

# ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND

## SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT OF THE COLLECTION



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June 2017

Cover: Sir Thomas Mitchell's paintbox

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## **PART 1**

### **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Significance Assessment of the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland Inc. (RGSQ) collection was undertaken under the guidelines of the National Library of Australia's Community Heritage Grant program, which are accepted as a benchmark for assessing cultural material. The project involved consultants Dr Judith McKay and Bill Kitson visiting Gregory House, the Society's premises at 237 Milton Road, Milton, Brisbane, between March and June 2017 to study the collection and related documentation and to consult members. In particular, they worked with the Executive Officer Bernard Fitzpatrick.

The RGSQ, founded in 1885, is one of only two geographical societies dating from the 19th century to continue in Australia. Its mission is to promote the study of geography and encourage a better understanding of the natural environment. Though the Society has always had a substantial library and has a small but significant collection of artefacts and artworks, maintaining collections has never been central to its operations. Regrettably, over the years many items of outstanding significance have been lost and much material has been transferred elsewhere. Of what remains, the library material is relatively well housed, however the artefacts and artworks are poorly displayed and/or stored.

This report makes various recommendations relating to the RGSQ's collection; however most would be beyond its ability, as a self-supporting, not-for-profit organisation, to implement without external assistance. The first recommendation is to apply to the National Library's Community Heritage Grants program for a Preservation Needs Assessment of the entire collection; this would be undertaken by a conservator and would offer further advice on the collection's care. Such advice will help the Society to make informed decisions about the collection's future.

For more than a century the RGSQ has sought to give Queenslanders a better appreciation of their natural surrounds and to promote the study of geography in all its forms. Also, the Society has promoted scientific and historical research in Queensland, covering such subjects as exploration, white settlement, the Great Barrier Reef and place names, and has marked historic sites. Without its efforts much of our history and heritage would have been lost.

The RGSQ's collection is little known within the Australian museum and historical community, a situation which hopefully this report will help to redress.

### **2 METHODOLOGY**

In undertaking this Significance Assessment, the consultants made a series of visits to Gregory House, the RGSQ's premises in Milton, Brisbane, between March and June 2017 to study the collection and related documentation, and to consult members. In particular, they worked with the Executive Officer, Bernard Fitzpatrick, who made collection items and documentation available and assisted throughout the project. Other members assisted with areas of the collection in which they have particular interest.

To gain an overview of the RGSQ and its collection, the consultants studied Dr Peter Griggs's excellent centenary history published in 1985, various RGSQ publications and archival material, and collection documentation held presently; in addition, they made general inspections of material on

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display and in storage. In dealing with the most significant items, they undertook further research using Trove and other sources. In assessing comparative historical collections, they drew on their knowledge of public collections in Queensland and web-based information on the holdings of other geographical societies.

Finally, throughout the project they drew on their extensive experience as museum curators: Judith as a curator at the Queensland Museum and consultant for other significance assessments, and Bill as curator of the Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying, Brisbane. Also, both consultants have wide research experience and collaborated in the book *Surveying Queensland 1839–1945: A Pictorial History*, published by the Department of Natural Resources and Water and the Queensland Museum in 2006.

The assessment is based on the guide *Significance 2.0: A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections*, 2009.

### **3 OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIETY AND ITS COLLECTION**

The RGSQ, founded in 1885, is one of Queensland's oldest scientific societies, bringing together people from across the state with an interest in geography. Its mission is to promote the study of geography and encourage a better understanding of the natural environment. To this end the Society organises a diverse programme of lectures and excursions, and supports geographical education. In recent years it has taken on organising and running the Australian Geography Competition, a joint initiative with the Australian Geography Teachers' Association, and facilitating the annual Geography's Big Week Out by which four year 11 students are selected to represent Australia at the annual International Geography Olympiad.

The Society is governed by an elected Council and has three paid staff members: a full-time Executive Officer, a part-time Business Manager and a part-time administrative assistant who are assisted by a number of member-volunteers. As a self-supporting, not-for-profit organisation, the Society is not wealthy, however, thanks to early 20th-century bequests, it has owned its own premises since 1941. The current premises, Gregory House, includes rentable office space which provides some income while other income is received from the Australian Government in support of the above educational activities for school students.

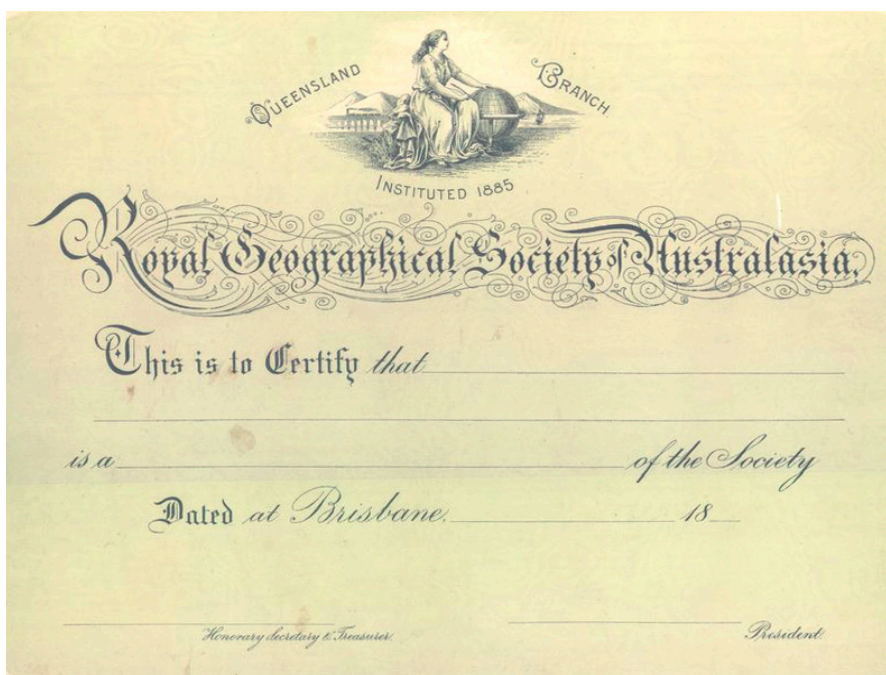
The RGSQ has a substantial library, called the Ken Sutton Memorial Library, as well as maps, photographs, its own archives, and a small but significant collection of artefacts and artworks; most of which has been acquired by donation or exchange. All this material is housed at Gregory House where it is accessible to members and, by appointment, to geography teachers and researchers. Some teaching material is available for loan to schools. The various categories of the collection are in different stages of documentation: the photographic collection is catalogued; the library, map and archival collections are now being catalogued; while artefacts and artworks are yet to be catalogued. The documentation recently completed has been the work of two special interest groups, a Map Group and a Library/Archives Group, comprising mostly retired professionals.

Presently there is no overall policy for future development and/or disposal of all categories of the collection, though a library policy has been adopted. Little information on the collection is available on the RGSQ's website, hence is largely unknown within the wider community.





Dr James Park Thomson (1854–1941), the RGSQ's founder, guided the Society for over half a century: as its Honorary Secretary-Treasurer, President (1894–97) and editor of its journal. A surveyor as well as geographer, Thomson wrote over 200 scientific papers and was instrumental in the adoption of the zonal system for reckoning time. In 1901 the RGSQ established its Thomson Medal in his honour and made him the first recipient. He received other awards, including an honorary LL.D. from Queen's University, Ontario, Canada in 1903 and a CBE in 1920. He retired from the public service in 1922, but continued to work tirelessly for the RGSQ until 1940.  
(John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland)



Early membership certificate  
(RGSQ archives)

#### 4 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY

The RGSQ,<sup>1</sup> founded in July 1885, is one of Queensland's oldest scientific societies, being third only to the Philosophical (later Royal) Society and the Acclimatisation Society. Originally the RGSQ was a branch of the Geographical Society of Australasia founded in Sydney in 1883,<sup>2</sup> which in turn was an offshoot of London's Royal Geographical Society founded half a century earlier. At this time interest in world geography was stimulated by British imperial expansion, leading to societies based on the London model being established around the Empire. Of the four geographical societies established in Australia during the late 19th century, only those in Queensland and South Australia continue, with the parent society in Sydney folding as early as 1909.

The RGSQ's founder was James Park Thomson (1854–1941),<sup>3</sup> a government surveyor with connections with the Sydney society, who called on people interested in geography to form a similar group in Brisbane. As the Society's Honorary Secretary-Treasurer until 1940, Dr Thomson managed to enlist the support of many of Queensland's leading citizens of the day: public servants, notably surveyors; politicians; professionals; businessmen; pastoralists; even governors. Some of these were also involved in other local scientific bodies, such as the Royal Society and the Queensland Museum. The RGSQ's foundation President was pioneer surveyor and explorer Sir Augustus Charles Gregory, commemorated in the naming of

1 The RGSQ was known as the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Queensland Branch) until 1899, as the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Queensland) until 1971, then as the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Queensland) Inc. until 1990, and now as the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland Inc.

2 The Geographical Society of Australasia assumed the 'Royal' title in 1886, soon after the Queensland Branch was founded.

3 W. S. Kitson, 'Thomson, James Park (1854–1941)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/thomson-james-park-8797/text15427>, published first in hardcopy 1990, accessed online 26 March 2017.

its premises, while the foundation patron was Queensland's Governor Sir Anthony Musgrave. Musgrave's appointment established a tradition of vice-regal patronage that continues to this day. Other prominent early members included Premiers Sir Samuel Griffith and William Kidston, Chief Justices Sir Charles Lilley and Sir James Blair, Surveyors-General William Alcock Tully and Allan Spowers, and Archbishops James Duhig and Gerald Sharp.

The RGSQ's founding aims, based on those already adopted by its southern counterparts, were to promote the study of geography, to disseminate knowledge on the various types of geography through public lectures and publications, to support further exploration of Australasia, to assist in the compilation of a reliable geography of Australasia, and to collect and publish historical records of geographical interest and the memoirs of men who have made significant contributions to geography in Australasia. Despite its wider brief, the Society has always been mainly interested in the geography of Queensland and its various regions. Initially it also focused on New Guinea and Melanesia, reflecting Queensland's territorial ambitions in the region at the time<sup>4</sup> and its dependence on labourers from Melanesia to work its sugar plantations. Another early interest was anthropology (or ethnology, as it was then termed), particularly relating to Australian Aboriginal people, as anthropology was seen as a branch of geography.

Originally the RGSQ had 60 members, mostly from Brisbane, but it soon expanded to include many country members as well as honorary corresponding members living beyond Queensland, and other honoraries appointed for their contributions to the Society or geographical science. By the first decade of the 20th century the Society could boast several women among its 200 or so members. Also by this time it established a pattern of activities that would continue almost to this day: holding monthly lecture meetings, organising excursions and expeditions, and publishing annual journals. The journals, though costly to produce and post, were seen as important for maintaining contact with distant members and for exchanging with other scientific organisations. Since 1993 the annual journals have been replaced by monthly newsletters.



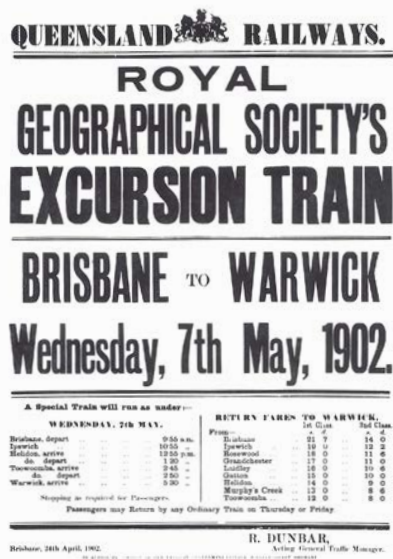
Sir Augustus Charles Gregory (1819–1905), the RGSQ's foundation President, was a noted explorer and doyen of Queensland surveyors. In 1859 he was appointed as Queensland's first Surveyor-General, having earlier led the North Australian Exploring Expedition across the continent. Later Gregory became Geological Surveyor and a member of the Legislative Council. One of Queensland's most influential citizens, he was knighted in 1903. He is honoured in the naming of the Gregory River, the Gregory pastoral districts and the Gregory Highway, all in inland Queensland. (John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland)



The Thomson Medal with the portrait of the RGSQ's founder, Dr J.P. Thomson

<sup>4</sup> Queensland annexed the southern part of New Guinea in 1883.





Poster advertising the RGSQ's excursion to Warwick in 1902 (Fryer Library, University of Queensland)

In 1901, soon after its foundation, the RGSQ established its Thomson Medal, named after its founder and long-serving Secretary-Treasurer, Dr J.P. Thomson. This was to be awarded annually to individuals in recognition of their outstanding services to the Society or to science generally.<sup>5</sup> The first medal was awarded to Dr Thomson himself while other early recipients included such notable Australians as the aviator Bert Hinkler, the explorer Sir Douglas Mawson and the engineer Dr J.J. Bradfield. Also early in its history the Society established a series of country branches. During its heyday, from the mid-1920s to the mid-30s, it had fifteen country branches extending from Thursday Island to Warwick and its membership reached 700. This was exceeded only briefly in the late 1940s and early 50s when its membership climbed to 1000, however by then all the country branches had closed except for a short-lived Western Branch formed at Dalby in 1955.

With its interest in exploration the RGSQ has been involved in many expeditions. The earliest was in 1909 when a party travelled to the Gulf of Carpentaria; there Dr Thomson was able to astronomically determine the position of the most northerly camp of the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition of 1861. This was followed by a series of expeditions to the Carnarvon Ranges in Central Queensland between the years 1937 and 1963. Though part of this rugged country had been declared a National Park in 1932, much was still unexplored when the Society began mounting its expeditions. In 1985, as part of its centenary celebrations, the RGSQ visited the remote Haddon Corner on the Queensland–South Australian border. More recent expeditions have been to such places as Sweers Island and Pennefather River in the Gulf of Carpentaria (2002) and Cravens Peak in the south-west (2007). In addition, community geographical projects have been organised, including an on-going Queensland by Degrees project by which RGSQ members and others visit and record geographical descriptions of the 185 points across the state where whole degree lines of latitude and longitude intersect.

Over the years the RGSQ has promoted scientific and historical research in Queensland. In 1922, on the initiative of its then President Queensland's Governor Sir Matthew Nathan, it set up the Great Barrier Reef Committee to



First Day Cover, 1947, commemorating the centenary of Edmund Kennedy's discovery of the Charleville district (RGSQ archives)

<sup>5</sup> The Thomson Medal was designed by A.A. Wright and C.W. De Vis, both of Brisbane, and engraved by Allan Wyon, Chief Engraver to Queen Victoria. It is awarded in gold, silver or bronze impressions, depending on the merits of recipients.



RGSQ expedition to the Carnarvon Ranges, 1955  
(RGSQ, photograph T55/2)

undertake scientific investigation of the Reef. The Governor's action followed a lecture on the Reef's problems by fellow member H.C. Richards, Professor of Geology at the University of Queensland. The Committee, chaired by Nathan and including representatives from various scientific organisations, raised government and other support to begin research, the results of which were to be published in the RGSQ's journals.<sup>6</sup> However, from 1924 a long-running dispute between the Society and the Committee over printing costs of the latter's reports led to a separation of the two bodies. The Committee continued until 1982, after which it was incorporated into the Australian Coral Reef Society.

Also in 1922, besides instigating the above committee, Sir Matthew Nathan persuaded the RGSQ to set up Queensland's first Place Names Committee. This committee, comprising senior public servants as well as RGSQ, Historical Society and University representatives, was to collect information on the origins of place names across the state. Interest in the project declined with Nathan's departure from Queensland in 1925 and within years the Committee ceased to function. It was eventually superseded in 1958 by a government-controlled Place Names Board and the information it collected was transferred to the Department of Lands (Survey Office), later to be incorporated into the present Queensland place names database.

Between the years 1926 and 1985 the RGSQ erected a series of plaques across Queensland to commemorate particular explorers, pioneers and historical events. These included Edmund Kennedy plaques at Cooktown and Cardwell, a Charles Sturt plaque at Birdsville, and a Thomas Mitchell plaque at Blackall. Some of the RGSQ's plaques were fixed to monuments which remain conspicuous features of the landscape in remote places like Birdsville. To mark the unveiling of the plaques, the Society, in cooperation with the Philatelic Society of Brisbane, issued a series of First Day Covers.

The RGSQ continues to promote geographical education in Queensland. In 1894 it established a class in Commercial Geography at the Brisbane Technical College, however in later years it failed to convince the newly-established



Sir Matthew Nathan, Queensland Governor's and RGSQ President in 1920–26, travelled extensively in Queensland and was widely respected. A scholarly man, he was also the University of Queensland's Chancellor and in 1925 was awarded an honorary LL.D.  
(John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland)

<sup>6</sup> Paul D. Wilson, 'Nathan, Sir Matthew (1862–1939)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/nathan-sir-matthew-7728/text13539>, published first in hardcopy 1986, accessed online 21 March 2017.



Sir Thomas Mitchell memorial at Blackall, bearing the RGSQ's plaque (RGSQ, photograph R46/4)

University of Queensland to include geography in its first subject offerings. During the 1970s and 80s the Society presented monetary awards to school and university students of geography. Since 1995 it has run the Australian Geography Competition, a national contest for secondary school students. A joint initiative with the Australian Geography Teachers' Association, the competition attracts wide support, with more than 70,000 students from 742 schools entering in 2017. The RGSQ also facilitates the annual Geography's Big Week Out by which four year 11 students are selected to represent Australia at the annual International Geography Olympiad. The Society also publishes educational material for schools.

## 5 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLLECTION

From its inception the RGSQ has maintained a library, much of this acquired by exchanging its publications for those of other scientific organisations both in Australia and abroad. Also, much material has been collected over the years as a by-product of the Society's activities, including its expeditions. Housing the growing library has always been a problem, especially with the many changes of premises. By 1894 the library was large enough to require the appointment of an Honorary Librarian, the first appointee being Major A.J. Boyd, later to become the RGSQ's Secretary (1895–97). By 1896 the library comprised about 5000 volumes<sup>7</sup> and within a few years it occupied a whole room.<sup>8</sup> By 1940 the holdings had grown to more than 40,000 volumes, seen as one of the Society's 'greatest achievements'.<sup>9</sup> In the late 1960s, with the move to more commodious premises in George St, the library was reorganised and cataloguing upgraded.<sup>10</sup> In recent decades the library has received little attention, however this situation is now being redressed.

Of the museum material collected by the RGSQ in its early years, some was particularly significant. The first was a collection of equipment associated with the foundation President, Sir Augustus Charles Gregory (1819–1905), Queensland's first Surveyor-General and a noted explorer,<sup>11</sup> comprising equipment used on his expeditions, including compasses, theodolites, a sextant, camera, shotgun, revolvers and a pack saddle.<sup>12</sup> This material was borrowed from Gregory's nephews for celebrations held by the Society in 1902 to mark his 83rd birthday. Following Gregory's death three years later the nephews donated the material and it was displayed at the RGSQ's premises until at least until 1941. Another precious item collected in the early years was the prismatic compass used by explorer William Landsborough (1826–1886) on his expedition to the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1866; this was donated in 1903 and also displayed in 1941. Sadly, since then all the above material has been lost, with the exception of Gregory's sextant and tea panican horizon, though these are held by the University of Queensland's Anthropology Museum rather than the RGSQ.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Peter Griggs, *A Dream in Trust: The Centenary History of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia*, Queensland Incorporated, published as the *Queensland Geographical Journal*, third series, vol. 7, July 1983, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Griggs, *A Dream in Trust*, p. 42.

<sup>9</sup> D.A. O'Brien, 'The Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Queensland): a review', *Queensland Geographical Journal*, vol. 46, no. 32, 1940, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Griggs, *A Dream in Trust*, pp. 138–39.

<sup>11</sup> Gregory led the North Australian Exploring Expedition which successfully crossed the continent's north in 1854.

<sup>12</sup> Griggs, *A Dream in Trust*, p. 169—this has a list of Gregory's equipment donated in 1905.

<sup>13</sup> Griggs, *A Dream in Trust*, pp. 38–39.





Queensland's Governor and RGSQ President Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams addressing the Society in 1913—note the portraits of Presidents in the background.  
(RGSQ, photograph R15/1)

Another early collection of outstanding significance has fared no better: that associated with Sir Thomas Mitchell (1792–1855), the first Surveyor-General of New South Wales and explorer, comprising four artefacts—his paintbox, camera lucida, pistol and shoulder belt—and possibly his scrapbook; as well as 24 artworks, mostly family portraits. The artefacts were donated in 1947 by Mitchell's grandson G.V.F. Mann, a well-known Sydney artist and gallery director,<sup>14</sup> in gratitude to the RGSQ for erecting its Mitchell plaque at Blackall, while the artworks were purchased from Mann in May 1948 for £300.<sup>15</sup> The artworks were shown in an exhibition held at Brisbane department store Finney Isles & Co.'s art gallery from 25 October 1948.<sup>16</sup> Of these works, only three survive, the rest being casualties of a fire that struck the RGSQ's former Ann St premises on 11 July 1959, destroying books, furniture and 'irreplaceable pictures'.<sup>17</sup>

The material mentioned above is not all that has been lost from the RGSQ collection over the years, an alarming situation that could also be explained by the Society's occupancy of eight different premises before moving to Gregory House in 2002. Another factor is that during World War II, when Brisbane was under threat of bombing, some collection material was sent to RGSQ country member Father Leo Hayes for safe keeping; Hayes, a Catholic priest and avid book collector, was then based at Crows Nest. Possibly not all this material was returned later and, following Hayes' death in 1967, could have been transferred to the University of Queensland among other material in his extensive collection.<sup>18</sup> This would explain how the two above-mentioned

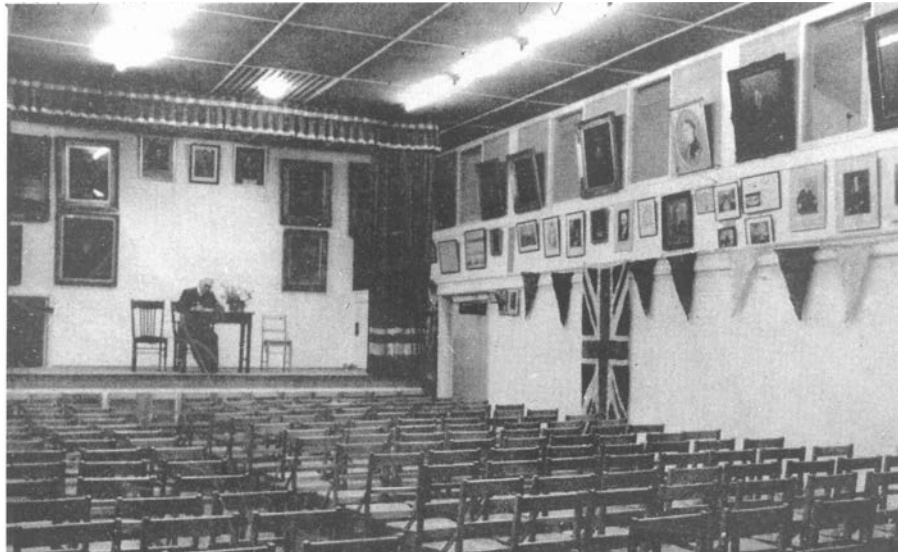
<sup>14</sup> *Telegraph*, Brisbane, 24 October 1947, p. 8; *Queensland Geographical Journal*, vol. 52, 1947–48, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> *Courier-Mail*, 17 May 1948, p. 3; *Cairns Post*, 6 August 1948, p. 6. Mann died soon afterwards, in November 1948.

<sup>16</sup> *Exhibition of Paintings by Sir Thomas Mitchell* [exhibition catalogue], Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Queensland), Brisbane, 1948; *Queensland Country Life*, 4 November 1948, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> RGSQ Council Minutes, vol. 8, 31 August 1959, p. 252.

<sup>18</sup> Chris Hanlon, 'Hayes, Edward Leo (1889–1967)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hayes-edward-leo-10463/text18559>, published first in hardcopy 1996, accessed online 5 May 2017.



Hall of the RGSQ's former Ann St premises before destroyed by fire in 1959—note the 'Sir Thomas Mitchell Collection' of artworks on the walls.  
(RGSQ, photograph R52/1)

Gregory items ended up in the University's Anthropology Museum and how other RGSQ material is now in the University's Fryer Library.

Other RGSQ material has been transferred to other collecting agencies, some of this on 'permanent loan':

- the C.A. Fitzgerald ethnological collection to the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, transferred in 1975;<sup>19</sup>
- a large collection of RGSQ photographs, mostly views of Brisbane and Queensland generally, dated 1894–1927, to the State Library of Queensland's John Oxley Library (acc. no. 5798);
- the John Oxley Library also holds many early RGSQ publications, suggesting a formal transfer, and Dr J.P. Thomson's personal papers;
- a rare historic atlas titled *Le Theatre du Monde*, published in Amsterdam in 1654, also to John Oxley Library, transferred in 1991 (see Part 2); and
- some RGSQ letterbooks and other material to the State Library of NSW's Mitchell Library.<sup>20</sup>

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

The RGSQ's collection comprises a substantial library, called the Ken Sutton Memorial Library, named after a former President, which holds a variety of paper-based and audiovisual material. As well, the collection includes maps, photographs, the RGSQ's own archives, and a small but significant collection of artefacts and artworks.

The following outline of the collection is presented by category, however it should be noted that some categories overlap hence some items are equally applicable to more than one category.

### 6.1 MAPS, PLANS AND CHARTS

There are more than 9000 maps, plans and charts. While most of these relate to Queensland and other Australian states or territories, there are many from

<sup>19</sup> Griggs, *A Dream in Trust*, p. 120.

<sup>20</sup> Griggs, *A Dream in Trust*, p. 164.



other countries around the world. Of the collection, only 48 items date from between 1865 and 1900 and all these are from Queensland or the former territory of New Guinea. The collection comprises many categories, however none of the various sets of maps and charts are complete series hence their value for research is limited. This is because the collection has been built up over the years by multiple donations rather than by official deposits from government agencies.

The collection comprises the following categories:

- *Australian Geographic* maps;
- *National Geographic* maps;
- Geological Survey of Queensland maps;
- various series of Queensland cadastral maps published for the Queensland Surveyor-General;
- thematic maps, such as a map of Australian Aboriginal tribal language groups;
- various topographic maps of Queensland published by the Australian Defence Force, National Mapping and the Queensland Surveyor-General;
- copies of survey plans of early Brisbane, the originals being held by Queensland State Archives or the Department of Natural Resources and Mines;
- British Admiralty nautical charts of the Queensland coast and surrounding waters; and
- copies of maps of early Australian exploration.

Notable examples are:

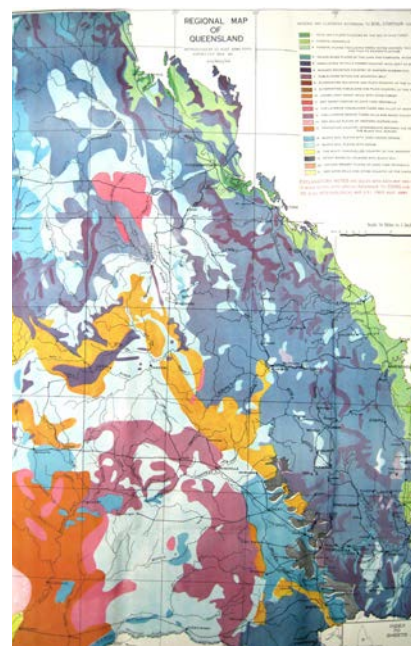
- a copy of the first known map of St Helena Penal Establishment, Moreton Bay, 1884; and
- an original, hand-drawn plan of the route taken by the Jardine Expedition to Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, in 1864–65 (see Part 2).

## 6.2 ATLASES

There are about 80 Australian and world atlases which include early publications as well as more recent facsimile editions.

Notable examples are:

- a rare historic atlas titled *Le Theatre du Monde*, published by Johannes Blaeu, Amsterdam, 1654 (see Part 2);
- Andrew Garran (ed.), *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, 3 vols, published by Picturesque Publishing Co. Ltd, Sydney, 1886;
- *Planisphere of the Southern Sky*, published by authority of the Victorian Government, 1880s;
- *Keith Johnston's Royal Atlas of Modern Geography*, published by W. & A.K. Johnston, Edinburgh, 1890; Alexander Keith Johnston was geographer to Queen Victoria;
- Edgar Ford (ed.), *Papua New Guinea Resource Atlas*, published by Jacaranda Press, Brisbane, 1974;
- *Schone Alte Karten*, 1981, presented by Queensland Governor Sir James Ramsay;
- *The Royal Geographical Society Atlas of the World*, 1983 edition, published in London; and
- *The Times Comprehensive Atlas of the World*, published by Times Books, London, 11th edition, 2003.



Regional map of Queensland



Sketch of Port Palliser on Kerguelen's Land' from *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean...*, vol. 1

## 6.3 TRAVEL GUIDES

These comprise tourist guides, walking and bushwalking guides, camping guides, etc. Most are relatively recent and relate to overseas.

## 6.4 OTHER BOOKS

The book collection comprises about 1500 volumes dating from the 17th century to the present, including rare books and books from the libraries of such notable Queenslanders as the surveyor Cecil Twisden-Bedford.<sup>21</sup> The collection covers a variety of subjects, including the exploration and European settlement of Australia, Queensland geography and history, anthropology, geology, climatology, geomorphology, palaeontology, flora and fauna, forestry, mining, environmental science and conservation.

Reference materials include encyclopaedias, biographical dictionaries, official Queensland and Commonwealth year books, various Queensland Government technical bulletins, and a series of handbooks of shires throughout Queensland published by the Department of Primary Industries in the 1970s. Also, there are multiple copies of the RGSQ's own publications.

Notable examples are:

- *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean...Performed under the Direction of Captains Cook, Clerke, and Gore in His Majesty's Ships the Resolution and Discovery in the Years 1776, 1777, 1779*, vols 1 and 2 by Captain James Cook and vol. 3 by Captain James King, published by G. Nicol and T. Cadell, London, 1784, donated by Hon. B.B. Moreton, MLC in 1903;
- Oliver Goldsmith, *A History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, published by Blackie & Son, Glasgow, 1840;
- R. Brough Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria*, published by John Ferres, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1878;
- Ferdinand von Mueller, *Systematic Census of Australian Plants*, Part 1 - Vasculares, published by the Victorian Government, Melbourne, 1882;



'Natives of Gippsland' from R. Brough Smyth's *The Aborigines of Victoria*, 1878

<sup>21</sup> The surveyor Cecil Twisden-Bedford (1850–1917) joined the Queensland Surveyor-General's Department in 1883. Two years later he was appointed to check the accuracy of the recently-completed Queensland–Northern Territory border survey. He had joined the RGSQ by December 1886 when he presented a paper to the Society entitled 'Reminiscences of a surveying trip from Boulia to the South Australian Border'. A man of great learning, he was known to have had a well-stocked library.

- Edward M. Curr, *The Australian Race: Its Origins, Languages, Customs, etc.*, 3 vols, published by John Ferres, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1886;
- Carl Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals: An Account of Four Years' Travels in Australia, etc.*, published by John Murray, London, 1889;
- Miller Christie (ed.), *Voyages of Captain Luke Foxe and Captain Thomas James in Search of a North-West Passage*, published by the Hakluyt Society, London, 1894, from the library of Cecil Twisden-Bedford;
- Archibald Meston, *Geographic History of Queensland*, published by Edmund Gregory, Government Printer, Brisbane, 1895; this copy is signed by the author;
- Walter E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies Among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines*, published by Edmund Gregory, Government Printer, Brisbane, 1897;
- John Masfield (ed.), *Dampier's Voyages*, 2 vols, published by E. Grant Richards, London, 1906;
- Matthew J. Fox, *History of Queensland: Its People and Industries*, 3 vols, published by States Publishing Co., Brisbane, 1919–23;
- Robert Logan Jack, *Northmost Australia: Three Centuries of Exploration, Discovery and Adventure around the Cape York Peninsula, Queensland*, 2 vols, published by George Robertson & Co., Sydney, 1922; and
- Baldwin Spencer, *Wanderings in Wild Australia*, published by Macmillan & Co., London, 1928.



Archibald Meston's signature in his *Geographic History of Queensland*, 1895

## 6.5 PERIODICALS

The periodical collection is vast, taking up more shelf space than the book collection. It comprises some 120 different titles, relating mainly to geography and geographical education. Many were discontinued in 2009 when the RGSQ stopped its exchanges.

General titles include:

- *National Geographic* (USA), 1892– (almost complete set);
- *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, 1831–80 (some have come from the Parliamentary Library);
- *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, 1880–92;
- *Geographical Journal* (UK), 1893–;
- *Geographical Magazine/Geographical* (UK), 1935–;
- *Scottish Geographical Magazine/Journal*, 1888–;
- *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute* (UK), 1869–1909;
- *Journal of the Royal Colonial Institute* (UK), 1898–1909;
- *Bulletin of the Imperial Institute* (UK), 1930s–40s;
- *Aramco World* (USA), 1991–;
- *Transactions of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1888–1928;
- Wragge, published by Queensland Government Meteorologist Clement Wragge, 1902–03 (see Part 2);
- *Australian Geographer*, 1933–;
- *Australian Geographic*, 1986–; and
- *Walkabout* (Aust.), 1930s–70s.

Geographical education titles include:

- *Queensland Geographer* (Bulletin of the Geography Teachers' Association of Queensland), 1972–;
- *South Australian Geographer* (Bulletin of the Geography Teachers' Association of SA), 1980s–;
- *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 1994–;
- *Geographical Education* (Aust.), 1970s–; and
- *Teaching Geography* (UK), 1968–.





Photo-journalist Thomas J. McMahon and his staff after disembarking at the Roper River Mission, Northern Territory (RGSQ, photograph N1/65)

## 6.6 PHOTOGRAPHS

The extensive photographic collection comprises about 4600 photographs and 2100 lantern slides, with some overlap in images. The subjects are diverse and include: portraits of RGSQ office-bearers, explorers, etc.; scenic views of Brisbane and Queensland; forestry activities; the Great Barrier Reef; Australian Aboriginal people and Aboriginal missions; the Pacific Islands and Islander peoples; and the Carnarvon Ranges, including the RGSQ's expeditions to the area. There is also a large presentation album of photographs of Townsville and North Queensland covering the years 1860s–1920s and focusing on buildings and scenery.

The collection includes about 100 photographs taken by the Queensland photo-journalist Thomas J. McMahon (1868–1933) recording South Pacific Islanders. McMahon took thousands of images of these peoples after World War I, wrote articles and books and gave illustrated lectures in Australia and abroad. Though well-known in his lifetime, McMahon's work is poorly represented in public collections in Australia hence the RGSQ's collection is very significant.



Aboriginal girls from Mapoon Mission, North Queensland, with examples of their handiwork (RGSQ, photograph N1/63)

## 6.7 TEACHING MATERIALS

This collection is a resource for geography teachers and comprises a range of materials: special publications and newsletters of the state and national branches of the Geography Teachers' Association, charts, posters, photographic slides, aerial photographs, reference books, audio-visual materials, etc. Most of these materials are relatively recent.

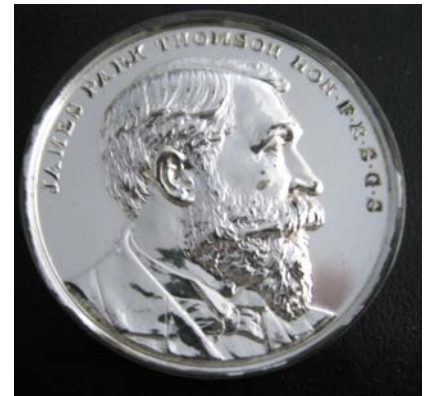
## 6.8 RGSQ'S OWN ARCHIVES

This material dates back to the Society's establishment and includes items of outstanding significance. It now being sorted and catalogued by RGSQ historian Dr Peter Griggs and other members.

The material comprises:

- membership lists, 1885–, including the first list with foundation members' signatures, and lists relating to country branches;
- Minutes of Council Meetings, 1890–;
- Minutes of Monthly Meetings, 1890–1941;
- Annual Reports, 1885–;
- cash books, 1885–;
- transcripts of lectures delivered to the Society over the years, including hand-written transcripts by Sir Matthew Nathan;
- manuscripts of papers published by the Society over the years, including hand-written papers by pioneer surveyor Cecil Twisden-Bedford and meteorologist Clement Wragge;
- correspondence and booklets relating to expeditions and erecting plaques;
- correspondence relating to celebrations for Sir Augustus Charles Gregory's 83rd birthday in 1902;
- correspondence relating to establishing a Place Names Board in Queensland, 1911–;
- correspondence relating to establishing RGSQ country branches; correspondence with the Geography Teachers' Association of Queensland, 1972–85;
- correspondence relating to awards presented to students;
- a box of material relating to RGSQ founder Dr J.P. Thomson;
- files, scrapbooks and photographs relating to various Society activities;
- large framed photographs of Presidents, some of these (e.g., Sir Arthur Morgan) being originals;
- annual journals, *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia* (Queensland Branch), 1885–99; superseded

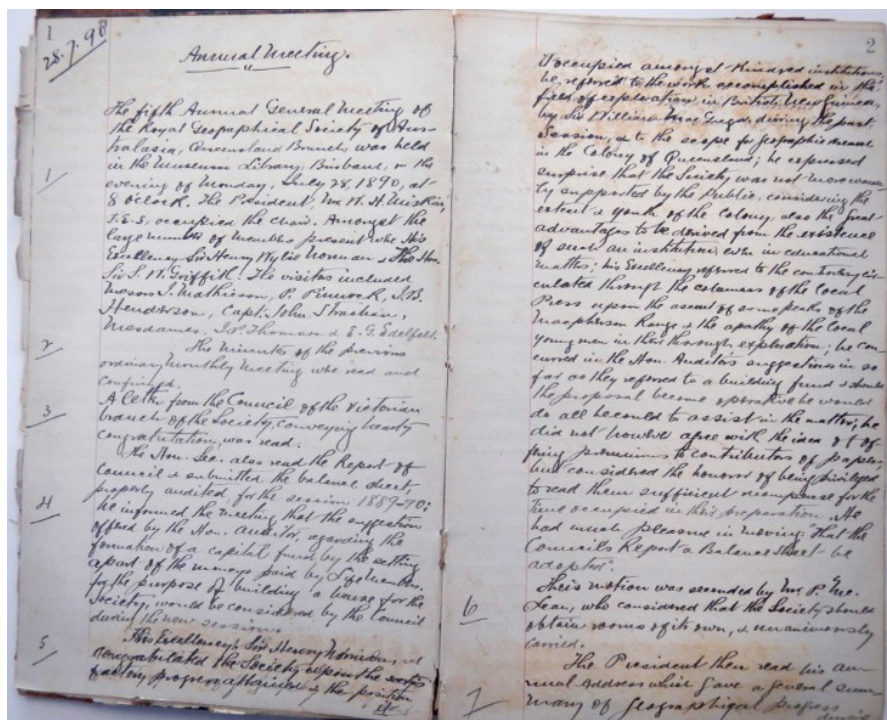
The Thomson Medal awarded to Ken Sutton in 1985:



Obverse, with the portrait of RGSQ founder Dr J.P. Thomson



Reverse, with a wreath of Australian flora



Minutes of the RGSQ's annual general meeting for 1898 (RGSQ archives)



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by *Queensland Geographical Journal*, new series, incorporating the former, 1900–64; superseded by *Queensland Geographical Journal*, third series, 1971–93;

- the Thomson Medal medal, silver, awarded to former RGSQ President Ken Sutton in 1985;
- monthly newsletters, *RGSQ Bulletin*, 1976–;
- Reports of the Great Barrier Reef Committee, 1925–42;
- First Day Covers issued by the Society; and
- various other Society publications.

The material does not include any pre-1960 outward correspondence apart from one fragile letterbook. As mentioned earlier, other RGSQ letterbooks have been transferred to the Mitchell Library.<sup>22</sup>

## 6.9 SCRAPBOOKS

Besides RGSQ scrapbooks mentioned above, the only other example is a 19th-century scrapbook possibly kept by Sir Thomas Mitchell, however provenance details have been lost.

## 6.10 ARTEFACTS

Though there are only a few artefacts, most are outstandingly significant. They are:

- the paintbox, camera lucida, pistol and shoulder belt of Sir Thomas Mitchell (see Part 2 ); and
- the RGSQ's magic lantern projector used for presenting its lectures from the 1880s; this was operated by the 'Honorary Lanternist', for many years the well-known Queensland photographer H.W. Mobsby.



The RGSQ's magic lantern projector

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<sup>22</sup> Griggs, *A Dream in Trust*, p. 164.

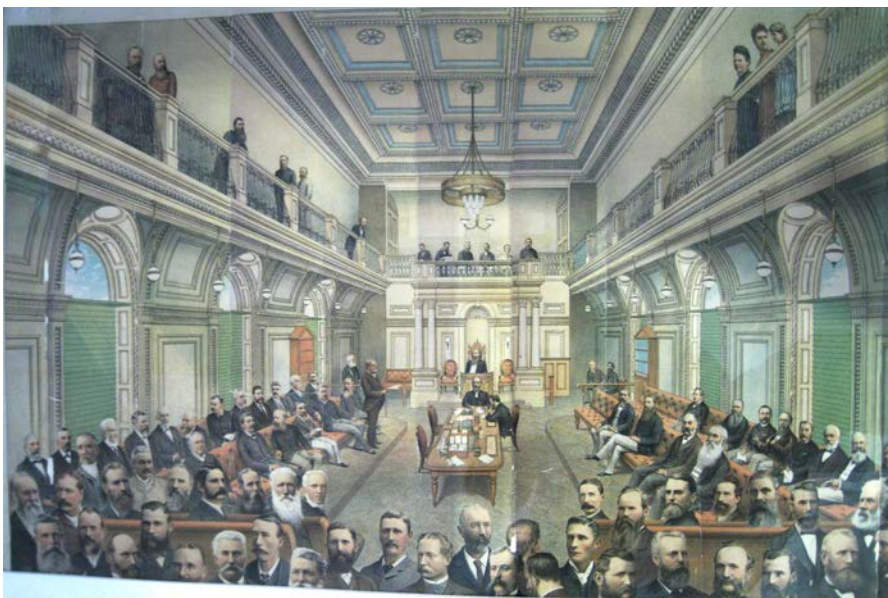
## 6.11 ARTWORKS

This is only a small collection given that many works, including all but three of the Sir Thomas Mitchell Collection, were lost in the fire of 1959. The remaining works are:

- a watercolour portrait of Livingstone Mitchell by Sir Thomas Mitchell, ca. 1840 (see Part 2);
- a watercolour portrait of an elderly woman possibly a member of the Mitchell family, unsigned, attributed to Thomas Mitchell;
- a framed series of scenes of battles of the Peninsular War, including Salamanca, presumably drawn by Thomas Mitchell and later, in 1841, printed as plates of *James Wyld's Maps and Plans of the Principal... Battles...during the War from 1808 to 1814*, however the hand-written captions do not appear to be in Mitchell's own hand;
- a chromolithograph of the Queensland Parliament in 1888, showing the Legislative Assembly Chamber along with portraits of parliamentary members, staff, reporters and visitors;
- an oil painting of *Overlooking Brisbane from the D'Aguilar Range*, ca.1945, by the Queensland weather forecaster and RGSQ member Inigo Owen Jones (1872–1954) who was also a competent artist,<sup>23</sup> this was donated in 1998;
- a bronzed plaster portrait bust of Charles Arthur Fitzgerald, a Fellow of RGSQ and ethnological collector, by the Queensland sculptor Maria Kuhn, commissioned in 1945 (see Part 2);
- an oil portrait of the noted Australian film director Charles Chauvel by Alan D. Baker, hung in the Art Gallery of NSW's Archibald Prize in 1951 (see Part 2);
- a portrait bust of Daniel O'Brien, RGSQ Honorary Director and General Secretary 1941–65, by RGSQ member Irene Barber, presented in 1952; and
- a pastel portrait of Daniel O'Brien by Carl Villiers Jordison, shown in the Arts Council exhibition 'Artists of Fame and Promise', 1958.<sup>24</sup>



Carl Villiers Jordison  
Portrait of Daniel O'Brien, 1958  
pastel drawing



Queensland Parliament, 1888  
chromolithograph

<sup>23</sup> John Steele, 'Jones, Inigo Owen (1872–1954)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/jones-inigo-owen-539/text11915>, published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed online 21 March 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Information from Glenn Cooke, formerly of the Queensland Art Gallery.



Inigo Owen Jones  
*Overlooking Brisbane from the D'Aguilar Range, ca. 1945*  
 oil painting

## 7 CONDITION OF THE COLLECTION

The condition of the collection varies greatly and should be assessed by a professional conservator.

As Gregory House is basically an office space and lecture venue, it is unsuitable for the display or storage of valuable collection material. The building lacks proper environmental control, with air-conditioning turned off whenever it is unoccupied. The low ceilings result in artworks being hung near air-conditioning vents, exposing them to constant temperature fluctuations, while the office lighting and windows expose some material to unacceptably high light levels. The collection is also at risk from standards of security and fire protection far below those offered by state collecting institutions.

Attention should be given to artworks on paper that have been on display for decades. Some artworks, notably Sir Thomas Mitchell's painting of his son, are faded while others require re-mounting and framing to archival standards.

Storage conditions for artefacts, such as the outstandingly significant Sir Thomas Mitchell artefacts, are poor and specialised storage materials are needed for their protection.

During the 1980s, with the assistance of the State Library of Queensland, some maps were placed within plastic sleeves; though said to be of archival quality, they should be checked by a conservator. Also, some maps have been entirely encapsulated in plastic which is not a recommended practice. Other maps have been stored rolled for many years hence will require professional assistance in flattening.

Many early books have been covered in adhesive plastic, again not a recommended practice.



Bookplate of Cecil Twisden-Bedford,  
 damaged by being partly covered in  
 adhesive plastic



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## 8 COMPARATIVE COLLECTIONS

In comparing the RGSQ's collection with those of other collecting agencies in Australia, the nearest equivalent is that of its fellow society, the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia. The South Australian society has a large and significant collection which is catalogued and recorded in some detail on its website; this includes an online catalogue of the library collection. The society mounts occasional exhibitions drawn from its holdings and features particular items on its website. The library collection comprises over 25,000 volumes and about 140 titles of periodicals—it is said to be 'one of the most significant collections of rare geographical books and manuscripts in Australia'. The manuscripts include such valuable items as three Sir Joseph Banks' manuscripts (1766, 1768, 1811), John McDouall Stuart's diary of his fifth expedition (1861–62) and two letters written by the first Surveyor-General of South Australia, Colonel William Light. In addition, the society has a collection of about 800 maps and plans which began with a significant donation by a member in 1886; as well as early atlases, artworks, medals, historic furniture, and a collection of exploration relics and memorabilia. The latter collection includes material associated with such noted Australian explorers as Charles Sturt, L.A. Wells, John McDouall Stuart and John McKinlay; and surveying material associated with Colonel Light. Hence it is evident that the South Australian collection is not only larger than its Queensland counterpart but also better documented and managed.

Of the RGSQ's library collection, much of this material is replicated in Queensland's major libraries, notably the State Library's John Oxley Library, the University of Queensland's Fryer Library and the Queensland Parliamentary Library, as well as in libraries further afield, notably the National Library of Australia and the various state libraries. Likewise, much of the RGSQ's map and plan collection is replicated in the Queensland State Archives, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and in the above libraries. Also, some of the RGSQ's Queensland cadastral and Geological Survey maps have been scanned by other organisations and are available online.

By contrast, the RGSQ's own archives, artefacts and artworks are mostly unique and outstandingly significant; they have no equivalent elsewhere.

## 9 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE COLLECTION

The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland (RGSQ), founded in 1885, is one of Queensland's oldest scientific societies and is one of only two geographical societies dating from the 19th century to continue in Australia. The RGSQ's founding aims were to promote the study of geography, to disseminate knowledge on the various types of geography through public lectures and publications, to support further exploration of Australasia, to assist in the compilation of a reliable geography of Australasia, and to collect and publish historical records of geographical interest and the memoirs of men who have made significant contributions to geography in Australasia. Despite its wider brief, the RGSQ has always been mainly interested in the geography of Queensland and its various regions. Over the years the Society's members (mostly men) have included many of Queensland's leading citizens: public servants, notably surveyors; politicians; professionals; businessmen; pastoralists; even governors. Traditionally governors have served as patrons. During its heyday, from the mid-1920s to the mid-30s, the Society had fifteen country branches extending from Thursday Island to Warwick, however by the 1950s all these had closed except for a short-lived Western Branch.

With such influential and widespread connections, the RGSQ has been able to collect significant material, though maintaining collections has never been

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central to its operations and some material has been lost or transferred to other collecting agencies. From its inception the Society has maintained a substantial library, much of which has been acquired by exchanging its publications for those of other scientific organisations both in Australia and abroad. Also, much material has been collected as a by-product of the Society's activities, such as hosting lectures, mounting expeditions to remote places, and erecting memorials to explorers, pioneers and the like. Besides its library, the RGSQ has maps, photographs, its own archives and a small but significant collection of artefacts and artworks. All this material is housed at Gregory House, the Society's premises in Milton, Brisbane, where it is accessible to members and, by appointment, to geography teachers and researchers.

The RGSQ library has about 80 Australian and world atlases, both early and recent; various travel guides; and about 1500 other books dating from the 17th century to the present and covering such subjects as Australian exploration, Queensland geography and history, anthropology, geology, climatology, geomorphology, palaeontology, environmental science and conservation. The library also has a large periodical collection comprising some 120 different titles, relating mainly to geography and geographical education; and a multi-media teaching collection for the use of geography teachers.

Besides its library, the RGSQ holds about 9000 maps, plans and charts, mostly 20th-century and relating to Queensland and other Australian states or territories. These include many categories, from thematic and topographic maps to early survey plans and British Admiralty charts; however, none of the various sets of maps and charts are complete series. The Society also has an extensive photographic collection comprising about 4600 photographs and 2100 lantern slides covering diverse subjects. These include portraits of explorers, scenic views of Brisbane and Queensland, forestry activities, the Great Barrier Reef, Australian Aboriginal and Pacific Islander peoples, and the Society's expeditions to the Carnarvon Ranges. The collection includes about 100 photographs taken by the Queensland photo-journalist Thomas J. McMahon (1868–1933) recording South Pacific Islanders.

The RGSQ's own archives date from its establishment in 1885. The early records include membership lists, minutes of meetings, annual reports, cash books, transcripts of lectures delivered to the Society, and manuscripts of papers published by the Society. There are also correspondence files, scrapbooks and photographs relating to the Society's activities over the years, as well as copies of its annual journals from 1885 to 1993, its monthly newsletters from 1976 to the present, and its various other publications. Though this material primarily documents the RGSQ's history, it also has wider interest in that the Society and its members have made important contributions to Queensland—for instance, in initiating research into exploration, the Great Barrier Reef and place names.

The RGSQ's collection of artefacts and artworks includes several items associated with Sir Thomas Mitchell (1792–1855), the first Surveyor-General of New South Wales and a noted explorer: his paintbox, camera lucida, pistol, shoulder belt and his watercolour portrait of his son Livingstone Mitchell. All these items have excellent provenance, having been acquired in the late 1940s from Mitchell's grandson G.V.F. Mann, a well-known Sydney artist and gallery director. Another outstanding artwork held by the RGSQ is an oil portrait of the famous Australian film director Charles Chauvel (1897–1959); this, by Sydney artist Alan D. Baker, was hung in the Art Gallery of NSW's Archibald Prize in 1951.

Other collection items of national significance include a rare historic atlas titled *Le Theatre du Monde*, published by Johannes Blaeu of Amsterdam in 1654; an original, hand-drawn plan of the route taken by the Jardine



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Expedition from Rockhampton to Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, in 1864–65; and *Wragge*, a periodical published briefly in Brisbane in 1902–03 by the Queensland Government Meteorologist Clement Wragge.

The RGSQ's collection is not fully catalogued and is not featured on the Society's website, hence it remains little known within the Australian museum and historical community. It has great potential for interpretation and research.

## 10 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

These are listed in order of priority, however most would be beyond the RGSQ's ability to implement with its limited resources and would depend on assistance being received from external sources.

1. Apply to the National Library of Australia's Community Heritage Grants program for funds for a preservation needs assessment of the entire collection.
2. Upgrade the collection's security by installing locks to areas holding valuable material.
3. Aim to complete cataloguing the various collection categories as soon as possible. Artefacts and artworks should be catalogued using a recognised museum registration system, incorporating digital images. Give priority to cataloguing significant material such as the Sir Thomas Mitchell Collection.
4. Encourage members interested in RGSQ history to continue sorting and cataloguing the Society's archives, and employ a part-time administrative assistant to help with data entry.
5. Establish a policy for future development and/or disposal of all categories of the collection. Though a library policy has been adopted recently, this should be updated and incorporated into a general policy.
6. Consider transferring to state or national collections material of outstanding significance that would be more appropriately housed in institutions offering higher levels of professional care, security and accessibility; for instance, material relating to Sir Thomas Mitchell to the State Library of NSW's Mitchell Library or the National Museum of Australia; the portrait bust of C.A. Fitzgerald to the Queensland Art Gallery; and the portrait of Charles Chauvel to the John Oxley Library, the National Portrait Gallery or the National Library.
7. Establish a series of object files to contain all hard-copy material available on specific collection items, especially significant items, to complement the data held on the catalogue. The files would contain material such as photographs, condition reports, letters from donors, references from publications, valuations, display captions, etc.
8. Establish guidelines for the rotational display of artworks of on paper and other fragile items that have been on permanent display for decades.
9. Engage an art conservator to check the condition of significant artworks and advise on future care.
10. Engage a paper conservator to check the condition of significant maps and advise on future care; also to oversee the flattening of maps that have been kept rolled for years.
11. Obtain specialised storage materials for artefacts and artworks.

12. Do not reframe artworks or undertake any conservation work without first obtaining specialist advice.
13. Seek the assistance of the State Library of NSW's Mitchell Library in verifying the scrapbook possibly kept by Thomas Mitchell—the library holds Mitchell's papers and may be able to draw parallels between these and the scrapbook.
14. Make the collection more accessible by providing information and photographs, or possibly this report, on the RGSQ website, thereby opening up the collection to a national and international audience. Note that this would have security implications and attract more researchers.

## PART 2

### 11 ASSESSMENT OF THE COLLECTION'S MOST SIGNIFICANT ITEMS

The following ten items are listed roughly chronologically. They have been chosen in consultation with RGSQ members.

#### 11.1 HISTORIC ATLAS *LE THEATRE DU MONDE*, PUBLISHED IN 1654

The atlas, titled *Le Theatre du Monde or Nouvel Atlas de Jean Blaeu*, was published in Amsterdam in 1654 as volume 5 of Blaeu's *Atlas Novus*. This folio volume, bound in an embossed leather cover, measures 52.5 x 35.6 cm. It contains maps of Scotland and Ireland, believed to be the work of Timothy Pont and Robert Gordon. With French text and maps in Latin, the atlas has a preface by its Dutch publisher-engraver Johannes Blaeu (1596–1673). The maps, richly embellished in the Baroque style, are copper-engraved with fine period hand-colouring. Blaeu's own coat-of-arms is included in the colourful embellishments.

The atlas was donated to the RGSQ in 1934 by Queensland pastoralist David McConnell of Cressbrook in the Brisbane Valley. Since 1991 it has been on permanent loan to the State Library of Queensland's John Oxley Library, held as a rare book (RB 912.41 1654). Inscriptions at the front of the atlas indicate that it had at least two other owners before acquired by McConnell: 'x Van Honsem' and 'William Alex Martin / Writer to the Signet'. It has evidence of water damage, probably resulting from a fire in the RGSQ's premises in 1959, but has later been conserved by the State Library.

*Le Theatre du Monde or Nouvel Atlas de Jean Blaeu* published in six volumes between 1635 and 1665, was a precursor to Johannes Blaeu's more famous *Atlas Maior* published several years later and described as 'the greatest and finest atlas ever published'. These atlases were greatest achievements of the Blaeu firm, one of the world's most celebrated publishers of maps, globes and atlases during the 17th century. The firm was founded in 1596 by Johannes Blaeu's father, Willem, and then continued by Johannes after his father's death in 1638. It flourished in Amsterdam for over 40 years until a fire destroyed its premises in 1672, claiming all its plates, prints and stock and







Title page of *Le Theatre du Monde*



The maps are decorated with elaborate cartouches, often with costumed figures and flora and fauna of the region illustrated

forcing its closure. Blaeu's atlases have always been acclaimed for their high production standards: the quality of the engraving, the paper, and colouring is outstanding, placing them among the finest illustrated books of their era. Costly as well as lavish, they were showpieces for their wealthy owners.

The atlas has outstanding historical significance as a fine example of a 17th-century Dutch atlas recording the state of geographic knowledge at the time and showcasing the skills of highly accomplished cartographers and engravers. With its richly embellished and hand-coloured maps, the atlas is also of aesthetic significance, and, as the only known copy of this particular Blaeu atlas in Australia, it is significant for its rarity.

## REFERENCES:

*Queensland Geographical Journal*, vol. 48, 1943–44, p. 5; *Courier-Mail*, 16 November 1941, p.4; Kath Berg, 'The Blaeu Atlas', *RGSQ Bulletin*, August 2009; websites <http://maps.nls.uk/atlas/blaeu-major/info.html> and <https://www.donaldheald.com/pages/books/6850/willem-blaeu-jan-blaeu/le-theatre-du-monde>, accessed 13 April 2017.





Folio map showing part of Scotland, from *Le Theatre du Monde*

## 11.2 PAINTBOX OF SIR THOMAS MITCHELL, 1806–

The artist's paintbox was a personal possession of Sir Thomas Livingston Mitchell (1792–1855), the first Surveyor-General of New South Wales and a noted explorer. The varnished mahogany box, measuring 20 x 7 x 3 cm, comprises a paint tray containing original watercolour paints and, beneath this, a drawer for brushes. The paint cakes bear the name 'Reeves & Woodyer' which is probably the manufacturer of the whole box. Under the lid is a label bearing the inscription: 'Thomas Mitchell / Est legitimus possessor hujus / AD. 1806'.

The inscription indicates that Mitchell acquired the paintbox when he was 14 years old. Born in Stirlingshire, Scotland in 1792, he attended the Grangemouth Primary School where he received instruction in drawing and painting. He developed his artistic skills during his later studies in Edinburgh and while serving as a young officer in the British army. In 1814, while engaged in topographical intelligence during Peninsular War, Mitchell was commissioned to produce plans of the conflict's major battlefields, a task he continued long afterwards; his scenes were eventually published in 1841 as *James Wyld's Maps and Plans of the Principal... Battles... during the War from 1808 to 1814*. Later, from his appointment in 1827 to the Survey Department of New South Wales, Mitchell continued to paint, recording the landscapes, flora, fauna and Aboriginal people he encountered on his travels. His work is represented in several public collections in Australia, including the National Library, the Mitchell Library, the Art Gallery of NSW and the Art Gallery of Ballarat.



Paint cakes from Mitchell's paintbox

The paintbox is thought to have been used by Mitchell throughout his career. Despite its extensive use, is in good condition. It is one of four artefacts donated to the RGSQ in 1947 by Mitchell's grandson G.V.F. Mann, a well-known Sydney artist and gallery director. The box is of outstanding historical significance for its association with Sir Thomas Mitchell, a key figure in the European settlement and early exploration of eastern Australia.



Mitchell's paintbox

## REFERENCES:

*Telegraph*, Brisbane, 24 October 1947, p. 8; *Queensland Geographical Journal*, vol. 52, 1947–48, p. 12; D.W.A. Baker, 'Mitchell, Sir Thomas Livingstone (1792–1855)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mitchell-sir-thomas-livingstone-2463/text3297>, published first in hardcopy 1967, accessed online 21 March 2017; D.W.A. Baker, entry on Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, in Joan Kerr (ed.), *The Dictionary of Australian Artists*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 541–42.

### 11.3 CAMERA LUCIDA OF SIR THOMAS MITCHELL

The camera lucida was a personal possession of Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell (1792–1855), the first Surveyor-General of New South Wales and a noted explorer. The camera lucida is an instrument for drawing objects or scenes in true perspective, and for copying, re-drawing or enlarging other drawings. It was patented by William Hyde Wollaston in 1807 and sold by art shops after that date. Generally it was accompanied by paper directions for use, as is the case with Mitchell's instrument. The camera lucida is contained within a skin-covered case measuring 23 x 5 cm.

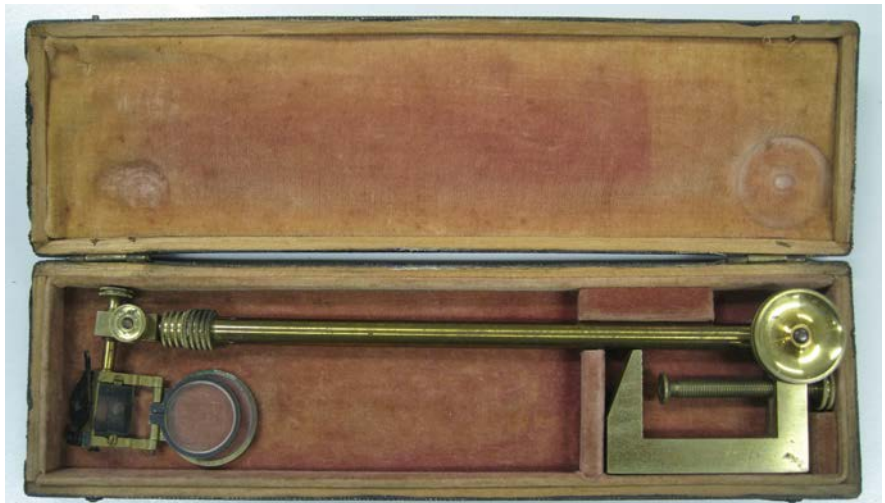
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Thomas Mitchell, a former army officer and veteran of the Peninsular War, arrived in Australia in 1827 to take up an appointment as Assistant Surveyor-General of NSW. Succeeding John Oxley as Surveyor-General the following year, Mitchell was to hold the post until his death in 1855. Soon after assuming office he instigated important but difficult task of making a trigonometrical survey of the colony. Besides facilitating land settlement, the survey was to be a first step 'towards the construction of a general map' of the colony. During his term Mitchell also oversaw the building of major new roads from Sydney to Parramatta and Liverpool and southwards to Goulburn, and undertook extensive journeys of exploration. In 1831–32 he travelled between the Castlereagh and Gwydir Rivers to test reports of the existence of a large river flowing to the north-west. His second journey, in 1835, was to trace the Darling River down to its junction with the Murray; however this was aborted mid-way due to Aboriginal attack. Mitchell's third expedition, in 1836, was to fulfill the aims of the earlier mission; travelling into what is now Victoria he was so impressed by the country he called it Australia Felix. In 1845–46 he undertook his fourth and final expedition in search of a route to the Gulf of Carpentaria; he reached the Barcoo River before turning back, on his return journey passing the future site of Mitchell.

On his journeys Mitchell systematically surveyed as he went and reported on the capabilities of the land he traversed. His major explorations were recorded in his *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia* (1838) and *Journal of an Expedition into the Interior of Tropical Australia* (1848), both copiously illustrated with drawings he (and a few others) had made on his travels. In 1850 he published his *Australian Geography* intended for use in local schools. Though Mitchell's career was marred by repeated conflicts with governors and poor administration of his Survey Department, he was a competent surveyor and explorer, a man of intellectual pursuits and an accomplished artist. His work led to large tracts of eastern Australia being opened for pastoral settlement.

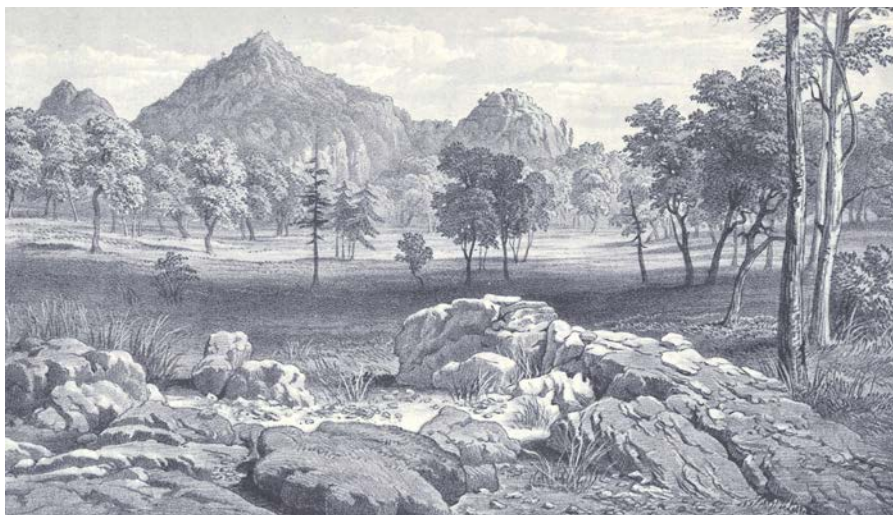
The camera lucida was probably used by Mitchell throughout his career. He may have used it as a young army officer in 1811–14 when he made plans of battlefields as part of his topographical survey work during the Peninsula War; however it is more likely that he used an instrument provided by the army rather than his own. Mitchell certainly used the instrument later: in 1828–33 on his triangulation survey of New South Wales, during which he sketched the hills and ranges; and on his four journeys of exploration of eastern Australia in 1831–46, during which he recorded the landscapes, flora, fauna and Aboriginal people he encountered.

Despite its extensive use, the camera lucida is in good condition. It is one of four artefacts donated to the RGSQ in 1947 by Mitchell's grandson G.V.F.



Mitchell's camera lucida





Sir Thomas Mitchell's drawing of *The Pyramids near Lindley Ranges*, 1846, recorded with the aid of his camera lucida, reproduced in his *Journal of an Expedition into the Interior of Tropical Australia* (1848).

Mann, a well-known Sydney artist and gallery director. It is not the only surveying instrument used by Mitchell to survive as other instruments are held by the National Library of Australia. The camera lucida is of outstanding historical significance for its association with Sir Thomas Mitchell, a key figure in the European settlement and early exploration of eastern Australia.

## REFERENCES:

*Telegraph*, Brisbane, 24 October 1947, p. 8; *Queensland Geographical Journal*, vol. 52, 1947–48, p. 12; D.W.A. Baker, 'Mitchell, Sir Thomas Livingstone (1792–1855)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mitchell-sir-thomas-livingstone-2463/text3297>, published first in hardcopy 1967, accessed online 21 March 2017; D.W.A. Baker, entry on Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, in Joan Kerr (ed.), *The Dictionary of Australian Artists*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 541–42.



Directions for using the camera lucida



Close-up view

#### 11.4 PISTOL OF SIR THOMAS MITCHELL

The pistol was a personal possession of Sir Thomas Livingston Mitchell (1792–1855), the first Surveyor-General of New South Wales and a noted explorer. It is a three-barrelled boxlock tap action flintlock pistol, 20 cm long, inscribed on the lock plate: 'London', at right, and 'Knubley', at left. John Knubley was a prominent London sword cutler and pistol maker in the late 18th century; he died in 1795, however pistols continued to be sold under his name by successive owners of his business. The pistol has three 7 cm turn off brass barrels cut inside to key ends. On the underside of the lower barrel at the breech end are stamped the London proof and view marks. The barrels are stamped with corresponding numbers to breech one through three. The pistol is fitted with a steel top sliding safety and has a plain walnut butt.

Pistols and muskets were part of the equipment carried by 19th-century surveyors while working in the field or on journeys of exploration. Mitchell's pistol, with a barrel length of 7 cm, would have only short-range accuracy hence would have been used for close-quarters self-defence, possibly in confrontations with Aborigines, rather than for shooting game for camp food. The advantage of this type of pistol is that three shots could be fired before having to reload.

The pistol is thought to have been used by Mitchell throughout his career. Despite its extensive use, is in good condition. It is one of four artefacts donated to the RGSQ in 1947 by Mitchell's grandson G.V.F. Mann, a well-known Sydney artist and gallery director. It is not Mitchell's only pistol to survive as the National Museum of Australia has his pair of duelling pistols; these were purchased in 1983 from the Royal Australian Historical Society hence have less reliable provenance. The RGSQ's pistol is of outstanding historical significance for its association with Sir Thomas Mitchell, a key figure in the European settlement and early exploration of eastern Australia.

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*Telegraph*, Brisbane, 24 October 1947, p. 8; *Queensland Geographical Journal*, vol. 52, 1947–48, p. 12; Howard L. Blackmore *A Dictionary of London Gunmakers 1350–1850*, Phaidon Christie's, 1986; D.W.A. Baker, 'Mitchell, Sir Thomas Livingstone (1792–1855)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mitchell-sir-thomas-livingstone-2463/text3297>, published first in hardcopy 1967, accessed online 21 March 2017.



Mitchell's pistol



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## 11.5 SHOULDER BELT OF SIR THOMAS MITCHELL

The shoulder belt was a personal possession of Sir Thomas Livingston Mitchell (1792–1855), the first Surveyor-General of New South Wales and a noted explorer. The black leather belt, worn across the left shoulder, was standard equipment for British army officers in the early 19th century. It has a silver boss bearing a lion's head from which a silver whistle is attached by a chain; this was used for communication in the field. The belt also has an attached leather cartridge pouch and originally had another pouch for carrying a pistol. Over time the belt has deteriorated: the leather is desiccated and the stitching of the cartridge pouch is worn, so much so that the flap is now detached.

The handsome shoulder belt is thought to have been worn by Mitchell throughout his career. It was certainly worn when he was a young officer in the British 95th Regiment serving in the Peninsular War, as shown in an early portrait, and its present condition suggests that it continued to be used later. The belt is one of four artefacts donated to the RGSQ in 1947 by Mitchell's grandson G.V.F. Mann, a well-known Sydney artist and gallery director. The belt is of outstanding historical significance for its association with Sir Thomas Mitchell, a key figure in the European settlement and early exploration of eastern Australia.



Early portrait of Thomas Mitchell in the uniform of a Major of the 1st Rifle Brigade of the 95th Regiment, showing his shoulder belt.  
(Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW)





Lion's head boss



Mitchell's shoulder belt

## REFERENCES:

*Telegraph*, Brisbane, 24 October 1947, p. 8; *Queensland Geographical Journal*, vol. 52, 1947–48, p. 12; D.W.A. Baker, 'Mitchell, Sir Thomas Livingstone (1792–1855)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mitchell-sir-thomas-livingstone-2463/text3297>, published first in hardcopy 1967, accessed online 21 March 2017.

## 11.6 PORTRAIT OF LIVINGSTONE MITCHELL BY SIR THOMAS MITCHELL, ca. 1840

The portrait of Livingstone Mitchell (1821–1889) was painted by his father Sir Thomas Livingston Mitchell (1792–1855), the first Surveyor-General of New South Wales and a noted explorer. The portrait, depicting its subject as a young army officer, is in watercolour on paper and measures 25.1 x 20.3 cm (sight only as it is framed). It is not signed or dated. Livingstone Mitchell was the eldest son and second of twelve children of Thomas Mitchell and his wife Mary, née Blunt. Born in Surrey, England, Livingstone arrived in Sydney with his parents in 1827, aged six. In 1838, at the age of seventeen, he received a commission in the British 96th Regiment with which he later served at Norfolk Island, guarding the penal settlement. By 1846 Livingstone had left the army and was living back in Sydney. He died in England in 1889.



Sir Thomas Mitchell  
Portrait of Livingstone Mitchell, ca. 1840  
watercolour painting

The portrait is one of a large collection of artworks purchased in May 1948 from Thomas Mitchell's grandson G.V.F. Mann, a well-known Sydney artist and gallery director.<sup>25</sup> The works were shown in an exhibition at Brisbane department store Finney Isles & Co.'s art gallery from 25 October 1948; it is from the exhibition catalogue that the sitter can be identified, being the only watercolour work listed.<sup>26</sup> The portrait is badly faded, having been on display for many years.

The portrait is of outstanding historical significance for its association with Sir Thomas Mitchell, a key figure in the European settlement and early exploration of eastern Australia. With its meticulous brushwork, the portrait is also of aesthetic significance, showing that Mitchell was not only a surveyor but also an accomplished artist.

## REFERENCES:

*Courier-Mail*, 17 May 1948, p. 3; *Cairns Post*, 6 August 1948, p. 6; *Exhibition of Paintings by Sir Thomas Mitchell* [exhibition catalogue], Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Queensland), Brisbane, 1948; D.W.A. Baker, entry on Thomas Livingston Mitchell, in Joan Kerr (ed.), *The Dictionary of Australian Artists*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 541–42; J.H.L. Cumpston, *Thomas Mitchell: Surveyor General and Explorer*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1954.

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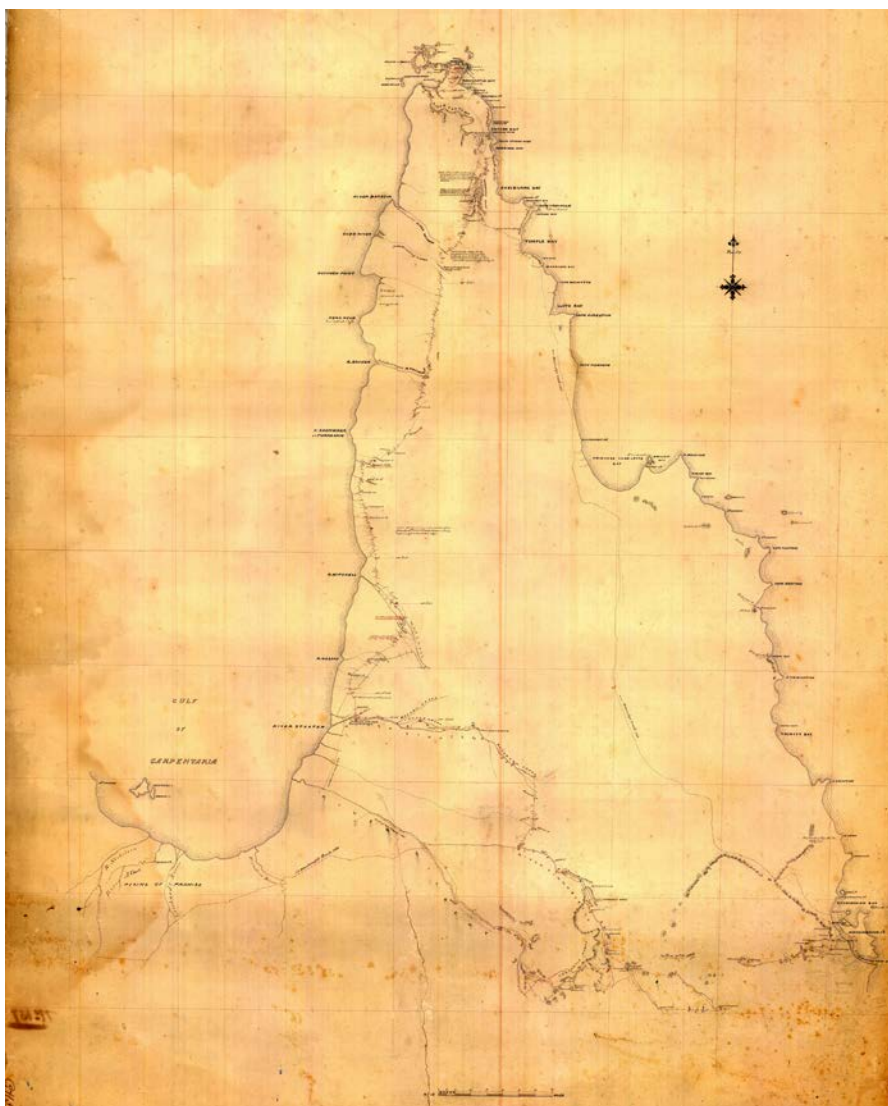
<sup>25</sup> *Courier-Mail*, 17 May 1948, p. 3; *Cairns Post*, 6 August 1948, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> *Exhibition of Paintings by Sir Thomas Mitchell* [exhibition catalogue], Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Queensland), Brisbane, 1948; *Queensland Country Life*, 4 November 1948, p. 7. Previously the portrait was thought to be a self-portrait of Thomas Mitchell.

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## 11.7 PLAN OF THE JARDINE EXPEDITION TO CAPE YORK PENINSULA, 1865

This is an original, hand-drawn plan of the route taken by the Jardine Expedition to Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, in 1864–65. On that expedition brothers Frank and Alexander Jardine drove a mob of cattle to Somerset at the tip of Cape York, where a government settlement had been established recently under their father, former Rockhampton police magistrate John Jardine. Departing from Rockhampton in May 1864, the party reached their destination ten months later after a perilous journey involving confrontations with local Aboriginal people. Besides tracing the Jardine Expedition, the plan shows the routes taken by earlier explorers of Cape York: Ludwig Leichhardt in 1845, A.C. Gregory in 1845, Edmund Kennedy in 1848 and G.H. McDonald in 1864. The linen-backed plan, drawn at a scale of 20 miles to the inch, measures 128 x 74 cm and is presently encapsulated in plastic. The plan was given to the RGSQ in 1890 by Life Fellow Warren Weedon, then accountant of the Department of Harbours and Rivers in Brisbane where he worked with Alexander Jardine (Chief Engineer) who had participated in the above expedition; it seems the men had come to an agreement over the plan's future safe-keeping.



Plan of the Jardine Expedition





Plan detail

The plan does not bear a date, however it can be dated to 1865 by reference to an almost identical plan held by the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines, originally catalogued by the Surveyor-General's Office as G52.9. The major difference between the two plans is that the RGSQ's copy has the campsites marked in Arabic numerals whereas the other has these in Roman numerals. Research reveals that both plans were drawn in 1865 by George Washington Young, a draftsman in the Department of Lands and Works, Rockhampton. A pencil note on the departmental copy indicates that it was compiled from six separate plans covering the expedition's route; these were drawn by the same draftsman and originally catalogued as G52, 4a to 4f.

The RGSQ's plan bears the initials 'G.H.I.' at the lower left, possibly denoting a former owner. The Queensland Electoral Roll for 1889, the year before the plan was donated, lists only one person of those initials: George Henry Irvine, a Brisbane-based chemist and assayer, who in 1893 became Manager of the Mount Morgan Gold Mine. Irvine's signature on his marriage certificate in 1894 matches the initials on the plan.<sup>27</sup> Possibly he had come into contact with one of the Jardines or Warren Weedon, the plan's donor. Both Irvine and Weedon were members of learned societies in Brisbane: Irvine of the Royal Society and Weedon of the RGSQ.

The RGSQ's plan was possibly used by John Woodhead Buxton, a Brisbane bookseller and printer, in 1867 when he published a *Narrative of the Overland Expedition of the Messrs Jardine from Rockhampton to Cape York, Northern Queensland*, compiled from the Jardines' journals and edited by Rockhampton surveyor Frederick J. Byerley; this included an engraved map with the same information, including camp sites marked in Arabic numerals. Alternatively, the plan could have been sent to the Royal Geographical Society of London for use by its engraver, Edward Weller, to produce the map in the 'Journal of an Expedition from Port Denison to Cape York under the command of F. and A. Jardine, Esqrs, by Mr Richardson'<sup>28</sup> published in the Society's journal in 1866; in this the campsites are also in Arabic numerals but the routes of other



The initials 'G.H.I.', possibly denoting George Henry Irvine

<sup>27</sup> George Henry Irvine married into the Compigne family of Jimboomba in 1894.

<sup>28</sup> Archibald Richardson, a Rockhampton surveyor, accompanied the Jardine Expedition.



The Jardine family, ca. 1866, including: Frank, second from left; John, centre; and Alexander, far right.  
(John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland)

explorers are omitted. It is unlikely that the same plan was used for both the Brisbane and London publications hence there was probably a third copy in existence.

The plan is in fair condition, with a poorly-repaired tear in the lower centre and water damage to the upper left. The tear does not extend to the linen backing, suggesting that this was added at a later stage. The plan is of outstanding historical significance as an early record of the Jardine Expedition to Cape York Peninsula in 1864–65, a feat of endurance that led to the opening up of Queensland's remote north to European settlement.

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Frederick J. Byerley (ed.), *Narrative of the Overland Expedition of the Messrs Jardine from Rockhampton to Cape York, Northern Queensland*, J.W. Buxton, Brisbane, 1867; 'Journal of an Expedition from Port Denison to Cape York under the command of F. and A. Jardine', Esqrs, by Mr. Richardson', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, vol. 36, [1866], pp. 19–51; Clem Lack, 'Jardine, Francis Lascelles (Frank) (1841–1919)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/jardine-francis-lascelles-frank-3924/text6117>, published first in hardcopy 1972, accessed online 5 June 2017.



Clement Lindley Wragge, ca. 1901  
(John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland)

## 11.8 PERIODICAL WRAGGE SELF-PUBLISHED BY CLEMENT WRAGGE, 1902–03

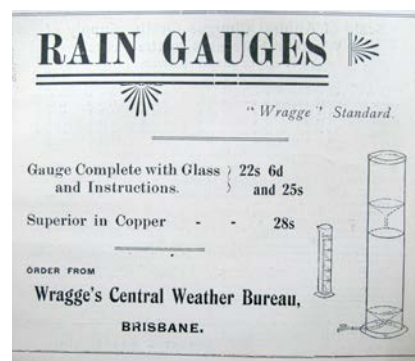
The periodical *Wragge*, subtitled 'a meteorological, geographical and popular scientific gazette for the people of the southern hemisphere', was published weekly from July 1902 to July 1903 by Clement Lindley Wragge (1852–1922), Queensland's Government Meteorologist. The periodical, though published and edited by Wragge himself in Brisbane, purported to be 'The official journal of the Central Weather Bureau', reflecting its publisher's national aspirations. In its pages, generally eight per issue, Wragge covered a range of topics: not just meteorology and climate, but also politics, health, bushcraft, agriculture, tree planting and conservation, natural disasters, even patriotism. His motto

was 'For God, King, Empire and People'. He also included advertisements, including for his rain gauges and Stiger Vortex cannons, which presumably helped offset his printing costs.

English-born Clement Wragge arrived in Australia in 1876 and joined the South Australian Surveyor-General's Department. After studying meteorology he returned to Britain in 1878 and established weather observation stations, including one on Ben Nevis, Scotland. Back in South Australia, Wragge set up similar stations at Walkerville and Mount Lofty and founded the Meteorological Society of Australasia in 1886. His activities caught the eye of the Queensland Government who commissioned him to report on establishing a local meteorological organisation to help stem shipping losses from cyclones; this led to his appointment in 1887 as Queensland's Government Meteorologist. In this role Wragge set up an extensive network of weather stations around the colony, issued forecasts, pioneered research into tropical storms, and lectured widely. In 1895 he established other weather stations in Tasmania (Mount Wellington) and NSW (Mount Kosciusko and Merimbula). In 1902, in an effort to break Queensland's 'Federation' drought, he purchased a number of Stiger Vortex cannons, which were supposedly able to bring rain from clouds. Test firings at Charleville were unsuccessful; two of the cannons remain there today.

Wragge, known for his flaming red hair and temper to match, became involved in disputes over the cost of his projects, and antagonised his southern counterparts by issuing forecasts and charts from his so-called 'Chief Weather Bureau' for the whole continent. He resigned from his Queensland post in June 1903 after clashing with the premier over a cut in his funding following the Federation of Australia. Having advocated the creation of a national weather bureau, Wragge was disappointed in 1907 when he failed to become head of the new Commonwealth Meteorological Bureau. He went to New Zealand where he died in 1922.

The RGSQ's holdings of *Wragge* are almost a complete set of the short-lived periodical: from vol. 1, no. 1, 17 July 1902 to vol. 1, no. 50, 25 June 1903, which is just two issues short of the final issue, no. 52, 9 July 1903. Other sets are held by the State Library of Queensland's John Oxley Library and the National Library of Australia.



Advertisement for Wragge's rain gauges (Wragge, 16 April 1903)

Pharmaceutical Chemist,  
**HIGH STREET, TOOWONG, near BRISBANE, Q.**

**HARVEY & SON,** Globe Ironworks,  
Margaret Street, Brisbane

Sole Manufacturers of Stiger Vortex Guns to Meteorological Bureau, Queensland.

**MAKERS OF—**

Wrought Iron Field  
or Carriage Gates.

Sheep-Fold Hurdles.

Iron Continuous  
Fencing.

Pig Troughing

Funnels.

Every Description  
of Ironwork.

Gate-Hinges,  
Nuts,  
Balls,  
and  
General  
Engineers,  
Builders' and  
Contractors'  
Requisites.

Drainage Covers,  
Frames, Etc.

OUR STEEL AND IRON ROOFS AND BUILDINGS ARE ECONOMICAL, DURABLE, EFFICIENT,  
QUICKLY AND CHEAPLY ERECTED, FIREPROOF, STORMPROOF, LIGHT AND HANDY FOR  
SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT.

Designs, Plans, and Estimates on Receipt of Exact Requirements.

Advertisement for Harvey & Son, manufacturers of Wragge's Stiger Vortex cannons (Wragge, 2 October 1902)





Standard thermometer screen, Merimbula weather station, NSW  
(Wragge, 25 September 1902)



Wragge's weather station on Ben Nevis,  
Scotland  
(Wragge, 6 November 1902)

The circumstances of the acquisition of the RGSQ's set of *Wragge* are unknown; though Wragge was a Fellow of London's Royal Geographical and Royal Meteorological Societies, he was not a RGSQ member. The volumes are of outstanding historical significance for their association with Clement Wragge who, at the turn of the 20th century, was a key player in the development of Australian meteorology and one of Queensland's leading public figures.

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*Queensland Geographical Journal*, vol. 54, 1949–52, p. 43; Paul D. Wilson, 'Wragge, Clement Lindley (1852–1922)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wragge-clement-lindley-9193/text16237>, published first in hardcopy 1990, accessed online 5 May 2017.

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### 11.9 PORTRAIT BUST OF CHARLES ARTHUR FITZGERALD BY MARIA KUHN, 1945

The portrait bust is of Charles Arthur Fitzgerald, a Fellow of the RGSQ and ethnological collector, depicting him holding a pipe in his left hand. The bust, in bronzed plaster of dimensions 56.5 x 35 x 30.9 cm, is the work of Queensland sculptor Maria Kuhn (1920–1981) who has signed and dated it under the shoulder: 'MARIA KUHN / 1945 / AUSTRALIA'. It was commissioned by the RGSQ in recognition of Fitzgerald's donation of his ethnological collection to the Society. The collection, comprising 800 items, mostly from Australia and the Pacific, was to be handed on to the University of Queensland; however this failed to happen so it was eventually transferred to the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs in 1975.

C.A. Fitzgerald, an engineer and keen collector, came to Brisbane after World War I. He worked for the City Electric Light Co. and the Edison and Swan Co. before establishing his own business, Precision Engineering Works, at Moorooka in 1924. After joining the RGSQ in the 1940s, he became a



Maria Kuhn  
Portrait bust of Charles Arthur Fitzgerald, 1945  
bronzed plaster





C.A. Fitzgerald at home with his ethnological collection  
(*Queensland Geographical Journal*, vol. 51, 1946)

councillor and life member and was awarded the Society's Thomson Medal in 1951 for his above donation and service. Fitzgerald seems to have been a shady character, being frequently reported in the Brisbane press for such misdemeanors as traffic offences and fraud. He died in 1954, leaving a large collection of swords, the spoils of several overseas trips, which were sold at auction.

The Brisbane-born sculptor Maria Kuhn, née Corrie, won a scholarship to study art at the Melbourne Technical College in 1937–39. During World War II she joined the WAAF and served in New Guinea, making a series of studies of soldiers which she later cast into plaster at her Brisbane studio. In 1945 she married Edward Kuhn, an Austrian artist in wrought iron, and continued her sculptural career until subsumed by family duties in the 1950s. Kuhn's work is represented in a few public collections in Australia, notably the Queensland Art Gallery and the National Library of Australia (drawings only), however few of her sculptural works survive apart from her statue of Premier Ned Hanlon at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

The portrait bust of C.A. Fitzgerald is of historical and aesthetic significance as a good example of the work of Queensland sculptor Maria Kuhn, an important woman sculptor of her time, and as one of Kuhn's few sculptural works to survive.

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*Queensland Geographical Journal*, vol. 51, 1946, p. 15; Peter Griggs, *A Dream in Trust: The Centenary History of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, Queensland Incorporated*, published as the *Queensland Geographical Journal*, third series, vol. 7, 1983; p. 120; *Brisbane Courier*, 5 August 1930, p. 34; *Courier-Mail*, 8 July 1942, p. 4; *Daily Mercury* (Mackay), 20 July 1942, p. 4; C.A. Fitzgerald probate notice, *Courier-Mail*, 4 December 1954, p. 11; *Courier-Mail*, 2 June 1954, p. 3; entry for Maria Kuhn in Design & Art Australia Online at <https://www.daaao.org.au/bio/maria-kuhn>, accessed 7 May 2017.



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### 11.10 PORTRAIT OF CHARLES CHAUVEL BY ALAN D. BAKER, 1951

The portrait is of the noted Australian film director Charles Edward Chauvel (1897–1959), depicting him seated in a chair while holding a book (possibly a film script) on his right thigh. The portrait, in oils on canvas, measuring 99.2 x 87.1 cm, is the work of the Sydney artist Alan Douglas Baker (1914–1987) who has signed it at the lower left: 'ALAN D. BAKER'.

Charles Chauvel was raised in the Fassifern district of southern Queensland where his parents had a grazing property. Following his education he moved to Sydney to study commercial art and drama, and then from 1920 worked as a production assistant. After visiting the USA in 1922–23 and working in Hollywood studios, Chauvel returned to Australia keen to produce his own films. Financed by Queensland businessmen and friends, he embarked on *The Moth of Moonbi* and *Greenhide* (both silent films, released 1926) which were modest successes. In later years he produced an impressive series of films with sound, including the jungle adventure *Uncivilised* (1936); *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, a tribute to the Australian Light Horse in Palestine during World War I (1940);<sup>29</sup> another wartime feature *The Rats of Tobruk* (1944); *Sons of Matthew*, a saga of pioneering life (1949); and finally *Jedda*, the story of an Aboriginal girl torn between her traditional ties and European culture (1955). The latter, shot largely in central and northern Australia, was



Alan D. Baker  
Portrait of Charles Chauvel, 1951  
oil painting

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<sup>29</sup> The film was inspired by the distinguished war records in Palestine of his father James Allan Chauvel, his uncle General Harry Chauvel and his cousin Michael Bruxner.

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the first Australian feature film to be shot in colour. Following his major films, Chauvel produced a series of shorter films entitled *Walkabout* for British Broadcasting Corporation television.

Chauvel was self-reliant—serving as his own business manager, director, writer, publicist and distributor. His publicity was flamboyant and some of his films were shot in remote locations under difficult conditions. His films won wide acclaim and helped to shape the popular image of Australia and its people at home and abroad.

The artist Alan Douglas Baker trained at the J.S. Watkins Art School, Sydney, where his fellow students included Henry Hanke and William Pidgen, both later to become Archibald Prize winners. Baker first entered the Archibald competition at the age of eighteen years with a self-portrait, which was accepted. He became an instructor at the J.S. Watkins School until he served with AIF in New Guinea in 1943–45. Also a commercial artist, he undertook posters and murals for Tooth's Brewery in Sydney. His works are represented in the collections of, among others, the National Library of Australia and the Art Gallery of NSW. He was a Fellow and Vice-President of the Royal Art Society of NSW.

Baker's portrait of Charles Chauvel is a good likeness and is painted in his characteristic tonal style. It was hung in the Art Gallery of NSW's Archibald Prize in 1951 and given to the RGSQ in 1962 by Chauvel's widow Elsa, a former actress, via RGSQ Council member Mrs Jean McGregor-Lowndes, a Brisbane cinema proprietor.<sup>30</sup> Presumably it was given because Chauvel was a Fellow of the RGSQ from the late 1940s, though living in Sydney in later life. Regrettably, the portrait is in poor condition, with the paint cracked and the canvas punctured near the centre.

The portrait is of outstanding historical significance for its association with the noted Australian film director Charles Chauvel. It also has aesthetic significance as a good example of the work of the Sydney artist Alan Douglas Baker.

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<sup>30</sup> RGSQ monthly meeting minutes, 18 July 1962; RGSQ Council minutes, 19 July 1962.

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## 13 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In undertaking this assessment, we were assisted by RGSQ members who extended hospitality and made material available during our visits to Gregory House. In particular, we thank the Executive Officer Bernard Fitzpatrick who coordinated the project; the RGSQ historian Dr Peter Griggs; and other members Chris Hall, Peter Lloyd, Peter Nunan and Rob Simson. We also thank the following who gave valuable assistance: Kaye Nardella of the Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying, Brisbane; staff of the State Library of Queensland; and Glenn Cooke, formerly of the Queensland Art Gallery. Finally, we thank Judy White of the Print Shoppe, Kenmore who expertly and patiently processed this document.

Dr Judith McKay and Bill Kitson, June 2017

Images: RGSQ, Judith McKay and Bernard Fitzpatrick unless otherwise credited.



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## 14 THE CONSULTANTS

Dr Judith McKay is a museum curator and historian with wide experience in museums, exhibitions, research and writing. She has worked in national, state and regional museums, most recently (until 2008) as a curator at the Queensland Museum. In recent years Judith has undertaken a range of significance assessments of heritage collections, including those of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame (2010), the Queensland Country Women's Association (2011), the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane (2013), the Queensland Maritime Museum (2015) and the Queensland Women's Historical Association (2016). Her awards include a Queensland-Smithsonian Fellowship (2001), the John Douglas Kerr Medal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland (2008) and a John Oxley Library Fellowship (2009). Until 2016 Judith was a member of the Queensland Heritage Council.

Bill Kitson is one of Queensland's best-known surveyors and also a museum curator and historian. Joining the Public Lands Survey Office in 1969, he worked on the geodetic survey of Queensland and on investigating the state borders, surveyed more than a century earlier. After giving up field surveying some 30 years ago, Bill assembled a priceless collection of documentary and pictorial material, as well as artefacts, to create the Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying, Brisbane. He retired in 2007 as the Museum's curator but continues to research surveying history. With Judith McKay, he is co-author of the book *Surveying Queensland 1839–1945: A Pictorial History* (2006). A Fellow of the RGSQ, Bill led the Society's expeditions to Haddon Corner in 1985 and Cameron Corner in 1988 and in 2009 was awarded the Thomson Medal. His other awards include a Public Service Medal (2003) and the Queensland Museum Medal (2007).