solo efforts in 1874 are proof enough of his extraordinary abilities in that regard. What is certain is that Holtermann appreciated photography’s potential for use in his campaign to promote immigration to Australia and thereby ensure a grander, more prosperous future for the colonies. In his own words at the time, ‘he has employed an unerring agent which cannot lie or misrepresent that which it has to produce for the information of the world—photography’.23 In Charles Bayliss, Holtermann obviously found an ideal collaborator who—endowed with sufficient material and financial support—was able to produce photographs of the quality necessary to realise Holtermann’s ambition.

The costs incurred by Holtermann in assembling the exposition were staggering. A report in the *Argus* on 3 February 1876 stated that in compiling the ‘extensive collection of photographic views of the scenery and public buildings of New South Wales and Victoria’, Holtermann had ‘already expended nearly 4000 pounds … and has obtained [from Charles Bayliss] between 1,000 and 1,500 negatives, some of them of a great size’.24
While the collaboration between Holtermann and Bayliss was short-lived—three years at best—it was incredibly productive. When it came to an end—probably as a result of Holtermann’s departure overseas in 1876 (he returned about 1878)—Bayliss struck out on his own. In 1876, he opened his first studio in Sydney where, at various addresses in George Street, he maintained premises for the rest of his career. The brass plate outside his studio said ‘Charles Bayliss Landscape Photographer’ but his specialisation involved two main areas: photography of the natural and of the built environments. These conformed to the standard fare of the view trade, which underpinned Bayliss’s livelihood for the next 20 years.

Bayliss was well travelled in the early phase of his career but from the mid-1870s onwards he photographed what he knew best: Sydney and its environs, the Blue Mountains and rivers such as the Hawkesbury and the Nepean.

Insofar as the built environment is concerned Bayliss pictured the transformation of Sydney over more than two decades. His subjects were the major city buildings and the full gamut of civic projects from parks and gardens (including a wonderful series on the Botanic Gardens in Sydney) to the latest engineering feats involving the construction of bridges and railways. His photographs, however, went beyond simply recording the city’s physical progress. He also demonstrated his sensitivity towards the non-physical dimensions of contemporary life, manifest in his responses to space—that peculiar spaciousness inside his images—and light. His use of both—whether inside the Garden Palace, looking up into the dome, or inside the Jenolan Caves—was at once analytical and metaphysical.

Bayliss produced many fine photographs of Sydney but his landscape photographs are also outstanding. They too are emphatically modern. Areas such as the Blue Mountains were within striking distance from Sydney—by stagecoach initially and then by rail (the railway to the Blue Mountains, terminating at Wentworth Falls, opened in 1867). Improvements in transport enabled an ever-expanding number of middle-class Sydneysiders—tourists or ‘excursionists’, as they were often called—to avail themselves of natural wonders, including the Three Sisters and the Grose Valley in the Blue Mountains and Fitzroy Falls in the Southern Highlands, all of which Bayliss photographed.

Views of Australian scenery were highly standardised in terms of subject matter; mountain ranges, waterfalls, caves, fern gullies and the bush were all favoured. While Bayliss’s oeuvre was typical in some respects, what was more striking were his own predilections. He was not a keen photographer of trees, ferns and bush scenes, as were J.W. Lindt, N.J. Caire, J.W. Beattie and other prominent view photographers. His main love was water; it drew him like a magnet. Time and again water—river water, Sydney Harbour, the sea and waterfalls—provided the central building block of his compositions. He was clearly entranced by its beauty and its effects but also by the way it translated photographically. In his Above Govett’s Leap, the water is a mirrored sheen; in many river views, the reflections introduce elaborate visual doubling; and in Mermaid Falls, a slender strip of water tips over the rock face into an improbably small, yet perfect circular pool.

In his landscapes from the late 1870s onwards, Bayliss employed a range of approaches that demonstrated his mastery of the dominant aesthetic conventions of the picturesque and the sublime. The views that exemplify the sublime are relatively few: the unpeopled vistas of the Blue Mountains with their endlessly rolling hills, or scenes of the Grose Valley in which small figures perch on rocks in the foreground to provide a measure of scale and drama. Variations on the sublime include highly analytical, impersonal images of rock faces and natural features that are unyielding and implacable. In them, Bayliss uses an indeterminate vantage point that blocks any possibility of entry; there is no rock to step on in the foreground, no pathway for the viewer to take through the scene.

Generally, however, he was attracted to less dramatic but no less beautiful scenery. Some of Bayliss’s quietest images are the most enduring; they still operate within a romantic framework and draw from a deep appreciation of nature. They are not, however, concerned with evoking a sense of awe so much as a particular mood. In the
Mermaid Falls
number 323 1880s
albumen print
20.0 x 15.2 cm
nla.pic-vn3297353
1880s, this mood is private and intensely solitary: a single person—sometimes in a boat—is held completely within the scene. Beyond the frame there is no other world. Such images address the viewer in a highly individual fashion, inviting a contemplative state, a state of reverie.

It is not known what Bayliss looked at either in landscape painting or landscape photography, or indeed whether he was familiar with the work of leading American practitioners such as Carleton Watkins, Edward Muybridge or Timothy O’Sullivan. Within an Australian context, he might have known Louis Buvelot’s paintings of a domestic, familiar landscape, but there is a fundamental difference insofar as his views of New South Wales are concerned: the status of the people depicted in the scenes. Buvelot’s subjects lived in the areas he painted, whereas Bayliss’s were invariably visitors who entered the natural environment briefly. Their reasons for doing so were entirely modern. They were tourists for whom contact with nature provided an antidote to city life, a form of replenishment and inspiration.

Another category in Bayliss’s landscape oeuvre is the settled, farmed landscape, which is evident in various commissions undertaken for property owners.

All Bayliss’s landscapes—whether peopled or unpeopled, settled or ‘natural’—share one essential element. They are representations of the colonised landscape, and as such are underwritten with assumptions about Empire, race and nature. They also unambiguously assume a common viewer: the European settler, not the Aborigine. In contrast with work by Caire, Lindt, Charles Kerry and others, they are not, however, overtly nationalistic images. Bayliss’s main concern is not with an already nostalgic expression of a pioneering past or the creation of a vocabulary of Australiana but with the poeticising of place.

One of the most cohesive and impressive groups of photographs by Bayliss in the National Library’s collection is of the Jenolan Caves, known in his day as The Fish River Caves. Located in the Blue Mountains 170 kilometres west of Sydney, it is the oldest known open cave system in the world. It has not been established exactly when European settlers discovered them but their beautiful stalactites and stalagmites ensured their popularity with tourists from the 1860s onwards (the New South Wales Government declared the site crown land in 1866). The earliest visitors did not have an easy time of it:

They entered the caves through gloomy and forbidding holes in the cliff-side. They groped along rough passages, stumbled over boulders, and trembled upon the edge of fantastic abysses. Bats’ wings brushed their faces as they slid down precipitous ramps on doubtless protesting sterns. They could view the miraculous limestone formations only by the feeble light of candles or magnesium flares.

Bayliss might well have visited the caves in the late 1870s on one of his photography expeditions to the Blue Mountains. His views of them, however, probably date from the 1880s, after the discovery of the Imperial Cave and Left Imperial Cave (1879 and 1880 respectively), both of which he photographed. He issued two sizes of prints, some of which have numbers inscribed on the negatives; like the photographs by his peer John Paine, and Charles Kerry in the 1890s, these were available for purchase by clients eager for views of the most unique aspects of the scenery of New South Wales. The fascination of the limestone caves was wide-ranging, encompassing science, geology, art and tourism.

In keeping with his legacy from Merlin, Bayliss’s photographs of the caves are comprehensive in scope. The group forms a narrative, beginning with external views of the site, and moving on to expansive views taken inside the caves themselves and a number of close-ups of visually arresting details, such as the stalagmite ‘Lot’s Wife’ and the stalactite the ‘Gem of the West’. The outstanding photographs in the group are of—and from—Nettle Cave. They suggest that Bayliss was as much entranced with the complex pictorial possibilities the cave
offered as with the subject matter itself. The Nettle Cave images are highly complex and visually disorienting; it is not possible to confidently determine the scale of the scene depicted or one’s viewing position. Bayliss explored this conundrum in his two versions of the staircase in Nettle Cave; one version included a man standing at the centre of the composition, the other was left blank.

The caves, outside and inside, also offered Bayliss some of his favourite recurring shapes—ovals, ellipses and half circles—which he organised into carefully balanced but dynamic compositions.

Bayliss’s photographic encounter with the caves makes it clear that the environment pictured is not natural. It is already inscribed with the activities of tourism evident in the pathways and stairs carved into the rock and the efforts of the New South Wales Government to fence off vulnerable features to protect them from vandalism (souveniring had been outlawed in 1872). As Julia Horne has noted, the government spent thousands of pounds on the caves during the 1880s—indeed more on Jenolan than on any other cave system in New South Wales.27

Bayliss photographed the intersection of natural and built features in the caves, creating some strange disjunctions. ‘Lot’s Wife’, for instance, rises as a bizarre vertical form behind a wire fence. The weirdness of the subject matter is heightened by the lighting that combines three sources: natural light in some instances, electric light (this was installed in some caves as early as 1888) and magnesium flares, which throw light on to features in the foreground.

Bayliss’s most celebrated work from the 1880s was undertaken for the Lyne Royal Commission on Water Conservation, which the Governor of New South Wales set up in 1884. Its purpose was to gather evidence about
the situation along the Darling River with the view of developing a means of ‘averting the disastrous consequences of the periodical droughts to which the Colony is from time to time subject’. In 1883–84, the rains had failed once again and the Darling River—which was a key link in the transportation of wool destined for England—had become unnavigable. The commission appointed Bayliss official photographer to the 1886 expedition that set off from Bourke in September and travelled by paddle-steamer down the Darling, arriving in Wentworth three weeks later. The irony was that the Darling and Murray rivers were in flood at the time.

The commissioners interviewed local residents along the way and assessed the condition of the land. Bayliss meanwhile took an extended series of photographs of the flooded Darling and surrounding landscape, and of the activities occurring in what had rapidly become an important wool-growing area. A selection of Bayliss’s images was bound into presentation albums and gravure prints after the photographs were used to illustrate the official report. Another member of the team, Canadian writer Gilbert Parker (then with the Sydney Morning Herald), gave a literary account of what he saw, later published in his book Round the Compass in Australia. Parker’s writing provides a sensitive accompaniment to Bayliss’s visual record.

The Royal Commission project was ideal for Bayliss, enabling his interest in comprehensiveness to be recast in terms of a journey. It is the journey itself—the places the team travels through and the scenes they come across—that gives this series its satisfying structure. The journey should not, however, be understood simply as a physical progression for it also represents a journey of the eye. Bayliss revelled in the unique pictorial opportunities the project offered, drawing attention not only to the act of looking but to the varied means of constructing pictures.

Some of the events he photographed—such as the crossing of the Darling River by a huge mob of bullocks—occurred independently of him; others he constructed for the camera. Look, for example, at the carefully organised Bullock Teams at Wilcannia with its trademark intersecting diagonals, or Wool washing on Gundabooka Station with its semi-circular arrangement of figures.

Charles Bayliss had long been attracted to water but his journey down the Darling presented a radical departure, a shift in vantage point that came from being on the river itself rather than on the land. This establishes an unusually effective rhythm and imbues the water-filled images with their slow, mesmerising quality. Bayliss’s views of the river were different in another fundamental way: they were concerned with the social world, with community and group activity, rather than with highly individualised personal experience.

There is abundant lyricism in the views taken on the river and in some of the landscape images but Bayliss’s series deals with contemporary realities too: the harshness of the physical environment and the sheer hard work involved in building new settlements and raising sheep and cattle. He also photographed Dunlop Station on the Darling River, a large holding covering nearly 180 000 hectares and grazed by 184 000 sheep. His photograph of the recently completed homestead is particularly revealing in terms of the relations between settlers and Aboriginal people. The two groups—separated by class, race and experience—occupy different spaces within the composition. The Aborigines are pictured in the foreground—some sitting on the ground with their dogs—while behind them stand the landowners. The young Aboriginal women who probably worked as housemaids have attributes of both groups, belonging spatially to the other Aborigines but pictured in a standing pose like the settlers for whom they worked (probably not for wages).

Gilbert Parker went to some lengths to write about the effects of colonisation on the Aboriginal people they came across on their journey.

Aboriginal Australia holds here its sorry court. This remnant of a once powerful tribe sit [sic] outside their gunyahs, and cower over their handfuls of fire, imperturbable and awfully alone. Once its warriors were the slayers of the white men; once they hurled the spear and the
axe, and fought hand to hand with the nulla-nulla, and whirled the demoniacal boomerang. They are victims of a policy of Reprisal; of an unwritten word which went forth from high places: ‘Disperse the aboriginal’ ... Destruction came upon the men, and destruction and worse upon the women, and here they are.\textsuperscript{31}

Only 11 photographs of Aboriginal people by Charles Bayliss have so far been identified—three of which date from the Darling River trip. It is an awkward, uneasy group overall, which combines relatively naturalistic and staged images. Most were taken outdoors; only one appears to have been produced within a studio setting.

In keeping with the prevailing views and conventions of the time, Bayliss's subjects are defined in generalised terms, as Aboriginal people rather than as individuals. Those photographed are not identified by name or language grouping; references to place sometimes appear in inscriptions but they are not necessarily accurate (perhaps having been inscribed by others at a later stage).

Bayliss's photographs of Aboriginal people were part of a well-established and flourishing trade. They were purchased by locals and visitors to Australia for inclusion in albums alongside other subject matter regarded as typically Australian. Some were also circulated as loose prints.

While Bayliss may not have realised it at the time, his photographs of Aboriginales are an inextricable part of the twinned projects of colonialism and modernism. Wherever his Aboriginal subjects were depicted—in their camps beyond the margins of European settlement or within the natural world—they were not seen to be part of an urbanised and increasingly industrialised society. The underlying assumption, derived from social Darwinism, was that Aboriginal people were pre-modern, with no future in a rapidly changing world.

The photographs have a number of vital functions within a contemporary context. They are new additions to the extensive archive of visual material documenting the dispossession of Aboriginal people, incontrovertible proof of their survival, and a resource for future investigation and consideration.

The heyday for Bayliss's career was the 1870s and 1880s, but what of the 1890s? To date, relatively few works from his final years have been located (one exception is a view of the fifth cricket test between Australia and England taken in 1897, the year he died). If, as seems likely, Bayliss's output did decrease, it was undoubtedly due to a combination of factors. By the 1890s a new generation had come to the fore, spearheaded by the phenomenally successful Charles Kerry (born in 1858), who ran a studio in Sydney specialising in aspects of Australiana. The photographic industry was also in the process of being reshaped; the view trade, which represented Bayliss's area of specialisation and livelihood, was being supplanted by the rise of the postcard trade. Finally, photographers employed by the New South Wales Government Printer more commonly undertook the government commissions that had been important to Bayliss in earlier decades.
The popular account of Bayliss’s death—probably like that of his introduction to photography—is apocryphal. Jack Cato wrote:

He was always fit and well, yet one winter’s morning in 1897 he caught a chill while feeding and harnessing the pony which he drove every morning to the studio. The chill turned to ‘galloping pneumonia’ and he died … at the age of 47.32

In fact, his death certificate stated the cause of death as *Erysipelas septicaemia* (a bacterial infection causing blood poisoning) after a 10-day illness. Bayliss was survived by his widow, Elizabeth, and six young children.

An obituary published a few days after Bayliss’s death stated that ‘as a landscape photographer he had few equals and no superiors … The work he did in every direction was of the best quality and it is too well-known far and wide to be improved by eulogy’.33

***

During his journey down the Darling River in 1886, Bayliss took a photograph titled *Looking South from Dunlop Range, Overlooking Louth, Darling River*. It deploys some of his trademark visual devices, with two men positioned strategically at either side of the image (surely the man at the left was instructed to lean against the tree to reinforce the vertical axis and to provide a counterpoint to his seated companion). Each man looks in a different direction, leading the viewer’s eye both ways across the composition. This is a strategy Bayliss used well, making us aware simultaneously of the act of looking at the landscape and of constructing it as an image.
Looking South from Dunlop Range is also full of space, with nearly half the composition occupied by sky and the open space of the land stretching uninterrupted for kilometres. In a landscape image such as this, the effects of space are generally more important than the rendition of detail. There is, however, one small fact that should not be overlooked: the seated man casually holds a bunch of wildflowers. It’s an unremarkable occurrence and yet is laden with potent associations. While the standing man looks towards the town of Louth in the distance—representing European settlement and civilisation—the other is preoccupied with the beauty of the natural scene. These responses to nature and culture—to the natural and settled landscape—are subtly and inextricably bound together. Enclosed within the same frame, they share the same space, the space of modernity.

Endnotes

1 Jack Cato, The Story of the Camera in Australia. Melbourne: Georgian House, 1955, p. 53. Keast Burke (Gold and Silver: An Album of Hill End and Gulgong: Photographs from the Holtermann Collection. Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1973, p. 48) has a slightly different version, writing that the young Bayliss had seen Merlin at work, had ‘been fascinated’ by the photographic process and ‘had decided in a flash that he wanted to be a photographer’.


6 Quoted by Alan Davies, op. cit., p. 66.

7 Ibid., p. 66.

8 Ibid., p. 66.

9 This point is discussed in greater depth in Helen Ennis, Photography and Australia. London: Reaktion Press, 2007, Chapter One, ‘First photographs’.

10 Cato, op. cit., p. 50.

11 B.O. Holtermann, ‘A Scheme to Promote Immigration’, Argus, 10 March 1874, p. 4e.


13 Note that Merlin had produced 10-by-12-inch negatives earlier, in about 1870.

14 Cato, op. cit., p. 53.

15 According to Keast Burke, it is likely that Holtermann acquired the A & A Photographic Company’s negatives after Merlin’s death as a means of assisting his widow. It is not clear, however, at what point or why Holtermann acquired the recently discovered prints. The carte-de-visite prints were probably too small for public display and so were not destined for use in the exposition, but it is possible that Holtermann commissioned the large prints for display purposes.
16 Holtermann, op. cit., p. 4e.
18 Other successful panoramas from the 1860s and 1870s were produced by William Blackwood, Townsend Duryea, Freeman Brothers, Charles Pickering and Francis W. Robinson.
19 Holtermann Diary, National Gallery of Australia Research Library.
20 Other panoramas of the same view are in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria and the Art Gallery of New South Wales.
21 *Argus*, 3 February 1876, p. 5c.
22 Quoted by Burke, op. cit., p. 51.
23 B.O. Holtermann, ‘A Scheme to Promote Immigration’, *Argus*, 10 March 1874, p. 4e.
24 *Argus*, 3 February 1876, p. 5c.
25 An album of Carleton Watkin’s photographs that included his view of Yosemite was donated to the State Library of Victoria in 1871 but it is not known whether Bayliss saw the album.
28 Ibid., p. 247.
31 Quoted by Jeffcoat, ibid., pp. 9–10.
32 Cato, op. cit., p. 56.
Panorama of Stawell, Victoria c. 1874–1875
albumen prints
27.5 x 174.0 cm
National Archives of Australia
A1719/678245
Battery on Middle Head, New South Wales, c. 1874–1875
albumen print
14.9 x 20.6 cm
nla.pic-vn4236860
Battery on Middle Head, New South Wales, c. 1874–1875
albumen print
10.3 x 17.8 cm
nla.pic-vn4218565
Road leading to bay, Sydney, c. 1874–1875
albumen print
22.6 x 27.5 cm
Private collection
Courtesy Josef Lebovic Gallery and the Holtermann family
Slab hut on Village Point with Watsons Bay in the background, c. 1874–1875
albumen print
22.4 x 28.4 cm
Private collection
Courtesy Josef Lebovic Gallery and the Holtermann family
Ship with sails, Sydney Harbour, c. 1874–1875
albumen print
21.0 x 26.8 cm
Private collection
Courtesy
Josef Lebovic Gallery and the Holtermann family
Clipper ship, Cape Clear, Dawes Point, Millers Point, c. 1874–1875
albumen print
22.8 x 28.2 cm
Private collection
Courtesy Josef Lebovic Gallery and the Holtermann family
Sydney Harbour with MacBeth boat builder in foreground and Fort Denison in the distance, 1880s
albumen print
16.6 x 21.2 cm
nla.pic-vn4236855
Panorama of Sydney,
August 1879
albumen prints
37.5 x 547.45 cm
nla.pic-an24497444
Interior of Garden Palace, Sydney International Exhibition Building, 1879
albumen print
21.0 x 27.0 cm
nla.pic-an10697078-19
Sydney Technical College
building exterior, 3, 1889
albumen print
24.2 x 29.7 cm
nla.pic-an24588476
A classroom with a display of machinery at Sydney Technical College, 1889
albumen print
23.4 x 29.2 cm
In the album
‘Photographs of premises occupied by the Board of Technical Education of New South Wales, 1889’
NLA PIC-AN24664655
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, number 6, c. 1882–1893
albumen print
14.5 x 20.2 cm
State Library of New South Wales
Pic.Acc.4763/6
Allan Cunningham Memorial in the Botanic Gardens, Sydney, New South Wales, 1880s albumen print 20.5 x 15.7 cm nla.pic-vn4278295
Botanic Gardens with a view to a ship at anchor in the harbour, Sydney, New South Wales, 1880s
albumen print
15.8 x 20.7 cm
nla.pic-vn4278145
A small child sits on a park bench and two men stand on the path leading to Mrs Macquarie’s Chair, Sydney, New South Wales, c. 1885
albumen print
14.6 x 20.0 cm
nla.pic-vn4278263
Public Works
Contractors Picnic to
Lord Brassey K.C.B.,
Hawkesbury River,
Saturday 9th July 1887,
the Party on Messrs
Anderson & Barr’s Jetty,
Dangar Island 1887
albumen print
21.8 x 29.0 cm on sheet
35.6 x 45.7 cm
nla.pic-an24634578
Hawkesbury Bridge

c. 1887
albumen print
15.3 x 19.8 cm
nla.pic-vn4278045
Lawrence Hargrave and unidentified man with four box kites at Stanwell Park, New South Wales, 1894
albumen print
24.2 x 29.3 cm
nla.pic-an12888301
The evolution of the flying machine, c. 1883-1885
albumen print
24.2 x 29.8 cm
State Library of New South Wales
PXID 969, no. 9
Above Govett’s Leap
number 304 1880s
albumen print
14.4 x 19.3 cm
nla.pic-vn3410439
From Kangaroo Point, Hawkesbury
number 427 1880s
albumen print
15.2 x 20.0 cm
nla.pic-an24616988
Grose Valley from Govett’s Leap 1880s albumen print 14.4 x 20.7 cm nla.pic-vn4218524
Grose Valley
number 310 1880s
albumen print
15.6 x 20.0 cm
nla.pic-an23835865
From Nettle Cave, New South Wales 1880s
albumen print
23.4 x 28.6 cm
nla.pic-an24680762
Lot’s Wife (5 Feet High),
Fish River Caves, New South Wales c. 1886
albumen print
20.0 x 15.0 cm
nla.pic-vn3989386
Wentworth on the
Darling River 1886
albumen print
21.3 x 28.7 cm
nla.pic-vn3960492
Group of local Aboriginal people, Chowilla, Lower Murray 1886
albumen print
23.8 x 29.1 cm
nla.pic-vn3968696
All photographs are by Charles Bayliss (1850–1897) unless stated otherwise. Titles in italics are those believed to have been ascribed by the photographer; all other titles are descriptive. Unless stated otherwise, all photographs are in the collection of the National Library of Australia.

The organisation of this exhibition checklist reflects the arrangement of photographs in the exhibition. Some photographs reproduced in this catalogue appear in albums and also as loose prints. Only those album images open to view in the exhibition are listed in the checklist, although other images in some albums have been reproduced in this catalogue. Within subject groups, works have been listed in alphabetical order. All dimensions given are height before width.

**American & Australasian Photographic Company (1869–1873)**

Henry Beaufoy Merlin (1830–1873) and Charles Bayliss

Residential dwellings and commercial premises, Gulgong, New South Wales, 1872–1873 15 albumen prints; varying dimensions, 50.5 x 36.8 cm page

In an album of photographs of Hill End and Gulgong, New South Wales, 1872–1873

Private collection

Courtesy Josef Lebovic Gallery and the Holtermann family

Henry Beaufoy Merlin (1830–1873) and Charles Bayliss

Bank of New South Wales, Orange, New South Wales 1873 albumen print; 20.7 x 27.6 cm National Gallery of Australia 2006.314

Henry Beaufoy Merlin (1830–1873) and Charles Bayliss

J. Jaye & Co. 1872 albumen print; 22.4 x 28.5 cm National Gallery of Australia 2006.315

Henry Beaufoy Merlin (1830–1873) and Charles Bayliss

Street scene with Mudgee Drug Store, Mudgee, New South Wales, c. 1872–1873 albumen print; 15.0 x 21.4 cm

Private collection

**Sydney and Environs**

A small child sits on a park bench and two men stand on the path leading to Mrs Macquarie’s Chair, Sydney, New South Wales, c. 1885 albumen print; 14.6 x 20.0 cm From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs, 1880–1897’ nla.pic-vn4278263

Allan Cunningham Memorial in the Botanic Gardens, Sydney, New South Wales, 1880s albumen print; 20.5 x 15.7 cm From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs, 1880–1897’ nla.pic-vn4278295

Battery on Middle Head, New South Wales, c. 1874–1875 albumen print; 10.3 x 17.8 cm In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’ nla.pic-vn4218565

Battery on Middle Head, New South Wales, c. 1874–1875 albumen print; 14.9 x 20.6 cm From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs, 1880–1897’ nla.pic-vn4236860

Botanic Gardens 1880s albumen print; 15.8 x 20.5 cm From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs, 1880–1897’ nla.pic-vn4278251

Botanic Gardens with a view to a ship at anchor in the harbour, Sydney, New South Wales, 1880s albumen print; 15.8 x 20.7 cm From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs, 1880–1897’ nla.pic-vn4278145

City buildings, Sydney, c. 1874–1875 albumen print; 22.6 x 28.8 cm Private collection

Hawkesbury Bridge c. 1887 albumen print; 15.2 x 19.6 cm From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs, 1880–1897’ nla.pic-vn4278047

Hawkesbury Bridge c. 1887 albumen print; 15.3 x 19.8 cm From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs, 1880–1897’ nla.pic-vn4278045

Interior of Garden Palace, Sydney International Exhibition Building, 1879 albumen print; 21.0 x 27.0 cm In an album of photographs of the Sydney Exhibition Building and other Sydney buildings nla.pic-an10697078-19

Interior of Garden Palace, Sydney Exhibition Building, looking up towards the dome, 1879 albumen print; 26.5 x 33cm In an album of photographs of the Sydney Exhibition Building and other Sydney buildings nla.pic-an10697078-23

Looking west along Bridge Street from Lady Young Terrace, Sydney, c. 1874–1875 albumen print; 22.6 x 27.0 cm Private collection

Macquarie Chair c. 1885 albumen print; 14.9 x 20.5 cm Art Gallery of New South Wales 411.1985
Middle Head Panorama
B.O. Holtermann standing on Middle Head, c. 1874–1875
albumen print; 22.3 x 29.3 cm
From the collection ‘Panoramas and photographs of Sydney, c. 1875–1886’
nla.pic-vn4266798

Middle Head Battery with North Head in background, New South Wales, c. 1874–1875
albumen print; 24.7 x 29.3 cm
From the collection ‘Panoramas and photographs of Sydney, c. 1875–1886’
nla.pic-vn4266857

Road leading to bay, Sydney, c. 1874–1875
albumen print; 22.6 x 27.5 cm
Private collection
Courtesy Josef Lebovic Gallery and the Holtermann family

Ship with sails, Sydney Harbour, c. 1874–1875
albumen print; 21.0 x 26.8 cm
Private collection
Courtesy Josef Lebovic Gallery and the Holtermann family

Slab hut on Village Point with Watsons Bay in the background, c. 1874–1875
albumen print; 22.4 x 28.4 cm
Private collection
Courtesy Josef Lebovic Gallery and the Holtermann family

Sydney from Pyrmont
albumen print; 15.0 x 20.7 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of New South Wales, c. 1876–1889’
nla.pic-vn4217682

Winding path through the Botanic Gardens, Sydney, New South Wales, 1880s
albumen print; 15.0 x 19.8 cm
From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs, 1880–1897’
nla.pic-vn4278274

Melbourne and Victoria
Baptist Church, Melbourne, c. 1874
albumen print; 22.6 x 27.0 cm
Private collection
Courtesy Josef Lebovic Gallery and the Holtermann family

Building with sign Hepburn & Leonard, Ballarat, number 4 from Holtermann’s Exposition Victorian Scenery, 1874
albumen print; 31.4 x 45.3 cm
State Library of New South Wales
PH235-1984

Menzies Building, Bourke Street, Melbourne, c. 1874
albumen print; 22.7 x 28.6 cm
Private collection
Courtesy Josef Lebovic Gallery and the Holtermann family

Mine buildings at centre, man with back turned to camera, number 12 from Holtermann’s Exposition Victorian Scenery, 1874
albumen print; 36.8 x 45.5 cm
State Library of New South Wales
PH235-1984

Aboriginal subjects
Aboriginal man with a spear, 1880s
albumen print; 20.0 x 15.4 cm
In ‘Album of New Zealand and Australian Photographs, 1880–1897’
nla.pic-vn4197003

Aboriginal man, woman and baby, c. 1875–1880
albumen print; 8.0 x 11.0 cm
In ‘Album of Photographs of Sydney, and Queensland Botanic Gardens, c. 1875–1880’
nla.pic-vn3997230

Aborigines, Australia
c. 1880–1884
albumen print; 15.2 x 20.0 cm
From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs, 1880–1897’
nla.pic-vn4278506

An Aboriginal child with her hand on a young woman’s shoulder, possibly southeastern New South Wales or Queensland, c. 1880–1884
albumen print; 15.2 x 20.2 cm
National Gallery of Victoria
PH235-1984

Young Aboriginal woman and child, possibly southeastern New South Wales or Queensland, c. 1880–1884
albumen print; 19.8 x 14.7 cm
In the album ‘New South Wales Photographs, 1880–1897’
nla.pic-vn4278331

Young Aboriginal woman and child, possibly southeastern New South Wales or Queensland, c. 1880–1884
albumen print; 19.8 x 14.7 cm
In ‘Album of New Zealand and Australian Photographs, 1880–1897’
nla.pic-vn4197002

New South Wales
Above Govett’s Leap, number 304
albumen print; 14.4 x 19.3 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn3410439

Barrenjoey, number 646
albumen print; 13.2 x 19.9 cm
From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs, 1880–1897’
nla.pic-vn4278084

Darling River
albumen print; 21.0 x 28.8 cm
In the album ‘Views of New South Wales Vol. II,
1886–1896
Presented to Major General E.T.H. Hutton, CB ADC,
to the Queen, commanding military forces of
New South Wales, by Major Stephen Mallarky,
2nd Infantry Regiment, March 1896
nla.pic-vn4237123

Fitzroy Falls
1880s
albumen print; 20.0 x 15.2 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn3410655

From Kangaroo Point, Hawkesbury,
number 427 1880s
albumen print; 15.2 x 20.0 cm
From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs,
1880–1897’
nla.pic-an24616988

Grose Valley from Govett’s Leap
1880s
albumen print; 14.4 x 20.7 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn4218524

Grose Valley
number 310 1880s
albumen print; 15.6 x 20.0 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn32835865

In the Basin, Nepean,
number 409 1880s
albumen print; 14.2 x 19.5 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn4218525

Junction Falls, Lawson,
number 323 1880s
albumen print; 20.0 x 15.2 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn3297356

Katoomba Falls,
number 300 1880s
albumen print; 19.8 x 15.0 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn4218555

Man standing on a cliff and looking at the
Blue Mountains,
1880s
albumen print; 14.2 x 19.5 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn3410337

Mermaid Falls,
number 323 1880s
albumen print; 20.0 x 15.2 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn3297353

National Park
1880s
albumen print; 14.7 x 19.4 cm
From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs,
1880–1897’
nla.pic-vn4237132

Pinnacle Rock
number 527 1880s
albumen print; 20.2 x 15.2 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn4217908

Pittwater Basin
1880s
albumen print; 15.1 x 19.9 cm
From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs,
1880–1897’
nla.pic-vn4277873

Public Works Contractors Picnic to Lord Brassey
K.C.B., Hawkesbury River, Saturday 9th July
1887, the Party on Messrs Anderson & Barr’s
Jetty, Dangar Island
1887
albumen print, 21.8 x 29.0 cm on sheet
35.6 x 45.7 cm
nla.pic-an24634578
Charles Bayliss, Gibbs Shallard and Co.
Robert Harper & Son
1880
albumen print, letterpress on card;
15.3 x 18.8 cm on sheet 23.6 x 29.5 cm
National Gallery of Australia
88.1908

Warragamba,
number 420 1880s
albumen print; 15.1 x 19.9 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-an23835093

Waterfall National Park
1880s
albumen print; 19.5 x 14.3 cm
From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs,
1880–1897’
nla.pic-vn4237181

Waterfalls, Mossmans Bay
number 469 1880s
albumen print; 15.0 x 20.0 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn32835093

Wharf—Peats Ferry
1880s
albumen print; 15.0 x 19.7 cm
From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs,
1880–1897’
nla.pic-vn4218365

Jenolan Caves,
New South Wales
Architects Studio, Jenolan Caves, New South
Wales
1880s
albumen print; 28.5 x 23.7 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn4218079

Bathing Pool and Fall, Cave River
1880s
albumen print; 23.9 x 28.6 cm
nla.pic-an24680718

Brides Veil, Imperial Cave
1880s
albumen print; 19.2 x 14.9 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn4218457

Carlotta Arch, Jenolan Caves, New South Wales
1880s
albumen print; 28.5 x 23.8 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn4193893

Cave interior, Jenolan Caves, New South
Wales [1], 1880s
albumen print; 23.6 x 28.3 cm
nla.pic-vn4218334

Cave interior, New South Wales, 1880s
albumen print; 15.0 x 19.8 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn4218462

The Caves, Nettle Cave
1880s
albumen print; 20.3 x 15.2 cm
In the album ‘New South Wales’
nla.pic-vn4198460

The Caves, the Mystery
1880s
albumen print; 20.3 x 15.2 cm
In the album ‘New South Wales’
nla.pic-vn4198480

Entrance to Devil’s Coach House, Jenolan
Caves, New South Wales
1880s
albumen print; 20.2 x 15.3 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn4218064

From Nettle Cave, New South Wales
1880s
albumen print; 23.4 x 28.6 cm
nla.pic-an24680762

The Garden Palace, Jenolan Caves, New South
Wales
1880s
albumen print; 14.7 x 19.7 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn4218073

The ‘Gem of the West’, Jenolan Caves,
New South Wales, c. 1886
albumen print; 23.5 x 28.2 cm
In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of
New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’
nla.pic-vn4218081

Grecian Bend, Fish River Caves
1880s
albumen print; 19.5 x 14.7 cm
Conservation of Water, 1886

Lot’s Wife (5 Feet High), Fish River Caves, New South Wales c. 1886

In the album ‘Views of Scenery on the Darling and Lower Murray During the Flood from the album ‘Australian Views 1886’

Darling River

In ‘Charles Bayliss Collection of Photographs of New South Wales, c. 1876–1897’

Nettle Cave 1880s

From the album ‘New South Wales Photographs, Sydney, New South Wales, 3 February 1892’

From the album ‘Views of Scenery on the Darling and Lower Murray During the Flood of 1886’

The Darling and Lower Murray Rivers

Darling River 1886

Group of local Aboriginal people, Chowilla, Lower Murray 1886

Group of local Aboriginal people, Chowilla, Lower Murray 1886

Group of local Aboriginal people, Dunlop Station, 1886

Homestead, Dunlop Station, Darling River 1886

Junction of Darling and Murray Rivers, Taken from Victorian Side 1886

Junction of Darling and Warrego Rivers (First View) 1886

Lake Menindee 1886

Looking South from Dunlop Range, Overlooking Louth, Darling River 1886

Mob of 1000 Bullocks Crossing Darling River, Near Wilcannia (First View) 1886

View from Dunlop Range, Near Louth, Darling River (Looking South) 1886

Waterworks, Wilcannia 1886

Wentworth on the Darling River 1886

Woolshed on Dunlop Station, Darling River 1886

Wool Washing at Gundabooka Station, Darling River 1886

Modern Life

Cricket match between England and Australia, Sydney, New South Wales, 3 February 1892

Five unidentified surveyors at camp site, New South Wales 1880s

The evolution of the flying machine, c. 1883–1885

The evolution of the flying machine, c. 1883–1885

The evolution of the flying machine, c. 1883–1885

Lawrence Hargrave and unidentified man with four box kites at Stanwell Park, New South Wales, 1894

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, number 6, c. 1882–1893

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, number 8, c. 1882–1893
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, number 9, c. 1882–1893
albumen print; 14.5 x 19.8 cm
State Library of New South Wales
Pic Acc. 4763/9

**Panoramas**

**Middle Head Defences** 1874
1 albumen panorama comprising 3 panels; 43.5 x 158.0 cm in total
State Library of New South Wales
XV1/Def/MidH/1

**Panorama of Circular Quay**, c. 1880s
albumen print; 12.9 x 28.8 cm
National Gallery of Australia
83.1384

**Panorama of Melbourne and Suburbs**, 1876
5 albumen prints; 38.0 x 261.5 cm
National Archives of Australia
A1719/678247

**Panorama of Stawell, Victoria**, c. 1874–1875
albumen prints; 27.5 x 174.0 cm
National Archives of Australia
A1719/678245
Charles Bayliss and B.O. Holtermann (1838–1885)

**Panorama of Sydney**, 1875
albumen prints; 41.0 x 312.0 cm
National Archives of Australia
A1719/678244

**Panorama of Sydney, August 1879**
albumen prints; 37.5 x 547.45 cm
nla.pic-an24491444

**Panorama of Sydney City from the GPO Tower**, c. 1887
albumen prints; 22.8 x 227.5 cm
National Gallery of Australia
97.1369

**Panorama of Sydney City from the North Shore**, c. 1887
albumen prints on linen; 22.8 x 227.5 cm
National Gallery of Australia
97.1368

**Wharf—Peats Ferry**
1880s
albumen print
15.0 x 19.7 cm
nla.pic-vn4218365
FURTHER READING


This project has benefited greatly from conversations with the following: Alison Bennett, Tim Bonyhady, Nigel Lendon, Ian McLean, Martin Terry, Les Walkling and especially Roger Butler.

A number of people generously shared information with me, including Julia Peck, Warwick Reeder, Marcel Safier, Stephen Zagala and Maggie Finch.

Two earlier exhibitions of Bayliss’s work provided important starting points: Sandra Byron and Kevin Jeffcoat’s *Down the Darling: The Charles Bayliss Photographs*, held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1991, and *Charles Bayliss* at Josef Lebovic Gallery, Sydney, 1984. I am further indebted to Josef Lebovic for bringing vital new material to my attention and ensuring that this current examination of Bayliss’s photography became fuller and richer.

I am especially grateful to Alan Davies, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, who provided invaluable assistance and commentary on Beaufoy Merlin, Charles Bayliss and B.O. Holtermann.

At the National Library, a great many people have assisted me. I am indebted to Nat Williams, Director of Exhibitions, and Justine Van Mourik, Acting Registrar, Exhibitions and Loans, and Linda Groom, Head Librarian, Pictures Collection. Brenda Runnegar, formerly in the Exhibitions Branch, also worked closely with me.

Loans have generously been provided by a number of public institutions. I would especially like to thank staff at the National Archives of Australia and the State Library of New South Wales; as well as Judy Annear, Art Gallery of New South Wales; Isobel Crombie, National Gallery of Victoria; and Gael Newton, National Gallery of Australia.

My colleagues at The Australian National University School of Art have provided invaluable support: my thanks to Gordon Bull, Head of School, and Anne Brennan and Chaitanya Sambrani in the Art Theory Workshop.

I am also very grateful to Susan Hall, Publishing Manager, and Kathryn Favelle, Manager, Publishing and Research, for overseeing this publication, to Jan Borrie and Paige Amor for the editing, and to Kathy Jakupec for the design.

Helen Ennis is Associate Head, Undergraduate, and Senior Lecturer, Art Theory, at The Australian National University School of Art.