



# *Paradise Possessed*

THE REX NAN KIVELL COLLECTION

The National Library of Australia is custodian of the Rex Nan Kivell Collection, which contains approximately 15 000 items of immeasurable significance for the study of the European presence in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific over the last few hundred years. This collection comprises a great variety of material, including artworks, diverse printed materials and objects. *Paradise Possessed* offers a series of views into the collection, and raises a number of issues suggested by documentary material of this kind. In the centenary year of Rex Nan Kivell's birth in 1898, it also provides a picture of Rex Nan Kivell himself.

*Paradise Possessed*  
THE REX NAN KIVELL COLLECTION

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Bryan Kneale (b.1930)

*Portrait of Rex de C. Nan Kivell* 1960  
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## FOREWORD

In the annals of the National Library of Australia, the acquisition of the Rex Nan Kivell Collection of historical paintings, watercolours, prints, drawings, books, maps, manuscripts and related materials stands as one of the great landmarks in the building of the national collection.

In the 1940s, the Library commenced discussions with Rex Nan Kivell, the New Zealand-born collector, connoisseur and art dealer who had resided in England for many years, where, from the 1920s, he had begun to build a collection focusing on the history of the European exploration and settlement of the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand. These discussions led to the purchase by the Australian Government of the first major instalment of the collection and to two subsequent gifts made directly to the National Library. Further materials were bequeathed to the Library after Nan Kivell's death in 1977. In discharging its brief to build a comprehensive collection of documentary materials relating to Australia and the Australian people, the Library has continued to build around Nan Kivell's collection, enriching and extending the foundation that it represents.

In this centenary year of the birth of Sir Rex Nan Kivell, the National Library pays tribute to the life and work of a man whose personal vision and strong sense of the history of the region of his birth have provided the means for scholars, researchers and members of the public to access a diverse body of materials which form part of the historical record of the Antipodean world. In 1974, Professor Bernard Smith predicted that the Nan Kivell Collection would come to exercise a substantial influence on Australasian historical scholarship. Over the years, the Library has observed with pleasure the use that has been made of the collection by many scholars and researchers, and in exhibitions in Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the United States of America.

These essays are issued to accompany the exhibition *Paradise Possessed: The Rex Nan Kivell Collection* which has been prepared to celebrate the centenary of Nan Kivell's birth in April 1898. While not yet the definitive appraisal either of the collection itself or of Nan Kivell's own remarkable life, these essays offer a glimpse of the man, and present insights into the range and diversity of a collection which represents one of the finest cultural benefactions to have been presented to the Australian people. The National Library of Australia is the proud custodian of this collection on behalf of the peoples of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, and is delighted to provide the opportunity for some of its riches to be shared with the wider public.

Warren Horton  
Director-General  
National Library of Australia



Bryan Kneale (b.1930)  
*Portrait of Rex de C. Nan Kivell* 1960  
oil on composition board; 127 x 71.2 cm (NK9530)

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Carved emu egg on silver plate and wood stand with fern, kangaroo and emu decoration c.1900  
emu egg, silver plate, wood; 27 cm high (NK6769/3)

# INTRODUCTION: REX NAN KIVELL AND HIS COLLECTION

*Sasha Grishin*

Francis Haskell, writing on the British as collectors, noted that they had the tendency ‘to look back nostalgically to their own ancestors, whether real or fabricated. The country house had long served as a repository for family portraits, and even its changing architectural styles had usually paid homage to some vanished but evocative past ... collections were built up for the sake of associations which they could recall’.<sup>1</sup>

Rex Nan Kivell not only invented himself but also invented for himself an ancestry, and, in the process, became one of Australia’s greatest cultural benefactors. Reginald Nankivell was born in 1898 in Christchurch, New Zealand, and by enlisting in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force during the Great War he made his way to England. By the end of the war this, in John Thompson’s words, ‘archetypal outsider—illegitimate, homosexual, self-educated Antipodean colonial’<sup>2</sup> had reinvented himself as Rex de Charembac Nan Kivell and started to collect Australian and New Zealand pictures and books. He was a compulsive collector who combined the desire for comprehensiveness of a modern social historian with the obsession of a connoisseur who could spend a 35-year quest in search of a prize acquisition.<sup>3</sup> One could speculate that this collector, never knowing the identity of his real father and having adopted a new name and persona, created a collection that would somehow trace the history of some imaginary ancestor, while at the same time bringing honour and distinction to his own name. Despite travelling widely, Rex Nan Kivell never visited the object of his collecting passion—Australia.

In retrospect, Rex Nan Kivell speculated on the significance of his activities as a collector. He wrote in a letter to the President of the Australian Senate in 1957:

The work has been long—I have been collecting over thirty years—but it has never been tiring or tedious. I have loved every minute of it, and probably shall be doing it until I die. I wonder what you and Mr Menzies talked about when you discussed the collection? I quite understand the desire must be to secure it for your National Library, and I strongly feel I should like them to have it, and for it to be used for the interest and research of whoever wants to take advantage of it. What does one do it for, it is a life-time’s work, and what for? When Mr Chifley, your late Premier, who was very interested in my collection, came to see me once he advised me to give it to the Commonwealth Library and said that he would recommend me for a knighthood as a sort of recompense for my work, but at the time I was more interested in amassing items than accepting recognition for what I was doing.<sup>4</sup>

By the time Rex Nan Kivell started to collect early Australian and New Zealand documents, art and artefacts seriously, he had already established himself as an important player on the London art scene. He joined London's Redfern Gallery in 1925, and six years later was its managing director, running it in partnership with an Australian, Harry Tatlock Miller. In the early twentieth century, British art institutions which collected or studied art were essentially concerned with what could be termed 'high art' or 'serious art'. In a hierarchy of arts, which can be traced back at least to Leonardo da Vinci's *Paragone*, easel paintings on historical themes and monumental sculptures occupied the Olympian summit; watercolours, drawings and prints were at best considered as preparatory works; while the so-called applied arts were not even on the agenda and lay somewhere below the lowest slopes of the foothills.

Already by 1948, the National Library of Australia had agreed to accept custody of at least part of the Rex Nan Kivell Collection to save it from the uncertainties of postwar Britain.<sup>5</sup> When one examines the collection, it appears as a combination of the collecting principles of Diderot and the Encyclopedists, where there was the desire to gather comprehensively all empirical data, with an almost postmodernist notion of 'aesthetic indifference'. Objects were assembled because of their subject matter and not for their intrinsic beauty. Nan Kivell collected everything related to the early histories of Australia and New Zealand. When one examines a checklist of the collection's contents, it appears as if there had been a random search on the computer under these two countries, and everything that came up and was available was promptly acquired, while the rest was put on a long desiderata list.

For example, Rex Nan Kivell acquired a silver tea service dated 1813, because it had been a gift by Queen Charlotte to Sir Joseph Banks, who in turn had been instrumental to the early exploration of Australia. Maori ceremonial war cleavers, emu eggs, scrimshaw, Aboriginal king plates, a compass and sundial, nautical instruments, marble plaques, a sample of tapa cloth and Thomas Baines' magnificent painted lantern slides of the mid-1850s, all attracted Rex Nan Kivell's attention. He also collected books, maps, prints, drawings, oil paintings, watercolours, photographs, letters and government documents—anything that had even the remotest association with Australia and its surrounding region. It is not a collection that was governed by aesthetics or notions of historical significance, but more by laws of market availability and the insatiable desire on behalf of the patron to collect all of the possible fragments of a lost ancestry.

While the collection may appear a little frightening to any conscientious librarian or institutionally trained cataloguer, it is an absolute treasure-trove to the contemporary cultural historian who wishes to examine the complex fabric of a society, rather than concentrate only on the aesthetic art objects designated by that society as its official cultural artefacts. As contemporary studies in visual cultures have progressively eroded socially constructed hierarchies in the arts, the importance and significance of this collection for contemporary research has grown. Statistical



analysis of the collection is complicated by its diversity of mediums. Although fully catalogued and accessible on-line, even estimates of its numerical size may vary in accordance to the applied categories; for example, do we count a series of watercolours as a single item, or should they be numbered individually? What about a series of bound prints, photographs, maps or music scores? Bearing this in mind, the size of the collection can be estimated as approximately 15 000 items.

A rough statistical breakdown includes 3455 printed materials—ranging from James Cook’s famous publication *A Voyage towards the South Pole, and round the World ...* (1777) to Alexander Dalrymple’s rare pamphlet *A Serious Admonition to the Publick, on the Intended Thief-Colony at Botany Bay* (1786). There are some 8300 items of pictorial materials, including over 1600 paintings and drawings, 3000 prints, and numerous albums of drawings, photographs and sketchbooks, such as the magnificent Hunter sketchbook. It was in fact this pictorial material which was crucial to the National Library’s decision to acquire the Rex Nan Kivell Collection in the first place. The enthusiastic National Librarian of the time, Harold White, wrote to the Prime Minister, ‘There is no doubt that it is

Thomas Baines (1820–1875)  
*Malay Trading Proa in the Straits of Madura, near Java* c.1856  
oil on lantern slide; 5.7 x 7.9 cm (NK6954/G)



incomparably the best pictorial collection relating to Australia and the South Seas still in private hands and that a similar collection could never again be assembled.’<sup>6</sup> This collection formed an important primary source for Bernard Smith’s seminal study *European Vision and the South Pacific* (1960) and later for numerous studies by other scholars. Unique paintings, watercolours, drawings and rare prints by artists including S.T. Gill, George French Angas, Eugene von Guérard, Sydney Parkinson, Nicholas Chevalier, The Port Jackson Painter (now thought to be Henry Brewer), Conrad Martens, John Lewin, Joseph Lycett, Augustus Earle and Thomas Baines comprise some of the great artistic treasures which have entered the National Library as part of this collection, and which have now become a well-known part of Australia’s cultural heritage.

The collection also has well over 600 maps, including a number of Abraham Ortelius’ sixteenth-century maps and some exceptionally rare maps of the eighteenth century. More than 100 manuscripts include such gems as letters from Charles Darwin, a letter from John Hunter to Joseph

Henry Brewer (1739–1796) attrib.  
The Port Jackson Painter (fl.1788–1792)  
[*Australian Aborigine*] 1790?  
gouache drawing; 30.5 x 24.3 cm (NK144/B)

Banks, as well as such curiosities as a list of male and female convicts in His Majesty's Gaol, the Castle of Lincoln, 17 May 1794. Together with botanical drawings, native artefacts and miscellaneous objects, the encyclopedic nature of this collection makes it a priceless resource for present and future generations of scholars working on cultural, geographic and social histories of Australia and the region.

A clue to the enormous value of the Rex Nan Kivell Collection to Australia lies at least in part in the enigmatic character of the collector himself. The fact that he was not a scholarly antiquarian, a trained connoisseur collecting within a particularly narrow range of interests, as was the case with many of his peers, gave his collection a certain timeless quality. By assembling a vast array of objects of cultural, material and spiritual significance for his imaginary ancestors who were among the first Europeans to visit, chart and colonise Australia and New Zealand, Rex Nan Kivell created a fragmentary snapshot of that time—which we will visit and revisit, as will future generations of Australians, to ask questions about our real and fabricated ancestors.



Thomas Baines (1820–1875)  
*Group of Explorers with Horses, Northern Territory* 1857  
oil on canvas; 45.1 x 65.5 cm (NK130)

## NOTES

- 1 Francis Haskell, 'The British as Collectors', in Gervase Jackson-Stops (ed.), *The Treasure Houses of Britain: Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985, pp. 56–57.
- 2 John Thompson, 'Self-made: Towards a Life of Rex Nan Kivell', in *Paradise Possessed: The Rex Nan Kivell Collection*. Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1998, p. 19.
- 3 Rex Nan Kivell at one stage spent 35 years tracking down a painting ascribed to Louis Auguste de Sainson; see Sasha Grishin, 'Australia's Cultural Heritage: The Visual Record', in John Thompson (ed.), *The People's Treasures: Collections in the National Library of Australia*. Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1993, p. 40.
- 4 Rex Nan Kivell, letter to Senator A.M. McMullin, President of the Senate, Canberra, 21 March 1957.
- 5 Minutes of the meeting of the Parliamentary Library Committee, 9 April 1948.
- 6 Harold White, National Librarian, letter to Prime Minister Menzies, 15 May 1956.



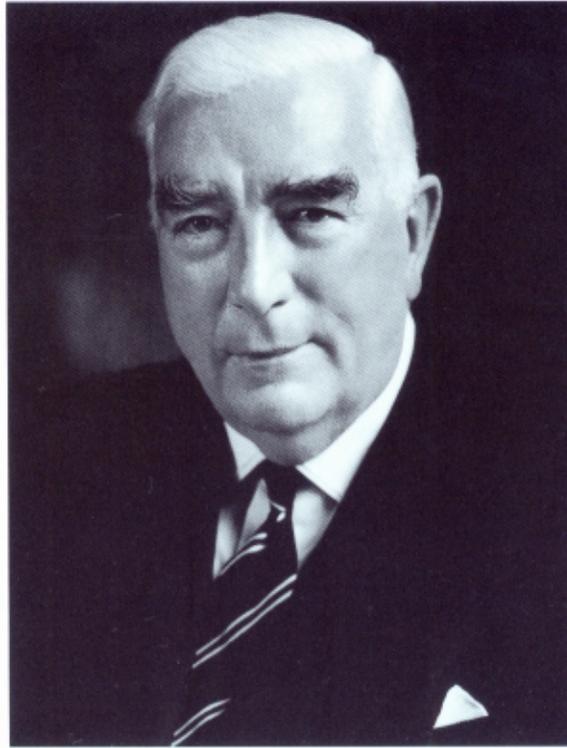
Eugene von Guérard (1811–1901)  
*James Glass's Station on the Goulburn River, Victoria* 1862  
oil on academy board; 35.7 x 45.8 cm (NK2165)

## A GENIUS FOR COLLECTION

In March 1962, not long after the Commonwealth Government had negotiated a purchase agreement with Rex Nan Kivell to secure the first instalment of his large Australasian collection of paintings, prints, drawings, books, maps, manuscripts and historical objects for the benefit of the Australian people, an exhibition of selected items was prepared for presentation at the State Library of South Australia to coincide with the Adelaide Festival of Arts. That exhibition had been arranged at the suggestion of the historian Sir Archibald Grenfell Price, a prominent South Australian and, at that time, Chairman of the Council of the National Library of Australia which had been instrumental in negotiating for the acquisition of the collection.<sup>1</sup> The exhibition itself was officially opened by Robert Gordon Menzies, then comfortably in the saddle in the final years of his record-breaking term as Prime Minister of Australia.

The speech delivered by Menzies to mark the official opening of one of the first Australian viewings of the treasures of the Nan Kivell Collection was a jovial one, with the Prime Minister in a mischievous mood. He took the opportunity to play sport with Grenfell Price, a man more than a little conscious of his own dignity, and with Harold White, the National Librarian who was tenacious and unrelenting in his advocacy of the interests of his institution.<sup>2</sup> Over many years, White and his staff had wooed Nan Kivell while at the same time ensuring that the government was left in no doubt that the collection which Nan Kivell had accumulated was likely to be an acquisition of the greatest importance. It is a reflection both of White's skills of advocacy and of the more intimate scale of government and of public administration which applied in Australia in the 1950s that the Library's case could be taken up personally with the Prime Minister of the day. And with the interest of the Prime Minister directly engaged by the energetic and powerfully persuasive Harold White, Menzies himself was recruited to play a part in persuading Nan Kivell that Australia would make a suitable home for his collection.

In the following extract of the speech delivered by Menzies in Adelaide on 17 March 1962, the Prime Minister reflects on his own meeting in London with Nan Kivell which had been arranged at the behest of Harold White and which must be seen now as one plank in White's shrewd and careful campaign to win the Nan Kivell Collection for Australia and for its National Library. It is important to acknowledge that the speech also reveals Menzies' own strong commitment to the treasures which Nan Kivell had accumulated and his awareness that many of these constituted an important part of the national heritage, the means by which the past might be better understood and appreciated by succeeding generations of Australians.



**Robert Gordon Menzies:**

But I think perhaps I ought to say a word or two to you about Mr Nan Kivell. I'd heard about, I'd seen some of his remarkable collection. I'd been told [about it by] Mr Harold White, the Commonwealth Librarian, who has a prehensile grasp on anything that matters from the point of view of Australian history and records—marvellous! A grip like a pawnbroker, do you know what I mean? Oh, there he is, yes. I can see him. He had broken the news to me about the Nan Kivell Collection and we had seen some of it, and great questions arose as to whether Australia might get some (modestly) or all (immodestly) of the collection. So my friend White, he just said to me in a casual, offhand way, as in Gilbert and Sullivan: "When you're in London next, I would like you to have a talk with Mr Nan Kivell." Well, I don't mind having a talk with anybody, as long as they're prepared to listen. You know what we're like, we politicians, yes. But I went to see him at the Redfern Gallery and the moment I walked in, I think I walked down a few stairs for a start and then I came in and he said: "I would like you to meet my associate, Mr Miller." I said: "You're not Tatlock Miller,

Sir Robert Menzies (1894–1978)  
From the Pictorial Collection



are you?" and he said: "I am." Then I remembered that many years before in Geelong, that progressive city that you've heard of in Victoria, I had met this young man who was then starting something. You know, I don't need to go into that, but there he was.<sup>3</sup>

So, I went down and had a look at this and that and had a talk with Mr Nan Kivell and said to him, in my naturally inquisitive manner: "Now, look, there's a very well-known legal firm in Melbourne called Malleeson"—it was at that time—"Malleeson, Stewart, Stawell and Nankivell, all one word. Are they related to you?" He said: "Yes, they're cousins, but we're the New Zealand branch." Of course, I didn't need to be told that in New Zealand, they prefer to be different. So it's two words in New Zealand, one word in Victoria, but a common thank you from our point of view on this occasion.

The second thing, it's worth mentioning, about Mr Nan Kivell is that he's Cornish ... So, here's a Cornishman, a New Zealander by birth, who has chosen to become the most remarkable collector in our time of Australian pictures and papers ... [an] astonishing collection ... going right back to the

Rex Nan Kivell (right) presenting early Australian material to Sir Harold White at Osborne House, Isle of Wight, United Kingdom 1963

Photograph by Axel Poignant  
From the Pictorial Collection



earliest days, the early prints, the black and white prints, the colour prints, the early watercolour drawings. You know, I think that a lot of Australians don't understand how many marvellous things were done in the first 30 or 40 or 50 or 60 years of Australian settlement—marvellous things. To look at them is a thrill, to have them put in their setting is an intellectual feast.

I didn't take much persuading, even by the iron hand of Mr White, to have a talk with Nan Kivell and see whether we couldn't perhaps, by devious means which might bypass the watchful

Rex Nan Kivell (left) with his business partner Harry Tatlock Miller in the Redfern Gallery 1957  
From the Manuscript Collection (MS4000)

eye of the Treasury, secure them for Australia. We were much assisted in this matter by what I regard as a singularly generous approach to this matter by Mr Nan Kivell himself. If Australia possesses so many of these things, it is in large measure due to his own genius for collection and his generosity in relation to this country. I believe myself that when all schools of artistic thought have fought their battles and have won and then lost, because this is inevitable, we will find more and more Australians coming back to have a look at the foundations.

I quoted Archie<sup>4</sup> a little Latin this morning, but as he was the only person who understood it, I must put what I now say into ordinary English: "It's better to seek the fountainhead than to divide up the little streams" [*melius est petere fontaneis*], that's right. Here, we get to the fountainhead. The old records, the old records put down by people, many of whom didn't regard themselves as artists or as professional artists but who had a talent for putting down what they saw. We would be abysmally ignorant of the history of this wonderful country of ours if we didn't have the opportunity from time to time of seeing how it looked to the eye of the beholder. How it looked to the sensitive eye of somebody who had instinctively the feeling of the artist. How it looked stage by stage, year by year ...

So ... I'm delighted to be asked to open this exhibition. It's a great pleasure to me to open an exhibition which, if it's looked at as I hope it will be by thousands and thousands of people, will have a great impact on the minds of the people of Australia. I'm delighted to be asked to open an exhibition which has its permanent value in the record of Australia and I'm delighted to be able to say ... how greatly indebted Australia is ... to the fact that a simple citizen, knowledgeable in art, a collector of art, a dealer in art, felt called upon, felt moved, to make a collection of this kind which is unique in the history of Australia ...

## NOTES

- 1 Sir Archibald Grenfell Price CMG (1892–1977), Chairman of the Council of the National Library of Australia, 1961–71.
- 2 Sir Harold Leslie White CBE (1905–92), Commonwealth Parliamentary Librarian, 1947–67, and National Librarian, 1961–67.
- 3 The Australian-born Harry Tatlock Miller was for many years the business partner in London of Rex Nan Kivell and a fellow director of the Redfern Gallery. As a young man in Geelong he had, with others, founded *Manuscripts: A Miscellany of Art and Letters* which ran, mainly quarterly, from 1931–35. Contributors included Hugh McCrae, Nettie Palmer, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Blamire Young and Clive Turnbull.
- 4 Sir Archibald Grenfell Price.



Sample of tapa cloth brought back by Alexander Hood, Master's mate, HMS *Resolution* 1774?  
plant fibre and pigment; 349 x 61.5 cm (NK2276)

# THE REX NAN KIVELL COLLECTION: A MEMOIR

*Bernard Smith*

A diary entry reminds me that I first met Rex Nan Kivell on Wednesday, 3 November 1948. I had arrived in London with my family on the *Stratheden* shortly before on a British Council scholarship to study at the Courtauld Institute of the University of London. My expressed intention was to study the ways in which early European travellers to the Pacific represented it visually.

Visited Mr Nan Kivell in the afternoon, of the Redfern Gallery, Cork Street. Nan Kivell, a New Zealander, who has been connected with the Redfern Gallery for over 20 years, has amassed a very fine collection of Australiana, including a large collection of early Australian and New Zealand watercolours and oil paintings. Burmester,<sup>1</sup> of the Commonwealth Library, Australia House, put me on to him. He took me to his flat and showed me what he had there. He has many more things in his country house in Wiltshire. A large collection of paintings has already been consigned to the National Library, Canberra.

So I had to content myself with what work I could do in relevant public collections in London. I began examining original drawings, in the manuscript room of the British Library, by Sydney Parkinson, Alexander Buchan and John Webber, all of whom had travelled with Cook in the Pacific. Just a week after I met Nan Kivell I recorded in my diary: 'Considerable variation in the original sketches and the engravings [by Bartolozzi] made from them.' Here was the germ of the idea I developed later concerning the relativity of European vision in its perception and recording of the Pacific world that I published first in my essay in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* (vol. 13, 1950) entitled 'European Vision and the South Pacific' and ten years later in my book of the same name published by Oxford University Press.

My great excitement came early in 1949 when I found a large corpus of drawings in the British Museum of Natural History at South Kensington relating to the beginnings of British settlement in Australia. They had only been noted previously by two Australian ornithologists, K.A. Hindwood and Tom Iredale. There were hundreds of drawings brought together in three folios: the so-called 'Watling drawings', the 'Banks 34MS' and the 'Raper drawings'. Just on 40 years later, I finally induced South Kensington to publish the material on the occasion of the Australian Bicentenary. I shall always remember how gracious and courteous Mr F.C. Sawyer, the cockney-spoken curator of that material, was. He was just about to publish his own commentary on some of the material, but did not feel in the least territorial about it.<sup>2</sup> Indeed he gave me every assistance. A true scholar. He was probably



pleased to find someone else interested in the material that so fascinated him. What a devastating contrast he was to Philip James, the Director of the Fine Arts Section of the Arts Council of Great Britain, whom I met a day or so later. A most unpleasant man. Not that I had come to London with any prejudice against the English. I had married an Englishwoman to whom I owe more than anyone, and but a few days before I had spent a couple of days at Much Hadham with Henry Moore, the famous British sculptor, a most lovable man. I had gone to the Arts Council to see an exhibition of the sketches of John Constable and then to call on James with an introduction. I confided my displeasure at my reception to my diary that evening: 'James is an example of the kind of Englishman I detest. A pompous civil servant type filled with his own dignity. Probably a very able administrator. But he exudes the atmosphere that his time is precious and must not be wasted.'

Francesco Bartolozzi (1727–1815)

*The Cession of the District of Matavai in the Island of Otaheite to Captain James Wilson for the Use of the Missionaries, 16 March 1797* 179–?  
coloured aquatint; 60 x 78 cm (NK256)

These human encounters are relevant to my later involvement with the Nan Kivell Collection. The Arts Council of Great Britain, John Constable and Philip James all stood for what is called 'high' art. But the material that I and, for that matter, Mr Sawyer were concerned with could be called, by contrast, 'low' art. When I explained to Anthony Blunt, the Director of the Courtauld Institute, the nature of my project, I obviously presented him with a problem. I had completed but two years of an undergraduate degree at Sydney so I could not be enrolled as a legitimate postgraduate student at the Courtauld. His predecessor, Professor T.S.R. Boase, however, had already approved of my studying there before I arrived in London. Blunt however raised difficulties. Art historians in his view must, for one thing, possess a good reading knowledge of German. I did not. So I ended up taking lessons from a Dr Spira who was living in cramped quarters in Brixton. He seemed to me to be a political refugee that Blunt was doing his best to assist in exile.

After a few weeks at Spira's feet I became increasingly alarmed. My British Council scholarship was initially for one year only and I had not come to London to learn German. I confronted Blunt and told him so. He decided that I had better go over to the Warburg Institute and pursue my research there. Perhaps he wanted me out of the way anyway. My political views, which he would have gathered after perusing my book *Place, Taste and Tradition* (1945), were probably too close to his own for his comfort at that time of his life. Sending me off to the Warburg in the Imperial Institute building was the best possible thing he could have done. There I was able to meet Charles Mitchell, a tutor with a touch of genius, and some brilliant German scholars, exiled in Britain during the war, such as Rudolf Wittkower. Both Mitchell and Wittkower were happy with my project. Wittkower had been studying the mythical monsters of the Greeks and was delighted to find me already researching medieval notions of the Antipodes. Mitchell had been in the British navy during the war and understood why I wanted to study the 'low' art of men like Buchan and Parkinson. It was Mitchell who gained me a second year from the British Council to finish my work. I had feared that if I had stayed on at the Courtauld I should have been asked to compile a catalogue say of the *English* paintings of Tom Roberts or Arthur Streeton—an appropriate task for a Commonwealth student!

Not that I rejected 'high' art. In the time at my disposal I saw as much as I possibly could of the great architecture of Europe and the masterpieces in its galleries before I returned to Australia early in 1951. Back here I had to knuckle down and complete my English honours degree at Sydney while compiling *A Catalogue of the Australian Oil Paintings in the National Art Gallery of New South Wales 1875–1952* based on the new model set by the postwar Martin Davies catalogues of the National Gallery of London.<sup>3</sup> (Yes, the New South Wales Gallery was still a 'national' one in those days over 50 years after Federation!)

Meanwhile, I had collected another obligation while still in London. This time from two more Kiwis, Professor John Beaglehole and Professor J.W. Davidson, to assemble a catalogue of the drawings and paintings made on Cook's three Pacific voyages. I didn't know, and it soon became clear they

didn't know, just what they had let me in for. That catalogue took me over 30 years to complete and publish.

However, it was Davidson who provided me with a postgraduate fellowship at the new Australian National University in Canberra. This made it possible for me at last to make use of the Rex Nan Kivell Collection then stored in Nissen huts at Parkes, the site of the present National Gallery of Australia. I was now able to apply art historical methods that I had learned at the Warburg Institute under Mitchell to the 'low' art held in the Nan Kivell Collection. After working for some months on his collection, I wrote him a long letter. Let me quote briefly from it:

You will recall that we met in 1948 and that you were kind enough to let me see your photographs of the items in your collection that you had sent out to Canberra ... it has only been since the beginning of the present year that I have been able to return to the subject that I took up several years ago ... You will be pleased to know that here in Australia some interest is at least developing in the study of the origins of Australian art. Professor Burke, Chair of Fine Arts at Melbourne University, is very keen to develop original research into Australian art history ... At the same time Australian History plays a very large part in the study of History at the new National University and although the arts side here is still not developed to any extent I am expecting that the next few years will see a greater emphasis placed on the study of the humanities in this University.

I took the liberty to suggest to Nan Kivell that he might consider including some British 'backup' material to his collection, having noted that the National Library only possessed a modern edition of David Cox's *Treatise on Landscape Painting* (1813–14), and a few books by Samuel Prout.

Oxford University Press published my *European Vision and the South Pacific* in 1960. It was the first time that visual material had been used in Australian studies in a continuous and organised way as historical research material with that interpretative sophistication to which verbal records are normally subject. Previously, Australian historians looked to visual material to illustrate their publications after they had completed writing them. I made this point as strongly as I could when I was asked to give an address on the occasion of the opening of the Nan Kivell room at the National Library in April 1974. Humphrey McQueen was probably the first Australian historian to grasp what I was talking about. Some years later, Professor Joan Kerr took up the matter passionately, and of course, in more recent times, many scholars such as Greg Denning, Nicholas Thomas, Sasha Grishin, Tim Bonyhady, Ann Moyal and Stephen Foster have made extensive use of the Nan Kivell Collection in their own historical research.

True, it does depend upon the kind of history you are writing! Not all historians will need recourse to visual material. I am just about to publish a book on the history of twentieth-century art that will not contain any illustrations. Why? The reasons are wholly pragmatic in this case—so that those I most want to read it can afford to buy it! But at least we should now expect that when

historians *do* use illustrations they are aware as to whether they are publishing an original drawing truly contemporaneous with the events it illustrates, or whether it is a retrospective engraving, lithograph, retouched photograph, or even a history painting made more than a century later, such as E. Phillips Fox's *Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay*.



Sydney Parkinson (1745?-1771)  
*Bread Fruit* 1769?  
watercolour; 30.8 x 38.5 cm (NK1223)

## NOTES

- 1 Clifford Amandus Burmester (1910–91) joined the staff of the Commonwealth National Library (later the National Library of Australia) in 1935. From 1947–51, he represented the Library as its Liaison Officer at Australia House in London; in this position he was responsible for carrying out negotiations with Rex Nan Kivell for the possible placement of his collection in Australia. In 1967, Burmester was appointed Assistant National Librarian, a position he held until his retirement in 1971.
- 2 F.C. Sawyer, 'Notes on Some Original Drawings of Birds Used by Dr Latham', *Journal of the Society of Natural History*, vol. 2, 1949, pp. 173–180.
- 3 Sir Martin Davies (1908–75), English art historian who in 1937 instituted a scholarly revision of the published catalogues of the picture collections in the National Gallery, London. The first of these, *The Early Netherlandish School*, appeared 1945–47 and was followed by *The French School* (1946) and *The British School* (1946). Davies held the post of Director of the National Gallery, London, 1968–73.



Thomas Gosse (1765–1844)

*Founding of the Settlement of Port-Jackson at Botany Bay in New South Wales*

London: T. Gosse, 1799

hand-coloured mezzotint; 53.8 x 60.5 cm (NK11590)

# SELF-MADE: TOWARDS A LIFE OF REX NAN KIVELL

*John Thompson*

For all the magnificence of his Australian benefaction, Rex Nan Kivell is hardly a household name in a country in which he was a stranger and which he never visited. No public spaces have been named in Nan Kivell's honour and no particular homage is paid to the memory of a man who yet was one of a handful of prescient and committed individuals—David Scott Mitchell, Sir William Dixon, E.A. Petherick and Sir John Ferguson—who built collections which have come to provide the underpinning of Australian historical research and scholarship.<sup>1</sup> Outside the small and privileged world of art curatorship and specialist librarianship, if Nan Kivell's name is known at all to the wider Australian public, it is as part of a caption on a gallery wall or as a credit in a book which reproduces an item from his collection. The curious may pause a moment to ponder this odd, slightly exotic name but will then move on quickly to the enjoyment of a particular painting to which, after all, the collector's name is a detail, a tag that pays the appropriate dues to provenance and to a process of acquisition, the details of which reside in dusty files and in the minds and memory of a handful of the cognoscenti.

But on the principle that debts should be honoured and that the source of a key part of Australia's cultural heritage should be better known and understood, it is important, I think, that in this centenary year of Nan Kivell's birth, at least the broad outlines of his life might be drawn. It is, in fact, a colourful and significant life. In varying degrees of detail, its impact was felt in four countries: in New Zealand, where he was born but which he left as a young man, never to return; in Britain, where he lived for the whole of his adult life and where he ran for many years the influential Redfern Gallery in Cork Street, London; in Australia, where he eventually placed his large and important collection of books, paintings and manuscripts relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific; and in Africa, where he was something of a grandee and where he maintained a villa in the expatriate community of Tangiers.

Some part of the interest of this life lies in the invention by Nan Kivell himself of the personality he became—the urbane dealer and collector who threw off his modest origins to emerge as a man of wealth, a knight of the realm, a connoisseur and collector of all manner of fine, beautiful and historic objects, and, finally, a philanthropist and a benefactor. To a greater or lesser degree, all lives, if not invented by those who live them, are shaped in various ways that move their authors away from sometimes uncertain beginnings. In Nan Kivell, we see, perhaps, the archetypal outsider—illegitimate, homosexual, self-educated, an Antipodean colonial—who, pressing his nose to the window, eventually gained access to the larger, more marvellous world from which he must have felt himself to be excluded.



Like others of his generation, Nan Kivell's enlistment to serve in the war of 1914–18 was, initially at least, as much about adventure and opportunity as it was about patriotism and the defeat of a dreadful enemy. Nan Kivell was certainly not alone in overstating his age (in his case by two years) when he joined the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in May 1916, but it can be surmised in retrospect that his determination to shake the dust of New Zealand from his feet was motivated more by interests of his own than by any conspicuous commitment to the allied cause.

Who was this man of sound health and of less than average height who at the end of May 1916 presented himself as a candidate for service in his country's military forces? According to his enlistment record his name was Reginald Nankivell, by occupation a bookbinder. His next of kin, his mother, was given as Mrs G.H. Nankivell of 25 Bligh Street in New Brighton, a suburb of Christchurch. The young man was apparently just over 20 years of age, having been born, according to his enlistment papers, on 8 April 1896. His hair was described as brown, his complexion fair and his eyes hazel. He had no distinguishing marks, no congenital peculiarities and no signs of previous illness. He had, he said, been a member of the Senior Cadets. All in all, he was a good prospect: able-bodied, unattached and well motivated.<sup>2</sup>

Rex Nan Kivell (left) in the uniform of the 1st Canterbury Regiment c.1916  
From the Manuscript Collection (MS4000)

Late in his life, in an oral history interview prepared for the National Library of Australia, Nan Kivell touched only briefly on his family origins. He mentioned the family's Cornish ancestry, growing up with a number of brothers and sisters, childhood games with the local Maori groups, messing around in the boats built by his brothers, and reading and browsing through books sent out from England or given by family friends in Christchurch. He suggested that an early interest in collecting was stimulated while he was still a boy at school by one Sidney Smith, an antiquarian book dealer in Christchurch. A Roman Catholic priest by the name of Fulton was mentioned as a key influence in alerting the boy to the subjects of history and geography, and to the voyages of the early explorers.

A romantic glow hangs over these almost certainly idealised reminiscences of childhood which in any case are blurred in detail, vague, almost deliberately imprecise. Invented? Not quite, but probably embellished and, as probably, believed by Nan Kivell himself, so completely had he come to accept a view of his early life which matched his own preferred view of himself as a man of gentle and patrician origins. The truth, as it often is, was a good deal plainer. In fact, the boy was born illegitimately on 8 April 1898, the son of Alice Nankivell and an unknown father. On the Nankivell side, the family origins were said to be Cornish, the name Nan Kivell meaning 'a nest of woodcocks' according to Celtic or Cornish usage. The arrival of the family in New Zealand is put at 1840. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Nankivells of the Canterbury Plains operated small businesses—they were butchers, builders, publicans, tradesmen, not the patrician land-holders alluded to by Nan Kivell in later revisions of his family history. Nan Kivell was brought up in the home of his maternal grandparents—George Henry Nankivell and his wife, Annie—sometimes identified by him in official biographies as his parents. The boy's education at the New Brighton School was modest, not the classical education at Christ's College which he later claimed.

A glimpse of Nan Kivell's version of his wartime service is provided in the oral history interview he recorded in 1970. Predictably, perhaps, it suggests suffering in the cause of patriotism. The misrepresentation of his age is openly acknowledged, but indeed that was something he shared with many other wartime adventurers, and in its own way it came to be viewed as a badge of honour worn with legitimate pride by the young soldiers of the Great War. Nan Kivell later claimed that he saw service in France and that after being gassed at Messines on the Somme, he was invalided out to London where, after recovering, he began to visit galleries and exhibitions and to develop an understanding of the work of contemporary artists. Nan Kivell suavely suggests a seamless transition from life in the trenches to a new existence in London, beginning to learn the ropes of the profession which came to be his life's work.

An examination of Nan Kivell's service record gives a very different story to the version later presented by him as fact. The truth is certainly less flattering than the various accounts which appeared in print during Nan Kivell's lifetime or which were written in the years immediately following his death. But it is apparent that not only did Nan Kivell embellish the details of his service

career but he positively used his time as an enlisted man to lay the foundations for his emergence at the end of the war as a person with (as he described it) exotic connections, a glamorous and romantic name, and a determined ambition to succeed both socially and in business.

The stark facts are that while Nan Kivell's wartime service in England was undistinguished, it was marked by numerous delinquencies including insolence, stealing and using travel warrants, and masquerading as an officer. The claim that he was gassed at the Somme evaporates as the fiction it was; the nearest he came to invalidity was several bouts of influenza. Indeed, he never saw service in France, apparently remaining in barracks at Codford in Wiltshire, the county where he later owned property. His various mundane sicknesses seem to have given him time to pursue his growing antiquarian interests, while his residence in England, however circumscribed by the demands of his service career, presented him with the opportunity to throw off his colonial past. Appearing for the first time in military documents compiled in 1918 is the name by which he was known for the rest of his life. Reginald was dispensed with to be replaced by the more cosmopolitan Rex, while his Nankivell surname was burnished to become Nan Kivell. But the *pièce de résistance* was the adoption of a grand middle name, de Charembac, later claimed by Nan Kivell as his way of acknowledging a Frenchwoman who had promised to make him her heir. As a passport to success, the name Rex de Charembac Nan Kivell must have seemed to offer greater possibilities for a young man keen to make his way in the metropolitan world than the usable, but plainer, Reginald Nankivell.

Success certainly came Nan Kivell's way. Demobilised in 1919, Nan Kivell entered the Royal College of Science, South Kensington, though with what academic result it is unknown. More importantly, by visiting galleries and becoming familiar with the work of contemporary artists, he began to develop the skills of discrimination and connoisseurship that would mark his subsequent career as both a dealer and collector. By his own account, it was at this time, still as a young man, that he began to collect early Australian and New Zealand pictures and books. This duality in his interests, the documentary art and history of the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand and the best of modern European art, sat side by side for the next half-century. In each of two very different disciplines Nan Kivell worked assiduously, in the first to satisfy what was essentially a private and personal interest, and in the second to establish in the Redfern Gallery a remarkable dealership in art which did much to promote an appreciation in Britain of contemporary painting and sculpture.

Nan Kivell's association with the Redfern Gallery commenced in 1925. The business had been founded two years earlier by two wealthy Englishmen as a small artists' cooperative. By 1931, Nan Kivell had assumed control as managing director, and from then until his death he ran the gallery in association with his Australian business partner Harry Tatlock Miller. No study has yet been made of the Redfern Gallery, and no definitive evaluation has so far appeared of the extent and nature of Nan Kivell's influence as a dealer and a patron. There is little doubt, however, that the Redfern was a significant force in stimulating a conservative British taste to embrace the modern and the new.



Nan Kivell's efforts were applied on three fronts at least: he assisted the promotion of a group of British artists who later emerged as major figures, among them Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland; he helped to introduce to England the work of a number of important European artists including Bonnard, Ernst, Picasso, Rouault, Soutine and Vuillard; and he gave encouragement to an emerging generation of Australian painters and designers including Loudon Sainthill and Sidney Nolan.

Australian and New Zealand scholars have recently begun to look more closely at Nan Kivell's achievements in building his great collection of books, manuscripts, maps and the historical and documentary art of this part of the world. But even here, much remains to be written both of the collector and his collection. These stories can then be placed into the context of the larger story of the efforts which have been made in Australia and New Zealand to build public collections of historical and cultural materials.

In bringing together what for convenience he called his Australasian collection, Rex Nan Kivell was well placed at the centre of the antiquarian trade in London and more generally in England at a

Robert Buhler (1916–1989)  
*Portrait of Rex Nan Kivell* 1969  
pastel on masonite; 52.5 x 42.5 cm (NK1545)

time when the competition for such material was limited and prices were often very low. As a collector, he cast his net wide, relying on his own instincts to pick up material in markets and antique shops, and later in responding to offers drawn to his attention by dealers such as Francis Edwards, Maggs Brothers and W.T. Spencer and Son. He was astute in following up leads of families in Britain who had connections with the distant colonies and who, very often, had brought back mementos of their own in the form of pictures, old letters, journals and related materials. In the first instance, it seems, Nan Kivell developed his collection for his own pleasure and in acknowledgement of his own personal history as an individual whose ancestry lay in the old world but whose destiny was linked to the pioneer development of countries in the new. It was only after the Second World War that he perceived the collection might eventually serve a larger public purpose.

By the late 1940s, Nan Kivell's Australasian collection had become so substantial that its safe accommodation in war-torn Britain had become a serious problem and a very real worry for him. In 1946, stimulated by conversations with Maie Casey (who was connected to an Australian branch of the Nankivells by marriage), Nan Kivell commenced discussions with liaison representatives in London of the (then) Commonwealth National Library, the present-day National Library of Australia. His purpose at the beginning was narrow and dictated by the pragmatic need to secure a safe, if temporary, home for a collection that was scattered at locations in the country, at the Redfern Gallery, in various stores in London and in garages. But right from the start, Nan Kivell's own need to achieve safe housing for the collection was linked to the idea that it should also be available for use.

After some initial hesitation by Library officials, negotiations were encouraged, and in 1949 the first consignment of pictures, books and other material reached Canberra on loan to the Library, which then sought, over a decade, to bring the collection into Australian ownership. It is a tribute to the prescience of the Library staff in Canberra that Nan Kivell's unusual offer to lend but to allow free use of his collection was accepted. In this way, the National Library was advantageously placed to enjoy the benefits of what was already an outstanding collection and to have the chance, in the fullness of time, to secure the collection permanently. Pauline Fanning, who was a staff member of the Library during these years, recorded the excitement and pleasure generated by the arrival of the collection:

Although many of the rare items had already been described to us, it was with astonishment and delight that we viewed the contents as they were unpacked; oils, watercolours, pencil drawings, maps, sculpture, manuscripts, rare books, broadsides and historical relics ... All were in superb condition, the oils magnificently framed, the books and manuscripts in fine bindings or handsomely boxed.<sup>3</sup>

But although Nan Kivell was unfailingly generous in honouring his commitment to allow the Library full use of his collection, he was more cautious in negotiating any agreement concerning its ultimate

disposition or in stating the terms under which its permanent placement might be made. At various times, the Australians must have faced the greatest anxiety concerning their chances of success.<sup>4</sup>

Some part of this apparent reluctance of Nan Kivell to state the terms for the permanent keeping of his collection may be traced to his own sense of identity as a man born and brought up in New Zealand. Although he had long made his permanent home in Britain, in various ways he continued to acknowledge his affiliation with the country of his birth. In a profound sense, this was reflected in the collection he built, and when faced with the task of resolving its placement, it is clear he felt a sense of obligation to New Zealand. It has also become clear that the collection represented the means by which Nan Kivell might secure the adornment of a title, the key as he saw it to his social and professional advancement in the stratified world of British society. Perhaps, too, he saw a title as the final gilding on the persona he had constructed for himself since his departure from New Zealand as an ambitious but socially ambiguous colonial.

The possibility that the New Zealand Government might recommend Nan Kivell for a knighthood in the Coronation Honours list seemed likely, in the early 1950s, to steer the collection to a permanent home across the Tasman. When this offer failed to materialise, due perhaps to a prejudice against Nan Kivell's unorthodox sexuality or his less than illustrious war record, it was left to the Australians, perhaps better informed about the collection's importance, to pursue its acquisition. Eventually, the collection was purchased by the Australian Government for £70 000, to be paid in two equal instalments. Although a considerable sum, this purchase price was almost certainly a fraction of the true value of the collection. This fact, combined with Nan Kivell's later direct gifts to the National Library, establish this expatriate New Zealander as one of Australia's great cultural benefactors.

Even after his long association with Australia through the years of wooing and negotiation, Nan Kivell remained sensitive to the possibility that his decision to place the collection permanently in Canberra would give offence to his homeland. At the time of the public announcement of the Australian purchase of the collection, Nan Kivell gave careful thought to the words of explanation he felt bound to offer to the people of his own country:

Being a New Zealander, an explanation should, I think, be given to the people of New Zealand as to my reasons for letting my collection of early Australasian items—paintings, drawings, engravings, manuscripts, pamphlets, books, etc.—go to the Commonwealth National Library in Canberra.

Nan Kivell made reference to the size of the collection and to the difficulties he had faced in housing the collection satisfactorily in England, especially during the war years and immediately afterwards. He noted the heavy Australian component, 85 per cent relating to Australia and the Pacific, and only the remainder relating exclusively to New Zealand. He did not want the collection divided. In making the decision to place the collection permanently in Australia, Nan Kivell stated that he had been



heartened by the assurance of representatives of the Australian Government that they would welcome any New Zealand interest in the collection and would cooperate completely with any requests for loans for exhibitions, educational purposes and research. He concluded by expressing the wish that the collection had been in duplicate so that New Zealand and Australia could have shared alike.<sup>5</sup>

On the recommendation of the Australian Government, Nan Kivell was twice honoured, first in 1966 with a CMG for services in providing the National Library of Australia with valuable early Australian and Pacific paintings and manuscripts. Ten years later, the longed-for knighthood was awarded 'for services to the arts'. Curiously, perhaps, despite a number of invitations, Nan Kivell never visited Australia—arthritis and the demands of a busy life in England were legitimate excuses but perhaps deep down he could not face the idea of confronting the Antipodean world which existed best in his imagination. While he never returned to New Zealand, in 1953 he made gifts to a number of fine arts institutions in his home country of some hundreds of contemporary prints by British artists including Henry Moore, Eileen Mayo and Graham Sutherland. In spite of the pleasure and satisfaction which he gained from the award of public honours, with the passage of time, Nan Kivell's greatest reward rests now in the fact that his collection has come to exercise a substantial and enduring influence on Australasian historical and artistic scholarship.

Mary Ann Musgrave (fl.1821–1847)  
*Portrait of William Nankivell*  
oil on canvas; 56.2 x 45.2 cm (NK4397)

Rex Nan Kivell died in London on 7 June 1977, aged 79 years. His old age had been troubled by severe arthritis, though the cause of his death was renal failure. He was buried at a private ceremony at West Lavington Church in Devizes in Wiltshire, and honoured later at a memorial service in London. He left an estate valued at £653 747 net. Personal bequests included, to Queen Elizabeth II, a gift of natural history subjects, originally in the collection of George III and earlier again, in the collection of Pope Clement XI; to his chauffeur he left his gold watch and bracelet. Nan Kivell had lived an extraordinary life which he shaped in the grand manner to his own exacting design. With a residence in London, an English country house, and a villa in Morocco overlooking the Strait of Gibraltar, this small, charming and generous man had travelled far from his modest beginnings in New Zealand. One of his countrymen has described him as the quintessential Antipodean expatriate, obdurate in his refusal to return, yet obsessed with images of his birthplace and its region, his whole identity bound up by his colonial past.<sup>6</sup> That obsession finds good cause for celebration in the centenary year of Nan Kivell's birth.

#### NOTES

- 1 In April 1974, the National Library of Australia formally named its then exhibition galleries on the Lower Ground Floor of its building in Canberra in honour of Rex Nan Kivell. The Rex Nan Kivell Room as it was known was officially opened by Professor Bernard Smith. With extensive renovations and refurbishment of the National Library building in 1991–92, a new exhibition gallery was installed on the Ground Floor. Use of Nan Kivell's name to identify the Library's exhibition facilities lapsed at that time.
- 2 I am grateful to Oliver Stead, Registrar of the Auckland Museum in New Zealand who originally provided me with access to a copy of Rex Nan Kivell's war service record. Mr Stead is engaged on postgraduate research which will include an appraisal of Nan Kivell's record and achievements as a collector and connoisseur. This study promises to be the most substantial and comprehensive biographical investigation so far undertaken.
- 3 Pauline Fanning, 'The Australasian Collection of Mr Rex Nan Kivell in the National Library of Australia, Canberra', *The Australian Library Journal*, vol. 2, no. 3, July 1962, p. 139.
- 4 A more detailed account of the history of Rex Nan Kivell's negotiations with the National Library of Australia and the Australian Government in the placing of his Australasian collection is given in the essay 'The Nan Kivell Legacy' which I prepared in 1990 when a selection of paintings, drawings and prints of New Zealand subjects from that collection went on tour to a number of venues in New Zealand. See Marian Minson, *Encounter with Eden: New Zealand 1770–1870*. Wellington: National Library of New Zealand, 1990. Since the writing of that essay, previously unknown facts have come to light concerning the life of Rex Nan Kivell.
- 5 Cablegram from the Australian High Commission, London, to the Prime Minister's Department, Canberra, 14 January 1959. Copy held in the National Library of Australia, Canberra.
- 6 These insights were offered by Oliver Stead in discussions and an exchange of correspondence which we had in 1996 when I was preparing an entry on Nan Kivell's life (forthcoming) for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.



Joseph Lycett (1775–c.1828)  
*Hibiscus grandiflora*, Australia c.1820  
watercolour; 36.2 x 27.8 cm (NK6335/F)

# MEMORIES OF MOROCCO

*Barbara Perry*

The Arabian Nights fairytales had always been among my favourite stories. The very names Ali Baba, Sinbad, Scheherazade and Aladdin conjured up marvellous fantasies, and transported me to a world of flying carpets, jewelled daggers, golden deserts, swaying palms and heroic adventures.

As a result, when Rex Nan Kivell invited me to spend a holiday at his villa in Tangiers I accepted with alacrity. It was April 1974, and I was the National Library's Deputy Liaison Officer in London. I had been asked by the Library's then Director of Publications, Alec Bolton, to make contact with Nan Kivell at his base in London—the Redfern Gallery in Cork Street—to discuss his proposed publication 'Portraits of the Famous and the Infamous'. Rex and I seemed to strike the right chord with each other immediately, and he proudly showed me over his gallery. He was a gentle, kindly man, warm and easy to talk to, and before my visit ended he had invited me to Tangiers. He said, 'I've got a very big house in Tangiers and I love having guests. Ask as many friends as you like to come with you.'

As soon as I arrived home I rang my friend Margaret Murphy, who was also in London, to ask her if she would like to accompany me to Morocco. Margaret had worked in the Pictorial Section of the National Library, and I knew she was well acquainted with the Rex Nan Kivell Collection—by this time an important component of the Library's Australian collections. At this stage I had worked in the Selection and Reference areas of the Library, and although I was aware of the treasures of the Pictorial Collection, I did not have first-hand knowledge of them.

Margaret was pleased to accept the invitation, and about two weeks later we flew out of London, spent a day in Gibraltar, then flew on to Tangiers.

Our own Arabian Nights adventure started when we were met at the airport by Rex's Arab companion, Mizouni Nouari, who waved us through Customs and escorted us to a dark blue Mercedes for our drive to Rex's home, 'El Farah' (Arabic for 'paradise'), in the suburb of Old Mountain. At first glance, Tangiers had quite a European appearance, with wide streets, fertile gardens and white houses. But we also caught glimpses of labyrinthine alleys and hundreds of minarets, and we were amazed and delighted to see eucalyptus trees lining many of the streets.

Rex's luxurious villa lived up to its name, with priceless furniture, modern master paintings, antique silver, *objets d'art*, and a vast garden leading to cliffs overlooking the Strait of Gibraltar.

Our host greeted us warmly. He told me he was very proud and pleased that his 'historical' collection, as he called it, was preserved for posterity in the National Library of Australia. (His private collection of objects relating to Australian and New Zealand history was always distinct from his collection of objects relating to his more general artistic interests.) Although Rex Nan Kivell

was intensely interested in Australian history, it was a matter of deep regret to him that, as a New Zealander, he had never set foot in Australia. (Unfortunately, ill health prevented him from coming to Australia later in his life.) He also told me that although he had invited every National Library Liaison Officer he had met to visit him in Morocco, I was the first one to accept.

A servant nicknamed 'Kifi', who wore a yellow turban, showed us to our rooms. My bed had a silk bedspread and silk curtains, and the window provided a magnificent view of the sea. I was told this was the site of the Battle of Trafalgar, a fact which appealed greatly to my historical sensibility.

Then I noticed a beautiful picture on the bedroom wall. I ran into Margaret's room and said, 'Margaret, come and see the lovely Matisse print in here!' Margaret looked at it, and in a strangled voice said, 'Barbara, it's not a print!' After Rex died I noticed that this painting sold for an enormous sum. Margaret, by the way, had a Picasso in her room.

After dinner—with a bevy of servants attending to our every need—we adjourned for coffee to the sitting room, which looked out over the moonlit ocean. There was a framed plan on the wall of this room, and Rex told me it was the plan for the Battle of Trafalgar, drawn in Nelson's own hand. It was later bequeathed to the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.

In the morning, Rex took us on a tour of his luxuriant garden. The roses were just beginning to bloom, and there were great swags of divinely scented datura vines, and clumps of acanthus, which Rex liked because of their classical associations. Rex also pointed out a bed of port wine magnolias, whose perfume was said to attract the nightingales. Near the edge of the cliffs leading down to the sea, there was a memorial to the Australian artist Loudon Sainthill (1919–69). Rex spoke often of Sainthill, and I remembered that the exhibition I had seen in the Redfern Gallery was devoted to his work. Having been influenced by the visit to Australia of Colonel de Basil's Russian ballet company, Sainthill had travelled to England and established himself as a major designer for the theatre, carrying out commissions for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, among others. He had been a great friend of Nan Kivell and his business partner Harry Tatlock Miller, and had been a frequent guest at El Farah.

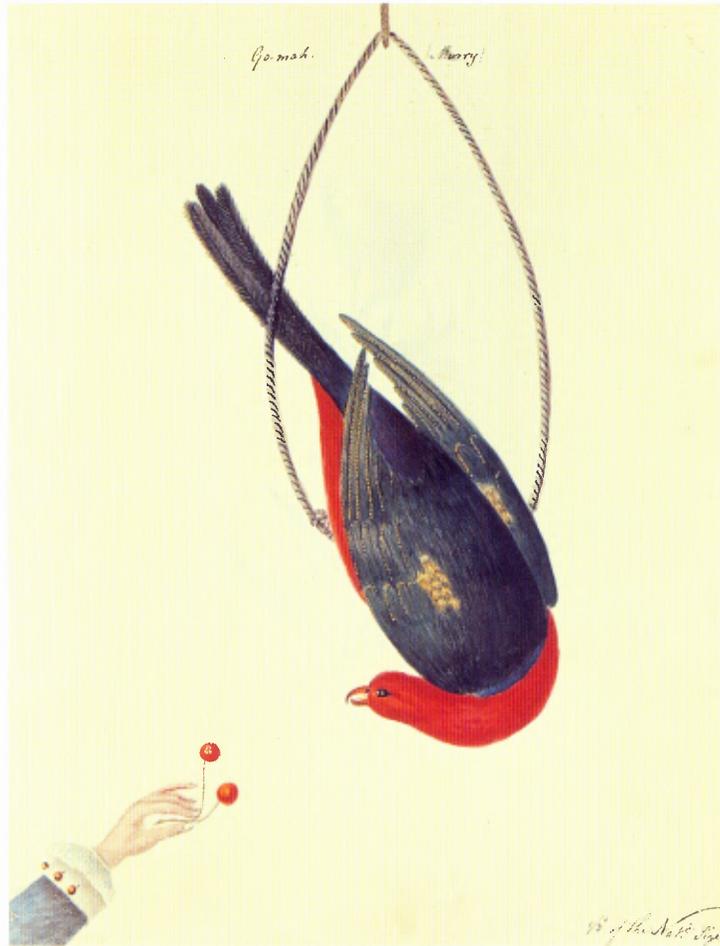
The Old Mountain area of Tangiers was home to a wealthy and well-connected expatriate community. Neighbours of Nan Kivell included Barbara Hutton and the Marquess of Bute. In the case of the Marquess, a family tragedy had discouraged him from visiting his villa for some years. One day, during a summer holiday, his son-in-law had walked into the sea and drowned; no good reason for his apparent suicide had ever come to light. This story remains in my mind as perhaps the most dramatic of the tales of mystery and intrigue which seemed to hang over the expatriate (mainly British) community in Morocco. Escorted by Mizouni as guide and chaperone, we met various members of this community over pre-dinner drinks in the exclusive bars and clubs of this romantic city.

On most mornings, Margaret and I accompanied Mizouni to the bazaar. This was like stepping into another world. The sounds and sights of the bazaar, and particularly the smells—ginger, incense,



hashish, roses—were exotic and exciting, and we felt we had left the twentieth century far behind. My imagined world of the Arabian Nights was brought vividly to life. We were fascinated by the range of leatherwork, textiles, handcrafts, carpets, lamps, and especially the jewellery on display. I bought a small gold charm in the shape of ‘The Hand of Fatima’ as a memento of my visit. Before returning to El Farah, we would sit at sidewalk cafes and drink coffee as we watched the passers-by in their graceful Arab clothes. Margaret and I both acquired caftans—mine was purple—and we wore these to dinner, to the delight of Rex. We found no difficulty in communicating with the Moroccans because even if they did not understand English, they always spoke French, and for the first time we became aware of the value of learning this ‘international’ language at school.

Rex Nan Kivell on the terrace at ‘El Farah’, Morocco 1972  
From the Manuscript Collection (MS4000)



After lunch, Rex would rest, then read, write or play solitaire, and Mizouni would take Margaret and me on drives into the countryside. Places we visited included Asilah, which is a former Roman town on the coast, with a large number of English residents, and Tetuán, a fascinating market town adorned with cool green gardens and olive groves, nestling at the foot of a high mountain. I remember sipping mint tea from a small silver cup in the town square—the sultan’s palace on one side and a mosque on the other—and gazing in wonder at the fountains and minarets.

John Hunter (1737–1821)  
King Parrot (*Alisterus scapularis*)  
plate 33 of *Birds and Flowers of New South Wales Drawn on the Spot in 1788, '89 and '90* 1788–1790  
sketchbook containing 100 watercolours (NK2039/33)

At El Farah, Rex would preside at dinner, which was quite a formal affair—candles, exquisite crystal, Georgian silver, fine wine, and simple but delicious fresh food—often fish. This was followed by coffee in the drawing room. One evening we were taken to enjoy a typically Moroccan dinner of couscous, lamb and rosé wine in the casbah, while being entertained by belly dancers and a knife thrower. Again, that exciting world of Ali Baba came alive before my eyes.

During our stay in Tangiers, Rex told us many stories about the acquisition of particular treasures in his collection. For example, one painting he had coveted for years was finally sold to him by a dealer just before Paris fell to the Germans, and Rex cut it from its frame, rolled it into a cylinder, and hid it up his trouser leg, catching the last train out of Paris. This painting, which is now in the collection of the National Library, depicts the unveiling of a memorial to the French explorer La Pérouse at Vanikoro, Solomon Islands. (It was attributed by Nan Kivell to Louis Auguste de Sainson, but later research suggests that it was probably painted by Louis Philippe Crépin.) I also gained an understanding of those works Nan Kivell considered to be the most precious and the greatest finds of his long career in building his collection relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. He was especially proud of the sketchbook compiled by Governor John Hunter illustrating the birds, flowers, fish and people of the Port Jackson area at the end of the eighteenth century. He referred to this precious item as the crown jewel of his collection.

Many great finds were made in antique shops, often by accident. Rex advised me that any antique shop was worth exploring. This advice applied not only to art works but to all types of material. Rex's own home was an illustration of connoisseurship in practice. Each object was beautiful and interesting in its own way, and most things had been found in antique shops and markets. I remember in particular a lovely chair, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, which was set beside the telephone.

This fairytale holiday ended all too soon, but it had a lasting effect on my life. It led me to study art history, and to work in the Pictorial Section of the National Library where, over a period of 20 years, I had the privilege of gaining a detailed knowledge of the truly marvellous historical collection of Rex Nan Kivell. The time I spent with this extraordinary and generous man gave me an insight into the mind of a passionate collector. I was able to understand the nature and character of the collection he had built up. In later years I was proud to feel that for a time I was one of the guardians of his vision.



William Charles Thomas Dobson (1817–1898)  
*Portrait of William Dampier* c.1850  
oil on canvas; 123.4 x 99.2 cm (NK5374)

# PARADISE POSSESSED: THE REX NAN KIVELL COLLECTION

*Michelle Hetherington*

1998 is the centenary of the birth of Sir Rex de Charembac Nan Kivell, born on 8 April 1898 in Christchurch, New Zealand. In this centenary year, the National Library has chosen to hold an exhibition, *Paradise Possessed: The Rex Nan Kivell Collection*, to honour Nan Kivell and to make his magnificent collection and his contribution to our cultural heritage better known.

The Nan Kivell Collection tells the extraordinary story of European discovery, exploration and colonisation of the Antipodes. It is a story of fascination and curiosity combined with a passion for scientific enquiry, seeking to observe and document the cultural and social diversity of other peoples, and the flora and fauna of other lands. The intellectual climate of the Renaissance encouraged a growing desire for verifiable evidence—as opposed to the legend and revealed truths that had satisfied earlier ages—which resulted in great voyages of discovery. The voyages of the eighteenth century in particular were undertaken in the search for reliable information that would extend scientific knowledge. This information—documentary evidence in the form of maps, astronomical and navigational data, pictorial representations of new lands and their inhabitants, their flora and fauna, specimens and artefacts, journals and logbooks—returned with the voyagers to Europe, where it was keenly sought after and collected. Like the curiosities that filled the cabinets of connoisseurs from the fifteenth century on, documentary evidence from the Antipodes was used in the attempt both to deduce the order of nature and to impose—in its classification—a hierarchy upon creation.

With a passion for discovery that parallels that of the early navigators and explorers of Terra Australis, Rex Nan Kivell sought out these artefacts and documents. After being demobilised from the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in 1919, Nan Kivell did not return home, but chose to remain in England. Scouring the local markets and visiting museums and galleries, he developed his interest in art and antiquities, and began to purchase the first items for a projected pictorial history of Australia and New Zealand. Choosing materials for the light they could shed on European involvement in the Antipodes, he soon extended his collection beyond the purely pictorial to include material that mapped the web of interconnection between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of the Antipodes, between government policy and its implementation in the colonies, between patrons, artists, publishers and the reading public, and between the successes and disasters of transplanting European culture and people to new lands. By setting out to possess paradise, Europeans changed that realm forever.

In 1925, Nan Kivell joined the Redfern Gallery which specialised in modern—particularly French—art, and by 1931 had become its managing director. Refining his skills of discrimination and connoisseurship while earning a good living trading in art, and with extensive contacts in the world



of auction houses and dealers, he was in an ideal position to extend his collection. Among the first to collect in his chosen field, Nan Kivell had little competition. Most of his purchases were made at auctions or through dealers who drew his attention to items they thought would interest him. He also contacted other collectors and families with significant colonial connections to see if they held material of interest that they would be prepared to sell. Fine condition was an important consideration when purchasing items, but comprehensiveness and coherence seem to have been his principal aims. Items were collected in a huge variety of media, from oil paintings to tapa cloth, beautifully bound first editions to handbills and broadsheets, and from rare maps to nautical instruments. The majority of items date from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, although the earliest items—liturgical fragments in his calligraphy collection—date back to the eleventh century.

In collecting material for its possible documentary value, Nan Kivell ranged far beyond portraits of the elite and artworks judged by his contemporaries to be aesthetically important. In doing so,

Unknown  
*Insulaire d'Owhyhe* 178-?  
watercolour; 16.8 x 10.8 cm (NK146)

he both anticipated and provided the basis for a re-evaluation of the history of our region. Items in the Nan Kivell Collection, created by the subjects of a colonising power and sourced by Nan Kivell at the centre of Empire, necessarily reflect the Eurocentric vision that saw all the world as forfeit to the 'progress' of Western society. But as a result of Nan Kivell's inclusive—even encyclopedic—approach, alternative, and at times subversive, readings of the past are also possible. The collection represents an invaluable research tool, containing both iconic works and much that is quirky and unexpected. The value of such a broadly inclusive collection policy becomes apparent when one focuses on the details of specific events. An example is found in the materials that relate to the death of Captain James Cook.

Captain Cook's death in 1779 was an event of great interest, and in response to enormous public adulation of the navigator, many representations of his death were created. Within the Nan Kivell Collection there is a correspondingly large number of these images. Of uncertain date is a small sketch, attributed to John Webber, of an Hawaiian Islander. In the lower left corner is a much



George Carter (fl.1769–1784)  
*Death of Captain Cook* 1781  
oil on canvas; 151.2 x 213.4 cm (NK2)

smaller sketch of Cook being stabbed, added almost as if the death occurred and was recorded while the artist was drawing the Hawaiian. The small size of Cook compared with the central figure disconcertingly inverts our perception of their relative importance and emotional effect and gives the appearance of an eyewitness account. The outlines of the figures, however, have been incised with a sharp implement and then overpainted. Webber's painting *The Death of Captain Cook* (c.1781–83), reproduced as an engraving by F. Bartolozzi and W. Byrne, is possibly the model from which the figures in *Insulaire d'Owhyhe* were copied. The scale of the figures, however, has been changed.

Numerous publications of Cook's voyages are included in the collection, and each edition after 1779 has a representation of Cook's death. The one chosen for display in *Paradise Possessed* shows Cook, face down at the water's edge, being dragged back by the ankles; a pose which, while lacking dignity, has the virtue of plausibility. In George Carter's magnificent history painting *Death of Captain Cook*, however, the death is portrayed as a battle between the forces of light and darkness, between good and evil. Cook's men occupy the lighter left half of the painting, racing to his defence or being sheltered by him. In the right half of the painting, the darkened bodies of the Hawaiians, their faces drawn as caricatures of savagery, appear to swarm beneath a lowering black cliff, threatening to engulf the British. Located just inside the dark half of the painting, preventing the wave of islanders from crashing on to the sailors, is the doomed figure of Cook. Clothing him in pure white, the artist heightens the contrast between Cook and his assailants, making a moral point that would not have been lost on contemporary viewers.

*The Apotheosis of Captain Cook*, used as a backdrop for the pantomime *Omai, or, A Trip around the World*, completes the translation of Cook from naval captain to Enlightenment hero. Borne aloft by Britannia and an angel, sextant in his hand and laurels on his head, Cook enters heaven as a martyr to the advancement of British science, influence and power. The Nan Kivell Collection in providing such a rich visual and documentary record of our past reveals much about the beliefs and values of the creators and subjects of that record and also of the changes in perception and values between their time and our own.

Reflecting particular strengths of the collection, *Paradise Possessed* focuses on six main areas. The exhibition begins with early depictions of Terra Australis Incognita and moves on to the voyages of exploration and their creation of vast amounts of documentary material and art. There are sections on Australia and New Zealand, whose colonisation proceeded from these voyages, and a fifth section documents the role of those tireless agents of Empire, the missionaries.

The final section of the exhibition is about Rex Nan Kivell himself and the acquisition of his collection by the National Library of Australia. The acquisition process, full of suspense and drawn-out and delicate negotiations—as exciting as any thriller—is well documented in the records. Nan Kivell, however, while proving extraordinarily generous to the researcher and historian, has been anything but generous to the biographer. Misrepresenting his grandparents as his parents, lying about



his age—to the extent of having the wrong date and year carved on his headstone—changing the form of his surname, becoming Rex rather than Reginald and adopting an improbable middle name, Nan Kivell successfully stymied any chance of uncovering his illegitimacy until well after his death.

While happy to talk about his exploits as a collector, Nan Kivell ignored requests for personal details, or provided an account the details of which changed with each telling. Many of the claims he made for himself, such as serving on the *Somme* in France or receiving the Danish Order of Dannebrog, have proved fictitious. The creation of his collection, however, a great work of art in itself, has proved a much more substantial claim to repute. Honoured twice by the Australian Government with a CMG in 1966 and a knighthood for services to the arts in 1976, Nan Kivell has earned the gratitude of those nations whose history his collection has enriched.

Fascinated as he was by portraits, Nan Kivell would no doubt be amused to see that his collection now functions as his most revealing portrait. Through it we see a man of enormous generosity, of imagination, vision and determination. In gathering together the heritage of his forebears, Nan Kivell created his own patrimony, and we, his beneficiaries, are all the richer for it.

After Philippe Jacques de Louthembourg (1740–1812) and John Webber (1752–1793)  
*The Apotheosis of Captain Cook*  
 London: J. Thane, 1794  
 engraving; 31 x 21.9 cm (NK10254)

16

V.3



The BOTANIC MACARONI

*Published as the Act directs Nov: 14. 1772 by M. Daryl, 39 Strand.*

*The Botanic Macaroni*  
London: M. Daryl, 14 November 1772  
etching; 17.8 x 12.6 cm (NK5003)

# AN UNENDING CONVERSATION

*Paul Turnbull*

'Collecting is an hereditary disease, and I fear incurable,' Augustus Wollaston Franks once wrote to a friend. Franks, who founded the British Museum's famed ethnographic collections in 1866, was one of many great collectors who have been moved to describe humorously the attraction of buying and trading objects of great beauty or cultural significance as an affliction or madness.

Today there is a tendency to see playful equations between collecting and craziness in an earnest, clinical light. What Rex Nan Kivell called the romance of collecting has been described as a pathological state, in which the collector is said to suffer from a fanaticism, 'always identical,' declares French critic Jean Baudrillard, 'whether in the case of the rich man specialising in Persian miniatures, or of the pauper who hoards matchboxes'. The collector is depicted as morbidly absorbed in a futile quest to arrange things into sets and series that can never be complete.

Some critics have gone further, dissecting autobiographies and reminiscences by famous collectors for signs of deep-rooted (dis) ease, for evidence that the collector's psyche was as delicate and fragile as the artefacts she or he desired, and that at heart these collectors remained lonely children seeking comfort by surrounding themselves with elegant toys.

Recently, I spent a little time leafing through Rex Nan Kivell's private papers in the possession of the National Library of Australia. It soon became clear that this was a man who derived passionate delight from collecting, and from being known and admired for his determination to possess rare and beautiful things. He was clearly in many respects a very private person. However, his resolve, especially to acquire important works relating to the history of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australia, was no fanaticism. Nor do his papers give much credibility to the notion that he was driven by some more or less unconscious sense of loss or anxiety.

A more interesting portrait emerges from his papers. Like the great collectors of eighteenth-century Europe, Nan Kivell regarded the collection of works of art and books as a private pleasure which could strengthen the public good. He understood possession of aesthetically pleasing or historically important objects as imposing an important civic obligation, to stimulate talk about the nature of beauty or the meaning of history, among friends and in society at large. Like his contemporaries, the great political philosophers Isaiah Berlin and Michael Oakeshott, Nan Kivell keenly appreciated that civilisation is a great, unending conversation.

This insight, I suspect, he gained during the course of his military service in the First World War. Nan Kivell did not personally experience the deafening hell of battle. His service record suggests that he may have actively sought to escape being sent to the Western Front. However, he still moved



among those lucky enough to return, but who would remain silent about what they had endured for the rest of their lives. Nan Kivell believed that there were many important strands of conversation, but personally saw none as more important than those calculated to stimulate discussion and debate about the histories of indigenous peoples and settlers in the South Pacific.

Among the National Library's Nan Kivell papers is a catalogue of the printed materials relating to Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand and Oceania that came to the Library. It reveals that Nan Kivell had a remarkably informed grasp of what would prove invaluable to future historians. Often he was far less interested in the craftsmanship or rarity of a book or pamphlet than whether it might contain new information or show past events in a more complex light.

My own suspicion is that Nan Kivell's well-developed sense of the importance of context for the historian derived from his interests in the related field of archaeology. Often overlooked is his active

Rex Nan Kivell's collection now functions as his most revealing portrait  
From the Manuscript Collection (MS4000)

membership of the Wiltshire Archaeological Society. In the 1920s especially he participated in digs on ancient British and Roman sites across southern Britain. In the course of working on excavations he learnt to pay scrupulous attention to the position and relationships between the diverse artefacts he helped unearth. Reading the catalogue listing of his remarkable finds in Europe's second-hand markets and great auction houses, one sees that he was similarly concerned to make possible the exploration of interrelationships between printed texts on which the writing of history so greatly depends.

Historians have benefited incalculably from the writings and images Nan Kivell had the intelligence, energy and resources to acquire. Currently, I am using his collection to research the cultural dynamics of encounters between Australian indigenous peoples and early European explorers. What particularly interests me is how the presence of indigenous communities and their use of the land figured in the evolution of European scientific thinking about the nature and origins of human difference. In the past, historians have tended to treat explorers' journals as relatively straightforward accounts of what they experienced.

One very important series of texts and images acquired by Nan Kivell which suggests that we would do well to treat these accounts as having a complex bearing on past events relates to François Péron (1775–1810), naturalist and surgeon on the French government expedition led by Nicolas Baudin, 1800–04.



Lieut. Robert Dale (1810–1856), engraver Robert Havell (1769–1832)  
A section of *Panoramic View of King George's Sound, Part of the Colony of Swan River* 1834  
hand-coloured engraving; 19 x 274.2 cm (NK759/2)

When he left France, Péron believed nature to be a divinely inspired economy, although one in which the passage of time had so erased the record of humanity's early history that it was highly unlikely scientific investigation would ever determine whether the peoples of the earth were the offspring of one original pair, or had been separately created. Nonetheless, on the strength of a wealth of knowledge gained through years of dissection of all manner of organic forms, Péron believed that all vertebrates took one of several preconceived basic forms, with the bodily structures of each distinct species being infinitely adaptable to environmental conditions.

Péron believed man was an organism similarly capable of being shaped by a spectrum of natural forces. In the first volume of his *Voyage de découvertes aux Terres Australes ...* (1807) he wrote of his encounters with Tasmanian burial places as having been crucial in bringing him to appreciate the power of nature not simply to mould human physiology but to bring new social institutions into existence.

During the course of Baudin's expedition, a surveying party went ashore at Maria Island, off Tasmania's south-east coast. While the bulk of the party mapped the sea channels and adjacent coast, Péron claimed to have set off alone into the interior of the island, and to have come across a path obviously in frequent use by the local indigenous people. Within half an hour he found himself on the top of a low hill, where 'divers kinds of beautiful grasses made a pleasant verdant carpet' with shrubs and trees growing in small thickets.

In his published account, Péron recalls surveying the beauties of the scene with 'a sort of pleasing inquietude', before noticing under the shade of a large casuarina tree a little distance away a 'monument, whose construction excited a considerable degree of curiosity'. The structure took the form of a pyramid carefully constructed of wooden poles and bark strips. 'So many precautions,' Péron writes, 'occasioned me to entertain hopes that I should make some interesting discovery, and I was not deceived.' Taking off the upper layers he found white ashes, into which he claims to have thrust his hand, drawing out a human jawbone. 'I shuddered with a sensation of Horror,' Péron tells us, his first thoughts being that he had come across evidence of cannibalism. However, 'on reflecting a few moments,' he continues, 'I soon began to experience sensations of a different kind: this verdure, these flowers, these protecting trees, this thick bed of green herbage, which so carefully had covered these ashes—all united to convince me that I had discovered a place of burial'.

Péron depicted the country surrounding the grave as a garden, wherein the forces of nature had inspired sentiments of devotion among the Tasmanian people. Devotion had in turn stimulated feelings of filial piety and affection, resulting in burial sites being placed close to fresh water and food resources, so as to ensure that the living, impelled by their daily wants, would 'experience in a greater degree the sentiments of gratitude and attachment' to the memory of the deceased. Péron explained the cremation practices of the Tasmanian peoples to a European audience as being the direct result of the power of nature over 'natural man'. Nature had provided the original impulse to sociability, exciting feelings of affection which rendered it unthinkable the dead should be left unburied.



But as the Tasmanians appeared to have no means of practising earth burial or embalming the corpse, they were left no option but to practise cremation. Here, then, was striking scientific evidence of environmental forces having determined the cultural peculiarities of a people.

However, a careful examination of an engraving accompanying Péron's published account of the encounter, based on drawings by fellow voyager Nicolas-Martin Petit, contradicts his claims in several important respects. Importantly, Péron was not alone. The right-hand background of the engraving depicts three other members of the expedition investigating a second burial place. Significantly, two of the party are sheltering behind a tree, while the third advances on the grave. The inescapable conclusion is that the party feared attack, and that they were almost certainly armed. This was not the peaceful garden of Eden that Péron would have his readers believe he had

Victor Pillement (1767–1814)

*Terre de Diemen, Ile Marie, tombeaux des naturels*

engraving; 24 x 31.2 cm [plate mark]

François Péron, *Voyage de découvertes aux Terres Australes ...* (Paris: Arthus Bertrand, 1824), 2nd ed., plate no. 16 (NK660/16)

encountered. Further examination of the engraving reveals another discrepancy with Péron's published account. The remains within the funerary structure are well exposed and widely scattered, leading one to suspect that Péron knew well he had encountered a tomb, and therefore would not have thrust his hand blindly into the structure.

The engraving does not provide a truer account of what took place on Maria Island, but it radically undermines the veracity of Péron's printed version of events, which for over two centuries has been taken to be an accurate account of what actually took place.

Other texts related to the Baudin expedition collected by Nan Kivell complicate matters further. They reveal, for example, that Péron, while keen to depict the Tasmanians as exemplars of humanity's natural goodness, chose not to reveal that he had indulged in grave robbing, carrying back to the beach 'several human bones and even some pieces of flesh that the fire had not consumed'. In short, we must concede that a more complex encounter between Europeans and indigenous Tasmanians had occurred.

Walter Benjamin observed that many collectors develop intimate relationships with the objects they own, 'Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them.' For Nan Kivell, this may have been true, but only partly so. What truly excited him, I suspect, was imagining how texts and engravings, such as those relating to the Baudin expedition, would allow historians to bring the past alive in all its richness, complexity and ambiguity. For those of us who have the privilege of living imaginatively in his legacy, few days pass without his collection provoking new questions and fresh avenues of enquiry. And that is as he hoped it would be. 'The romance of it,' he once wrote of his collecting, 'is this awakening of interest—like the blooming of a rose. I saw it as a bud.'

# ‘TRAVELLING STRANGE SEAS OF THOUGHT ALONE’

*Michael Richards*

Ask National Library map curator Maura O’Connor to explain the significance of the Rex Nan Kivell maps, and she says, ‘They are about the discovery of Australia, about putting it in a global context.’ And here is an important clue to the national significance of the Rex Nan Kivell Collection. More than anything else, it is about context, about the global environment, about Australia and our neighbours and all our histories. Its rich and diverse Australian content is folded within a series of complex layers, through which connections run constantly out, past the borders of this country to the seas, the Asian and Pacific region, their indigenous peoples, and to the European adventurers, freebooters and settlers who built the colonial societies that established the modern era in our region.

Paradoxically, one of the important layers surrounding the collection is that of the non-Nan Kivell collections in the National Library. By this I mean the things acquired to extend, complement or fill in the gaps left by the Nan Kivell material. Although the Library began serious collecting of non-book material because of its national significance in the 1920s, notably the *Endeavour* journal of Lieutenant James Cook, in many ways it was the arrival in the Library of the first consignments of the Nan Kivell Collection which first turned the Library into the cultural treasure-house that it is today. This is especially so in regard to pictorial material. Rich as the Library was in printed material—especially with the great foundation stone of the Petherick Collection and, many years later, the Ferguson Collection—it was the Nan Kivell material which first pushed the Library way beyond the conventional boundaries of library collection development. This was as much to do with the very nature of the Nan Kivell pictorial material, in particular, as it was to do with the fact that there were pictures at all: here was a collection so rich in its documentation of the past, and so dismissive of purely aesthetic considerations, that it made the growth of policies and collecting ambitions in response both possible and almost inevitable.

The strength of pictorial collections in other great Australian libraries no doubt added impetus to this development, but it is possible it might not have happened in Canberra without the successful negotiation to acquire the Nan Kivell Collection. If one considers the collection, then, as both a thing in itself and as the heart of what has been added since, what a jewel we have here! Here is that which enables scholars working in the Library to bring alive and revisit the past with the voices of those who would otherwise have disappeared. Here is the evidence from which we can piece together the story of the impact of that past on the present. And here is the data for an informed guess about the possible future, based on an understanding of what has gone before. Stored in this building, on its



shelves and in its drawers, manuscript boxes and strongrooms, is Australia's fragile consciousness of itself, the myriad faces and voices of a nation still on a voyage of self-discovery. However seductive our modern fascination with digitisation, and the possibilities of remote access that digitisation creates, in the end it all comes back to these fragile pieces of paper, miraculous survivors of past times. Sometimes, even though there may have been hundreds of copies in the first place, these are now the only known copies.

Libraries are, of course, difficult and dangerous places. Ambushes are not uncommon, and, at times, the stories they tell are uncomfortable. The Rex Nan Kivell Collection reminds us that ours is a culture with its roots in invasion, conquest and settlement. There is very little indigenous material in the

Elizabeth Walker (1800–1876) after W. Alsworth  
*The Emigrants*  
[London]: Day and Haghe, 185–?  
hand-coloured lithograph; 45.2 x 57.2 cm (NK1228)



collection, and it has been criticised for its lack of indigenous focus. This misses the point. The collection was formed in London and the other auction centres of Western Europe, along with the provincial galleries, street markets and antiquarian bookshops of the rest of the British Isles. There was indigenous material to be found in these places, but only the spoils of Empire—the souvenirs and trade goods of conquest. There is a fair swag of this in the collection, but it does not dominate. What does dominate is the triumphalist view of Empire, particularly the seemingly inevitable march to world domination of the British Empire. That which is not British is other, is marginal, is defeated. Or so, to the collectors of the nineteenth century, it would have seemed.

But a revisiting of these shards of the past can tell another story. Even in the presence of the British as observer, we can search for the presence of those who were allegedly displaced by them, finding glimpses of another world in both absence and in the gaps between the all-powerful signs and symbols of rule and the reality depicted, however summarily. Sometimes the intention for such a

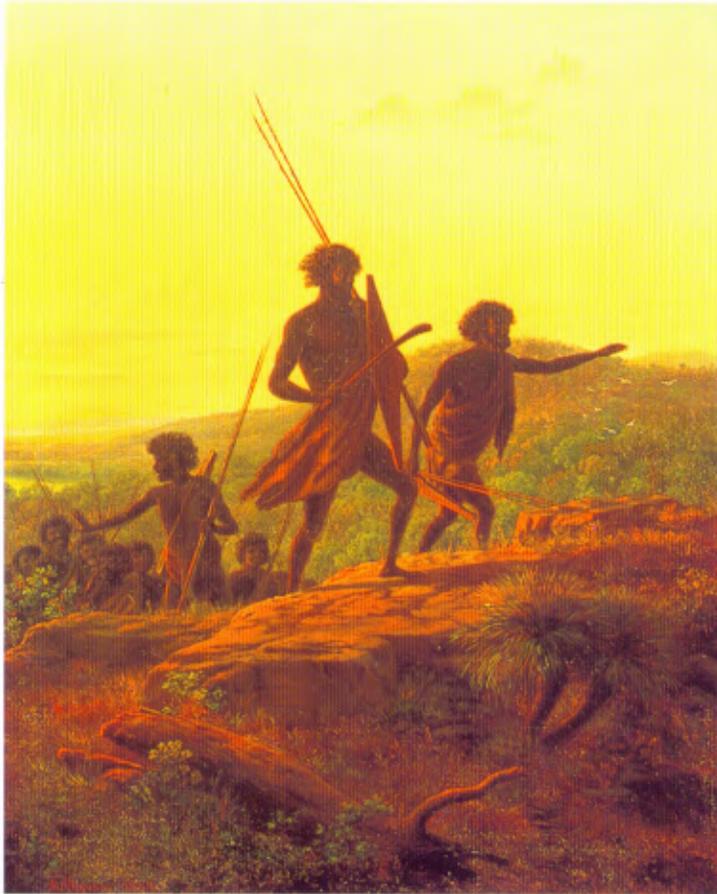
Augustus Earle (1793–1838)  
*A Native Family of New South Wales Sitting Down on an English Settler's Farm 1826?*  
watercolour; 17.5 x 25.7 cm (NK12/45)

reading seems clear on the part of the original artist, as in Augustus Earle's drawing *A Native Family of New South Wales Sitting Down on an English Settler's Farm* (c.1826–27). Perhaps it's a contrast between the stillness and centredness of these defeated people and the pretence of Georgian solidity in the settler building here depicted, but whenever I look at this remarkable drawing, I think of one powerful poster of the Bicentenary: 'Always Was, Always Will Be Sacred Land', and I read Earle's work as a statement about continuing ownership and determination to stay on one's land until driven out.

Sometimes what was perhaps an original heroic sentimentalism can be translated and reread, such as in Eugene von Guérard's *Natives Chasing Game*, also known as *Aborigines Met on the Road to the Diggings* (1854). To view the painting in our times is to receive a different message, intended or not, about inhabitants and displacement. Of course, that is not how such works were always read. When the once celebrated historian Arthur Jose wrote dismissively of Aboriginal people that 'they are not so much inhabitants of Australia as parts of its flora and fauna', in an oft-reprinted school textbook of the 1930s, he expressed a view that would have understood this painting in a different manner. But to our times, with all that is now known of the story from 'the other side of the frontier', to use Henry Reynolds' paradigm-altering phrase, and in the light of such markers of reconciliation and renegotiation as the Mabo judgements and National Sorry Day, the painting stands for something different. It, too, stands for ownership, for continued use and care of the land, in the face of the massive disruption to traditional lifestyles of firstly pastoralism and then the gold rushes. It stands especially for survival.

Finally, here is one of the most extraordinary and distressing items in the collection, the scrapbooks and albums assembled by Horatio Robley in the years after the Maori Land Wars in New Zealand. No vision of Eden, these drawings and photographs of the tattooed heads of Maori people, dead and alive, severed and connected, remind us of the violence of those years, and of the incredible ability of people to turn almost anything into a talisman, a curio and finally a commodity. When Robley's own collection of heads came on to the market, the New Zealand Government of the day declined to buy them, for fear of offending Maori people. Sixty years later, their repatriation has become an issue, as significant in New Zealand as similar questions in relation to Aboriginal body parts taken from Australia by collectors and scientists. Nan Kivell's purchase of the Robley albums, macabre as they might be, makes available to scholars and indigenous people a vital source of ideas about how and why such a trade flourished in Australia and New Zealand. On one level, it exposes the voyeuristic racism that often underpinned the imperialistic project. On another level, it preserves an ancient and honourable artistic tradition.

The turn-of-the-century Australian writer Ada Cambridge spoke of 'travelling strange seas of thought alone'. She referred to the challenge of being a feminist and freethinker, and at the same time the wife of an Anglican clergyman in Melbourne. Her phrase captures much of what it is to be Australian today, 100 years later, as we approach a great milestone in our nationhood and reflect on



the past while building the future. There is so much that is strange, unexpected and perverse in the Australian experience, and much loneliness. Yet there is movement and growth also at many stages of our history, as we have travelled through the democratic experiments and social reforms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the complex and perplexing times of today. Cambridge's compelling words could be applied to much of the experience documented by the Rex Nan Kivell Collection. Without it, our knowledge of ourselves and of our neighbours would be significantly poorer. With it, we can embark on a voyage of discovery as amazing as those of the Polynesian adventurers who first claimed New Zealand and so much of the Pacific, as challenging as those of the eighteenth-century navigators in their tiny ships, and as lonely and yet enriching as those of the colonists who left Europe and Asia to find a new life in Australia in the nineteenth century.

Eugene von Guérard (1811–1901)  
*Natives Chasing Game* 1854  
oil on canvas; 46.5 x 37 cm (NK108)



Silver kettle and spirit lamp given by Queen Charlotte to Sir Joseph Banks 1813  
silver, raffia on handle; 21 cm high (NK29)

# THE REX NAN KIVELL MAP COLLECTION: A COLLECTOR'S COSMOLOGY

*Suzanne Rickard*

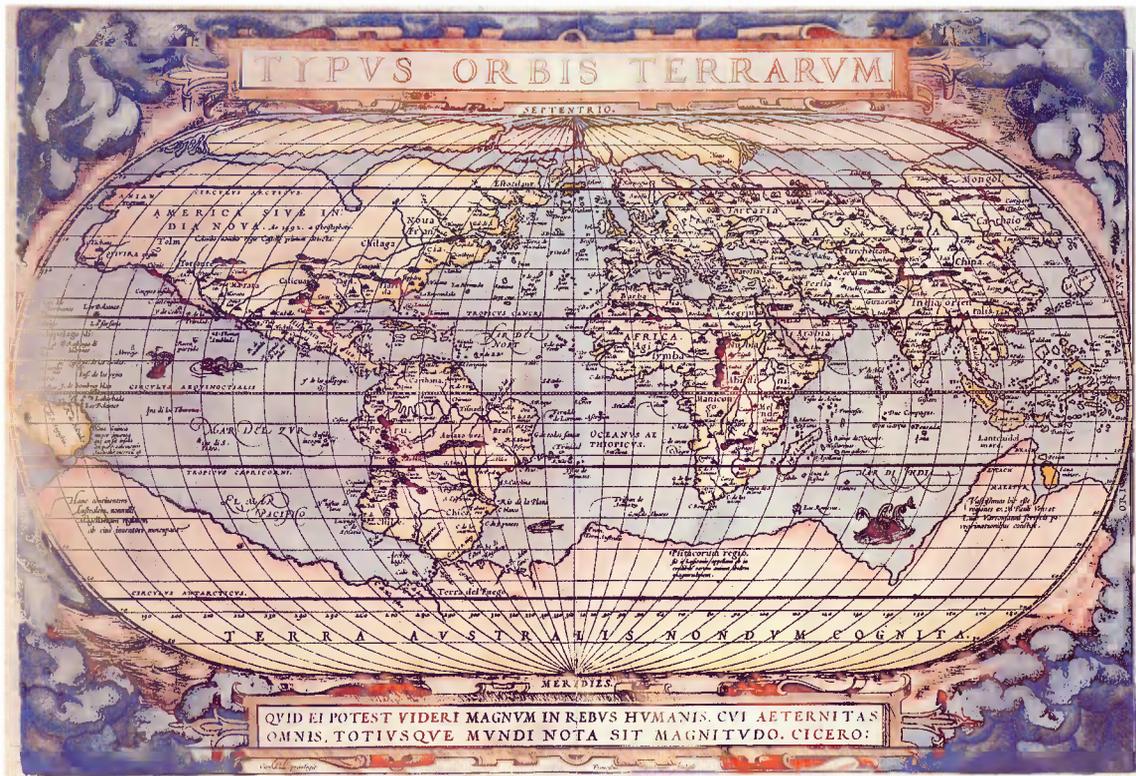
Have you ever pored over a map and noticed how entire continents can be redrawn in the mind's eye? Coastlines, oceans, mountains, rivers—land and sea forms—emerge as features of imaginary landscapes. None of us are born with continents or landscape images in mind, and while many have undertaken journeys, it is the information on maps which enables most of us to conjure visions deep within our brain's own hemispheres. Maps allow us to transport ourselves to places known and unknown. In young minds, such visions may be kindled by outlines and exotic names from the pages of an atlas.

Throughout history, maps have interpreted the known world and suggested the possibility of new worlds. The first maps were drawn on the earth with a finger or a pointed stick. Mental maps held in the memory allowed humans to describe landscapes and localities to others, but such ephemeral information had to be constantly redrawn and retold.

Anxious to understand how the universe and physical world operated, the ancients initiated the study of cosmology. Cosmology derives from the Greek word *cosmos* which refers to the universe as an ordered whole. From this new science sprang theories about the creation and development of the physical world. In terms of illustrating territory, maps have attested to man's desire for knowledge, power and control over the known world.

Maps have been reproduced on materials as varied as stone, papyrus, leather, silk, glass, metal, parchment, vellum, plastic and paper. Reduced to a single sheet or a flat chart, the world is brought down to size to sit on a chart table or a library shelf. The language of maps has also encompassed the physical universe—terra firma, terra incognita, terra nullius. The phenomena of ocean currents, trade winds, water hazards, bomboras, coral reefs and rocky shoals are carefully divulged for impending mariners. Warnings prepare travellers for hazards—'Here be dragons' or 'enemy camp'. Travellers may have never seen an isthmus or ridden along a peninsula, but in a sense know what to expect from searching map illustrations. The eyes of geographers, mariners, surveyors, adventurers, merchants, islanders and explorers have all looked upon and produced maps, but specialist cartographers—particularly from the fifteenth century—have produced some of the world's most beautiful and fascinating documents which have attracted travellers, scholars and collectors.

Reading maps is a two-way process which starts with the map-maker or cartographer who projects a vision on paper or another material, and finishes with the reader who conceptualises that vision. The mysterious continent, Terra Australis Nondum Cognita, revealed by Antwerp cartographer Abraham Ortelius in 1570 on his map *Typus Orbis Terrarum*, tantalised and inspired dreams of an empire in the South Seas.



Maps are, of course, tools as well as practical and historical documents, but they also serve as visual mediators and metaphors. From maps, we have come to expect seas to be blue and mountains black. In an abstract sense, from maps we can understand frontiers, although in reality we know that boundaries are rarely obvious in the landscape. Mountainous terrain is mapped out in colours indicating altitude, while coastlines and ocean depths are emphasised in deeper blues. In ancient maps, coastlines were left as blank spaces almost as if they did not exist, awaiting an explorer's confirmation. What eventually followed were the cartographer's sure lines of definition. As map-makers gradually marked in coastlines, so the speculative spaces in our universe filled with new information.

Today, sophisticated space telescopes explore the furthest reaches of our galaxy and beyond, relaying information electronically, via satellite communication, mapping the earth's surface and extending our knowledge of this universe. Linking these episodes in human history—the mud map and the satellite—are the intervening centuries when maps were committed to human knowledge as documents.

Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598)

*Typus Orbis Terrarum* 1570?

hand-coloured map; 33.5 x 49.8 cm (NK10001)

The Rex Nan Kivell map collection was acquired in 1959 by the Australian Government for the National Library and contains more than 1000 rare maps and charts. Through this collection we witness an expansion of knowledge emerging through wanderlust and navigation. Rex Nan Kivell began acquiring maps and charts in London during the 1940s, and as a connoisseur he understood the mysterious attraction as well as the historical value of the map. In important respects, Nan Kivell created his own cosmology with his collection, which included maps, manuscripts, pictorial and printed material relating to the great voyages of exploration.

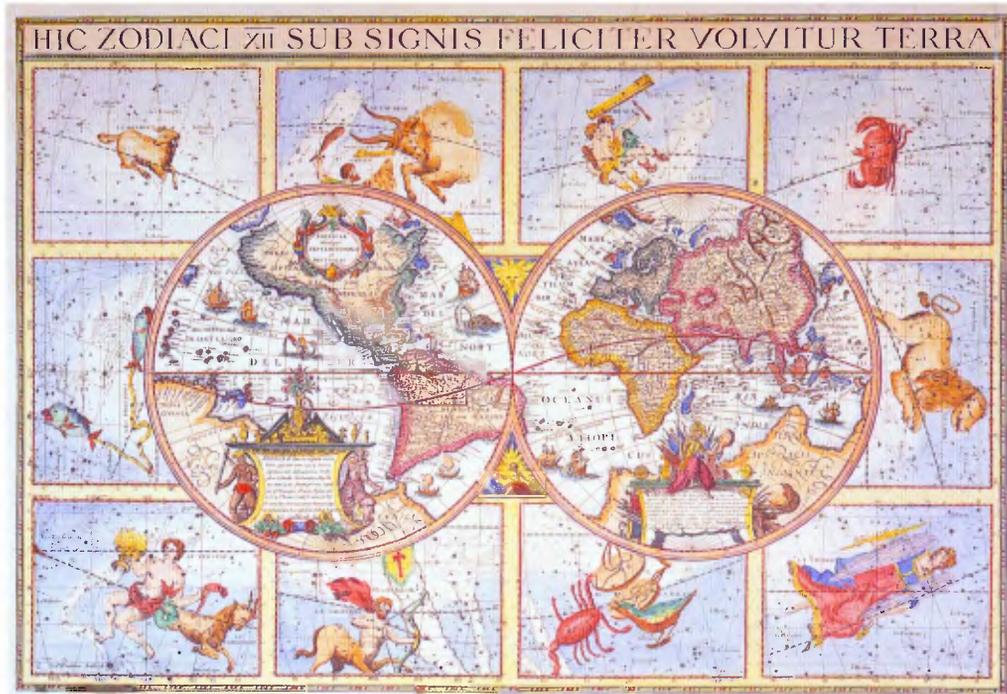
In a sense, Nan Kivell attempted to 'map' knowledge. He focused on the exploration in the Indian and Pacific oceans and the discovery of Terra Australis Incognita, a land first imagined by the classical Greeks. This land was later described as the mysterious Great South Land by the sixteenth-century Dutch cartographer Cornelis de Jode. Emerging by degrees of coastal exploration, New Holland or Terra Australis was revealed to be a continent and not the great southern landmass of the imagination. The seafaring explorers, particularly the Dutch, Portuguese, French and English, literally put Australia and New Zealand on the map.

Nan Kivell's cosmology begins in late fifteenth-century Europe and spreads from the general to the particular, from the great world maps of the Northern and Southern hemispheres to finely detailed maps of the nineteenth-century Victorian goldfields and land divisions in Western Australia. This highly specialised collection encompasses time and space, human exploration, conquest and settlement.

Nan Kivell's interest in maps began as a boy in New Zealand, but it was as director of the Redfern Gallery in London's Cork Street that he was well placed to pursue his collecting interests. He bought material in Europe and further afield, aiming to compile a complete record of flora, fauna, topography, ethnography and cartography relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Continuing the process, the progress of European settlement is then traced through coastal, cadastral and electoral maps well into the nineteenth century. Maps claimed a central place in Nan Kivell's collection as layer upon layer of information was brought together, resulting in one of the truly great collections.

The great Dutch, English, Italian and French cartographers are represented in the Nan Kivell Collection, as are nineteenth-century Australian map-makers. It is an interesting visual exercise to compare the finely hand-coloured and highly decorative sixteenth-century world maps of Dutch cartographers Abraham Ortelius and Hendrik Hondius, with the simple map made by unknown Maori captives taken to Norfolk Island in 1798 to assist in flax weaving. This map, identified as *Ea-hei-no-maue, North Island, New Zealand*, indicated where these men could be safely landed on being repatriated when it was discovered that Maori women and not men wove flax into cloth. These maps, complex and simple, have added particular dimensions to the history of cartography as well as to the early history of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

Imagination, myth and knowledge were skilfully woven together by early cartographers. Take, for example, Nicolaes van Geelkercken of Amsterdam, whose map *Hic Zodiaci XII sub Signis Feliciter*



*Volvitur Terra* incorporates all these elements. This exquisitely coloured world map, published in 1615, shows the known continents, speculative landmasses, strange beasts and signs of the zodiac. To contemporaries, did this represent the best of all possible worlds? Latitudinal and longitudinal measurements and calibrated surveying instruments enabled later cartographers to produce maps with the highest degree of accuracy. Maps might have lost some of their qualities of mystery and wonderment, but they provided mariners and merchants with accurate information which enabled their ships to reach distant ports by the shortest routes, utilising favourable winds and ocean currents. Run lines on nautical charts divided up ocean surfaces, with the essential compass bearings indicating the pull of the magnetic poles.

Dominating the art of cartography in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the Dutch, whose mariners and merchants plied the known world in search of raw and rare materials to trade. The names of Mercator, Ortelius, Blaeu, Hondius and Doncker are most prominent in the Nan Kivell Collection. Around the same time, the Spanish and Portuguese were also producing maps, but were highly secretive, regarding their maps as strategic documents. Spanish and Portuguese maps of this period remain a rarity. Pedro Fernandes de Queiros described his visit to the New Hebrides in 1605 in

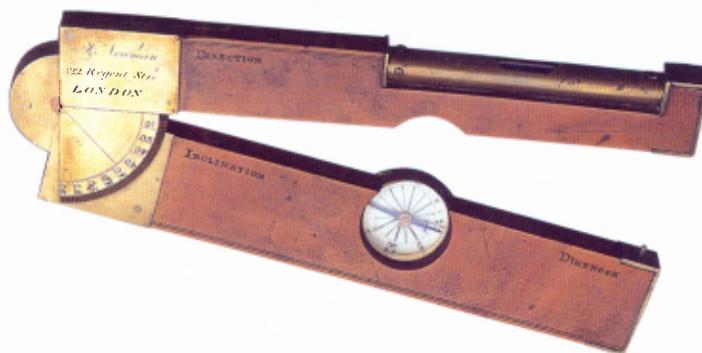
Nicolaes van Geelkercken (c.1585–1672)  
*Hic Zodiaci XII sub Signis Feliciter Volvitur Terra* 1615  
 coloured map; 24.5 cm diam. on a sheet 56 x 75.5 cm (NK9678)

a series of memorials to the Spanish king. *Memorial Segundo—Senor el Capitan Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, Diog: Que Para Descubrir la Parte Incognita del Sur ...* is the basis of the eighth memorial published in 1617 in English. Nan Kivell acquired a rare copy of this memorial, republished as *Terra Australis Incognita ...* by the London bookseller William Bray in 1740(?).

The French made a significant mark in maps in the eighteenth century when Louis Denis provided a double hemispherical map of the world, *Mappe-monde physique, politique et mathématique ou nouvelle manière de considérer la terre*. The French had designs upon the continent of Nouvelle Hollande and had considered their own convict colony before the British claimed the territory for themselves. Later, Louis de Freycinet described his *Voyage de découvertes aux Terres Australes* (1812) in which the landmass and all maps were dedicated to the Emperor Napoleon.

It is significant that Lieutenant James Cook brought French theoretical maps with him on the *Endeavour* when charting Australian waters. From 1770 onwards, the acceleration of British exploration was rapidly reflected in the appearance of Admiralty charts and maps which were printed in London, particularly by W. Strahan and T. Cadell, who reproduced Cook's maps. George Bass, Matthew Flinders and William Westall each produced detailed maps which added to the accumulation of coastal knowledge and resulted in rapid corrections and additions. Nan Kivell made certain that his collection incorporated these maps, effectively completing the continent's circumnavigation, and taking maps from a set of imaginary lines to a confirmed outline of a continent.

The Rex Nan Kivell map collection reflects one man's desire to compile an encyclopedic dossier of 'all knowledge' leading to and relating to the discovery of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. The expanded boundaries of the world are bound up in Rex Nan Kivell's cosmology, and the treasures which he possessed are available within the National Library's Map Collection for all to view.



J. Newman (manufacturer)  
Compass, protractor, ruler and spirit level owned by Alexander Hood c.1772  
instrument set: brass, wood; 30.7 x 5 cm (MS4080; NK2190)

## DISCOVERING VOYAGES: RESEARCHING THE REX NAN KIVELL COLLECTION

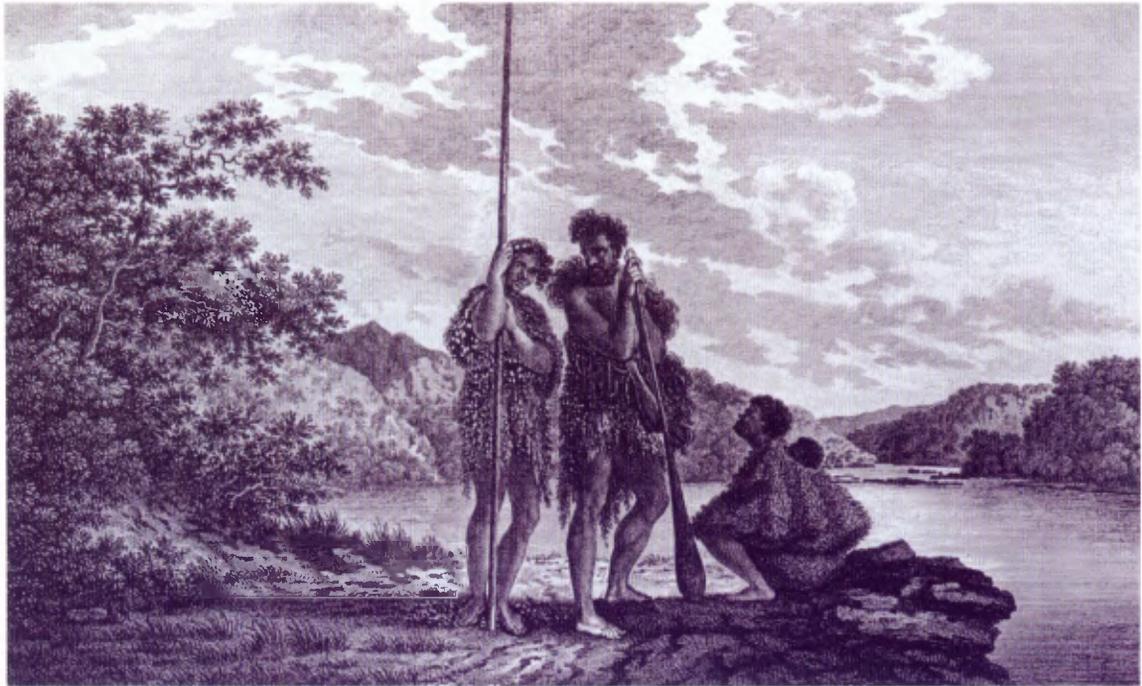
*Nicholas Thomas*

The Rex Nan Kivell Collection held by the National Library of Australia has diverse strengths, but is most famous for its richness in the field of early Pacific voyaging. This area has long been one of tremendous popular interest, especially in Australia and New Zealand, but it has also continually been a focus for innovative scholarship. Those unfamiliar with the study of exploration and cross-cultural encounters might assume that by now, everything has surely been said about the voyages of Captain James Cook.

It is true that an enormous range of primary material and interpretation has appeared in print: J.C. Beaglehole's meticulous edition of Cook's journals; Rüdiger Joppien and Bernard Smith's handsome and authoritative publication *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages*; and many other biographies, histories and scholarly editions. Yet recent shifts in humanities scholarship have opened up many new questions concerning Cook's voyages, as well as those who came before and after. There is much important material in the Nan Kivell Collection that may have seemed less significant before, but will play a vital role in answering some of these new questions, and in stimulating the reappraisal of histories of exploration in a broader sense.

The relevant shifts in wider thinking have been various. Scholars of English literature have gradually moved away from a canon of classics, and are now more concerned to situate those great books within a wider field of cultural expression. They are interested particularly in the ways in which works in formerly neglected genres, such as travel literature, had a broader impact, and expressed social understandings and ideologies in broader terms. Anthropologists have complemented traditional fieldwork with historical perspectives; in regions such as the Pacific, this has meant that the interactions between indigenous cultures and Europeans since early contacts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have become of increasing interest. In the humanities generally, works such as Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1977), which drew attention to the structured misconstruction of the East by the West, have stimulated an enormous range of enquiries into colonial cultures, representations of non-Europeans, and histories of ideas of race and cultural difference. While the project of post-colonial theory, which Said's work stimulated, has remained largely a textual endeavour, cultural historians have turned their attention increasingly toward travel and toward cultural expression in cross-cultural situations.

In the Pacific and Australia, much of this work was anticipated by Bernard Smith's magisterial study *European Vision and the South Pacific* (1960), which addressed European perceptions and representations of Pacific environments and peoples, paying particular attention to the interplay



between visual art and science. Smith's work was distinctive for its engagement with a great variety of textual and visual material, much of it in the Nan Kivell Collection: he drew attention to the relations between studies, finished works and published engravings, illuminating the modification of imagery through composition, publication and republication.

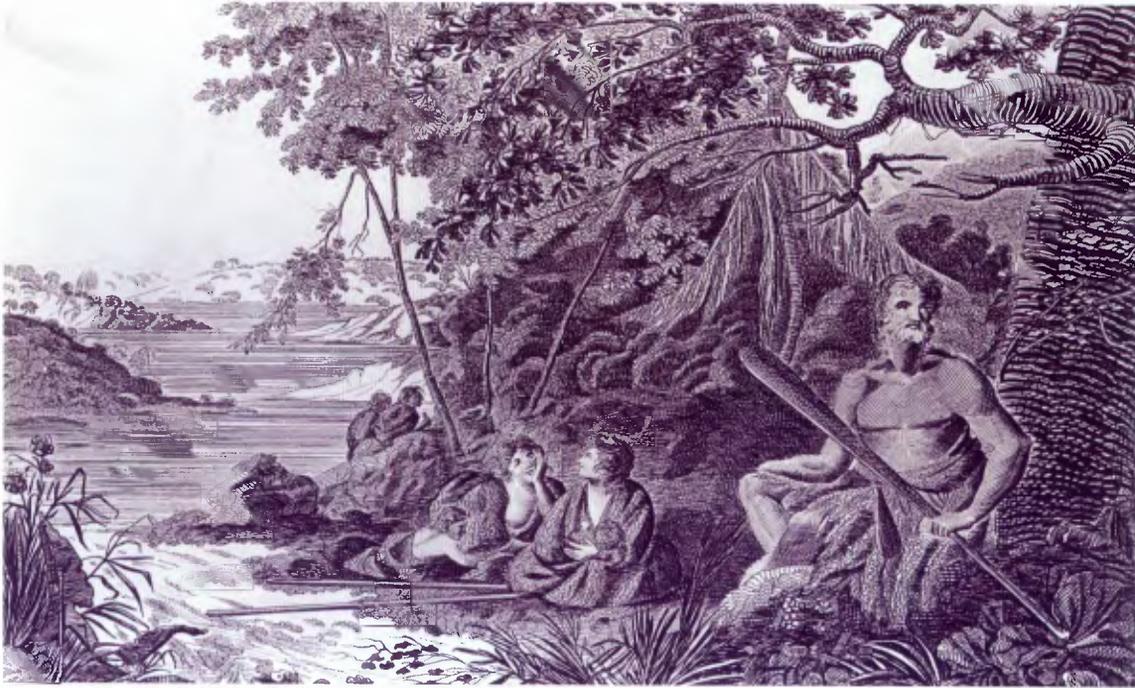
This is an area in which the Nan Kivell Collection still has a tremendous amount to offer. Although the celebration of Cook has become notorious, little work has been done on the representation of the Cook voyages in popular culture. The voyage narratives were constantly reprinted from the time of initial publication right through the nineteenth century, and the images that were reproduced as engravings in the original editions were reprinted, adapted and pirated in a vast number of publications. The Cook that a reader in the early nineteenth century might know would not necessarily have been the Cook of the original eighteenth-century publications, nor the Cook that today's reader of scholarly editions has access to. It would be right to assume that the texts and pictures were abridged and to some degree bowdlerised, but this observation might be a starting point for enquiry rather than an end point. We might also ask: how were the voyage narratives

Daniel Lerpinière (1745–1785) after William Hodges

*Family in Dusky Bay, New Zealand* [sic]

engraving; 25.3 x 38 cm [plate mark]

James Cook, *A Voyage towards the South Pole, and round the World* ... (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1777), vol. 2, plate no. 63 (NK3502)



changed? Which passages in the original publications (which were themselves adapted from the journals) proved problematic or offensive to later readers? How were the morals of contact redefined?

There is, in other words, scope for a whole project that would explore the overlapping histories of voyaging and publishing. Voyage books were generally extraordinarily popular, and went through many editions directed at more and less affluent readers. The Nan Kivell Collection holds not only copies of the original primary sources, which scholars have focused their attention on to date, but also a great variety of these reprints which, as an ensemble, reveal much about who printed voyages and who read them.

The Library holds several copies of a book that marks one of the beginnings of this popularisation of Cook. George William Anderson's *A New, Authentic, and Complete Collection of Voyages* appeared in 80 sixpenny parts between 1784 and 1786. It presented itself as 'the most ACCURATE, ELEGANT, and PERFECT EDITION of the WHOLE WORKS and DISCOVERIES of that Celebrated CIRCUMNAVIGATOR', but was something of a hodgepodge, including histories of the voyages of Drake and a number of earlier navigators, and, to stimulate public interest, a full account

*A Family in Dusk Bay, New Zealand*

engraving

George William Anderson, *A New, Authentic, and Complete Collection of Voyages round the World ...*  
(London: Alex Hogg, 1784–1786?), vol. 3, facing p. 53 (NK5561)

of Cook's death, which was incorporated out of sequence, early in the series. Anderson's preface warned readers of the faults of rival publications. 'Mercenary persons' employing 'sinister artifices' published similar works of poor quality and at excessive expense, and were therefore guilty of obstructing the intention of government, by preventing Cook's voyages being more universally read.

Among the faults of compilations of voyagers, the printer noted that it had 'of late become a Mode too common to usher periodical Publications into the World with a good Appearance at first; and in the Course of their Execution, to fall off from the original Perfection'. Anderson assured his readers that this would not be true of *A New, Authentic, and Complete Collection*; however, a comparison between the fine copperplate engravings issued with the initial parts and the crudely delineated engravings that appeared subsequently makes this charge appear absolutely apt for the very book being advertised. Because the prints were produced out of order, and were normally redistributed through the book when it was bound, this is only obvious when one consults the Nan Kivell copy consisting of the original separately issued parts. One of the more crudely executed engravings is based on the 'Family in Dusky Bay' that appeared in Cook's *Voyage towards the South Pole* (1777). This engraving depicted a group of Maori encountered over a short period in March and April, 1774. The adapted print, 'A Family in Dusk Bay', completely rearranges the figures, foregrounding the man, and emphasising the maternal and dependent femininity of both women.

Later images, which can also be traced through the Nan Kivell Collection, further diminish the cultural particularity of the original print. A curious Italian plate, from an album of assorted travel views, retains the title of the earlier plate, but otherwise possesses the slenderest connections with it. The figures are wholly altered. The man holds a cruder kind of club, and is a generic barbarian, combining traces of Maori *moko*, curvilinear facial tattoo, with a feather headdress that has native American rather than Oceanic associations, and what appears to be a curious kind of figurative body-painting or tattooing, featuring snakes that wind their way down his arms, and botanical motifs on his thighs. The woman is emphatically reduced to subservience.

Readers of Domeny de Rienzi's *Océanie*, a three-volume compendium of geographic and ethnographic information on the region, were provided with a further version of the engraving. Here, the main warrior with his club is preserved, the sex of the second warrior is changed, and the woman to the right is turned into a savage Venus. The distortions did not stop there: this is no longer the family of Dusky Bay but 'Habitants de Mallicolo', that is of Malakula in Vanuatu, which is about as far from southern New Zealand as Managua is from Montreal. Yet de Rienzi's book was swiftly translated into a number of European languages and must have been the most widely distributed synthesis of what passed for European knowledge of the Pacific in the mid-nineteenth century.

Why this succession of distortions? One of the most striking features of the original image of this particular group of Maori people in southern New Zealand was the complexity of the very family depicted, which confused the visitors' expectations of indigenous gender roles. Europeans, at this



time, believed that women were generally degraded among savages; such degradation was indeed taken as a sign of the lack of civilisation. Here, the evidence was perplexingly mixed: one woman did indeed seem to be treated as a bearer of burdens, and is conspicuously subordinate, but another carries a spear and seems to share the warrior liberty of her husband. The anomalies that were

Theodoro Viero (b.1740) after William Hodges  
*Famiglia della Baja Dusky*  
engraving (NK9769)



preserved in the initial print were gradually neutralised, through both more conventional representations of native patriarchy, and more voluptuous renderings of the women.

The example of these shifts in imagery is only a tiny part of a much larger story. That story emerges from the fertile and often violent interactions between Europeans and indigenous peoples that were represented in diverse ways for diverse audiences. Research in anthropology and oral history is helping uncover the other side to this history: the multiple and various indigenous perspectives upon encounters, which archival studies also illuminate in unexpected ways. The Rex Nan Kivell Collection constitutes a vital resource for maritime history, for indigenous history, and for the study of visual art; the collection also offers resources for new enquiries into European culture. Popular publishing represents only one of the areas in which the Nan Kivell Collection might change and enrich our sense of European cultural histories. The collection exemplifies the ways in which an Antipodean vantage point produces new insights into the old world.

*Habitants de Mallicolo*  
engraving

Domeny de Rienzi, *Océanie ou la cinquième partie du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1836–1837), vol. 3, plate no. 251, facing p. 414 (NK9705)

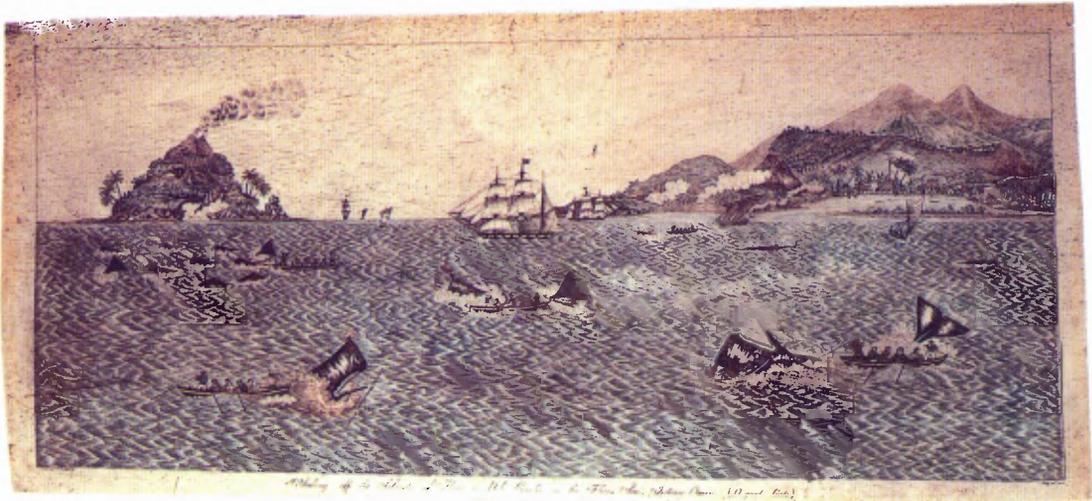
## MR NAN KIVELL'S SCRIMSHAW

*Honore Forster*

The rich diversity in material forms is one of the great strengths of the Rex Nan Kivell Collection and underlies much of its value to scholars and researchers. One of the collection's most remarkable items is part of a sperm whale's lower jawbone, measuring 30.5 x 66 cm. It has been engraved with a beautiful polychrome picture showing a dramatic panorama of ships, whaleboats and sperm whales, with a tropical landscape and a smoking volcano in the background. It is a scene full of movement and colour: the restless waves, the huge whales spouting blood in their death throes, the whale hunters in their frail boats, and the local sailing craft are all carefully delineated. The artist has not painted this remarkable picture, but incised the bone with fine lines, using a sharp instrument, and then filled the lines in with coloured pigments (probably watercolours) which remain fresh and clear to this day, 140 years later. The work has been executed with enormous skill and delicacy, and must have taken many hours of painstaking effort.

Its creator, signing himself W.L. Roderick, inscribed it 'Whaling off the Islands of Flores, & Pulo Comba, in the Flores Sea, Indian Ocean (A good Cut)' and dated it 30 July 1858. It is now known that William Lewis Roderick was an English doctor who sailed several times as surgeon on a London-registered ship to the whaling grounds in the Atlantic and Indian oceans between 1847 and 1856. We also know that the whaleship was called the *Adventure*, and that Roderick decorated other sperm whale jawbone plaques and teeth, some fine examples of which are to be found in American museums. Although the *Adventure* undoubtedly went whaling in Indonesian waters in the vicinity of the island of Flores in the Flores Sea, Roderick's panorama on the Nan Kivell plaque is probably a composite scene. The real *Adventure* takes centre stage in the picture, but Roderick has exercised some artistic licence in his depiction of the dramatic whaling scene. The date of the inscription suggests he completed what seems to have been his *magnum opus* after his return from the *Adventure's* 1856 voyage. This was to be its last whaling voyage—by the 1850s British sperm whaling was almost moribund, and thus Roderick's marvellous ivory image is in some sense a commemoration of an earlier and more active era in England's deep-sea whaling history.

Why did Dr Roderick choose such an unlikely medium for his artistic talents? His years aboard the *Adventure* provided him with both the means and opportunity to practise and perfect his skills as a scrimshaw artist. 'Scrimshaw', a word of uncertain origin, has been called the art of the whaler, and the great whaling years of the nineteenth century saw the burgeoning of this unique form of folk art. Experts suggest that scrimshaw flourished particularly between 1820 and 1870.



Roderick was just one of many whalers—captains and crew alike—who practised the art of scrimshaw during the long and often tedious voyages. He chose a popular form of the art, which involved using a sharp pointed instrument to incise or prick pictures or designs on readily accessible whale products—usually the cleaned and polished teeth of sperm whales. These images were then filled in with pigment—typically black, though sometimes other basic colours were used, as in Dr Roderick’s piece. Ships and whaling scenes, sweethearts and mothers, whales and mermaids, were just a few of the subjects chosen. The name scrimshaw was also given to decorative and/or useful pieces carved from baleen (collected from the non-toothed whales, such as the blue whale) or skeletal bone—items such as ditty boxes (for small valuables), swifts (for winding wool), bodkins, walking sticks, corset busks or stays, baskets, knife handles, pie crimpers, riding whips—in fact, the sheer variety of the scrimshaw objects produced is astounding. Some were engraved, others were not.

The names of many of the scrimshaw makers are unknown. Some however, like Roderick, did sign their work. Edward Burdett, a famous early American scrimshaw artist, not only signed many of his pieces but was also identifiable by his very distinctive style. A handsome, unsigned scrimshaw tooth attributed to him appears on the front cover of *The Dalton Journal: Two Whaling Voyages to the South Seas 1823–1829* (edited by Niel Gunson and published by the National Library in 1990).

The whalers of the nineteenth century could hardly have imagined that their spare-time creations would later be keenly sought by museums and private collectors, and that particularly fine pieces would command extraordinary sums at auctions and through the antiquarian trade. Indeed,

William Lewis Roderick

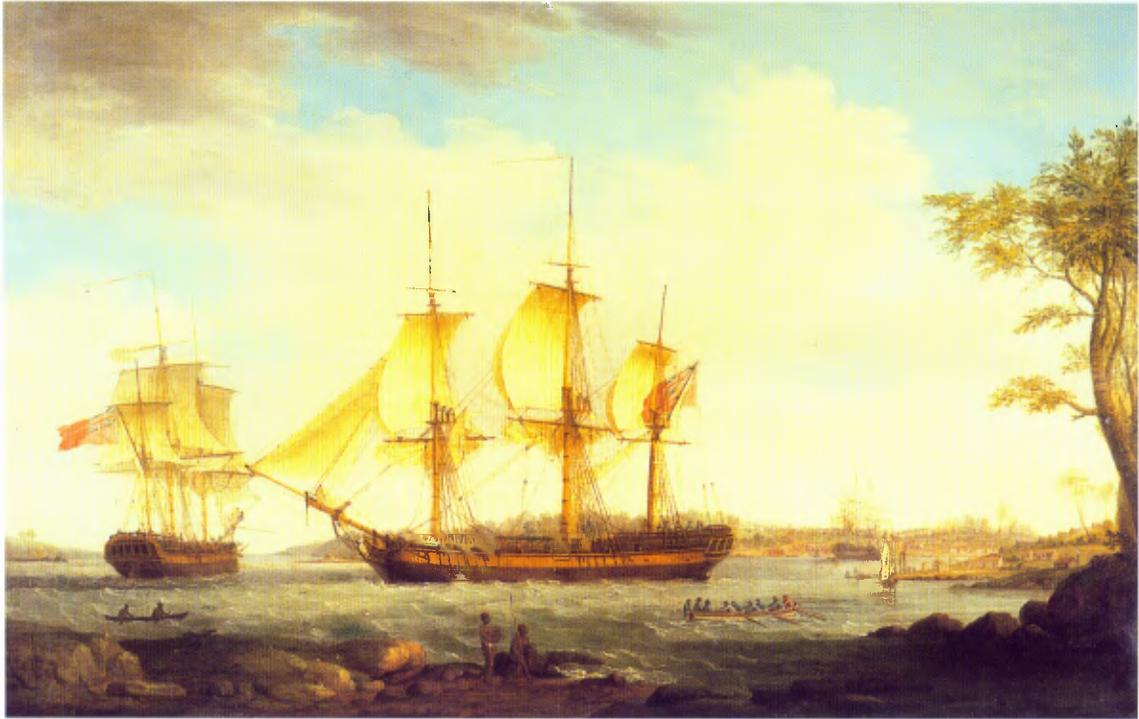
*Whaling off the Islands of Flores, & Pulo Comba, in the Flores Sea, Indian Ocean* 1858  
scrimshaw on whale jawbone; 30.5 x 66 cm (NK828)

in response to this demand, numerous machine-made scrimshaw pieces made from polymer have more recently appeared, causing considerable anxiety among collectors since the fakes are not always easy to detect without expert scientific testing. Engraved teeth have been particularly popular with the fake-makers, but many other spurious scrimshaw items have also been detected. (This 'fakeshaw' should not, of course, be confused with commercially available authorised scrimshaw reproductions—nor with the creative work of modern scrimshaw artists.)

Since American ships were more numerous than those of other countries engaged in nineteenth-century whaling, and whaling records such as logs and journals, as well as personal mementos, tended to be valued and preserved by American whaling families (much more so than elsewhere), many examples of all types of scrimshaw are found in public collections in the United States. American museums such as the Kendall Whaling Museum, the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the Mystic Seaport Museum and the Nantucket Whaling Museum all have large and impressive collections of this art—including, it should be noted, decorated teeth and plaques



Thomas Buttersworth (fl.1813–1827)  
*Three Vessels Whaling among Icebergs* c.1820  
oil on canvas; 45.1 x 61.1 cm (NK1166)

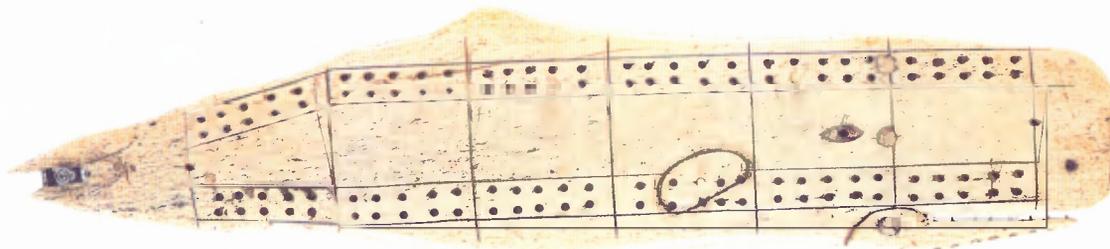


by Dr Roderick. While there are fewer extant works of English scrimshaw, some fine examples are nonetheless found in such collections as the Town Docks Museum in Hull. (The *Phoenix* tooth on the cover of the *Dalton Journal* publication is in this collection.) In Australia, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in Hobart has probably the most significant collection of pieces of British origin, but there are plenty of others in public collections both in Australia and New Zealand. William Roderick's magnificent piece of engraved jawbone—as important aesthetically as it is from a documentary point of view—is one of a number of fine pieces from the Nan Kivell Collection now on loan to the National Gallery of Australia. (A reference image may be consulted through the National Library's Images1 site on the World Wide Web, at <http://www.nla.gov.au/images1/>.)

The growing interest in scrimshaw has led to the publication of numerous books and articles on the subject.<sup>1</sup> William Roderick's artwork has attracted the attention of scrimshaw expert Janet West and anthropologist R.H. Barnes, who provide a detailed description of the plaque, the whaling scene and its locality, as well as telling us what is known about William Roderick the artist.<sup>2</sup> Other notable contributions to the Australian literature on scrimshaw are by Vaughan Evans<sup>3</sup> and Stuart M. Frank.<sup>4</sup>

Thomas Whitcombe (1763–1824)  
*Departure of the Whaler Britannia from Sydney Cove 1798*  
oil on canvas; 82 x 122.5 cm (NK7)

These and other modern studies, with their wide-ranging surveys and assessments of important scrimshaw collections and of individual pieces, help us to appreciate in some depth the unique qualities of Dr Roderick's engraved jawbone. But it is also important to acknowledge Rex Nan Kivell's connoisseur's eye, and his acumen in acquiring this unusual and beautiful work long before scrimshaw became a fashionable collectible.



#### NOTES

- 1 Useful books on the whaler's art in the National Library's collection include: Richard C. Malley, *Graven by the Fishermen Themselves: Scrimshaw in Mystic Seaport Museum* (Mystic, Connecticut: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1983); and Clare Barnes, *John F. Kennedy: Scrimshaw Collector* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), which contains numerous excellent colour photographs of the ex-president's remarkable collection.
- 2 'Scrimshaw by William Lewis Roderick: A Whale Bone Plaque Dated 1858 Showing the Barque *Adventure* of London Whaling off Pulau Komba in the Indian Ocean', *Mariner's Mirror*, vol. 76, no. 2, 1990. Dr West has also written a very useful two-part survey, 'Scrimshaw in Australia with Special Reference to the 19th Century', *The Great Circle*, vols 8 and 9, 1986 and 1987. Other interesting articles by Dr West include 'Scrimshaw: Facts and Forgeries', *Antique Collecting*, vol. 16, no. 10, 1982; and 'Australian Scrimshaw', *Australiana*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1987.
- 3 Vaughan Evans, 'Scrimshaw: The Art of the Whalers', *The Australasian Antique Collector*, vol. 20, 1980.
- 4 Stuart M. Frank, 'The Origins of Engraved Pictorial Scrimshaw', *Antiques*, vol. 142, no. 4, 1992. This work is a most beautifully illustrated and informative study of the subject.

Unknown  
Scrimshaw cribbage board  
scrimshaw; 41 cm long (NK5059)



Sir William Beechey (1753–1839)  
*Portrait of King George III* c.1800  
oil on wood panel; 29.2 x 23.9 cm (NK6229)

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

HONORE FORSTER was formerly a research officer in the Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University, Canberra. She is the author of several books and articles relating to the history of whaling in the Pacific Ocean in the nineteenth century, with a particular interest in the role of doctors on whaleships. Her publication *The South Sea Whaler* (1985) has become the standard bibliographic guide to nineteenth-century whaling in the Pacific.

SASHA GRISHIN studied art history at the universities of Melbourne, Moscow, London and Oxford and has served several terms as visiting scholar at Harvard University. In 1977 he founded the Fine Art Program at the Australian National University and now is a Reader in Art History at that university. He has published extensively in contemporary and medieval art. His books include *Dr Doyle's Sketches in Australia* (1993) and *Australian Printmaking in the 1990s: Artist Printmakers, 1990–1995* (1997). He is presently completing a three-volume publication titled 'S.T. Gill and His Audiences' which will include a comprehensive *catalogue raisonné*.

MICHELLE HETHERINGTON is the curator of the National Library of Australia's 1998 exhibition *Paradise Possessed: The Rex Nan Kivell Collection*. She has a background in Fine Arts, majoring in Sculpture, English Literature, Art History and History. She has worked at the National Library since 1991.

BARBARA PERRY worked in the National Library of Australia from 1968 until 1998. For 20 years, she held the position of Pictorial Librarian which included responsibility for the care of Rex Nan Kivell's paintings, prints, drawings and historical objects relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

MICHAEL RICHARDS was for many years Curator of Exhibitions at the National Library. He is now the Historian at Old Parliament House in Canberra. Himself a child of Empire, he grew up in South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, the descendant of English, Dutch, German and Welsh settlers in South Africa, India, Indonesia and New Zealand.

SUZANNE RICKARD is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Division of Historical Studies, Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University. She has a particular interest in late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century British and Australian social and cultural history. She is a frequent user of the Library's manuscript and rare book collections and contributes regularly to *National Library of Australia News*. She is currently editing a scholarly edition of George Barrington's *Voyage to New South Wales* (1795), using illustrative materials drawn from the Rex Nan Kivell Collection.

BERNARD SMITH lives and works in Melbourne. A distinguished art historian, he was a pioneer in Australia in interrogating the visual documentary record of the European penetration of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. His publications include *Place, Taste and Tradition* (1945), *European Vision and the South Pacific* (1960), a volume of autobiography *The Boy Adeodatus* (1985) and, with Rüdiger Joppien, *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages* (1985–87).

NICHOLAS THOMAS studied anthropology, archaeology and Pacific history at the Australian National University and completed a doctorate on Marquesan culture and contact history in 1986. He was a research fellow in cultural anthropology at King's College, Cambridge, from 1986 to 1989, and then held Australian Research Council fellowships before taking up his current position as Director of the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research at the Australian National University. He has written widely on Pacific history, anthropological theory, and art. His books include *Entangled Objects* (1991) and *Colonialism's Culture* (1994).

JOHN THOMPSON has worked in the National Library of Australia since 1979. He has taken a special interest in the building of the national collection of Australian materials. He traces his family origins in Australia back to the eighteenth century, a perspective which enriches his appreciation of the range and diversity of Rex Nan Kivell's great Australasian collection.

PAUL TURNBULL is an historian and a past Harold White Fellow of the National Library. He has written extensively on ideas of history and anthropology since the late eighteenth century, and is currently a visiting senior research fellow at the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research at the Australian National University.

# REX NAN KIVELL EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

## INTRODUCTION

Joseph Griffiths Swayne (1819–1903)  
*Canterbury Plains from the Port Hills  
Showing the Coast of Pegasus Bay  
near Christchurch, NZ* 1861  
oil on canvas; 89.7 x 135.3 cm  
T405 NK1288

## SECTION 1

### Terra Australis Incognita

Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598)  
*Typus Orbis Terrarum* 1570?  
coloured map; 33.5 x 49.8 cm  
NK10001

Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598)  
*Americae Sive Novi Orbis Nova  
Descriptio* 1587  
hand-coloured map; 34 x 46.5 cm  
on a sheet 39.8 x 51.4 cm  
Map RM2099 NK1528

Unknown

*Abraham Ortelius, Cosmographus  
Regius* 16–?  
wood engraving; 17.5 x 12 cm  
U6869 NK3442

Joseph Hall (1574–1656)  
*Mundus Alter et Idem: Siue Terra  
Australis ante Hac Semper Incognita  
Longis Itineribus Peregrini Academici  
Nuperrime Lustrata*  
London: H. Lownes, 1605?  
NK910

Daniel Defoe (1661?–1731)  
*The Life and Adventures of Robinson  
Crusoe*  
London: Willoughby & Co., 184–?  
NK9747

Nicolaes van Geelkercken  
(c.1585–1672)  
*Hic Zodiaci XII sub Signis Feliciter  
Volvitur Terra* 1615

coloured map; 24.5 cm diam.  
on a sheet 56 x 75.5 cm  
NK9678

Pedro Fernandes de Queiros (d.1615)  
*Terra Australis Incognita, or,  
A New Southern Discovery:  
Containing a Fifth Part of the World/  
Lately Found out by Ferdinand  
de Quir, a Spanish Captain*  
London: William Bray, 1740?  
NK5371

Johannes Kepler (1571–1630)  
*Tabulae Rudolphinae ...*  
Ulmae: J. Saurii, 1627–[1630]  
NK6789

Vincenzo Coronelli (1650–1718)  
**Section of a World Map**  
Venezia: Accademia Cosmografica degli  
Argonauti, 1692 or 1693  
three gores of a globe, paper;  
42 x 29.3 cm, 47.5 x 27 cm, 47.3 x 28 cm  
NK10244A, B, C

Jacques Cassini (1677–1756)  
*Planispherum Terrestre Secundum  
Recentiores Astronomorum Observations*  
1696  
coloured map; 53 cm diam.  
on a sheet 55.2 x 70.4 cm  
NK3945

Louis Renard  
*Poissons, écrivisses et crabes de  
diverses couleurs et figures  
extraordinaires ...*  
Amsterdam: 1718?  
NK3704

## SECTION 2

### Curious To Discover

Louis Denis (1725–1794)  
*Mappe-monde physique politique et  
mathématique ...*  
Paris: Pasquier, 1764

coloured map; two hemispheres  
61.3 cm diam. on a sheet 69 x 136 cm  
NK7076

Michael Burghers  
*A New Map of the Terraqueous Globe  
According to the Ancient Discoveries ...*  
Oxford: Edward Wells, 1700  
coloured map; two hemispheres  
24.5 cm diam. on a sheet 53.5 cm long  
NK6248

William Dampier (1652–1715)  
*A New Voyage round the World ...*  
2nd rev. ed. London: James Knapton,  
1697  
NK1509

William Charles Thomas Dobson  
(1817–1898)  
*Portrait of William Dampier* c.1850  
oil on canvas; 123.4 x 99.2 cm  
T382 NK5374

Samuel Wallis (1728–1795)  
*Whitsunday Island* c.1767  
drawing/wash; 28.7 x 44 cm  
T1913 NK31/1

Unknown

*The Natives of Otaheite Attacking  
Captain Wallis, the First Discoverer of  
that Island* 1786?  
engraving 21.2 x 26.2 cm  
U3006 NK1680

François Godefroy (1748–1819)  
*Cession de l'isle de Otahiti au  
Capitaine Wallis par la reine Oberea*  
1774?  
engraving; 22 x 33 cm  
U1193 NK2164

Sir William Beechey (1753–1839)  
*Portrait of King George III* c.1800  
oil on wood panel; 29.2 x 23.9 cm  
T496 NK6229

- James Cook (1728–1779)  
*A Chart of the Southern Hemisphere Shewing the Tracks of Some of the Most Distinguished Navigators*  
London: W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1 February 1777  
map; 49.5 cm diam.  
on a sheet 56.6 x 53.8 cm  
NK2456–15
- James Cook (1728–1779)  
**Letter, Plymouth Sound, to George Perry, Victualling Office, London**  
11 July 1772  
MS4037
- J. Newman (manufacturer)  
**Compass, protractor, ruler and spirit level owned by Alexander Hood** c.1772  
instrument set: brass, wood; 30.7 x 5 cm  
MS4080  
A40002500 NK2190
- Unknown  
*A View in Othaite* c.1820  
oil on canvas; 71.2 x 91.5 cm  
T274 NK11
- Sydney Parkinson (1745?–1771)  
**Bread Fruit** 1769?  
watercolour; 30.8 x 38.5 cm  
T2501 NK1223
- John Hawkesworth (1715?–1773)  
*An Account of the Voyages Undertaken by the Order of His Present Majesty, for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere ...*  
3 vols. London: W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1773  
NK1426
- George William Anderson  
*A New, Authentic, and Complete Collection of Voyages round the World, Undertaken and Performed with Royal Authority ... of Capt. Cook's First, Second, Third and Last Voyages ...*  
London: Alex Hogg, 1784–1786?  
NK5656
- James Cook (1728–1779)  
*A Voyage towards the South Pole, and round the World ... in the Years 1772, 1773, 1774 and 1775 ...*  
2 vols. London: W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1777  
NK5677
- After Philippe Jacques de Loucherbourg (1740–1812) and John Webber (1752–1793)  
*The Apotheosis of Captain Cook*  
London: J. Thane, 1794  
engraving; 31 x 21.9 cm  
U1183 NK10254
- George Carter (fl.1769–1784)  
**Death of Captain Cook** 1781  
oil on canvas; 151.2 x 213.4 cm  
T266 NK2
- Unknown  
*Insulaire d'Owhyhe* 178–?  
watercolour; 16.8 x 10.8 cm  
T2422 NK146
- James Cook (1728–1779)  
*A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean for Making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere ...*  
3 vols. London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1813  
NK1091
- John Spiller (1763–1794)  
**Marble plaque of John Webber** c.1790  
white marble plaque; 71.5 cm diam.  
A40008169 NK1110
- John Webber (1752–1793)  
*View in Ulietea* 1786  
oil on canvas; 43.4 x 61 cm  
T417 NK5929
- Sample of tapa cloth brought back by Alexander Hood, Master's mate, HMS Resolution** 1774?  
plant fibre and pigment; 349 x 61.5 cm  
A40005038 NK2276
- C. Essex & Co. (manufacturer)  
**Compass and sundial** c.1780  
brass and wood; 7 cm diam.  
A40002357 NK10852
- Arthur William Devis (1763–1822)  
*Portrait of Captain Wilson of the Antelope* c.1782  
oil on canvas; 74 x 60.8 cm  
T418 NK5375
- Unknown  
*Abba Thulle, King of Pelew, together with Ludee His Wife and Prince Lee Boo Their Son* 180–?  
engraving; 18 x 23.2 cm  
U7249 NK1645
- John Wedgeborough  
*Journal* 1792–1794  
MS4088
- The Shipwreck of the Antelope ... on the Pelew Islands ... in August 1783*  
London: R. Randall, 1788  
NK2192
- Henry Wilson (1740–1810)  
*Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Antelope ... on the Pelew Islands ... in August 1783*  
Perth [Scotland]: R. Morison and Son, 1788  
NK5686
- The History of Prince Lee Boo, a Native of the Pelew Islands*  
London: J. Harris, 1812  
NK1097
- Charles Darwin (1809–1882)  
**Letter, Valparaiso, to Charles Whitley, College, Durham** 23 July 1834  
MS4260
- Conrad Martens (1801–1878)  
**Valparaiso, 1834** 1834  
watercolour; 53.7 x 75.7 cm  
T1719 NK154

### SECTION 3

#### The Progress of Art

##### *The Botanic Macaroni*

London: M. Darly, 14 November 1772  
etching; 17.8 x 12.6 cm  
U6305 NK5003

##### *The Fly Catching Macaroni*

London: M. Darly, 12 July 1772  
etching; 17.6 x 12.3 cm  
U6303 NK5004

##### *The Simpling Macaroni*

London: M. Darly, 13 July 1772  
etching; 17.8 x 12.6 cm  
U7126 NK5005

##### **Silver kettle and spirit lamp given by Queen Charlotte to Sir Joseph Banks**

1813  
silver, raffia on handle; 21 cm high  
A40009467 NK29

Alexander Dalrymple (1737–1808)  
*A Serious Admonition to the Publick, on the Intended Thief-Colony at Botany Bay*

- London: John Sewell, 1786  
NK9608
- Henry Brewer (1739–1796) attrib.  
The Port Jackson Painter  
(fl.1788–1792)  
*View of the Entrance into Port Jackson  
Taken from a Boat Lying under the  
North Head* 1790?  
watercolour; 11.7 x 24.2 cm  
T1996 NK205
- John Hunter (1737–1821)  
New Zealand Flax (*Phormium tenax*)  
plate 91 of *Birds and Flowers of  
New South Wales Drawn on the Spot  
in 1788, '89 and '90* 1788–1790  
sketchbook containing  
100 watercolours  
NK2039
- John Hunter (1737–1821)  
**Letter, Sydney, New South Wales to  
Sir Joseph Banks** 5 April 1800  
MS4247
- William Mineard Bennett (1788–1858)  
*Portrait of Vice-Admiral John Hunter,  
Governor of New South Wales* c.1812  
oil on wood panel; 19.4 x 17.6 cm  
T450 NK2040
- Henry Brewer (1739–1796) attrib.  
The Port Jackson Painter  
(fl.1788–1792)  
*[Australian Aborigine]* 1790?  
gouache drawing; 30.5 x 24.3 cm  
T2128 NK144/B
- Richard Atkins (1745–1820)  
*Journal* 1791–1810  
MS4039
- Sir William Beechey (1753–1839)  
*Portrait of George Barrington* c.1785  
oil on canvas; 77 x 63.3 cm  
T275 NK13
- Watkin Tench (1758/9–1833)  
*A Narrative of the Expedition to  
Botany Bay ...*  
London: J. Debrett, 1789  
NK85
- John White (1757/8–1832)  
*Journal of a Voyage to New South  
Wales ...*  
London: J. Debrett, 1790  
NK653
- Unknown  
*Captains Hunter, Collins & Johnston  
with Governor Phillip, Surgeon White  
etc. Visiting a Distressed Female  
Native of New South Wales at a Hut  
near Port Jackson* 1793  
engraving; 14.1 x 19.7 cm  
S4782 NK2799
- Bennelong (c.1764–1813)  
**Letter, Sydney Cove, New South Wales  
to Mr Phillips** 29 August 1796  
MS4005  
NK4048
- James Neagle (1760–1822)  
*[Ben-nil-long]* 1798  
copper engraving; 10 x 13.5 cm  
U5308 NK9503
- Thomas Whitcombe (1763–1824)  
*Departure of the Whaler Britannia  
from Sydney Cove* 1798  
oil on canvas; 82 x 122.5 cm  
T271 NK7
- George Shaw (1751–1813)  
*The Naturalist's Miscellany ...*  
London: F.P. Nodder, 1790–1813  
NK1079
- John William Lewin (1770–1819)  
*Cryptophasa pultenae* 1803  
plate 13 of *Natural History of  
Lepidopterous Insects of New South Wales*  
London: Thomas Lewin, 1805  
hand-coloured etching; 20.2 x 15.2 cm  
U426 NK39/13
- John William Lewin (1770–1819)  
*[Two Kangaroos in a Landscape]* 1819  
watercolour; 39.5 x 56.5 cm  
T1619 NK139/A
- Joseph Lycett (1775–c.1828)  
*Hibiscus grandiflora, Australia*  
c.1820  
watercolour; 36.2 x 27.8 cm  
T1640 NK6335/F
- Allan Cunningham (1791–1839)  
**Letter, Crepang Bay, Timor,  
to Sir Joseph Banks** 8 November 1819  
MS4169
- Phillip Parker King (1791–1856)  
*Tomb of Allen [i.e. Allan]  
Cunningham Esqr. at Sydney* 1840?  
hand-coloured lithograph; 24.2 x 19.5 cm  
U5932 NK3415
- John Heavyside Clark (c.1770–1863)  
*Field Sports ... of the Native Inhabitants  
of New South Wales*  
London: Edward Orme, 1813  
NK756
- List of male and female convicts  
in His Majesty's Gaol, the Castle of  
Lincoln, on 17 May 1794, who were  
to be transported according to their  
sentences** 1794  
MS4040
- Nicholas Matthew Condry (1799–1857)  
*Convict Hulks at Gravesend, England*  
c.1830  
oil on canvas; 33 x 45.5 cm  
T495 NK6062
- Josiah Godber  
**Letter to his wife** 4 December 1817  
MS4199
- George Brassington  
**Letter to Mrs Godber** 6 July 1823  
MS4199
- Frederick Bromley, engraver (fl.1856–1860)  
*General Sir Thomas Makdougall  
Brisbane, of Brisbane and  
Makerstoun, Bart* 18 July 1842  
mezzotint; 38 x 29.8 cm  
U7184 NK1929
- Sir Thomas Brisbane (1773–1860)  
**Dispatch** 13 December 1822  
MS4036
- Sir Thomas Brisbane (1773–1860)  
**Letter, Council of the Royal Society**  
22 May 1828  
MS4036 Box 1, item 17
- Sir Ralph Darling (1775–1858)  
**Letter to Sir Thomas Brisbane**  
4 February 1826  
MS4036
- John Linnell (1792–1882)  
*Portrait of Mrs Darling and Two of  
Her Children* 1825  
oil on wood panel; 53.4 x 64.7 cm  
T373 NK1102
- James Atkinson (1795–1834)  
*An Account of the State of Agriculture  
and Grazing in New South Wales*  
London: J. Cross, 1826  
NK883

- W. Newman  
**Female Emigration** October 1834  
hand-coloured lithograph; 36.2 x 22.7 cm  
U2599 NK4184
- Augustus Earle (1793–1838)  
**Bungaree, a Native Chief of  
New South Wales** 10 August 1830  
hand-coloured lithograph; 31 x 20 cm  
U19 NK2652
- J. Fitzsimons  
**Aboriginal king plate with  
engraving: Tallboy, King of Moorabie**  
c.1865  
brass breastplate; 8 x 16 cm  
A4000702 NK1880
- Lancelot Edward Threlkeld  
(1788–1859)  
**Dialect of Aborigines, Newcastle**  
1825?  
MS4036
- Edwin Stocqueler (1829–c.1857)  
**Night Corrobee of Australian Natives**  
c.1850  
oil on canvas; 48 x 77.3 cm  
T504 NK6777
- Carved emu egg on silver plate and  
wood stand with fern, kangaroo and  
emu decoration** c.1900  
emu egg, silver plate, wood; 27 cm high  
A40004619 NK6769/3
- Lieut. Robert Dale (1810–1856),  
engraver Robert Havell (1769–1832),  
**Panoramic View of King George's Sound,  
Part of the Colony of Swan River** 1834  
hand-coloured engraving; 19 x 247.2 cm  
U708 NK759/2
- Swan River Settlement: Return to an  
Address of the Honourable the House  
of Commons, dated 7 May 1829 ...**  
London: Ordered to be printed by the  
House of Commons, 1829  
NK986
- Henry William Bunbury (1812–1875)  
**Diary 1828–1837**  
MS4041
- Thomas Watson  
**Plan Shewing the Position of 500 Acres  
of Land on the Murray Estuary ...** 184–  
ms map; 58 x 69 cm  
NK2456–167
- W.S. Hatton  
**Fremantle with Rottnest Island in the  
Distance** 1859  
watercolour; 18.1 x 27.1 cm  
T1929 NK1199
- William John Huggins (1781–1845)  
**Captain Stirling's Exploring Party  
50 Miles up the Swan River,  
Western Australia, March 1827** 1827  
oil on canvas; 29.2 x 36 cm  
T2471 NK11635
- Silver salver presented by the  
colonists of Western Australia to  
Sir James Stirling, on his resignation,  
31 December 1838**  
sterling silver tray; 56.5 cm diam.  
A4000144X
- George Cruikshank (1792–1878)  
**Passing Events, or, The Tail of the  
Comet of 1853** 1853  
hand-coloured etching; 22.2 x 41.5 cm  
U7230 NK11149
- Eugene von Guérard (1811–1901)  
**Natives Chasing Game** 1854  
oil on canvas; 46.5 x 37 cm  
T295 NK108
- George Butler Earp  
**The Gold Colonies of Australia, and  
Gold Seeker's Manual ...**  
New ed. London: G. Routledge, 1852  
NK3366
- Edward Gilks (b.1822)  
**The Digger's Road Guide to the Gold  
Mines of Victoria and the Country  
Extending 210 Miles round Melbourne**  
Melbourne: S. Leigh, August 1853  
map; 17.5 x 23.5 cm  
NK2456/133/1–4
- Eugene von Guérard (1811–1901)  
**James Glass's Station on the  
Goulburn River, Victoria** 1862  
oil on academy board; 35.7 x 45.8 cm  
T481 NK2165
- John Glover (1767–1849)  
**Sketchbook of John Glover:  
Tasmanian Views** 1834–1835  
ink, pen and wash drawings; two albums  
T3079–T3110 NK644/1–32
- Thomas Baines (1820–1875)  
**Eight Paintings on Glass for Projecting**  
c.1856  
oil on glass; 5.7 x 7.9 cm  
T1155 NK6954A–H
- William Clark (1803–1883)  
**Hydrabad in Full Sail** 1865  
oil on canvas; 78.8 x 139.5 cm  
T456 NK1927
- Conrad Martens (1801–1878)  
**View from the Domain, Sydney,  
June 1844** 1844  
pencil drawing; 23.5 x 33.6 cm  
T1744 NK316
- Conrad Martens (1801–1878)  
**[Sydney Harbour]** c.1840  
watercolour; 31.2 x 44.3 cm  
T1735 NK180
- Richard Wingfield Stuart (1843–1914)  
**Kangaroo Hunt near Braidwood,  
New South Wales** 187–?  
oil on canvas; 46.5 x 68.5 cm  
T296 NK109
- Thomas Baines (1820–1875)  
**Group of Explorers with Horses,  
Northern Territory** 1857  
oil on canvas; 45.1 x 65.5 cm  
T315 NK130

## SECTION 4

### The Furthest Eden

#### *[Ea-hei-no-maue, North Island, New Zealand]*

London: Cadell & Davies, 25 May 1798  
map; 39 x 51 cm  
NK11077

#### Richard Read (b. c.1765–1827?) **Portrait of Elizabeth Isabella Broughton, about Seven Years Old** 1814

watercolour; 36.3 x 30.3 cm  
T2707 NK417

#### William Broughton (fl.1814) **Letter, Sydney** 1814 MS4048

#### Chief Tau Wharaunga? **Letter in Maori and English re General Boyd massacre** 1823 MS4036

#### John Sylvester **[Portrait of Te Pehi Kupe, with Full**

**Tattoo on Face and Wearing European Clothes]** 1826?  
watercolour; 21.1 x 15.8 cm  
T3172 NK1277

Basil Woodd (1760–1831)  
**Memoir of Mowhee: A Young New Zealander Who Died at Paddington, 28 December 1816**  
in *Missionary Papers for the Use of the Weekly and Monthly Contributors to the Church Missionary Society*, no. 10 1818  
NK4250/A

Augustus Earle (1793–1838)  
**A Narrative of Nine Months' Residence in New Zealand, in 1827: together with a Journal of a Residence in Tristan d'Acunha 1827–1832**  
MS4157

Augustus Earle (1793–1838)  
**Entrance of the Bay of Islands, New Zealand** 1827  
watercolour; 23.5 x 37.5 cm  
T104 NK12/66

George Lillie Craik (1798–1866)  
**The New Zealanders**  
London: Charles Knight, 1830  
NK901

Unknown  
**Whaling Ship with a Whale in a Cove, New Zealand** c.1840  
oil on canvas; 63.2 x 76.1 cm  
T277 NK15

Mary Ann Musgrave (fl.1821–1847)  
**Portrait of William Nankivell**  
oil on canvas; 56.2 x 45.2 cm  
T446 NK4397

Edward Arthur Williams (1822–1898)  
**Tauranga, New Zealand, 23 April 1864**  
1864  
watercolour; 32 x 49.5 cm  
T3171 NK5305

**Three Maori cleavers** 18—?  
1 wood, 1 bone, 1 jade; 46 cm or smaller  
A40005690

H. Harper  
**War in the North, 1845**  
[an eyewitness account of one of the Maori wars] 1845  
historical manuscript; MS4090

**The Maori Wars, NZ** 1863  
atlas containing 21 plates  
map Ra148 NK1863/3

Horatio Gordon Robley (1840–1930)  
**Original Drawings, Notes, etc. Concerning the Maoris, New Zealand 192–?**  
1 scrapbook: photographs, watercolours, pen and ink drawings; 48.6 x 39.8 cm  
T3397 NK6213

Horatio Gordon Robley (1840–1930)  
**Memoirs** 1858–1908  
MS4063

William Montague Nevin Watkins (1835–1904)  
**Akaroa Harbour, New Zealand** c.1880  
oil on canvas; 38.3 x 66 cm  
T292 NK105

## SECTION 5

### Servants of Empire

Francesco Bartolozzi (1727–1815)  
**The Cession of the District of Matavai in the Island of Otaheite to Captain James Wilson for the Use of the Missionaries, 16 March 1797** 179–?  
coloured aquatint; 60 x 78 cm  
U5486 NK256

**The Missionary Voyages to the South-Sea Islands Performed in the Years 1796, 1797, and 1798, in the Ship Duff ...**  
London: George Routledge, 1845  
NK10222

John Eyre (1768–1854)  
**Letter, Point Venus, Mattavye, Otaheite**  
[re missionary activities in Tahiti]  
21 July 1797  
MS4102

Benjamin Barr  
**Letter to Rev. Thomas Haweis**  
[application to become a missionary in the South Seas] 18—  
MS4030 NK2897

John Jackson (1778–1831)  
**Portrait of John Wesley** c.1820  
oil on canvas; 98.5 x 87 cm  
T519 NK10165

James Smetham (1821–1889)  
**Maori Chiefs in Wesley's House,**

**22 July 1863** 1863  
oil on wood panel; 18.5 x 35.5 cm  
T323 NK138

Unknown  
**The Missionary Settlement Rangihoua on the North Side of the Bay of Islands**  
c.1832  
oil on wood panel; 22.3 x 30.5 cm  
T316 NK131

Unknown  
**Station of the Church Missionary Society at Te Puna, Bay of Islands, Seen from the SSE** c.1840  
oil on wood panel; 22.3 x 27.8 cm  
T317 NK132

C. John M. Whichelo (1817–1865)  
**Portrait of Rev. William Yate** c.1840  
watercolour on ivory; 12.5 x 9.5 cm  
T509 NK9642

John Cleveley (c.1745–1786),  
from James Cleveley's drawings  
**[Discovery and Resolution at an Island in the Pacific, 1777]** 178–?  
oil on canvas; 68.5 x 122.1 cm  
T349 NK812

## SECTION 6

### A Portrait of the Collector

**Photograph album of the Tichborne trial** 1871–1874  
album; 29.5 x 46 cm  
NK713

**Ballantine & Orton: or Sir Roger versus the Dodger** 187–?  
theatre poster; 49.5 x 19 cm  
NK713

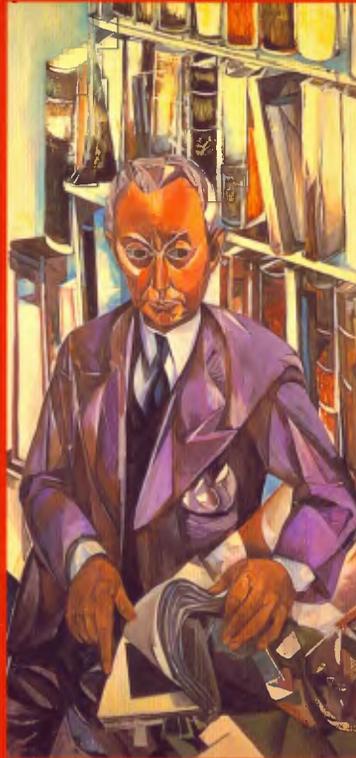
**Sir Roger: A Tichborne Ballad**  
(*Clarke's Whims and Oddities*)  
London: H.G. Clarke, 1874?  
3 sheets; 29.4 x 87.5 cm  
NK3993

Unknown  
**Portrait of a Lady** c.1840  
oil on canvas; 53.5 x 43.2 cm  
T488 NK5817/B

Spink & Son  
**Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George Awarded to Rex Nan Kivell** 1966

- enamel and gold medal and ribbon;  
15.7 x 17.5 cm  
A4000621 NK11942
- Medieval Manuscripts and Documents from the Nan Kivell Calligraphy Collection**  
Declaration of uses 28 November 1618  
37 x 44.5 cm  
MS4052/1/65
- Medieval Manuscripts and Documents from the Nan Kivell Calligraphy Collection**  
Prayer book (fragment) in Latin 13—  
20.3 x 14.8 cm  
MS4052/2/12
- Early Manuscript Letters of Australasian Interest**  
album of autograph letters  
NK4168
- Rex Nan Kivell (1898–1977)  
**Papers** 1938–1977  
MS4000
- Rex Nan Kivell (1898–1977) and Sydney Spence  
**Portraits of the Famous and Infamous: Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, 1492–1970**  
London: the authors, 1974
- Typed list of items consigned from the Rex Nan Kivell Collection to the National Library**  
MS4000 Series 2
- Paul Robinson  
**Letter to Rex Nan Kivell about the archaeological dig at Cold Kitchen Hill**  
17 June 1975  
MS4000/1/64
- Harry Tatlock Miller  
**Letter to Rex Nan Kivell** 10 July 1975  
MS4000/1/64
- L.C. Key  
**Letter to Kenneth Binns, Librarian, Commonwealth National Library**  
8 August 1946
- Indian Paintings from the 17th to 19th Centuries Including Examples from Rajasthan, the Punjab Hills, Deccan and Other Areas**  
London: Arthur Tooth and Sons, 1974  
NKA1169
- Thomas Dalmahoy Barlow (1883–)  
**Woodcuts of Albrecht Dürer**  
London: Penguin Books, 1948  
NKA763
- Rex Nan Kivell on the terrace at 'El Farah', Morocco** 1972  
Photograph  
MS4000
- Rex Nan Kivell at the entrance to the Redfern Gallery, 20 Cork Street, Burlington Gardens, Bond Street, London** 1955?  
Photograph  
MS4000
- Rex Nan Kivell with his business partner Harry Tatlock Miller in the Redfern Gallery** 1957  
Photograph  
MS4000
- Mizouni Nouari and Rex Nan Kivell**  
Photograph  
MS4000
- Studio portrait of Rex Nan Kivell**  
late 1920s  
Photograph  
MS4000
- Rex Nan Kivell in the uniform of the 1st Canterbury Regiment** c.1916  
Photograph  
MS4000
- Axel Poignant (1906–1986)  
**Rex Nan Kivell presenting early Australian material to Sir Harold White at Osborne House, Isle of Wight, United Kingdom**  
1963  
Photograph  
MS4000
- Rex Nan Kivell in the Redfern Gallery**  
Photograph  
MS4000
- Rex Nan Kivell in New Zealand**  
Photograph  
MS4000

Distinguished contributors to this volume are  
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Turnbull, Michael Richards, Suzanne Rickard,  
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This collection of essays provides a series of fascinating insights into the National Library of Australia's extraordinary Rex Nan Kivell Collection. This is one of the most remarkable and valuable collections of material held by a library anywhere in the world; a collection which documents European imaginings of the fabled Antipodes, and real European journeys in search of the fabulous.