G.E. PEACOCK

AND ART IN

COLONIAL SYDNEY:

1837-1857

VOLUME ONE

MASTER OF ARTS (HONOURS)
THESIS
SUBMITTED BY

GARRY P. DARBY B.A.

SUPERVISED BY
PROFESSOR JOAN KERR

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY
POWER FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT

1989
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My supervisor, Professor Joan Kerr, has provided both information and inspiration and I wish to acknowledge my debt to her.

Much of the research for this thesis was completed in public libraries and in particular the Mitchell Library, Sydney, and the Australian National Library, Canberra. To the people of these fine institutions I say thank you.

My family and friends have provided invaluable encouragement and support. I am grateful to Alan R. Dunstan MA, who read the manuscript and offered constructive criticism.

Garry Darby
February, 1989.
CONTENTS

1. Acknowledgements
2. Contents
3. Illustrations – Volume Two.
6. Chapter Two – On Style and Technique – p43.
15. Bibliography.
INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a synthesis of two separate attempts to reveal the nature of the Sydney art world in the 1840s and 1850s. Considering that biography was a certain way into the historical events and attitudes of the times it was decided first to build the work around the life of one man; George Edwards Peacock. As an individual Peacock came into contact with many people, events and conventions which established the character of the world in which he lived. Those people, events and conventions are the second part of the synthesis.

Such concerns often lead away from Peacock and the narrative of his life. Nevertheless, in following the major 'sidetracks' such as the Emancapist/Exclusive debate, government legislation against Art Unions or the vigorous involvement of a person such as James Turner Grocott in the Sydney art world to name a few, fresh viewpoints were established. Peacock saw and was seen in a variety of ways. What he saw informs our view, the way he was seen in his own time speaks clearly of attitudes to art, society and convictism.

The thesis is not a biography. Where Peacock's life touched on seminal events or when he encountered productive people examinations of those phenomena are undertaken.
Introduction

Those examinations, all relevant to art in Sydney in the 1840s and 50s are of vital concern to this thesis. In turn they help to sustain a considered view of the context in which Peacock lived.

The discussion on Art Unions, for example, displays the importance with which they may have been regarded by Peacock as an individual in 1850. On a broader scale they represent a facet of the struggle for power traceable to, and linked with, the Emancipist/Exclusive debate which had continued, in one form or another, since Macquarie's time.

In referring to particular subjects, more detailed information regarding attitudes may be gathered and examined. A number of colonial artists painted the same subjects as Peacock. He painted public and private architecture, landscapes and harbourscapes, and occasionally included Aborigines in his landscapes. Conrad Martens shared Peacock's interest in those subjects.

Peacock arrived, as a convict, in 1837 and did not begin painting until five years later. Martens had arrived in 1835, and by that time there were no tribal Aborigines in the Sydney area. Both artists, however, made historic capital from the inclusion of Aborigines in their work.

On another level Peacock's work represents the moment
when artists in Australia were beginning to seek out the ephemeral in nature - its effect rather than its substance. There is no suggestion that Peacock (or Martens) put aside pragmatism to accommodate an entirely romantic approach, for this was not the case. But there is little doubt that Peacock was motivated by the sheer beauty and mood of the environment surrounding Sydney and its harbour.

He was motivated also by the emergence of a great city in the antipodes. A cultured man, Peacock regarded public buildings such as the new Government House and the Supreme Court as undeniable signs of British authority and presence in the colony. They represented a civilising influence in an otherwise romantic and remote place.

The villas and gardens of private individuals also served as indicators of the colony's growing sophistication. Peacock continually associated himself with grand houses such as 'Tarmons' and 'Craigend', painting both the houses themselves and the sweeping views of Sydney they commanded. As an emancipist Peacock was not welcome in these places yet they provided him with stimulating and significant subject matter. The association may also have provided him with a vicarious sense of social acceptance.

The decade of the 1850s was the time when a certain professionalism developed amongst artists in Sydney. Major
public art exhibitions had been staged in 1847 and 1849. These had acted as a catalyst for artists to form their own association and lend their support to men such as the Ford brothers and James T Grocott who effectively promoted the cause of colonial artists through their Art Unions. The small band of private patrons was not sufficient to support professional art activity and by 1850 it was realised that a much wider audience should be sought. The threat posed by the newly introduced photography also acted as a spur to the self-promotion by artists. George Edwards Peacock, by then an emancipist, was closely involved with all of those events and activities. Accordingly an account of his life during the period necessarily reveals much about the wider art scene in Sydney.

The press of the day took an interest in art and artists. The meetings of the short-lived Society of Australian Artists were reported as were the more commercial activities such as Art Unions and raffles. Editorial space was made available to promoters such as Grocott who was, by necessity, a regular advertiser. Letters to the editor occasionally revealed unexpectedly informed attitudes of interested individuals. The exhibitions of 1847 and 1849, which promised to establish something of a cultural identity for Sydney, were extensively reviewed with some wit and critical flair. As a consequence, contemporary newspapers proved to be a
productive and accurate source of information for this thesis.

There is no evidence to show that Peacock was a trained artist when he was transported. A man of quick intelligence, he mastered the techniques of watercolour and oil painting while in the colony and produced many works from vantage points along the South Head Road. Today his paintings are intriguing visual evidence of part of our colonial history. They also display the results that a new landscape and a new society had upon artistic style, life and attitudes transplanted from Britain to the antipodes.
CHAPTER ONE - THE SYSTEM

When the convict George Edwards Peacock arrived in Sydney on 8 May 1837 he became part of a unique social system. Bound by its penal origins, Sydney society was doggedly conscious of class and status. Convicts could earn the pardon of Her Majesty but it was much more difficult, if not impossible, to shed the stigma of convictism entirely and so earn re-acceptance into society.

Although it was not possible for Peacock to completely regain the social status he had in England prior to his arrest in 1836, he did regain self-esteem and some respectability through his painting. Professionalism in the arts was in its infancy in New South Wales when Peacock began to paint in 1842, and although an amateur he appears to have quickly realised that this colonial situation might provide for him both a modest income and a means of re-entry into his accustomed level of society. Painting remained a cultivated and gentlemanly pursuit. Confronted with a difficult task, Peacock encountered many obstacles in Sydney, a tight-knit society which was, as yet, a long way from outgrowing its utilitarian beginnings.

Thirteen years after his arrival and by then an emancipist with a conditional pardon, George Edwards Peacock was elected to the committee of the newly-formed Australian Society for Artists. (1) Considering that he was a lawyer who was barred from practising, a disgraced member
of a notable and devoutly Christian Yorkshire family, and a
husband and father separated permanently from his wife and
son, his election must have marked something of a return to
'normal' society. Throughout the preceding years he had
been obliged to suffer the indignities of life as a
convict. During that time he had had some success as a
painter, and this, combined with his legal skills brought
the forty-four year old solicitor back to some noticed and
productive role.

The advent of the Australian Society for Artists in
Sydney in 1850 was significant. It provided one sign that
New South Wales was finally developing a degree of
professionalism and dedication to the Fine Arts. Peacock's
acceptance to the Society also demonstrated that by 1850
emancipists were not entirely ostracised in the small
'cultural world' that did exist.

By then he had been an emancipist for more than four
years, and during that time Sydney gentry had bought his
paintings. His work had been shown in the two major loan
exhibitions that had taken place and several of his small
paintings hung in the new Government House.

George Edwards Peacock lived in Sydney under
conditions which were, in almost every sense, rude and
uncultured when compared with those which had provided the
context for his life in Sedbergh and London prior to 1837.
However, the transportation of this educated and energetic
Yorkshireman to Port Jackson meant that the colony had one
more artist to bolster its nascent cultural activities.

A study of Peacock's life and work in Sydney reveals a range of colonial attitudes to art, culture, convictism and class structures. His case is exceptional in the sense that he was a "special" or educated convict, and as such was treated differently from the vast majority of transportees. Obviously, 'specials' were more likely to leave records—either words or images—of their lives than ordinary convicts were. Although little written material by Peacock is extant, his paintings, made during the decade 1842-1852, form an historically significant and revealing body of work.

During his trial at the Old Bailey Peacock had claimed that he needed funds to 'support his professional respectability'. (2) In Sydney, with his professional status gone forever, and being ever-conscious of his background and upbringing, Peacock merely sought respectability. Painting, a talent which he developed after his conviction and transportation, had—if only as a bonus—provided him with a means of regaining his self-respect.

Throughout his life Peacock had demonstrated an inability to manage his own financial affairs. From the time of his marriage in 1835 until he was forced to sell his cottage and land at South Head some twenty two years later, Peacock experienced financial difficulties and deprivation. The social distinctions which applied to him were further emphasised by this lack of wealth. A number of
emancipists in the colony amassed wealth and with it some
degree of respect and recognition, but the disenfranchised
lawyer had no such opportunity. His singular form of
recognition came through his art.

Convict transportation to Sydney ceased in 1840 and by
the late 1840s and early 1850s when Peacock was most
active, there had been some softening of attitudes to the
convict stigma. (3) Nevertheless, long-held attitudes
prevailed and there remained no social place for a poor
emancipated lawyer cum artist, however well bred and
educated.

There are two policies to be considered when dealing
with the treatment of 'special' or educated convicts.
First, it was believed that if there was to be any
convict-led revolt in the colony such a revolt would be
organised and promoted by one or more of the educated or
"gentlemen" convicts. It was also reasoned that educated
prisoners were, generally speaking, not suited to, or
prepared for, hard manual labour. The latter was, of
course, the more sympathetic view, although both were often
held concurrently. Regardless of which attitude dominated
the result was that 'specials' were always kept separate
from the labouring convicts.

'Specials' were almost always sent to places outside
the mainstream operations of the colony. This was certainly
the case under Governor Richard Bourke whose policies
prevailed when Peacock arrived in Sydney. Prior to Bourke's
regime some 'specials' had been retained in Sydney to serve as clerks or in other forms of Government service, but many more were banished to remote places such as Port Macquarie or Wellington Valley.

Port Macquarie also received those prisoners who were deemed invalids or 'idiots'. The convict diarist Thomas Cook, himself a 'special', noted in 1835 that,

I was removed on board the steamer for Port Macquarie to which place all men of Education were invariably forwarded on their arrival, as were other prisoners who at, or for some years after arrival had been returned by Medical Men as 'Invalids', 'Idiots' etc.(4)

So Peacock's destiny was, to a some extent, determined well before his arrival. During the time he served his sentence he encountered both the sympathetic and cautious approaches to men of his kind.

In his report the surgeon of the convict transport Prince George made a separate note on Peacock:

I beg to mention that George Edwards Peacock's conduct throughout the voyage was Exemplary and I am happy to say that I was enabled through intervention of friends to get him the situation of Gate Keeper at his present destination. Especials not being assigned - He consequently was employed as a Clerk.(5)

This assistance from a fellow 'professional' was, no doubt, gratefully received. However, it seems clear that he was bound to serve his time at Port Macquarie, not in Sydney, as Bell had forecast.
Governor Bourke’s attitude to ‘specials’ was well-known and positively stated. For example, in a letter to Spring-Rice in September 1837 he wrote:

You must not believe the absurd stories of a special’s life in Sydney. In the first place during the last six years, I mean since my arrival, not one has been permitted by me to settle in Sydney, and some who were so permitted in former times have been sent away for misconduct. These educated convicts are all in Port Macquarie — a remote settlement to the Northwards of Sydney tho’ now becoming more inhabited by Graziers and Cultivators.(6)

Although banished from the main areas of settlement the ‘specials’ were not harshly treated.

The Molesworth Report of 1837-8 to the House of Commons outlined clearly a case against appointing convicts as clerks in Government departments. The report claimed that, ‘enormous and complicated abuses’ were encouraged by such a system. Abuses came about through the employment of convicts as clerks in the various departments of the Government where they have had means of acquiring knowledge, of which corrupt and dangerous use has been made and through,

the employment of convicts as clerks to attorneys, with free access to the gaols, which has given rise in the colony to an unparalleled system of bribery and connivance at crime.(7)

Despite such strongly worded advice, the authorities at
Chapter One

Port Macquarie, at least, continued to appoint convicts to clerical positions of trust. The lack of educated men in the settlement gave them little choice. In May 1838, Peacock was appointed as clerk to the Prisoners’ Barracks, Port Macquarie. Just prior to his appointment and at the time Sir George Gipps became governor, there were some 623 convicts at Port Macquarie; of these one hundred and two were ‘specials’. (8)

Gipps, who had taken over from Bourke in February 1838 considered Port Macquarie to be a place which presented ‘great difficulty’ to those administrators in charge. Reporting to Lord John Russell in September 1839 Gipps described Port Macquarie as being

the place at which Convicts of the class called Specials, or familiarly Gentlemen Convicts, are stationed as a class of persons which for obvious reasons it is more difficult to manage than any other and who have constantly given a great deal of trouble to this Government. (9)

Despite this attitude Gipps did not continue with Bourke’s structured policies relating to ‘specials’. Indeed, in Peacock’s case, it was Gipps who provided a way for him to return to Sydney, but not before he had spent two years at the northern prison outpost.

Even though he was a ‘Special’ Peacock’s life at Port Macquarie would have been far from comfortable. Privilege did not always bring with it advantage. When he visited Port Macquarie in 1836 James Backhouse observed the
conditions which prevailed for 'Specials';

The number of educated prisoners called Specials at this depot is about 160. Of these, only twenty-five can be considered orderly or thoughtful men. About as many more are of equivocal character. The residue are dissolute and drunken. The prisoners who are operative mechanics are allowed to earn money, at least by connivance; but they have no private places to keep anything, and if they even purchase clothes, to give themselves a more respectable appearance than that of prisoners generally, they are sure to have them stolen by those with whom they are associated. To avoid this risk they therefore, almost universally, spend their earnings on rum and tobacco. (10)

Backhouse also described the 'miserable wooden barracks' in which all prisoners were housed. Peacock's worst fears must have been realised on his arrival at this penal settlement. Although housed with gentlemen convicts, the transformation from his life as London solicitor to clerk of the prison barracks must have provided a rude awakening.

Port Macquarie was also a place of imprisonment for secondary offenders and 'difficult' prisoners. One inmate whom Peacock might have met was the portrait painter Joseph Backler.

The two artists had remarkably similar careers. Both were educated men from respectable backgrounds; both had been convicted of forgery and both had had death sentences commuted to transportation for life. Between May 1837 and June 1839 both were detained at Port Macquarie.

Backler, who had arrived in the colony in May 1832,
was sent to Port Macquarie because he was a ‘difficult’ prisoner. This punishment did not have the desired effect and Backler continued to offend. When Governor Gipps replied to an application for remission of Backler’s sentence he noted

his conduct however has not been such I regret to say as would justify my recommending him for my present indulgence. He has been twice sentenced to serve in irons (a period of six months each time) first for obtaining fire arms illegally and under false pretences, and secondly for absconding. (11)

The similarities between Backler and Peacock conclude with a perusal of their respective records. There are two oil paintings by Backler of Port Macquarie but none by Peacock. Peacock, at Port Macquarie for entirely different reasons, behaved throughout his sentence in an exemplary manner. As a ‘special’ he was trusted by the authorities and given certain freedom and privileges which were not allowed to miscreants such as Backler. Indeed Peacock was paid for his work at the prisoners’ barracks. Writing to the Police Magistrate at Port Macquarie in May 1838 the Colonial Secretary advised:

His Excellency also approved of George E. Peacock per Prince George receiving a gratuity of 8 pence per day as Clerk to the Prisoners’ Barracks in the room of Thompson from the date of his commencing duty. (12)

So, at this time, Peacock and Backler were at the opposite
ends of the scale used to measure the good behaviour of convicts.

Nothing is known of any direct relationship between the two artists at Port Macquarie, but Backler and Peacock were certainly to meet in Sydney in the 1850s.

In June 1840 Backler's maternal relations in Glasgow sought a remission of his sentence. The appeal came through a despatch from Lord John Russell and was directed to Governor Gipps. (13) This type of appeal was relatively common, especially from families who were well connected. In Backler's case the appeal by his family was refused.

George Edwards Peacock had also received loyal support from his family and friends. After his trial at the Old Bailey had concluded he had been put into Newgate Gaol under sentence of death. Records show that he languished there for more than a month during which time vigorous efforts were made to secure his reprieve. (14)

Appeals were addressed to Lord John Russell; they consisted of five petitions and numerous letters. The first petition contained a list of twenty-two people who had been friends of Peacock for a considerable time. Included was one Mr. Thompson, a friend of seven years standing, who had been a witness at Peacock's wedding. There was a petition from Peacock's bankers, one from George Edwards Peacock himself, one from his family and a huge one containing 508 names of people from Yorkshire and the north of England. (15)
Peacock's father, who at this time was totally blind and had recently suffered a stroke, was kept in ignorance of his son's plight. The family believed that the shock could well be too much for the old man.

The appeal for Peacock's reprieve was put before the King in Council on 26 October 1836, and received a sympathetic hearing. In his report to the Home Secretary, the Recorder of London had singled Peacock out for particular mention.

His sentence was reduced from death to transportation for life. On or after 26 October 1836 Peacock was removed from Newgate and placed aboard the prison hulk 'Justitia' lying at anchor at Woolwich.

After his arrival in the colony Peacock continued to receive favourable attention from the authorities. This was due partly to his own efforts and partly to those of his wife who managed to generate a deal of sympathy and understanding for her unfortunate situation. Officials in both Britain and the colony seemed anxious to give her every assistance. Indirectly, and for a brief period only, Peacock's wife made his life in colonial Australia a little more bearable. George Edwards Peacock had married Harriet Eliza Lavinia Brown on 16 August 1834 at St. Mary Abbot's Church, the parish church of Kensington, Middlesex. Their son, Francis Mitford Peacock, was christened at Holy Trinity Church, Brompton Road Kensington on 4 May 1836.
Chapter One

Three months after Peacock had arrived from England aboard the **Prince George**, Harriet and the infant Francis Mitford followed him to the colony. Accompanied by Jane Watson, a female servant, they arrived on the **City of Edinburgh** which berthed in Sydney on 31 August 1837. (19) By the time they arrived Peacock had been at Port Macquarie for two months.

Harriet Peacock, although the wife of a convict, had attracted some excellent recommendations and testimonials. These letters emphasised the status of the Peacocks in British society. They also displayed the sympathy and humane treatment that was accorded the attractive Mrs. Peacock and her son. For example, the Chancellor of the British Exchequer, Lord Monteagle wrote to Governor Bourke

> I have written to you some letters about a very unfortunate but most interesting lady who is about to follow the fortunes of a convict husband. She sails in the **City of Edinburgh**, and I know you will do all you can for her. She has the courage to delight you as a soldier and quite enough attraction to interest you as a man. She goes out with very excellent recommendations and testimonials...I have watched over her and protected her in her trials and I assured her that she would meet with sympathy and kindness on her arrival. Glenelg, Stephen, John Smith and the Australians are all interested on her behalf and have written individually. She also has letters to the Bishop, to Fisher and other persons. (20)

Mrs. Peacock indeed had friends in high places but she had entered a social situation which, for her, was fraught with difficulties.
When she arrived in the colony she was duly befriended by both Governor Bourke and his daughter Anne. The Bourkes assisted her in her efforts to be reunited with her husband at Port Macquarie. In his correspondence Bourke reported to Monteagle:

I wrote to you on the 9th instant to inform you of the receipt of your letters by Mrs. Peacocke (sic) and of my having done all that was in my power in that case. Since I wrote she has proceeded to join her husband at Port Macquarie. She has not been supplied with sufficient money and I therefore gave her fifty pounds which she told Anne you would repay from her funds. You can do so by placing the amount with Herries and Farquhar to my account. Anne was of great use to her and she is to write from Port Macquarie if she wants anything further. Poor thing she has a long servitude before her eyes, as her husband must complete eight years before any available indulgence can be afforded him.(21)

It was quite remarkable for the Governor of New South Wales not only to go out of his way to assist the wife of a convict but also to lend her a very considerable sum of money. Peacock had also been afforded the most sympathetic treatment he could possibly have expected. His introduction to convict society could have been a good deal more harsh. Yet his fortune further improved.

Bourke, with continued interest in Mrs. Peacock's welfare, suggested to the authorities at Port Macquarie that on her arrival Mrs. Peacock should have her husband assigned to her - a normal enough procedure in such cases. Events moved swiftly, for just three days after his letter of 20 September, Bourke was able to inform Spring-Rice that
the Police Magistrate at Port Macquarie, William Grey, had agreed to his request. Reporting on Mrs. Peacock's arrival and progress he wrote:

It is fortunate that her husband's conduct has been such as to allow of his assignment during pleasure...and I trust it may continue to be orderly and proper so as to ensure his remaining where he is. (22)

So after just eighteen weeks in the colony, Peacock had been assigned to his wife. Although facing a period of eight years before he could expect freedom, he was therefore comfortably placed by comparison with the vast majority of his fellow prisoners. This arrangement, which at first proved satisfactory, did not produce long or lasting results. The Peacocks could not settle to a "normal" life under circumstances which were far removed from anything in their previous experience. By May the following year Peacock was recorded as being Clerk to the Prisoners' Barracks and his wife and child had returned to Sydney.

In June 1839 Peacock became concerned about extricating his wife from 'a disgraceful and ruinous connexion' in Sydney. (23)

He sought leave to spend fourteen days in Sydney so that he might make efforts to save his marriage and enquire after the present and future welfare of his son. (24) This fourteen day pass was extended several times until in December 1839 the Colonial Secretary, E. Deas Thomson sent the following correspondence to the Principal
Superintendent of Convicts. He wrote, in part:

I do myself the honor to inform you that Peacock is now ordered to Parramatta to be placed under the instruction of Mr. Dunlop the Astronomer. (25)

Peacock's move away from Port Macquarie to Sydney was, once more, brought about by the good graces of colonial authorities. Sympathy was one of the factors influencing this decision. Peacock had been offered the alternatives of returning to Port Macquarie or staying in Sydney to train as a meteorologist with Dunlop. His decision to stay in Sydney meant that he would have closer and more regular contact with his wife and child so that eventually they may be able to again live as a family.

His education and upbringing in England meant that Peacock, under normal circumstances, could have become a man of some note and standing in Sydney society. He was never threatened by the Sydney environment. Indeed, he seems to have seen it as a place where his family might have lived harmoniously. This notion is evident in later paintings such as Lyons' Terrace, 1844, [illus.1.-cat.13], and North East View from Mr. Gregory's Garden, Potts Point, Port Jackson, 1849 [illus.2.-cat.80]. In the former, people stroll down Liverpool Street in the late afternoon sunlight. They are placed before Lyons' Terrace, a group of five houses built for auctioneer, Samuel Lyons. Transported for theft in 1815, Lyons received an absolute pardon from
Governor Darling in May 1832. As an emancipist his business dealings in Sydney brought him considerable wealth and respect. Plans and specifications for his substantial and elegant row of terrace houses were originated by John Verge but the work was completed by John Bibb in 1841, after Verge had retired from practice.(26) At least in his art, Peacock had effectively demonstrated that a certain colonial elegance and relaxed way of life prevailed in Sydney. The Harbour and Clarke Island provide an idyllic setting for Mr. Gregory's exotic tropical garden. Two fashionably dressed women in the foreground indicate that polite society is established and the wilderness has been tamed. In this work Peacock has positioned himself as if he were the owner of the property enjoying the deliberately planned vistas through to the harbour. In both works the artist depicts Sydney in Elysian terms.

Surely, the artist would have felt that with time and opportunity he might achieve some standing. His background was such as to bolster this sort of supposition.

George Edwards Peacock was one of ten children born to Daniel Mitford Peacock and his wife Catherine (née Edwards). Daniel had graduated from Cambridge University as an M.A. in 1794 and begun a long and distinguished career in the church. He was Vicar of Sedbergh, Yorkshire, for some 42 years. Between 1812 and 1840 he was also Rector of Stainton-le-Street in County Durham.(27) Two of his male children, Edwards George (b.2/9/1804) and George Edwards
carried on the maiden name of their mother. George Edwards Peacock was born at Sedbergh, Yorkshire on 1 August 1806 and baptised there on 4 September the same year. Two other sons, Mitford and Daniel Mitford Peacock carried the maiden name of their grandmother.

George Edwards Peacock's grandfather was William Peacock, also a Cambridge graduate, Rector of Danby Wiske, Yorkshire for the fifty years between 1761 and 1811. William Peacock had married Elizabeth Mitford and had three sons. He died, after a lifetime devoted to the church, in 1811. (28) The three brothers of George Edwards Peacock, Mitford, Edwards George and Daniel Mitford, were all Cambridge graduates and were all to follow ecclesiastical careers. Edwards George Peacock, like his grandfather, became Rector of Danby Wiske, while the youngest brother, Daniel Mitford, became Headmaster and Chaplain, Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, in 1850. (29) George Edwards Peacock chose a career in law. He had six sisters. They were, Catherine Edwards (b.1799), Charlotte (b.1802), Caroline (b.1807), Julia (b.1811), Jesse (b.1813), and Eliza (b.1815).

After attending school between c.1812-1821, probably at Sedbergh, G.E. Peacock was trained in law and admitted as a solicitor to Lincoln's Inn, London on 13 January 1830. For the next five years Peacock's practice was established in various places. During 1831 he shared a practice with William Lowless at 28 Tokenhouse Yard, London. By 1833,
although at the same address, he now practiced alone. The years 1834-5 saw him at 34 Old Broad Street, and by 1836, the year that was to prove so disastrous for him, he worked alone at 89 Chancery Lane. (30)

During his trial on 11 September 1836 Peacock described the lack of success in his practice. He told the court that

he had not been long in practice when he lost 1,500 pounds and was further compelled to pay 600 pounds in consequence of him having been security for a friend. (31)

Such circumstances necessitated Peacock borrowing from his father. The Rev Daniel Peacock's will indicates that this was the case and that the loan had been provided from a considerable part of the provision he had bequeathed to his wife and daughters. He willed that if there were any arrears of interest on the debt at the time of his death these should be discharged, but that any interest becoming due after his death, should be paid to his wife and daughters, and also that the debt should be paid off to them as far as it was in his son George's power to do so. (32)

This loan, of an undisclosed amount, did not suffice, and increasing financial difficulties led Peacock to forge a power of attorney for the transfer of stock, held in trust for his brother the Reverend Edwards Peacock. Seven thousand eight hundred and fourteen pounds was involved and
it was shown that on 7 December 1835 the stock was sold via a broker. G.E. Peacock, acting as solicitor on his brother's behalf, had forged the names of Mr. Watkins and the Reverend Fountain on the transfer documents.

Pleading his own case, Peacock admitted guilt and claimed that he was only making temporary use of the money. Well aware that he could hang for the offence, he became understandably emotional during his address to the court. Imploring the jury to consider that he had a wife and child, 'the unfortunate man dropped his head, and burying his face in his handkerchief, sobbed bitterly'.(33) Peacock in his quest for mercy also reminded the jury of his 'respected and venerable parents, one of whom, bowed down by age and affliction, was tottering on the verge of the grave'.(34)

Clergymen, barristers, merchants and solicitors testified that Peacock had formerly been of excellent character and was known for his, 'strict honesty, honourable and upright dealing in his profession and the highest respectability of conduct in every relation of his life'.(35) The jury saw fit to recommend mercy, a factor which possibly played its part in Peacock's ultimate reprieve from death.

After George Peacock's conviction and transportation, his father, finally aware of the truth, added a codicil to his will, accepting that 'under the present circumstances of my son George' the debt could not be repaid. George
Chapter One

Edwards Peacock's activities had produced drastic financial deprivations for his brother, his mother and his sisters. (36)

In Sydney his gentle upbringing was largely forgotten. Although he was a gentleman he was still (and forever) a convict; indeed he was the type of convict that some government officials viewed with extra suspicion and distrust. Because he came as a convicted forger, he was inevitably excluded from any connection with people of his own social rank.

That many convicts had prospered and formed a 'numerous body of affluent emancipists' did not escape the notice of Lt. Col., G.C. Mundy. (37) He suggested that persons newly arrived in the colony would soon become well aware of these emancipists and the 'degree of influence' they exerted on the social system. (38) Nevertheless the barriers were not broken down in every respect. Commenting on influential emancipists Mundy noted,

The merchants and men of business meet them on equal terms for the negotiation of affairs in which their wealth, intelligence or commercial weight sometimes necessarily involves them. They do not presume on this partial admission to equality but fall back on their prescribed position when the business which had called the two orders into temporary contact [is concluded]. (39)

And an anonymous bank manager giving advice to new arrivals in the colony described the social gaps which existed;
In the first place, understand, young gentlemen, we are divided into at least three sets, but you have only to do with two, the Free Colonists and the Emancipists. Many of the latter are wealthy, educated and personally respectable; but if you mean to associate with the other party, you must avoid the Emancipists, except in mere trade transactions, in the same way as you would a black bear in New York. If you visit one you cannot visit the other. (40)

Peacock would have experienced this very situation in 1850, but because his skill and training in the law, he was of singular benefit to the embryonic Society for Australian Artists.

His membership of the Society, even his sometimes chairmanship, would, nevertheless, have taken him only to the fringe of 'polite' society. Awareness of origins, as Mundy so clearly pointed out, was one of the great pre-occupations of colonial society. In social terms every conviction remained a life sentence.

Mundy's recorded observations of Sydney society in the late 1840s concisely described the emancipist's dilemma,

Official juxtaposition does not bring with it any plea for social intimacy. The 'conditional' or 'free' pardon of their sovereign appears to entitle this unfortunate section of society to traffic on equal terms with their fellow man, but yields them no licence to pass from the counting house to the parlour. (41).

So Peacock was able to enjoy the patronage of some of Sydney's leading gentlemen. He was welcome too, as a diligent member of a society which had commercial aspirations, but the likelihood was that, as an emancipist,
Chapter One

he would never enter the 'parlours' of Sydney society.

Peacock arrived in the colony at a time when a protracted debate continued between Exclusivists and Emancipists. Essentially the debate was waged over the struggle for power in a colony that was obviously headed for self-government. The struggle served to reaffirm the attitudes held towards emancipists and when Peacock became free in 1845 such attitudes were firmly in place.

The question of emancipists' rights went back some twenty years to the period when Governor Macquarie's policies were put into effect. His sympathetic attitudes to ex-convicts are well-known. He considered that the talents of such men as Francis Greenway, William Redfern and Edward Eagar should be employed for the benefit of the colony. Accordingly, under Macquarie's direction emancipist architects, doctors and lawyers could expect to return to their chosen profession in the colony. Macquarie's policies extended well beyond such considerations to include the possibility of ex-convicts sitting on juries and taking up positions as magistrates, as well as dining at Government House. This last most particularly rankled with free settlers.

That Macquarie's policies did not entirely meet with official approval is well known. The extended results of his support for emancipist rights and the spirited opposition to it are particularly significant in any examination of Peacock's career in New South Wales, for
they served to create the type of society in which he was required to live and work. Attitudes affecting Peacock in the years following 1845 were born and nurtured in the colony during Macquarie’s period of governorship.

A case which was particularly relevant to Peacock’s future centered around another transported solicitor, Edward Eagar. Eagar had arrived in the colony in July 1811. Like Peacock he had been sentenced to death for forgery but the sentence had been commuted to transportation for life. Macquarie granted Eagar a conditional pardon in 1813. Eagar established a successful practice as a law-agent and attorney in Sydney, but his career came to an abrupt halt in 1815 when Judge J.H. Bent decided that he was not eligible to practice in the courts. Bent took exception to Eagar’s convict background and deliberately cast doubts on the solicitor’s qualifications. (42) The judge claimed;

> the judges in general had decided that a man having once been convicted of a felony was a sufficient plea for his not being ever again permitted to practise in any of their courts as an attorney. (43)

Macquarie and Bent clashed over this decision, with Macquarie being supported by the court magistrates, Alexander Riley and William Broughton. The magistrates suggested to Judge Bent that even though they upheld the emancipists’ right to practice, it was not considered that such lawyers should be admitted to ‘society’. (44)

Judge Bent, standing by his decision, twisted this
argument, declaring that if the ex-convict lawyer was not to be admitted to society then he had no place in the legal profession which, after all, was the preserve of gentlemen. Macquarie did not let the matter rest and his subsequent appeal to the Secretary of State brought about Bent's dismissal from the bench. Following this decision, ex-convict lawyers worked for free lawyers ostensibly as 'clerks' and were able to continue professional associations until 1838, when the Supreme Court ruled that ex-convict lawyers must not be employed as clerks. (45)

This decision marked the culmination of events which had begun in 1814, a time when there was only one free lawyer in the colony. By 1838 no administrator was prepared to support the emancipist cause in the manner adopted by Macquarie. Accordingly, ex-convict lawyers such as Peacock were disadvantaged both professionally and socially.

Emancipists were to cultivate the attitude that the colony was, as Macarthur stated, 'theirs by right, and that emigrant settlers were interlopers upon the soil'. (46) This position was of course challenged by the land-owning 'gentry' of the colony who considered that control of the colony's affairs should be vested, not in ex-convicts, but in themselves and their families. Macarthur was, of course, a gentleman; it might therefore be held that his was a very biased view.

The foundation of the Australian Patriotic Association in 1835 served to widen the social and political gaps
between Exclusivists and Emancipists. Indeed the very title of this association, a body which represented the liberal-emancipist group, expressed the notion that the exclusivists were non-patriotic and were opposed to the progress and welfare of the Australian masses.

Peacock’s position in this system was an invidious one. He was from a gentlemanly background yet was never to be accepted into a ‘society’ which, in many cases, was comprised of people of lesser standing and education than himself. He was a solicitor who by official decree could never again practice. As a gentleman/emancipist he had no particular group with whom he could confidently identify. Patrons for his art were not motivated by political or social considerations, so while some wealthy emancipists may have bought his work, this was not consistently the case. Peacock, in the social sense was in the worst of possible worlds – unacceptable to the gentry and exclusivists, with whom he would have had a natural affinity, and unwilling to identify with the ‘emancipists’ who generally lacked the social and cultural values he had been brought up to respect.

When Harriet Peacock followed her husband to Australia she no doubt did so in a bid to conserve their marriage. She was not prepared for the rigorous social divisions which existed in colonial Sydney. Such divisions meant that her husband (and consequently herself) had absolutely no hope of regaining their former respectability and position
in polite society. Prior to leaving England she could not have understood that as the wife of an emancipist she faced a future which would be intolerable. The system allowed no alternative. Peacock needed to get back into the exclusive’s fold if he were to have any chance of regaining his wife’s affection.

Colonial class-consciousness and the Exclusivist-Emancipist debate was exemplified in 1837 by the publication of three books, each on the same theme: James Macarthur’s New South Wales: Its Present State and Future Prospects, James Mudie’s The Felony of New South Wales and J.D. Lang’s Transportation and Colonisation.

Mudie’s coining of the word ‘felony’ had sarcastic and vicious overtones. Of the word he wrote:

The author has the honour of especially presenting it to the gentlemen emancipists, alias, the emancipated felons of the colony, by whom he has no doubt it will be received with most peculiar approbation and delight, inasmuch as it not only expresses—and elegantly expresses—their place in society, but as it raises their caste...to the dignity of an order in the commonwealth. (47)

Ironically, Mudie’s own claims to colonial gentry status were highly questionable. After his arrival in the colony he had adopted the title ‘Major’ to which he had no claim. (48)

Although Rev. J.D. Lang had few social pretensions, he did believe that there was no justification for convicts and ex-convicts forming a political party which could
conceivably control the affairs of the colony. For Lang
convicts and emancipists had their place, but their social
and political influence must be controlled. (49) James
Macarthur believed conservative values to be under threat;
his book was published in London while he was there
conducting an intensive lobby against emancipist claims.

Because of this undisguised struggle for power, social
barriers were more rigidly enforced than ever before.
Conscious of the activities and attitudes of exclusivists
and aware of the divisions deliberately promoted by
liberal-emancipist groups, Peacock, whose legal training
might easily have led him to actively participate in the
debate, chose instead to follow more peaceful pursuits.
One of these was painting. Before such a situation came
about, and even before Peacock was in any position to begin
painting in the colony, a number of significant events
occurred in his life.

After Peacock’s prolonged stay in Sydney at the end of
1839 the Principal Superintendent of Convicts informed the
Colonial Secretary that the prisoner would remain in Sydney
at the request of Governor Gipps. Gipps’ intention was that
Peacock should be trained to keep meteorological tables. He
was to be placed under the guidance of James Dunlop, the
Government Astronomer, who was then based at the
Observatory, Parramatta. (50)

Peacock’s training period under Dunlop at Parramatta
was relatively short; by 1840 he was quartered at the South
Head Signal Station and employed as a Meteorological Recorder. He was, of course, still a convict; another five years had to pass before he could apply for either a conditional or absolute pardon. Peacock was to continue work at South Head for the next sixteen years, until the station closed in 1856. It was during these years that he began to paint. Throughout the decade of the 1840s and through the first half of the 1850s Peacock lived a solitary existence, performing work which made very few demands on either his time or his intellect.

Had it not been for his continuing marital problems, Peacock, as an artist, would have been ideally placed. He received a wage which would have supported him in a meagre but adequate fashion, he had time to spare, and, most importantly, he was continually faced with the exciting vista of Port Jackson whose variety of small bays and inlets offered an unending source of subjects to be painted.

When Peacock had chosen to stay and work in Sydney, his main objective seems obviously to have been to repair and then consolidate his marriage and family life. He noted that in other places Meteorological Recorders had had dwellings constructed for them and hoped that at South Head he would have been supplied with a cottage so that he could get his wife away from Sydney and to a 'retired place'.

Unfortunately the government had no money for a cottage but housed him instead, without his family, at the
Signal Station. This arrangement did not last long; the
Signal-man married and Peacock was obliged to move out. At
his own expense he built a small cottage on some land on
the western side of the road, just a short distance north
of the signal station. This land was owned by Francis
Mitchell and commanded sweeping views of Port Jackson.
Writing about early Sydney artists, Sir James R. Fairfax
recalled:

The first one I remember was Mr. Peacock, who
used to live at South Head in a nice cottage
about opposite the signal station. It may have
been in the middle of the Forties. He was then
Government Meteorologist, and he painted in his
leisure time some pretty pictures of Sydney and
its surroundings. (52)

Peacock travelled on a regular basis between South
Head and the city. From the high points along the South
Head Road he had wide views of the harbour. His small
painting Port Jackson NSW, Distant View of Sydney from
above Rose Bay – on the South Head Road 1847,
[Illus.3-cat.46] is typical of his reaction to the
ever-present harbourscape. Looking away to the horizon he
perceived Sydney as a city spreading in many directions.
Buildings ranged in the distance and traffic on the harbour
are indicators of a bustling and increasingly sophisticated
seaport. The travellers in the foreground return to an
outlying area but remind us that connections to the city
are both well established and nearby.

If Peacock thought of himself as belonging to this
place he must also have regarded himself, at times, as something of an outsider. An inhabitant of the city yet living on its fringe; a married man separated from his wife and child; a man of quick intelligence quietly charting the daily rainfall. Loneliness pervades his paintings. Despite its setting, Peacock's cottage, by his own admission, was 'quite unfit for a female to live in' (53) He tried to make it habitable while a second cottage was being built but could not entice his wife, accustomed to much greater domestic comfort in both London and Sydney, to join him there.(54) Throughout this period Peacock faced 'serious expenses', incurred both by the building of the new cottage and for the maintenance of his wife and child who continued to live in the city.(55) He needed to live frugally - 'indeed I should be ashamed to acknowledge upon what I have existed during the last two years' - to meet those expenses. Finally, in August 1842, Peacock, after meeting with 'ingratitude and careless indifference' decided that he had been 'compelled in justice to myself and my child to abandon all thoughts of a reconciliation'.(56) He wrote a long and detailed letter to Governor Gipps seeking custody of his son, Francis Mitford.

When he came to the main purpose of the letter Peacock stated clearly:

I desire to have my boy under my care and protection: I can support him - I will do a father's duty by him. He is arrived at an age when his religious and moral instruction require
Chapter One

to be attended to. (57)

Gipps believed that 'the boy would be better off with the Father than with the Mother' but would not take such a controversial decision upon himself. Although he sought the advice of the Civil Crown Solicitor it appears that Gipps' beliefs did not prevail and Peacock was not reunited with his son who, by 1842, was six years of age. (58)

Fourteen years later when South Head Meteorological Station was abandoned, Peacock was still employed there as the recorder. During the intervening years he had lived a lonely existence, relieved only by increasing involvement in the Sydney art world.

In December 1850, long after all hope of a marriage reconciliation had faded, he had purchased the land at South Head from Francis Mitchell, agreeing to pay thirty pounds per year for the following twenty years. (59) For the next two or three years he continued to paint but by 1854 had been overcome by an accumulation of debts and was obliged to mortgage the land to the Australian Mutual Provident Society. (60) Then, in October 1855, Peacock was summoned to appear in the Supreme Court for a debt of seventy seven pounds seven shillings and ninepence, outstanding to William Dean and Archibald Ashdown. (61) To meet this debt Peacock raised a second mortgage, this time with Montague Stephen. (62)

His web of financial problems continued to spin wider and wider until in January, 1856 Peacock was again
summonsed, this time by William Peisley, for one hundred and fifty one pounds seventeen shillings and seven pence.(63) Being unable to pay, Peacock could only offer his creditor a further mortgage over the already heavily mortgaged land, and Peisley had little option but to accept.(64) A further summons from the timber merchant James Curtis in July 1856 brought Peacock to the end of his miserable financial limits.(65) The Australian Mutual Provident Society foreclosed on their original mortgage, and in March 1857 Peacock’s land at South Head was sold to Richard William Leftwich, a publican.(66)

The years 1842-1852, sandwiched as they were between his marital and family problems and his eventual financial demise, were the productive ones in Peacock’s painting career. The decades of the 1840s and 1850s saw the emergence of professional attitudes towards the arts and Peacock, who sought always to supplement his income by the sale of his work, was concerned with many of the activities which enhanced the social and economic standing of artists. He never quite joined the ranks of professionals such as Conrad Martens, Joseph Fowles and John Skinner Prout, but his continuing involvement with exhibitions, Art Unions, and the establishment of a Society for Artists meant that he was an integral part of this milieu. Consequently, any examination of his career necessarily encompasses much of the activity that surrounded art and artists in Sydney during the 1840s and 1850s.
Notes - Chapter One.

(1) S.M.H. 27 March 1850 p3.
(2) The Times, London, 22 September 1836.
(3) By 1851 the convict population of NSW was only 2,693 or 1.5%. Emancapists in NSW numbered 26,629, or 14% of the total population. C/F R. Ward, The Australian Legend p15.
(4) F.Rogers (Ed.), Port Macquarie: a History to 1850, Port Macquarie, 1982, pp159-60.
(6) Sir Richard Bourke to Spring-Rice, Sept, 20, 1837, A1736, p65, M.L.
(9) ibid.
(11) PXn259, Joseph Backler, M.L.
(12) Colonial Secretary, Out- Letters, 38/4836, 28 May 1838, A.O.N.S.W.
(13) PXn259, Joseph Backler, M.L.
(14) Register of Criminal Petitions, H.0.17.5, Ax1, P.R.O., Kew.
(15) ibid.
Chapter One

(16) Circuit Letters. (Returns by judges and recorders of convicted persons recommended for mercy), H.O.6.21, P.R.O., Kew.

(17) Marriage Registers, St. Mary Abbot’s Church, Kensington.

(18) Register of Baptisms, Holy Trinity Church, Brompton Road, Kensington, Middlesex – Baptisms solemnized in 1836, p151.

(19) A.O.N.S.W. 4/4826.

(20) Governor Sir Richard Bourke, Correspondence with Lord Monteagle 1823-55, A1736, item 36. Dated 13 May 1837. Letter to Gov. Bourke from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, M.L.

(21) Sir Richard Bourke to Spring-Rice, A1736 p65, 20 September 1837, M.L.

(22) Sir Richard Bourke to Spring-Rice, A1736 p65. 23 September 1837, M.L.

(23) Colonial Secretary In-Letters 1842, A.O.N.S.W. 4/2568, 42/6578, August 1842.


(28) J.A. Venn, Compiler, Alumni Cantabriienses, Part 2,

(30) Information from correspondence with the Law Society Library, Chancery Lane, London.


(34) *ibid*.

(35) *ibid*.


(38) *ibid*.

(39) *ibid*.

(40) *Household Words*, 16 November 1850, p187.

(41) *ibid*.


(48) J.B. Hirst, op. cit., p151.

(49) J.B. Hirst, op. cit., p165.

(50) James Dunlop (1793-1848) had been an acquaintance of Sir Thomas Brisbane before the latter was appointed Governor of N.S.W. When Brisbane determined to establish a private observatory at Parramatta, Dunlop, who had arrived in November 1821, was employed as his personal assistant. The newly-built observatory began operations in May 1822. After a period in Scotland, during which he continued in Brisbane's employ, Dunlop returned to Parramatta in 1831 as Superintendent of the Observatory which, by then, had been taken over by the government. Dunlop was a man of wide-ranging interests including natural history and poetry. c/f A.D.B. Vol. 1, 1788-1850, p338. (A.D.B. Vol. 1, 1788-1850, p338)

(51) Colonial Secretary, In-Letters, 42/6578, 4/2568.


(53) Colonial Secretary, In-Letters, 42/6578, 4/2568, A.O.N.S.W.

(54) It was, quite possibly, this second cottage which Fairfax later remembered and described as 'nice'.

(55) Colonial Secretary, In-Letters, 42/6578, 4/2568, A.O.N.S.W.

(56) ibid.

(57) ibid.

(58) ibid., Minute.
(59) Registrar General of NSW, 11/892, December 1850.
(60) Registrar General of NSW, 737/34, 31 October 1854.
(61) Supreme Court Judgements, A.O.N.S.W., 9/5725-199.
(62) Registrar General of NSW, 114/46, 7 December 1855.
(64) Registrar General of NSW 655/43, 6 February 1856.
(65) Supreme Court Judgements, A.O.N.S.W. 9/5734-164.
As a member of polite society in England, Peacock would have had the opportunity of learning to paint and draw—perhaps from a private tutor at his home in Sedbergh. Such opportunity and encouragement is even more likely considering the young man’s close family connection with the church. Discussing the Reverend William Gilpin, Michael Clarke has pointed out that he was just one of many from the clerical profession who took a decided interest in the visual arts. (1) Others included William Bree, James Bulwer, John Eagles and Joseph Wilkinson. There were doubtless many more because the clergy enjoyed the great luxury of leisure time for cultural activities. (2)

By 1820 in England the teaching of skills related to drawing and painting had become ‘pervasive’. (3) By 1829 Robert Southey could claim that,

accomplishments which were almost exclusively professional in the last age, are now to be found in every family within a certain rank in life. Whenever there is a certain disposition for the art of design it is cultivated. (4)

By that time too, painting and drawing materials were much more readily available and many artists had taken up the role of Drawing Master. The movement towards art as a desirable social quality had begun mid-way through the preceding century and the tenor of those times may be guaged by artist T. Beilby’s announcement in the York
Chapter Two

Courant, 28 November 1769. He proposed opening a 'Drawing School' in Leeds 'to initiate the young Ladies and Gentlemen of this Town into a knowledge of several Branches of that polite and useful Accomplishment'. (5) As was the case with his parents, George Edwards Peacock, grew up in an age when he would have received every encouragement to both study and practice painting. It was a refined and gentlemanly thing to do. Young ladies regarded an ability to draw and paint in watercolours as a social achievement to be ranked with playing a musical instrument, composing poetry or prose or sewing delicate needlework.

Furthermore, it was landscape painting which was in vogue amongst amateurs. There were several reasons for this but Gilpin pointed out the most obvious when he claimed,

the art of sketching landscape is attainable by a man of business; and it is certainly more useful; and I should imagine, more amusing to attain some degree of excellence in an inferior branch than to be a mere bungler in a superior. (6)

Landscape painting, although an 'inferior' branch of art, was more easily assimilated, so that men and women of the upper and middle classes so inclined learned and practiced landscape painting. However, sophistication, education, training and artistic background defined art-making styles. The notion of Romanticism which characterised much professional landscape painting from the late eighteen century, meant that the genre also became associated
significant way they facilitated his efforts to say something personal about the landscape and, more importantly, emphasised his former status in society. Peacock was not painting the enclosed estates of England but the more open and spacious public areas along the shores of Port Jackson. He was painting what has been described as the 'democratic' landscape. Within these areas, and against the veil of harbour and expansive sky, were private villas; the residences of Peacock's potential patrons. Consequently, market demands decreed that his style be tempered to retain a degree of accuracy and detail.

Portrait painting, the more complex forms of still-life painting, and history painting were, most often, only practiced by professionals. About painting in Britain during the late eighteenth century Boase wrote:

Portraits were for profit, historical painting for the high realms of the imagination but in the popular mind landscape was rapidly becoming the main pictorial theme.

Only on the rare occasion did painters here concern themselves with 'elevated', historical, religious or neo-classical subjects. 'High Art' of this type was the preserve of contemporary painters from 'home'. Patrons in New South Wales almost invariably imported such art, calling on local painters only when portraits and landscapes (images from their immediate surroundings) were
required.

That Australian colonial artists in the first half of the nineteenth century pursued the landscape theme may be witnessed in the vast majority of works painted by Peacock, Martens, Glover, J.S. Prout and von Guerard. Each, in their own way, personalised and romanticised the landscape. None, of course, ventured as far as Turner or Constable because in the colonial situation a degree of topographical accuracy was both prudent and traditional. Prudent because of market demands and traditional because the antipodean landscape was not yet fully described to an audience still eager for information. As late as 1862, Eugene Von Guerard considered that his painting North-east View from the northern top of Mount Kosciusko would be of 'Australian national interest' because it revealed previously unseen landscape. (10) However, his romantic notions were not to be suppressed; he added that the painting provided 'a complete rebuttal of the theory...that Australian scenery possesses no elements of the sublime'. (11)

Peacock shared with the others the combined motives of recording and expressing and consequently became acutely aware of nature in all her aspects. There was, however, nothing in the Sydney landscape to promote a sense of time passing. This was a favoured stratagem of European romantic painters (Richard Wilson, Hubert Robert) who frequently included ruins and overt references to history and legend. When painting the vistas surrounding Port Jackson, Peacock
could not include ruined castles, tumbledown cottages or Gothic arches, but he did successfully transfer popular English concepts such as atmospheric effects, blasted trees placed strategically in the foreground, and other signifiers of the sublime and romantic in his small oils.

In his painting *Glenrock - Darling Point* [Illus.4.-cat.8], Peacock explores the mysterious qualities of a landscape very close to the city. The South Head Road snakes towards the city and at this point is carved out of dense forest. On top of the hill stands 'The Octagon', a tower built to facilitate observation of shipping on the harbour below. 'Glenrock', now demolished, stood on the present site of the Ascham School at Edgecliff. The house, built by Thomas Smith between 1835 and 1839, is here bathed in a light which separates it clearly from its bushland setting. In the foreground the artist has made effective use of shattered trees clinging to a rocky outcrop. In the manner of Gainsborough [Illus.5.] and the American colonial Thomas Cole [Illus.6], Peacock uses these tortured remnants as signifiers of man's progress through, and triumph over, the wilderness.

Conrad Martens had already made extensive use of this symbol. Both artists found it an effective way to describe the manner in which Europeans were 'civilising' the Sydney bushland. In his watercolour *View of Brisbane 1862* and again in *View From Neutral Bay - Breaking of the Storm*, Martens employs the image of a single shattered tree
standing sentinel over the city. The many similar examples by Peacock include, *Sydney from the North Shore* [Illus.7.-cat.7], *Government House Sydney from the Statue of Sir Richard Bourke* [Illus.8.-cat.12], *View of part of Woolloomooloo and Mr. Barker's House and Mill, with Bradley's Point, 1844* [Illus.9.-cat.19].

Drawing masters in the first half of the nineteenth century invariably advocated copying as the most effective teaching practice. Students would watch and imitate the drawing master at work. Some students merely became adept copyists. However, a student's technique, method and choice of subjects were often established in this way. Some became competent draughtsmen without ever referring to the object. The particular manners and styles of individual drawing masters were effectively passed on by means of the copying process.

The predominance of the copying method may be seen in the practice of circulating Drawing Books. In these books, landscape painting for amateurs was a prime consideration and the methods of such English artists as Ibbetson, Cox, Nicholson, W.H.Pyne and others were dissected, discussed and finally reduced to an easily digestible formula. Where Drawing Books were not employed, students would work from borrowed original drawings and paintings and, in this way, quickly learn to produce an acceptable work.

Peacock who grew up with such methods, would have had no other expectations from art training when he took up
painting in Sydney in the early 1840s. The only professional artist in the colony at that time who shared Peacock’s penchant for the romantic landscape was Conrad Martens.

Martens gave lessons and produced lithographed versions of his works while his paintings and drawings could be seen regularly in Sydney. In July 1856 he delivered a lecture on landscape painting at the Australian Library to an audience who were member of a newly-formed club of amateur painters. Consequently his style and technique was well known and, as was the established way, amateurs in Sydney made copies from his work. Because of the range and effectiveness of his activity, Martens was responsible for what might loosely be termed the "Martens School" in Sydney. His influence stretched from the late 1830s well into the 1860s. Martens’ pupils included the Reverend W.H.Walsh (1846), the Misses Thacker (1846), Mrs. T.S.Mort (1846), Miss Icely and the daughter of Sir T.L. Mitchell (1850). (14)

Prominent architects Robert Russell (1835) and Edmund Blacket (1846) were also pupils of Martens. To all his pupils Martens passed on his enthusiasm for the work of those painters who had had some influence on the formation of his own style in London during the 1820s. These included, apart from his teacher Copley Fielding, David Cox, George Cattermole, Clarkson Stanfield, Francis Danby and J.M.W.Turner.
Chapter Two

It is clear that Peacock is to be numbered amongst those followers of Martens and it is certain that he made copies after Martens' lithographed work. From Martens' Sketches in the Environs of Sydney 1850-1851 Peacock selected a view of Elizabeth Bay. [Illus.10] and reworked this into a small oil painting. [Illus.11.-cat.4]. Minor alterations are due mainly to Peacock's less skilful approach and different medium, but the work is undeniably a painting exercise by a student following his chosen master. Other clear examples of this technique may be seen by comparing works by Peacock and Martens which include Bourke's statue. [Ills.12] & [illus.13.-cat.6]. There are many similar examples where a subject or particular viewpoint has been shared by these artists.

Martens painted mainly in watercolour while Peacock confined himself almost exclusively to oil paints. However, there is some evidence that Peacock, like so many other amateurs in England and the colonies, had had his first painting experience with watercolours. Indeed his style strongly suggests that he was well aware of the watercolour tradition that prevailed during the first decades of the nineteenth century. In the mid-1840s Peacock made a group of rare watercolour works which are very similar in style to those of his mentor. The group of three (or possibly four) was used by the author Finney Eldershaw to illustrate his book, Australia as it really is, in its Life, Scenery and Adventure, published by Darbon and Co., London, 1854.
Chapter Two

Peacock's watercolours were lithographed in colour by Ben George of 47 Hatton Gardens.

The first of these, Port Jackson, New South Wales, North East View from above Darling Point (looking up into North Harbour) c1845-1849 (illus.14.-cat.133) is titled View from Mount Adelaide, Port Jackson in the lithograph facing page forty-four. Mount Adelaide was begun in about 1843 by the Colonial Architect, Mortimer Lewis, as a home for his family. By 1858, when it was owned by John Croft, the house had been extensively re-modelled after plans by Edmund T Blacket.(15)

The second watercolour, Port Jackson, New South Wales - View in Double Bay - Darling Point, (illus.15.-cat.134), depicts the residences of the merchant, Acton Sillitoe (The Willows), Sir T.L.Mitchell (Carthona) and Dr. Nicholson (Lindesay). The third work, View of Darling Point, Port Jackson New South Wales (illus.16.-cat.135) is painted from a vantage point high on Darling Point above Sillitoe's The Willows and includes a detailed image of that house.

These watercolours demonstrate that Peacock was versatile in technique although few other examples in this medium have been recorded. They may also point to a closer link between himself and the teaching and painting techniques of Conrad Martens. Peacock's rendering of the qualities of light and shade are as well handled here as in his far more numerous oils.

Although they favoured different mediums, the similar
attitudes and styles of Peacock and Martens may be
demonstrated by referring to the paintings of Amsterdam.
Island that they produced in the 1840s. These works again
point to the master/pupil relationship that existed between
the two painters. Furthermore the circumstances of their
production provides some insights into the life of colonial
painters and of the way their work became adaptable and
transportable.

Author Tim Bonyhady in Images in Opposition:
Australian Landscape Painting 1801-1890, 1985, referred to
the lack of transportability in Australian art, claiming,

The colonist's preference for European art
affected all painters who came to Australia and,
to a significant extent, restricted them to
subjects with which European artists could not
compete, most notably portraits and landscape
paintings, while wealthy colonists such as
pastoralist Simon Fraser occasionally had their
portraits painted in the course of European
travels, Australian scenery was not so easily
transportable.(16)

In support of his claim Bonyhady refers to
D.H.Solkin's catalogue for the 1982 exhibition, Richard
Wilson: The Landscape of Reaction, claiming, 'There appears
to be no Australian equivalentsto Richard Wilson's painting
of Niagra Falls based on a sketch by an unknown military
draughtsman'.(17)

There are, in fact, a number of Australian colonial
parallels with the example cited by Bonyhady. For example,
Thomas Watling's sketches of Aborigines around Port Jackson
were worked up by British artist William Alexander for engraving. (18) The much transformed works were published in An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales, the journal of David Collins (London, 1802). Alexander had not visited New South Wales and relied on original works by Watling to convey notions of the indigenous people and their surroundings, misreading local peculiarities such as the habit of standing on one leg - as Bernard Smith has pointed out. (19)

Similar remarks may be made about another English artist, Edward Dayes. Referring to illustrations in an earlier edition of Collin's journal, Rex and Thea Rienits wrote, 'Dayes must have made his drawings from others done on the spot, and there is ample evidence that some of these latter were by Watling'. (20) Dayes, like Alexander, never visited the colony.

A more comprehensive and detailed example may be given by referring a pair of landscapes painted by Conrad Martens and George Edwards Peacock in the 1840s. In this case, neither Peacock or Martens ever saw the landscape he depicted. Martens worked from pencil sketches made by his patron, the solicitor and amateur artist Charles Lowe, while Peacock copied Martens' work. Both images claimed to depict Amsterdam Island in the southern Indian Ocean.

There are numerous examples of Martens' work depicting non-Australian subjects, but the oil painting of Amsterdam Island [Illus.17.-cat9] by Peacock is the only
known work of his to depict a foreign scene. The Martens watercolour of the Island of Amsterdam is contained in a folio of drawings, the property of the Dixson Gallery, Sydney. (21) Peacock’s painting is recorded and a photograph of the original is held by the Mitchell Library. (22) The painting is held in a private collection outside New South Wales.

Although Martens’ sketch is inscribed ‘Island of Amsterdam’, it is in fact the Island of St Paul which is adjacent to it in the Indian Ocean. Other views of St Paul by William Bligh, George Tobin and an unknown seventeenth-century Dutch artist confirm this identification. (23) A written description of St Paul mentions the ‘singular and magnificent entrance formed by the falling to seaward of the northern side of the vast volcanic crater’. (24) This description seems accurate for the landscape shown in both the Martens and the Peacock and corroborates the pictorial evidence.

After Conrad Martens arrived in Sydney on 17 April 1835 he continued to practice as an artist. He had been employed aboard the ‘Beagle’ as a topographical artist while the scientists, including Charles Darwin, conducted a marine survey expedition. (25) Martens was essentially a romantic landscape painter in England prior to his time on the ‘Beagle’. He had studied with Copely Fielding, the noted watercolourist and it was here that Martens first became interested in the portrayal of weather effects. (26)
His interest in astronomy and the scientific aspects of weather observation were extended during his time aboard the 'Beagle'. Because of his work on the ship, his abilities and techniques as a topographer developed considerably. Martens' romantic approach to the landscape had not, however, diminished and he still combined influences from Claude, Turner and Fielding with a more scientific approach.

Some time between 1844 and 1848 in Sydney Martens accepted the unusual commission from Charles Lowe. Lowe had made sketches of the Island of St Paul in 1844 and requested Martens to use these to produce paintings for him. Two works were completed and exhibited in the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia Exhibition in 1849. The present whereabouts of these paintings is unknown, but the pencil and wash drawing under discussion was almost certainly a preparatory sketch for those paintings.

This was not a typical commission for Martens, but it does point to the economic conditions which existed in the colony at that time. Although by 1849 the worst of the depression was over, Martens had learned that he must cater for market demands. His record books show that he reproduced English scenes, gave lessons, painted detailed pictures of gentlemen's residences and printed and coloured popular lithographic views of Sydney in his efforts to earn a reasonable living.
Although unusual, it is not therefore surprising that Martens would agree to develop Lowe’s sketches into finished paintings. His attitude to this commission serves as further evidence of the respectability of the copy at the time and hence its place in the training of artists. His previous experience as a topographer would have fitted him well for the task, and indeed the sketch shows aspects of Martens as both a romantic and topographical artist.

This dichotomy emphasises the point made by Bernard Smith in his *European Vision and the South Pacific*, that in a scientific age art as information tended to share, if not dominate, the prime considerations of colonial painters. Of necessity, such tasks were often undertaken by artists in distant places whose work suffered from the lack of direct observation of the subject. It would be reasonable to assume, for example, that direct sketches by Martens would have been topographically more accurate than the ones produced for Lowe.

Martens had not, however, been in the Indian Ocean and hence had seen neither St Paul nor Amsterdam islands. After leaving England, Martens had sailed only as far as Rio before he joined the ‘Beagle’, in November 1833. Until October 1834 Martens and the expedition sailed the coast of South America. When he left the ‘Beagle’ Martens sailed north-west across the Pacific to Tahiti and later to Sydney where he remained. When painting St Paul he thus relied entirely on Mr. Lowe’s sketches. Peacock probably never saw
St Paul Island either. It is possible that the ‘Prince George’ passed by these islands on the voyage to Sydney, but more likely that it passed well away to the south. (30)

In 1847 Peacock was represented by eight works in the second exhibition of the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia. Two years later in the show which included Martens’ St. Paul picture, Peacock was represented by three more works, being listed in the catalogue, along with Martens, Backler, Nicholas and others, as being amongst the exhibiting artists. Those included appear to be the more ‘professional’ artists of Sydney; their addresses were also given.

Peacock had seen either the Martens painting or a sketch of St. Paul prior to the 1849 exhibition and had made a fairly accurate copy of one of them. Perhaps Peacock copied this as an exercise or, alternatively, had had access to the work for long enough to make a faithful copy. The owner of the Martens paintings, Charles Lowe, lived, as did Peacock, near South Head. (31) It seems perfectly reasonable that fellow solicitors who were neighbours and shared an interest in landscape painting would have had a mutual interest in the Martens painting of St Paul.

The Martens image reveals that he was working on a tonal study and apparently ‘working up’ the sketch by Lowe. Even in this sketch Martens holds to the principles he espoused in his lecture to the Sydney Sketching Club on 21 July 1856, when he stated:
First. In choosing your subject, take care that there is some principal object on which to concentrate your effort, and attract attention, and let the highest light and the largest mass of dark assist each other at this point by their contrast. (32)

With regard to Amsterdam Island, Martens made the singular rock in the sea the focal point of his picture. Its dark tonality, and that of the sea to the immediate left, provides a strong contrast with the romantic light bathing the middle ground. Martens, in his lectures, wrote of aerial perspective and this too is evident in the sketch. Perhaps Martens regarded this small sketch as a useful illustration of his painting techniques.

The Martens sketch is 'loose' and unfinished, with little attention to detail. Martens was apparently solving problems of composition and tonal arrangement when he made it, being content to mass clouds without searching for his customary effectiveness. 'The sketch', Martens stated in his lecture, 'should be slight as it is for the purpose only of giving a general idea of the subject to be painted, and the beginning of a work is not the time for details'. (33).

Peacock, on the other hand, made a much more finished work paying equal attention to every detail (as is often the custom of naive painters). Five men in a dinghy row into the picture intersecting a dark section of the foreground and a seagull alights on a half-submerged object
to the left. This last motif is something of a Peacock trademark and may be seen in a number of his paintings. Martens also used this device in his lithograph, Clarke's Island, Port Jackson. Although the paintings Martens made for Lowe have not been traced, they may also have included such foreground detail to enliven an otherwise empty seascape.

The two works under discussion were made for different purposes. Peacock was setting about a finished painting whereas the Martens' work may be regarded only as a working sketch. The way in which Peacock has been able to adapt Martens' tonal and compositional scheme for his own ends and in a different medium shows him to be then more than a simple copyist or student. Regardless of whether Peacock painted his canvas as an exercise or not, it is likely that he learned some worthwhile lessons from Martens. If Peacock was in Martens' audience for the 1856 lecture he would have had those lessons confirmed.

In 1874 the Peacock picture was owned by Dr McKellar, who exhibited it in the New South Wales Academy of the Arts' Third Annual Exhibition of Colonial Works of Art. Ninety-five years later, in April 1969, the painting appeared in a Sydney auction as Hackfall, Yorkshire 1848 - an imaginative title considering that Hackfall is centrally situated in Yorkshire and completely landlocked. Six months later it was auctioned again, being listed then as Sailors in a Dinghy off the Coast, 1848. The same work was
auctioned twice more: in Melbourne in 1970, and in 1972 where it was acquired by its present owner. On each of these occasions it was titled *Coastal Cliffs* (37).

Peacock and Martens had a great deal in common and it is clear that their artistic paths crossed on a number of occasions. The painting of St Paul Island by Martens, made between 1844 and 1848, had inspired Peacock to make his copy in 1848. The Martens work that has survived is the preparatory sketch of a master and the Peacock oil is the effort of a talented amateur verging on professionalism who was able to supplement his income by selling paintings to the gentlemen and government officials in Sydney. (38)

Both works tend to contradict Bonyhady’s assumption that Australian colonial art was not easily transportable since, in this case at least, views were imported into the country for interpretation and finishing. The Martens/Peacock case, which has been presented in some detail, indicates that artists here were, at times, called upon to service the needs of travellers and immigrants. The evidence relating to Watling, Dayes, Alexander and other English copyists is well-known, but this example illustrates that there was a two-way flow of imagery in colonial times, and that transportability was an important factor at a time when art fulfilled a vital role in the dissemination of information.

Whilst it remains likely that Peacock had undergone some art training as part of his general education, there
is no evidence to show that he regarded any of his work in England as being of exhibition standard. He does not appear to have shown work at the exhibitions of the Liverpool Society nor at those conducted by Yorkshire's most prominent group, the Northern Society at Leeds. In London, Peacock was concerned with his legal training, his marriage in 1834, the birth of his son, and finally his financial problems, the court case and the conviction which led to his transportation in 1837. The Royal Academy, London, does not list him as an exhibitor.

Peacock's small 'souvenir' sized oils are difficult to align with any English counterpart or 'school'. They are a peculiar result of colonial patronage which appreciated their unique qualities of size and medium - transportability of another sort. Oil paint was more permanent, resilient and difficult to damage, while their size meant that they required no special packing or sealing when being moved. In short, they were an ideal souvenir for travellers to carry or for colonial residents to send abroad. Furthermore Peacock often identified details of his paintings with precision and care. Such titles as 'No.6 Port Jackson NSW Woolloomooloo - Lady Darling's and Piper Points in perspective, from the Domain, 1846' indicate that the painter always had a British audience in mind and that he genuinely sought to record topographical detail. Such titles were written on labels by Peacock, signed, dated and attached to the stretcher of the canvas.
Peacock did paint larger works. These were most often destined for Art Union prizes, for exhibition, for a special purpose, or possibly commissioned. On 24 June 1850 George Edwards Peacock was awarded first prize in J.T. Grocott's third Art Union. The prize was for a landscape painting in oil. He won twenty guineas and a silver medal for his painting *Buttermere Lakes*. (39) Buttermere, in the famous Lakes District of England, lay only 40 miles to the north-west of Sedbergh where Peacock had been born and educated. The work, it was claimed, had been painted expressly for the Art Union (40), indicating that Peacock had either painted this from memory, worked it up from engravings or perhaps taken it from another painting which had found its way to the colony, the last being a method employed by Peacock on other occasions.

*Buttermere Lakes*, measuring 76.5 x 105 cms, was a large painting for Peacock who normally preferred to work on a much smaller scale, but Art Union competitions obviously encouraged the production of large works. By 1850 there was a small industry developing for the production of canvases ranging up to gallery size.

Several of Peacock's extant paintings extant come into this category. They include: *A View from Sydney taken from Darlinghurst showing Woolloomooloo Bay 1852* (35.5 x 76.5cms [illus.18.-cat 61]), *City and harbour of Sydney N.S.W. from the heights above Vaucluse* (36.8 x 89cms [illus.19.-Cat.63]), *The Three Brothers Mountains near*
Camden Haven, East Coast 1852 (40.5 x 58cms [illus.20.-cat.87]), and Port Jackson N.S.W. showing the Observatory (35.5 x 76.5cms [illus.21.-cat.101]).

The works dated 1852 were painted at a time when Art Union activity in Sydney was suspended, and similarly the remaining large works cannot be directly linked with Art Unions. Their large scale was presumably recognised as an accepted part of his repertoire by then. Even so, a survey of his known works shows that the majority of his paintings measured no more than 15 x 20cms. The largest extant work, is City and Harbour of Sydney, N.S.W., from the heights above Vaucluse measures 36.8 x 89cms, somewhat smaller than the untraced Butteremere Lakes.

By the time George Edwards Peacock was in his early twenties provincial art societies and exhibitions were beginning to emerge throughout Britain. (41) For example the Northern Society was formed at Leeds in 1809 and the following year a similar society was formed at Liverpool. Such societies and institutions were, 'committed to the encouragement of the arts in provincial centres in all parts of the British Isles'. (42)

Peacock would have been of the type to seek out the benefits that a knowledge of the arts might bestow. One supporter of provincialism in the arts observed in 1823,

The arts bestow an intellectual grace upon society; they refine the taste and soften the
manners... provide a counteracting influence to the gross and sordid spirit, which is too often the result of individual attention to mercenary pursuits. (43)

When this comment was made Peacock was just seventeen years old. An intellectual climate prevailed, both in London and the provinces, which encouraged accomplishments and participation in the arts. These attitudes were part of Peacock's 'cultural baggage' when he was transported in 1837.

Peacock would also have had opportunities to see the work of Turner, Sandby, Varley, Cox, Fielding and others, either in the provinces or in London where he was a student of law. The Northern Society at Leeds was the closest society to Peacock's home at Sedbergh and in 1824, for example, J.M.W. Turner exhibited some watercolours at the Society's Annual Exhibition. It may well be that the work of Martens in Sydney simply confirmed for Peacock that his style and his attitudes to art were in tune with the best artists in both Britain and the colonies.

The picturesque qualities of Sydney Harbour replaced the picturesque vistas of the Lakes District or the grand scenery experienced by many artists during their pilgrimages to Italy or other exotic European locations. The European Grand Tour undertaken by artists such as Wilson and Turner was necessarily reduced, in Peacock's case, to journeys to and from Sydney along the South Head Road.
Like Martens, his art was a synthesis of the romantic and the topographical. Peacock sought always to include detail in his work, a trait that led him in the opposite direction to that of Turner who sought grandeur by expressing the breadth and scope of the elements in nature. In Romantic painting nature and its myriad of detail is always preferred to the general, sweeping or abstracted approach. The exotic becomes centrally important; the familiar is relegated to a secondary role.

Peacock, working in a Romantic vein, nevertheless continued with what was apparently an ever-present obligation for colonial artists: to record detail or 'information'. Hence his work became an interesting combination of factual detail and romantic sensibility which now provides an idealised view of the colony in mid-century. Peacock interpreted his surroundings as warm, embracing, and poetic, despite the turbulent and fragmented life he had lived in Sydney.

His calm attitude is echoed in paintings of the Harbour, a place which for him was never wild or stormy. An evocative stillness pervades his small oil painting No.2 Port Jackson NSW The Floating Light (Morning) 1846 [illus.22.-cat.35] which shows the mood of the Harbour during early morning. Whilst a romantic mood prevails, the artist has not lost sight of particular elements such as the becalmed sailing ship, the coastal steamer in the distance and the small rowboat in the foreground, all of
which promote an historical sense of time and place.

As has already been shown, at other times Peacock was concerned with the mysterious and sublime. Inspired by the Harbour, the emerging city and its grand villas set in spectacular landscapes, Peacock's work signalled part of the change from the strictly topographical painting of the early artists such as Watling, Lycett and Eyre to more romantic and artistic concerns. This remains true for New South Wales even though the main thrust of the Romantic movement in Europe had waned by 1850.

As a consequence of his combining pragmatism and romanticism Peacock's paintings are effective as both works of art and historical documents. When they were made the paintings were an important part of the artist's efforts to regain respect in society. The very style of Peacock's paintings demonstrated his gentlemanly background. Today they serve as a reminder that some degree of artistic sophistication had emerged in the colony prior to 1850.
Notes. - Chapter Two.

(2) ibid.
(11) ibid.
(12) Trevor Fawcett, *op. cit.*, p33
(13) ibid.
(17) ibid., n.21, p157.
Chapter Two


(26) *ibid.*, p235.


(28) SPFAA Catalogue, *op.cit.*, Entries 176 & 177.


(30) The artist John Glover on board the ‘Thomas Lowry’ in 1831 sighted and sketched the Island of St.Paul.

(31) *Ford’s Directory of Sydney for 1855*.


(33) *ibid*, p99.
Chapter Two

(34) For example see ZDG333 (Mitchell Library, Sydney), and 'Port Jackson N.S.W. Sydney, with Fort Macquarie Looking up the Harbour From Off Garden Island 1849', (Small Picture File, Mitchell Library, Sydney under Sydney Harbour and Islands -1849).


(36) Information inscribed on the stretcher of this painting.


(38) Returns of the Colony of N.S.W., 1840-58. 4/272-290, Mitchell Library, Sydney. In 1847 Peacock's wage p.a. was 27.7.6.

(39) S.M.H. July 1850

(40) ibid.

(41) Trevor Fawcett, op. cit., p.1

(42) ibid.

(43) S.D. Cleveland, The Royal Manchester Institution, Manchester, 1931. - Quoted by Trevor Fawcett, op. cit., p.6.
Chapter Three

CHAPTER THREE - PATRONAGE

Peacock brought his work to the attention of Sydney patrons in a variety of ways. Individuals may have acquired his works through Art Unions, through a purchase from a gallery, through exhibitions such as those held in 1847 and 1849 or, in some cases, directly from the artist. Unlike Conrad Martens, Peacock left no records of his transactions; however, a list of some twenty people who owned his works has been compiled. (Appendix A). His status as an artist, always somewhere between amateur and professional, may not have demanded that such business-like records be kept; the very limited corporate and state patronage available in Sydney did not extend to Peacock.

While it remains difficult to identify the full range of his patrons, a more complete understanding of the art scene may be gained by an examination of the activities of Peacock’s contemporaries such as Martens, Fowles and Nicholas. These artists worked in a context similar to Peacock’s and competed with him for the varied but limited patronage available.

Peacock’s work was put on public exhibition in company with that of some of Sydney’s professional and better patronised artists. There were several entrepreneurs in Sydney who were prepared to deal in the work of colonial artists. At the forefront of such activity was James T. Grocott whose Art Unions through the 1850s provided an
outlet for a number of painters. Other promoters of colonial productions included Wollcott and Clarke, Kern and Madder, Richardson and Leech, Mr. Piddington and Mr. Ross.

Ross advertised on 3 September 1855 that his Gallery of Australian Arts at 19 Bridge Street would open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., ‘to meet the convenience of parties engaged in business during the day’. (1) Ross exhibited a range of colonial pictures by gaslight. Shown concurrently was, ‘the finest picture ever exhibited in the colony’, the English painter J.A. Stewart’s ‘Adam and Eve Before the Fall’. (2)

As was the practice of colonial newspapers, advertisers like Ross were favoured with ‘editorial’ mention in the news columns. Apart from the Sydney Morning Herald, Ross advertised in The People’s Advocate and that paper reciprocated by printing the following,

ROSS’S AUSTRALIAN GALLERY OF ARTS. — Our readers will see, by our advertising columns that the large room over Messrs. D. Buist and Sons Pianoforte Warehouse, in Bridge Street has been thrown open to the public, as a Picture Gallery by Mr. Ross, the spirited proprietor of Stewart’s Chef d’oeuvre, his painting of Adam and Eve. We can conceive nothing better calculated to foster the rising talents of our Australian Artists, or to afford all, who, whether temporarily or not, make (for the time being at least) this colony their home, a fair opportunity of attaining the rank among their comppeers to which their abilities entitle them, than such an Exhibition: whilst on the other hand, we are equally sure that a public entertainment of this nature, cannot fail to ameliorate the moral and social condition of our population: its effect now being the same that it was, when the words "ingenuas didicisse,
&c.," (as true as they are trite) were first penned. We sincerely hope then, that Mr. Ross will meet with such support, both from Artists, and the public of New South Wales, as will ensure to his undertaking, the success which it deserves.(3)

Ross, unlike a regular art dealer or Art Union organiser, depended on viewers as much as sales and charged admission to his gallery. The journalist for The People's Advocate clearly recognised this situation when he described the Exhibition as a 'public entertainment'.(4) Prices were 1/- for adults and 6d for children.(5)

Just two weeks later the People's Advocate again reported on Ross's exhibition but began with an attack on the Sydney public and its art patrons. The article described the, 'long and severe struggles' which had taken place in attempts to put the fine arts on a 'permanent basis in the colony'.(6) The report continued,

Many attempts have been made to form a society for the purposes of advancing the interests of artists here, but unfortunately from a variety of circumstances they have been strangled in their birth. A few public exhibitions - a few Art Unions - a few Art Lotteries - have left faint traces behind them which memory would fain forget. Rich patrons were presumptuous and niggardly; artists depressed and disjointed; speculative dealers exacting and unscrupulous. The age of gold succeeded, and the eye of the artist brightened through the film gathered by toil, trouble and neglect; the sight gleamed but for a moment; the gold was not for him; his studio received not welcome nuggets; and the dust on his unsold pictures was not of a golden hue.(7)

Eventually this article came to its major point: that is,
it directed praise to Ross for his efforts in promoting colonial art, concluding:

This gentleman has already formed a fine collection of pictures, principally from the studios of artists resident in this colony. Amongst them are some excellent specimens of Messrs. Martens, Smith, Campbell, Dexter, Balcombe, Fowles, Peacock, and the late Mr. Nichols. The collection also contains some works by English artists of known ability, forming altogether a most attractive exhibition deserving of every public encouragement. At present the pictures are on view in a large room over Mr. Buist’s piano-forte warehouse. in Bridge-street. (8)

So, in this exhibition Peacock’s work was hung with the leading painters in the colony. Henry Smith, Oswald Campbell, William Dexter and Joseph Fowles enjoyed continued critical acclaim while there had been general agreement for a number of years that Martens had been Sydney’s outstanding painter.

Peacock’s inclusion in this company provides one measure of the way in which his works were rated in his own time. When considered in conjunction with other evidence related to private patronage, Art Unions, large scale exhibitions and criticism, it becomes clear that Peacock’s contemporaries, drawn from a variety of areas, certainly regarded him as one of Sydney’s small band of ‘professional’ artists, even if he necessarily continued as a meteorologist at South Head.

Whilst noticing the talents of these men, the paper could not help suggesting that many previous attempts to market art in the colony had not come to much. When this
article appeared in 1855 art was still by no means on a professional footing, but this reflected more than the quality of art being produced. For most artists, Peacock included, there was simply insufficient private, corporate and state patronage to support them. Mr. Ross had made a substantial effort but, since this exhibition proved to be his one and only attempt to promote colonial art, it became yet another in a series of somewhat isolated art events in Sydney.

Patrons of art in early Sydney had an ambiguous attitude to local artists. Collectors such as T.S. Mort, A.B. Spark and T.W. Smart were convinced that their 'serious' purchases should be made in Britain or on the continent. Privately, they accepted that master painters, both modern and ancient, could be found only in those places. Publicly, gentlemen in Sydney were prepared to speak out in the cause of colonial art, just as they encouraged almost every other form of social, political and commercial endeavour. While there was nothing inconsistent in holding both views, few patrons were prepared to provide the financial support which might effectively consolidate the place of local art.

Standards of taste, connoisseurship and selective judgement were naturally developed from British and European experiences and standards. They were not to be hastily altered by a colonial way of life or the demands imposed by the unfamiliar landscape. Indeed, if anything, the isolation from cultural sources and heritage
strengthened the ties with long established values.
Gentlemen in Sydney were not evaluated by rough colonial standards, but by those which prevailed 'at home'. The colony was not regarded as a cultural entity. Rather it was treated always as a far-flung and dependent extension of Britain, a place to which culture, sophistication and, in particular, the fine arts, had to be imported.

The notion that overseas works equalled excellence was not confined to the Australian colonies. Even mid-nineteenth century patrons in Britain largely supported European artists, and American patrons supported British and European artists; in every case the 'home-grown' artists suffered.

The majority of painters in New South Wales came from Britain and, during the 1840s and '50s, the term 'colonial artist' still meant, more often than not, that the person in question was simply a resident. Aware that patrons took their standards from British and European models, artists in the colony strove to match their distant fraternal brothers with whom they had, sometimes, trained. Gentlemen and connoisseurs recognised and publicly endorsed the importance of establishing galleries, societies and academies for the encouragement of the fine arts, yet there were very few among them who sought to transform this philosophy into reality by commissioning or purchasing local art. Intellectual committment was one thing; putting status symbols on walls of fine colonial villas was
another.

Art was a luxury that could be afforded by the few. For many it could only be regarded as a product of long-established and mature societies. Australia, in the 1850s, was an energetic and expanding country where local Fine Arts were yet to earn a significant place in the order of social priorities. It was not until photography took hold late in the decade that there was a recognisable and tangible group of patrons ready to purchase images of themselves and their surroundings. Most residents of the colony (which, after all, was still only sixty years old) firmly believed that art was expensive, foreign, aristocratic and superfluous. This attitude remained part of the Australian ethos for the next 100 years, but during the decade of the 1850s the struggle began in earnest to put colonial art on a professional basis. Actively initiated by artists, businessmen and connoisseurs, art unions, art societies and exhibitions provide evidence for this claim. To a much lesser extent private patronage also had its part to play.

Included amongst those patrons in Sydney who, verbally, at least, supported the cause of colonial art and artists was the successful merchant and auctioneer, Thomas Sutcliffe Mort. His early business ventures in the colony were associated with the sale of wool and he was one of the few who prospered during the depression of the 1840s. By 1846 he had built his mansion 'Greenoaks' at Darling
Point, and when this was extended in 1859 (after plans by Edmund Blacket) an art gallery was included. The gallery and Mort's extensive gardens were periodically open to the public. On display were some 120 paintings which Mort had purchased in England during his visit of 1857-59. The importation of such a large collection of art, together with Elizabethan armour and other English antiques, indicated two things. First, that Mort retained and cherished close cultural ties with England. Secondly, that he hoped his collection could inspire colonials (both gentry and aspiring painters) since no state patronage or art public gallery existed.

On isolated occasions, Mort sold colonial art through his auction house. In December 1849, for example, he auctioned thirteen 'beautiful crayon drawings and oil paintings' by James Armstrong Wilson, the colonial artist who had been prominent in the recently concluded exhibition organised by the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia. (10) Two years earlier Mort had been a foundation member of this society, while in 1851 he served on the management committee of the Australasian Botanical and Horticultural Society. Although active in promoting cultural life in Sydney, Mort's own purchases of colonial art were insignificant by comparison with his English purchases. Nevertheless, he did lend colonial works by Fowles and Ellis to the 1847 exhibition, others by O.W.Brierly, Captain Perry and Conrad Martens to the 1857
exhibition and he owned a work, *Australian Scene*, by the noted Sydney amateur, Mrs Maria Jane Scott (nee Barney). Mort owned other works by Martens, including *Mort's House from Double Bay 1855* and *St. Mark's Church, Double Bay 1855*, purchased for their subject matter and its close connection with the merchant’s life in Sydney. (11) Mort considered himself a ‘serious’ collector and patron of the arts, which might have made him exceptional as a buyer.

Mort certainly championed the cause of colonial art and artists publicly. Indeed, there was a nationalistic ring to his call for local support, not only for artists but for colonial productions of all types, when a public subscription was taken up in 1856 for a portrait of Sir Charles Nicholson. Organisers suggested that the painting should be made in England by an English ‘master’, but Mort, in an indignant letter to the Sydney press, maintained that he had a great deal of respect for Nicholson but would refuse to contribute unless the picture be painted in the colony. He continued;

We have talent of first-rate order here which, for all the people of New South Wales appear to care, may find its way back — like that of Nichols the sculptor — to the place from whence it came, for how is it possible that we can ever attain proficiency in the colony if we do not encourage colonial talent, or how hope to retain merit of high caste amongst us if we sacrifice our resident artists as we do? But it is the same in everything from clothes pegs to printing, and thus our native industry is deprecated and our national prosperity hindered. (12)
This display of loyalty was encouraging to artists, although T.S. Mort did not necessarily always follow his own advice.

The *Sydney Morning Herald*, in a separate article, echoed Mort's sentiments, suggesting that O.R. Campbell's portrait of Governor FitzRoy, completed during the previous year, should have convinced observers that he was one colonial artist, at least, worthy of encouragement. The article implied that if Nicholson's portrait was to be painted it should be painted in Sydney, and Campbell given the commission.

These views were challenged the following day by John Woolley, Professor of Classics at the University of Sydney. While he stated that he respected Mort and his efforts to encourage the social and intellectual development of the community, Woolley claimed that neither Campbell or any other colonial painter was yet ready to challenge the best from England and, as Campbell would no doubt agree, 'the first portrait painter at home is at present preferred to himself. If you believe in the divinity of art, you must acknowledge its progressiveness.' (13) He forecast a time when Australian artists would rival England's best, but stated that this time had not yet come.

Nine years later Mort, still actively concerned with the Fine Arts, wrote to the Australian artist Adelaide Ironside, then in Italy. He offered advice regarding the exhibition and sale of her work in Sydney but remained
sceptical of local art patronage. He wrote:

I feel some difficulty as the general depression now existing is anything but favourable to their sale, for lovers of the Fine Arts are not to be met with in the colonies so plentifully as in England. (14)

Time had apparently not brought much improvement to the colonial scene - or even change. Mort, was still making public pronouncements, promoting the cause of local artists.

Artists such as Conrad Martens, J.S. Prout, Frederick Garling and Joseph Fowles certainly sold their work in Sydney, but only Martens - in spite of his protestations to the contrary - managed to make a living from his art alone. Martens showed that with ingenuity and flexibility it was possible for a painter to generate a reasonably comfortable living in Sydney. To do this, however, Martens was obliged to travel, give lessons, produce copies of his own and other painter's work, undertake framing and restorations and make editions of popularly priced prints. Even then he suffered lean economic periods. Artists who were not prepared to suffer some lowering of status, or were not prepared to cater for the market as they found it, discovered that economic survival in the colony was difficult indeed. (15)

Others such as G.F. Angas, although active and resourceful, could not survive in the small market. Patrons
most often purchased colonial works on the basis of familiarity with the subject, be it a portrait, landscape or genre subject. But collectors, buying art 'for its own sake', rarely departed from the established European names and standards.

By 1850 in Sydney there had developed a range of colonists who became, for a variety of reasons, patrons of local art and artists. A number of these came into contact with Peacock and purchased his work. Although they were a small group, it is likely that they purchased, between them, a considerable number of paintings. Many of these works were despatched to Britain to confirm for the recipients the close personal and family ties that existed between them and the colony. Patrons here expected paintings to demonstrate their personal success and prosperity. Landscapes were also favoured because they detailed the surroundings in which such successes had occurred. In essence, Peacock's work (like almost everyone else's) was bought because he painted 'information' about the colony. Nevertheless, his small and detailed works were infused with a romantic mood - a synthesis which appealed to those who wanted momentos of the colony and also to those who were attracted to the representation of the colony as something of an Athens in the Antipodes.

The engraver, printer and publisher, William Kellett Baker, was an enthusiastic supporter of colonial art. He was one of the most prominent collectors of Peacock's
paintings and through his commercial activities also accumulated original works by Samuel Elyard, Joseph Fowles, Frederick Garling, John Rae, T.Rider – and George Edwards Peacock. Baker loaned nine examples by these artists to the exhibition of 1847. Two of the most intriguing were the untraced studies by Rider. Entitled Billy Emue of Lake Macquarie and Kitty Jones, Lake Macquarie they depicted individual Aborigines from the area north of Sydney, and give some minor clue to the artistic activity of Rider, still a mysterious figure in the Sydney art scene. In October 1840, Baker had published a series entitled Twelve Profile Portraits of the Aborigines. (16) Although similar to early works by Fernyhough and Rodius, they were signed ‘I.W.R.’ and were quite possibly by Rider who had a demonstrated interest in depicting the Aborigines. In other places Rider was listed as ‘W’, and there is still some confusion over his initials.

Baker, like many other patrons of colonial art, appreciated the beauty and activity of Sydney’s harbour. This was reflected in paintings such as Peacock’s View in the Harbour of Port Jackson, Joseph Fowles’ The Steamer ‘Soverign’ and Frederick Garling’s A View of Sydney from the North Shore, all of which formed part of Baker’s collection. The publisher also owned three portraits by John Rae, Sydney’s first full time Town Clerk and an amateur artist better known for his sketches of everyday life in Sydney.
Rae was closely associated with intellectual life in Sydney and had given lectures at the Mechanics' School of Arts, on *Taste*, *The English Language* and *Robert Burns*. A patron as well as an artist, his personal collection, centered around topographical views of Sydney and New South Wales, included several works by Peacock. Rae collaborated with the artist John Skinner Prout, writing the text for *Sydney Illustrated* issued as a single publication in 1844. (17) Through this association Rae became a major collector of Prout's Australian work and was able to lend a total of seventeen Prout examples to the 1847 and 1849 exhibitions. A number of these were views of country areas in New South Wales such as *Jamison’s Valley* and *The Weatherboard Inn on the Bathurst Road*, while others were atmospheric works such as *Winter Scene* and *Moonlight*. Rae also owned, and showed, paintings by Peacock, Lucy Havens, Conrad Martens and William Nicholas.

Dr. Arthur Martin A’Beckett, a surgeon and member of the New South Wales Legislative Council between 1856-1860, was also a member of the committees that conducted the 1847 and 1849 exhibitions of Fine Art in Sydney. A’Beckett and his wife, Emma Louise, were patrons of Sydney artists, including Joseph Fowles, Marshall Claxton, Conrad Martens and Peacock. For the exhibition of 1857 the A’Becketts loaned Claxton’s portrait of Captain Cook, but in 1849 they had shown *Citadel of St. Sebastian*, an atypical work by Peacock.
The A'Becketts also collected Peacock's more familiar work. Seven small oil paintings of Sydney Harbour were auctioned in Melbourne during March 1983. All had come down to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Moore from the estate of Emma Louise A'Beckett, and included such titles as *Sydney from the Harbour off Macquarie Fort*, and *View of Middle Harbour, Port Jackson N.S.W. at Sunset*.

These works, all approximately 15 x 20 cms., were typical of the 'souvenir' sized paintings Peacock made throughout 1846 and 1847. They proved popular with Sydney patrons and many were shipped to the United Kingdom to serve as reminders of the Antipodes. For those who hadn't seen Australia, Peacock's paintings presented a romantic and appealing vision of a spacious city spread around the shores of the harbour which he ensured remained central to his compositions.

Peacock attracted the patronage of people who shared his love of Sydney Harbour and its range of romantic moods. His most prestigious patron was the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency Sir Charles FitzRoy. Fitzroy was patron of the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia in 1847 and 1849 and lent three paintings to the first exhibition. Two were views of the new Government House by Peacock. This, a subject Peacock frequently returned to, was one which demonstrated Sydney's growing sophistication. The new Government House (designed by the English Country house architect Edward Blore) became a
standard subject for painters of the 1840s and 1850s, probably the one most certain to attract patronage. Considering Peacock’s aspirations to regain respectability, this public proof of vice-regal patronage would have been very welcome.

FitzRoy’s third loan painting was by Joseph Fowles and depicted H.M.S. Carysfort, the ship in which the Governor had arrived on 2 August 1846. Fitzroy had quickly involved himself with the social, cultural and sporting life of Sydney. By 10 August he had become a member and patron of the Australian Club and two weeks later Lady Mary Fitzroy gave the first of her many parties at Government House. Governor FitzRoy, who kept the only pack of hounds in the colony, was inclined to the life of a sybaritic English gentleman - which perhaps helps explain his willingness to foster the patronage of local artists such as Peacock and Fowles.

Regardless of the Governor’s energy and his rather grand lifestyle, he was considered by some to be uncultured. For example, Justice Roger Therry claimed of FitzRoy, ‘his knowledge of books was small’ and ‘he had no talent as a speaker and his writing was supposed to be done by proxy’. (18) Fitzroy was not an informed or dedicated patron of art. Rather, he endorsed the practice, so prevalent in the colony, of purchasing paintings because of some personal association with the subject matter.

FitzRoy’s cousin, Lieutenant Godfrey Charles Mundy,
was also a patron of Peacock. Mundy, who was stationed in Sydney between June 1846 and August 1851, accompanied FitzRoy on several tours of country areas. In Sydney, Mundy resided at 'Tarmons' on Woolloomooloo Hill, a house which commanded fine views of the township across the bay. Peacock had painted 'Tarmons' in 1845 when it had been the residence of Sir Maurice O'Connell. [Illus.23.-cat.30]. He presented the two-storeyed house, set in spacious surrounds, against the vast Sydney sky as was normally the case with Peacock's 'house portraits'. The horizon is deliberately kept low on the canvas so that an atmosphere of light and airiness prevails.

When Peacock again painted from 'Tarmons' some time after 1848, it was the spectacular view rather than the the house itself, that he sought to commemorate. Indeed, the artist, in this image, *Sydney from Woolloomooloo* [Illus.24.-cat.51] almost ignores the house, choosing instead an exaggeratedly high viewpoint so as to dramatise the townscape before him. Residents and guests at 'Tarmons' (now the site of St.Vincent's School and Convent at King's Cross) would have enjoyed a similar view from the first floor windows which faced the west. The work contains a myriad of detail, from the dominant spire of St.James to washing drying on the clothesline stretched between three straggly gum trees. Away to the right is the omnipresent New Government House and tall-masted ship anchored near Sydney Cove. Peacock's depiction of the wide beach at the
southern end of Woolloomooloo Bay is a stark reminder of the march that 'progress' has made through this city. Late afternoon light suffuses the scene, highlighting many of the major buildings and private houses. The enjoyment that Peacock took from painting the city and his expressive sense of place is evident in the work. His use of thrusting perspective, inescapable in the foreground rooftops, demands that the viewer becomes involved in the detail and mood of the city.

Another of Peacock's patrons who valued the view of Sydney from its eastern heights was the solicitor George John Rogers. A member of the legal firm of Carr, Rogers and Owen, his private residence was 'Craigend', a neoclassical house formerly owned - and perhaps designed - by Sir Thomas Mitchell. Rogers, like Sir Maurice O'Connell and Lieutenant Colonel Mundy at 'Tarmons', sought to have recorded the extensive views which were the source of so much pleasure and pride to himself and his family. During 1843 and 1844 Peacock made a number of small oil paintings of both the views and the house. Six of these were offered at auction by Christie, Manson and Wood, Sydney during October 1986. In one work, Port Jackson Looking North East from Craigend, 1844 (illus.25.-cat. 125), Peacock depicted figures who appear to be Mrs. Rogers and her small child on the broad steps of 'Craigend'. Other artists also painted from the grounds, capitalising on the Grecian style architectural details and fine views, but Peacock's
inclusion of members of the family would seem to indicate that this, and the five associated works, were destined for the Rogers' personal collection. The remaining paintings, all executed at about the same time, together present a panoramic view from Craigend. Peacock looked to the south east, to the city in the north west, to a view north from Craigend and finally again towards the heads of Port Jackson in the north east.

Further evidence of this type of patronage comes from the correspondence of William Stanley Jevons, who, although not a collector of colonial art, exemplified attitudes to imagery of both the United Kingdom and Australia. During mid-July 1857, Jevons, then a youthful employee at the Sydney Mint and an amateur photographer, wrote to his "sister Henrietta, in England, describing his small cottage at Double Bay. Jevons went into some detail about his use of paintings and photographs to decorate the walls. He confided:

The *Thames at Ham* has been much admired and is now in a frame over my harmonium. The *Dee* and its sands is also a pretty picture but of course more interesting to myself than others since it reminds me of days long ago when I used to play about the sand banks....(19)

Men such as Mundy and FitzRoy who were certain of returning to the United Kingdom, expected colonial art to provide records and reminiscences of the type that Jevons enjoyed from his English paintings at Double Bay. Although
still largely unknown, Peacock’s patrons would have been almost entirely of the same persuasion.

Private art patronage in the colony was not necessarily influenced by the free or emancipist status of artists. The emancipists Joseph Backler and Charles Rhodius in Sydney attracted wide-ranging patronage, while Thomas Bock and William Buelow Gould in Hobart Town both worked prolifically. Peacock’s patrons, as we have seen, included prominent citizens such as Mundy, A’Beckett, Rogers, Sir Maurice O’Connell and Governor Fitzroy. Although one might have expected him to be patronised by a leading supporter of the emancipist’s movement such as W.C.Wentworth, this was apparently not forthcoming. Wentworth only loaned two paintings to the 1847 exhibition in Sydney; both were European works.

A lawyer and a prominent political figure, Wentworth also regarded himself as a literary man. In 1824 he had founded The Australian, a newspaper that followed a nationalistic and pro-emancipist editorial policy. Yet, despite his enthusiasm for such causes, Wentworth was not a patron of colonial artists, emancipist or free. No wealthy emancipists appear amongst the known owners of works by Peacock, supporting the hypothesis that he used his art exclusively to assist entree back into free society and divorced himself completely from associations with fellow ex-convicts.

The purchase of art, however, was not confined to
individuals. In particular The East India Company, represented by in Sydney by Captains Apperley and Dallas, was a rich and important patron of colonial artists. During 1846–7 they commissioned some 120 works from Sydney artists. Involved in the organisation of this unusual corporate commission was the music dealer James Turner Grocott.

Grocott played an important role in the Art Union movement in Sydney during 1849–50 and liked to describe himself as 'the mouthpiece of the Artists of Australia'. He was active in most areas of artistic endeavour, including patronage. Evidence of the extent of his activity and, in particular, his cultivation of both patrons and artists was given in an earlier letter to the S.M.H. Writing in support of the letter from 'A.B' urging the formation of an art society in Sydney, Grocott outlined something of his attitudes and recent entrepreneurial activities. He wrote 'I know from experience that good pictures will meet with purchasers, and at a tolerably remunerative price'.

This positive claim indicated Grocott's faith in both local artists and patrons – a faith not shared by colonial painters, most of whom struggled on the fringes of professionalism. During the 1840s and '50s attempts were made, through art unions, the formation of societies, exhibitions and the encouragement of patronage, to strengthen both the standards and remuneration of artists.

Grocott was central to many of the activities seeking
to develop the Sydney art market. His letter continued:

as a testimony to what I claim, I shipped per Royal Saxon a month ago, six cases of pictures, 120 in number for Captains Apperley and Dallas, nearly the whole of which are the production of artists in the colony; in fact I have actually sold during the last three years 957 pictures 830 being executed in the colony.(22) Apperley and Dallas, accompanied by their respective families, sailed for Calcutta aboard the Royal Saxon on 10 April 1847.(23)

They had been visiting Sydney to buy horses on behalf of the East India Company. When they arrived, at the end of 1846, part of their mission was to take back to India a range of paintings showing the activities of the Company in Australia. James T. Grocott, self-appointed spokesman for colonial artists, would have seemed an obvious choice to organise the production of these paintings. Apart from his contact with artists, he was in a position to arrange the commission on a firm and business-like basis. He noted

Captain Dallas called upon me and desired me to employ an Artist to take portraits of the ships chartered by them, also the portraits of several high-bred horses, about to be shipped.

Grocott selected, not one but, several artists to work on the project. Time, it seems, was an important factor in the contract, for Dallas. 'at some considerable expense caused artists to proceed to the station at Bungarrabee (sic) and several sketches were made of the place'.
Chapter Three

Grocott's letter then emphasised his own role as a 
benefactor providing employment, even though for a few 
brief months, and thus promoting colonial artists.

The ultimate issue of the commission thus given 
to the Artists amounted to upwards of two 
hundred pounds. The Artists will bear me out in 
the assertion that they met with almost constant 
employment through me for a considerable period. 
(24)

Three of the artists involved in the commission were 
Joseph Fowles, T.Rider and Henry Curzon Allport. Fowles, 
who later became an associate of Peacock's on the committee 
of the Australian Society for Artists, painted Bungarribee 
homestead in the late 1840s. The station was also painted 
by T.Rider and H.C.Allport and these works are now in the 
Mitchell Library. The two watercolour sketches by Rider and 
Allport's work are inscribed with references to the 
Honourable East India Company. A further watercolour by an 
unidentified artist is entitled Shipping Horses for the 
Government of India at Milson's Point Wharf - Darling 
Harbour. (25) This work, now in Sydney's Dixon Galleries, 
bears witness to Grocott's involvement with the commission. 
Although an original work, it bears the printed label 'pub. 
by J.T.Grocott Syd.', suggesting that it was intended for a 
print. (26)

No evidence suggests that Peacock was one of the 
artists employed on this commission. Indeed, it is most 
likely that his meteorological work at South Head would
have precluded him from taking part. Only certain aspects of patronage were available to Peacock. Where a full-time commitment was required, Peacock, like most of his fellow artists, could not become involved.

Frederick Garling, like Peacock, was also employed full-time in government service. In spite of this, he would have been a logical choice to paint the Royal Saxon or other vessels, since, as William Moore has claimed, 'when a new vessel anchored in the harbour he would take the earliest opportunity to go out in his rowing boat, drop a kellick, and make a sketch. His pictures of ships are said to be faithfully drawn, with not a rope out of place'.

Garling was painting quite prolifically in 1846-7; in 1848 one of his marine paintings was offered, along with works by Peacock and Fowles, as a prize in the Sydney Art Union. His work provided the accurate record that Apperley and Dallas sought on behalf of their employers, and the resourceful Garling would have found more time to complete the paintings than Peacock ever could.

Joseph Fowles was another natural choice for Grocott to make, for the artist was experienced in the painting of both architecture and horses. Nevertheless, the patronage offered by the East India Company to Australian colonial artists is the only documented example of such an extensive and lucrative commission. Artists obviously could not rely on income from such schemes. At least it proves that a few people in colonial society recognised the need for.
broad-based and continuing support for the arts.

Writing in 1857, Joseph Sheridan Moore, editor of *Freeman's Journal*, advocated a wider support for the arts. An influential member of Sydney's nascent literary elite, Moore wrote that the time had come when art should be officially encouraged. Recognising that utilitarian values still prevailed, Moore addressed his remarks to the 'practical' man:

> Art then, we beg to tell him, repays the State that encourages it - and not in glory alone, but in safe and sure returns for the money invested.\(^{(29)}\)

With a distinct bias towards art education aimed at furthering industrial and commercial design, Moore advocated that a Professor of Painting and Drawing be appointed to every Mechanics' Institute throughout the colony. His proposed 'Australian Central Academy of Fine Arts and Design' would award prizes and scholarships and, in time, place art on a thoroughly professional and respectable footing. Although he suggested three sources for funding his project - Government, Municipal and private individuals - Moore indicated that it was the Government on which 'we should - and indeed, must - mainly depend for support'.\(^{(30)}\)

Reflecting on Australia's attraction for visiting artists (then as now), Moore suggested that even 'some tolerably well-known, second-class, European artist'
should, if he were to come to Australia be assured of a success, 'such success at least as a good surgeon or musician would probably meet with'. (31) Colonial artists who had, by this time, made a number of exploratory but futile attempts to raise their status and incomes, would have welcomed any innovation aimed at stimulating art patronage in Australia.

At the time Joseph Sheridan Moore put forward his proposals, Thomas Sutcliffe Mort was in England preparing to make his purchase of English and European art and antiques to grace his proposed art gallery at 'Greenoaks', Double Bay.

Just four years later Australia's first public gallery opened. The initial exhibition at the Museum of Art was held on the ground floor of the Melbourne Public Library and consisted of casts of

the Elgin Marbles, and seventy antique statues, together with sixty-three busts...in the course of a couple of months (the exhibition) attracted no less than 62,000 visitors, a result that was clearly advantageous to the foundation of a correct taste. (32)

The earliest form of State patronage for colonial art echoed the views of private collectors such as T.S. Mort. Even more disastrously for Sydney artists, Australia's first public gallery was located in the new, rival colony. New South Wales had to wait years before it managed to get one. Even then the contents were overwhelmingly dominated
Chapter Three

by overseas examples. Colonial art had its place and function but when 'serious' purchases, which were meant to reflect the taste and status of an individual or organisation, were made British and continental values prevailed.
Notes - Chapter Three

(1) S.M.H. 3 September 1855 p7.
(2) S.M.H. 6 September 1855 p1.
(3) Peoples Advocate 18 August 1855, p3.
(4) Loc.cit.
(5) S.M.H. 3 September 1855 p7.
(6) People's Advocate 1 September 1855 p3.
(7) Loc. cit.
(8) Loc. cit.
(9) American art was unfamiliar and did not offer patrons any sense of cultural tradition or exemplary values.
(10) S.M.H. 24 December 1849.
(11) M.S.142, p180. M.L.
(12) S.M.H. 7 February 1856 p3.
(13) S.M.H. 8 February 1856 p3.
(14) T.S.Mort to Adelaide Ironside, 17 November 1864, Society of Australian Genealogists.
(15) Through his art alone Martens supported his wife and family for a period of some thirty years - in some years he earned as much as four hundred pounds; a comfortable income in the 1850s. Although there were times when he did not do so well he was certainly enjoyed a reasonable standard of living throughout the time he was painting.
Chapter Three

Sydney, 1984, p44.

(17) A.D.B. Rae, John, Vol.6., p2.

(18) R. Therry, Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in New South Wales and Victoria, (Facsimile Edition) Sydney, 1974, p376


(20) S.M.H. 17 June 1850.

(21) S.M.H. 7 May 1847 p3.

(22) S.M.H. 7 May 1847 p3.

(23) S.M.H. 10 April 1847 p1.

(24) S.M.H. 17 June 1850 p3.

(25) The Royal Saxon departed from this wharf on 10 April 1847.

(26) Dixon Galleries, SV1A/19.

(27) Joan Kerr (Ed.), op.cit. p274.

(28) Loc. cit.

(29) J.S.Moore quoted by Bernard Smith in Documents on Art and Taste in Australia, Melbourne, 1975, p149.

(30) Loc.cit.

(31) Loc.cit.

If there be one thing more than another which can tend to humanise mankind and soften down the stern realities of life it is the cultivation of the Fine Arts (Peoples Advocate 1 Sept. 1855)

I have never known so great a depression in business of all kinds than there is at present.....(Conrad Martens, M.S.0313, 11 Nov., 1849)

The Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia staged two loan exhibitions in Sydney in 1847 and 1849. George Edwards Peacock was represented by eight works in the first and three in the second.

The eight works shown in 1847 were all landscapes and seven of those were certainly views of Sydney or its harbour. By the time the exhibition was staged, Peacock had been painting for some four years and had developed a small but diversified clientele. The eight works were loaned by five owners, discussed in the previous chapter.

Peacock's representation was exceeded only by the professional artists Conrad Martens (13 works) and John Skinner Prout (18 works). This provides some measure of his popularity as an artist and the appeal of his subject matter. The notable and prolific colonial painters Samuel Elyard and Frederick Garling, were represented by four
works and three works respectively.

Reviewing Peacock's works in the exhibition the *Sydney Morning Herald* critic noted,

> They are all oil paintings and all appear to be members of the same family. Mr. Peacock's drawings are praiseworthy for their correctness and attention to details; but we cannot discover to what school his system of colouring belongs. Mr. Peacock must look at nature through warm-coloured spectacles. His pictures have not the force nor the transparency which we expect to find in oil colours. To satisfy himself of the singularity of his style of colouring we would advise him to place one of his pictures beside one of the good paintings of the Dutch school. The contrast will teach him a lesson which may be turned to advantage in his future works. The Italian landscape by Wilson would be an admirable subject for him to copy from.\(^{(1)}\)

Clearly the *Herald* critic did not subscribe to the idea of a developing 'colonial' school. Nor did he consider that artists such as Peacock should, even in minor ways, break free of seventeenth and eighteenth century European conventions of landscape painting. Such conventions were deeply embedded in the consciousness of collectors here and remained one of the prime conditioners of taste and acceptance. Nevertheless, Peacock might have been well pleased with the attention he received. His drawing was praised and his colouring, although considered at times florid, would not have proved a deterrent to patrons who sought romantic and inspired souvenirs of the colony.

Whilst it has not been possible to identify particular works from these exhibitions, Peacock's *Port Jackson NSW*
from the heights above Double Bay, looking north 1847
[Illus.26.-cat.47], contains all the elements of his
painting style at the time. The colouring noticed by the
Herald critic is evident. Peacock's typical high viewpoint
prevails, and drawing on the ancient literary traditions of
Virgil and Ovid, he presents Double Bay as something of an
Arcadia. In Renaissance thought Arcadia was considered as a
setting for an entirely free and happy life. The pastoral
nature of this scene is in keeping with the concept of a
landscape which was never awesome or threatening but
produced qualities of shelter and accommodation for human
needs. Although the city is close by, Peacock surveys and
depicts a place of escape from the complexity and problems
of everyday life - an idealised rural retreat.

Peacock uses a variation of the most appropriated
Claudeian framing device to direct our gaze past the women
in the foreground to 'Carthona' on the left and the infant
village of Double Bay spread along the foreshores of the
harbour. A becalmed sailing vessel in the middle distance
and the stilled reflections attest to the tranquillity of
this place. The harbour reflects a peaceful sky and, unlike
Martens, Peacock seeks no drama in cloud formations or
impending weather changes.

'Carthona', on Darling Point, was completed three
years before Peacock made this painting. Its name was
possibly derived from 'Carthon' - 'the murmur of the waves'
- a tragic hero from the popular Romantic poems of the
reputed Gaelic bard Ossian. Consequently the house, one of a number of Gothic villas which dominated the headlands of Port Jackson’s southern shores, could have had both visual and literary associations for Peacock and his clients. Like Glover in van Diemen’s Land, he sought a balance between an idealised vision of the landscape and the constraints of topography.

The exhibitions of 1847 and 1849 were certainly the most significant during the years when Peacock was painting in Sydney. Their effect was threefold. First they demonstrated some degree of cultural maturity in the colony. Secondly, they proclaimed a challenge to Hobart’s position as the leading cultural centre. Thirdly, they allowed the wealthy and those with pretensions to connoisseurship to display their status symbols to a population that had inherited strict ideas of class and position.

The exhibitions gave rise to a number of events which tended to polarise the attitudes of colonial artists, patrons and collectors. The split was evident during the second exhibition in 1849, after which eight years passed before any similar show was arranged in Sydney. The greatest difference of opinion came in relation to the basic purpose of the Society and its exhibitions.

Critics in Sydney were able to claim, in 1849, that far from achieving its basic aims the Society had been in ‘deathlike repose’ for the past two years. More
importantly, a damning reference was made to,

the gross mismanagement which pervaded the entire arrangements in 1847 to the manifold blunders....the favouritism and jobbery, the unfair treatment experienced by Colonial Artists and the utter neglect of the avowed objects of the institution.(3)

Since the Society had nominated its main objective as being the encouragement of art in the colony, artists were justifiably disenchanted. They had had works excluded from the best positions so that 'contemptible productions' might be prominently placed by their influential owners.(4) There were also some questions asked as to the distribution of funds.

The gentlemen who organised and ran the Society had claimed that their efforts would have a far-reaching effect on taste and moral attitudes in the community. Their own attitudes emphasised differences in class, status and education, as this gentry-led group sought to impose its values on the remaining and 'uncultured' segment of the population. Presumably they sought, in an altruistic way, to bring about cultural enlightenment in colonial society.

There had been many expressions of the moral values of art, both in England throughout the early years of the nineteenth century, and in the colonies. The notion had been established in the eighteenth century and was best-expressed by Joshua Reynolds in his Discourses on Art. In the Ninth Discourse he wrote;
The beauty of which we are in quest is general and intellectual; it is an idea that subsists only in the mind; the sight never beheld it, nor has the hand expressed it; it is an idea residing in the breast of the artist, which he is always labouring to impart, and which he dies at last without imparting; but which he is yet so far able to communicate, as to raise the thoughts and extend the views of the spectator; and which, by a succession of art, may be so far diffused that its effects may extend themselves imperceptibly into publick benefits, and be among the means of bestowing on whole nations refinements of taste; which, if it does not lead directly to purity of manners, obviates at least their greatest deprivation, by disentangling the mind from appetite, and conducting the thoughts through successive stages of excellence, till that contemplation of universal rectitude and harmony which began by Taste may, as it is exalted and refined, conclude in Virtue.(5)

That Reynolds' sentiments had carried over to Sydney in the mid-nineteenth century is made clear by the Sydney Morning Herald report of 24 May 1847:

We rejoice....that at last the higher and more influential inhabitants of Sydney have come forward to promote an object which will, if carried into effect, tend powerfully to the elevation of public taste and the progress of public improvement.(6)

The Herald, it seems, was committed to two ideals. First, that an exhibition of art would certainly provide moral uplift for all who saw it and secondly, that such an exhibition should be organised, not by artists, but by gentlemen of cultivated taste.

In flattering tones, guaranteed to please the most hard-headed Sydney gentlemen the Herald proclaimed;
Now let the gentlemen of Sydney—particularly the exclusive ones—manage this exhibition. They are the best fitted for it; they have cultivated tastes, and many of them are no mean proficients in art. But the public will have the benefit of this taste, and the humblest visitor to the exhibition is as likely to have ‘the latent talent of soul awoke’ by the contemplation of works of real genius, as the highest in the land.

Placed on such a lofty pedestal, Sydney gentry would have needed little further inducement to loan their works of art. Since their taste had been formed by the attitudes of eighteenth century England, the importance, strength and moral influence of the 1847 exhibition would reside in the British and European modern and old master exemplars. There was not the slightest suggestion that any colonial work could exert similar influences.

Colonial works of art were, however, welcome but the real benefit to practising artists would come, not from sales and exposure, but from the study of the loan exhibits. Speaking at the meeting which established the Society, Robert Owen noted that there was a ‘much larger number of artists in the colony than was supposed’ and that they ‘would derive much benefit from the opportunities of study which such an exhibition would offer’. Some colonial artists may have agreed with that point of view although events which followed the 1847 exhibition suggest otherwise.

The doctrine of moral public benefit for the public
was uppermost in the minds of the gentlemen who guided the Society's activities. Just how the process of democratic and civilising reform operated was never fully outlined by its supporters, but one commentator, the Reverend John West in Van Diemen's Land, did outline his thoughts on the matter. In his lecture delivered to the Launceston Mechanics' Institute he said:

We owe our thanks to the committee of the Launceston Mechanics' Institution, for a display of art so pleasing to all, and especially so to the junior members of society. These exhibitions are subservient to the cause of virtue. Such pleasures diminish the power of meaner gratifications; every addition to the intellectual amusement of the day is a new guarantee for the morrow. The youthful visitor will return with his views increased and his notions more distinct, he will feel a new interest in his race and a fuller consciousness of its mental dignity; dissipation will be resisted, not only by the warnings of authority, but by the instinct of taste. (9)

Artists on the other hand, believed that a Society dedicated to the promotion of the fine arts should, as a prime objective, encourage local artists and local artistic production. To do this efficiently, colonial patronage should be directed to the purchase of locally produced work. Whilst they might not sell directly from a loan exhibition, colonial artists - like their counterparts in the English provinces - believed that such exhibitions provided exposure for their work and opportunities for public discussion of their relative abilities. (10) Future commissions and sales would flow from the contact made with
prospective patrons. The exhibitions of 1847 and 1849, respectively, demonstrate the conflicting attitudes of gentlemen and artists.

The Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia began as an organisation conducted by a group of colonial gentry. This was not unusual. It was normal for the gentry to produce a cohesive and united front on public occasions. In particular, their domain was public meetings where social, political and cultural issues were debated. (11) The hegemonic nature of Sydney's gentry class was equally obvious when the question of the future organisation of the Fine Arts arose. The first Committee of Management consisted of twenty-nine men. Only one, John Rae, was an artist; he was also Town Clerk of Sydney.

The Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia was formed and became operative in a very short space of time. Four days after the opening of the first exhibition in June 1847, one Sydney correspondent noted that,

In the short space of one month, the Society has been formed, comprising His Excellency the Governor, the leading gentry, and others to the number of three hundred at least; and an exhibition got up, of which the colony has every right to be proud, for I may safely say that it has not been surpassed by that of any provincial city at home. (12)

The speed with which the organisation moved is remarkable considering that all the works on show were
private loans. By 1847 there had already been three art exhibitions held in Van Diemen's Land and that colony had assumed the leading role in cultural activities. All three exhibitions had taken place in Hobart Town, the first in 1837 under the patronage of Sir John and Lady Franklin. More than 216 works were shown at this, including works by the colonial artists Lempriere, Chapman and Law. (13) Further exhibitions followed in January 1845 and May 1846. Paintings by George Morland, Benjamin West and J.M.W. Turner hung beside those of colonials, Thomas Bock, Thomas Griffiths Wainewright and John Skinner Prout.

The 1845 Hobart Town exhibition was arranged by a committee largely composed of high-placed government officials. Unlike the organising committee in Sydney, all were amateur artists and most displayed their work in either this or the following year's exhibition. They included the Colonial Treasurer, Peter Fraser, the Colonial Secretary, Auditor of Civil Accounts, G.T.W. Boyes, and the Colonial Architect, William P. Kay. Other members of this committee included the Anglican Bishop of Van Diemen's Land, Francis Nixon, naval officer Francis Simpkinson de Wesselow, and one professional artist, John Skinner Prout. Clearly, one major objective of this committee was to establish a situation whereby the growing number of amateur artists in Van Diemen's Land could exhibit their work before a much larger audience than that normally provided by family and friends.
Whilst the committee was dominated by amateur artists and government officials, John Skinner Prout served as something of a catalyst for the enthusiasm the project generated in Hobart society through his own desire to stage such large-scale exhibitions. In Sydney from June to November 1841, Prout had delivered six well-attended lectures on art at the Mechanics' Institute in which he suggested that 'the time had arrived when an exhibition of pictures would be supported'. (14) Prout then had proposed to

select and borrow pictures from persons residing in the colony, which, together with the productions of artists living in Sydney, would form a sufficient number of works for an exhibition, and be the means of doing all parties a service. (15)

Despite vice-regal approval, the exhibition was thwarted by a declining economy, or as Prout put it, 'the results of previous mercantile imprudence and over speculation'. (16) So he did not hesitate when another opportunity for an exhibition arose, in much more favourable circumstances, four years later in Van Diemen's Land.

By 1847 the consciousness of Hobart's dominance in the Fine Arts had become an incentive for the gentry of Sydney to initiate similar activities. Now enjoying a more encouraging economic outlook, they resolved to establish a Fine Art Society, establish an annual exhibition, and
thereby regain from Hobart Town Sydney's rightful place in the vanguard of colonial cultural activity. Such resolve was expressed in this comment:

If we merely follow the footsteps of our neighbours in Hobart Town by giving an exhibition and not following it up, we might as well have remained without an exhibition for all the useful purpose it would be likely to serve. (17)

If Sydney was successfully to promote the Fine Arts, two things were essential. As was the case in Hobart, vice-regal patronage was seen to be of great importance. Secondly, the enthusiastic support of leading and wealthy citizens was essential. They would loan the greater share of the art works exhibited and they would provide the organisational skill and influence to ensure the smooth functioning of the Society and its exhibitions.

In early June 1847, the Sydney Morning Herald published a letter from 'A.B.' who referred to the economic recovery under way in the colony. The writer suggested that, in light of the recovery, it was an appropriate time to consider establishing an exhibition of works of art. He also remarked that

Good pictures are arriving from England - many are already here; many persons are now in the colony capable of producing respectable pictures and works of sculpture, and many persons will be found willing to loan good pictures. (18)

There was never any thought of an exhibition of
colonial productions in their own right. That would not attract Sydney's viewing public, nor would it prove the local gentry taste to be identical and equal to that of the same class at 'home'. Any exhibition of quality and lasting worth therefore had to include 'good pictures from England'. It is important to note, however, that 'A.B.' saw sufficient merit in colonial art to conceive of it being displayed beside those importations.

As was the case with a number of other observers, 'A.B.' claimed that exhibitions of fine art were bound to improve colonial taste. (19) Concluding his letter 'A.B.' wrote, 'If one or two influential gentlemen will take the suggestion up, I am persuaded they would be nobly seconded....I beg to suggest....that some steps be immediately taken in this matter.' (20) More than one or two influential gentlemen took up the suggestion, but the ubiquitous local businessman and entrepreneur, James T. Grocott, made a much prompter reply to 'A.B.'s' call for action.

In his letter, written on the 6th and promptly published on the 7th of May, Grocott not only supported 'A.B.'s' call but offered free use of part of his shop for the exhibition. He begged to assure 'A.B.' that he would be most happy to lend for a period of three months, (gratuitously) the use of my long room at the rear of the shop, 115 feet long, which is admirably adapted for displaying pictures, having a doomed [sic] toplight, I am convinced I can collect at least forty, among my friends and
patrons of the arts. (21)

This reply put in train a series of events which led to the exhibition just a little over six weeks later.

Grocott was later to claim he had orchestrated the whole affair. Part of a long letter Grocott wrote to the Sydney Morning Herald in June 1850 about the Fine Arts in Australia referred to

a gentleman well known in Sydney for his zeal and good judgement in these matters, did at my suggestion, address a letter to the editor of the Herald signed A.B. urging them to call upon the public to get up an Exhibition of Colonial and Imported pictures....This letter appeared in the Herald of 6 May 1847. (22)

Grocott's enthusiasm and his keen promotional sense may have provided the impetus needed to stir some leading citizens into the action necessary to establish a creditable and sound footing for the fine arts in the colony.

The anonymous 'A.B.' was, in all probability, the merchant and businessman Alexander Brodie Spark of 'Tempe' at Cook's River, a liberal patron of the arts. At 'Tempe' he had a fine collection of European oil paintings. Amongst colonial artists, he owned works by John Skinner Prout, Conrad Martens, Maurice Felton and Marshall Claxton, as well as the photographer Douglas Kilburn. Spark loaned a total of fifteen works for this first exhibition of the Society. He was also a member of the Society's first
committee.

On 15 May 1847 a meeting of interested parties had been held to review the possibilities of forming a society. With Edwin C. Suttor as pro tem. Honorary Secretary, the meeting found that there was both sufficient interest and need for such a society in the colony. Grocott was amongst the first subscribers for membership and immediately volunteered his premises in George Street for a much larger public meeting.

A public announcement thus appeared in the Sydney press.

Exhibition of Pictures
Notice is hereby given that a Public Meeting will be held at Mr. Grocott's Long Room, 486 George St., on Saturday 22nd Instant, at two o'clock p.m. for the purpose of forming a Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia, and the establishment of a periodical exhibition of paintings.

The meeting was duly held, chaired by the Speaker of the Legislative Council, Dr. Charles Nicholson. According to James T. Grocott there were some 210 people present, including thirteen members of the N.S.W. Legislative Council. (23)

Nicholson wisely suggested that the first object of the new society should be to present an exhibition which would stimulate interest and lead to the cultivation of art in the colony. (24)

Some of the most influential men in the colony were
present at this meeting, which put forward only positive attitudes to the formation of the society. The Attorney General, the Hon. John Hubert Plunkett, spoke about the 'good effects' which were bound to arise as the result of its formation and work, basing such assumptions on the the formation of similar institutions in Britain. In the formal sense it was Plunkett who made the initial step to create the society. He moved:

That a society be formed, to be called 'The Society for the Formation of the Fine Arts in Australia'. That it consist of a patron, President, and Vice-President, Treasurer, and Honorary Secretary, Committee, and Members; and that the object of the Society be—first, the establishment of a periodical exhibition of paintings and other works of art; and, second, the foundation of a gallery of painting and sculpture.

This motion was seconded by Alexander McLeay Esq. M.L.C. and supported by the amateur artist Richard Hipkiss.

There is no record to show whether or not Peacock attended this meeting. However, organisers and supporters of the meeting had established an atmosphere in which the 'gentlemen' or 'exclusives' of Sydney indeed provided cultural leadership as the Herald had hoped. Under such circumstances, any other concerned emancipist, would have been frustrated by the intention to exclude them but in Peacock’s case, such frustration must have been tinged with the hope that the Society would succeed and provide a forum in which the fine arts might flourish.
Chapter Four

Hipkiss is the only artist recorded as speaking at this meeting. Considering his previous activities, he should not be regarded as a representative voice of colonial artists, either amateur or professional. Prior to his migrating to Australia, Hipkiss had been active in the reform movement in Britain. In Sydney he was involved in public affairs and was a member of a wide variety of societies and organisations. These included founding memberships of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts and the Australian Union Benefit Society. In 1839 he had been made secretary of the Floral and Horticultural Society which numbered many of the Sydney gentry, including A.B. Spark, amongst its members.

For the ageing Hipkiss, support of a Fine Arts Society would have come as a matter of course. He remained dedicated to the widely-held notion of 'self help and self improvement through co-operative action'. (25) This was an era that saw the formation of many societies for the promotion or improvement of social, cultural and scientific activities.

Plunkett's motion, supported by Hipkiss, was carried unanimously. William Cowper M.L.C. was the next speaker and he strongly advocated the formation of the society. Cowper believed that the society and its activities would,

...tend very materially to elevate the social and moral tone of the community, and to direct the
minds of rising generations to more elevated pursuits than those to which their present attention was directed. (26)

Cowper, the sixty-eight years old former Anglican Dean of Sydney, predictably believed in encouraging the Fine Arts as a weapon against evil and corruption, dominant features of colonial life, which many agreed had prevailed for too long. His speech concluded with the formal motion to elect willing participants to a variety of official positions. He moved:

That His Excellency Sir Charles Augustus Fitz Roy be requested to become the Patron of the society; that Charles Nicholson Esq., Speaker of the Legislative Council, be the President; and the Hon. Sir Alfred Stephen, Chief Justice—the Hon. John Hubert Plunkett, M.C., Attorney General—and Alexander McLeay, Esq. M.C., be the Vice-Presidents; and that Edwin Suttor, Esq., be the Honorary Treasurer and Secretary; and that the Committee consist of—Charles Nicholson M.C.; Captain O'Connell, M.C.; Arthur a'Beckett Esq; John Brown Esq; J.B.Darvall, Esq; C.Irving, Esq; George Miller, Esq; A.Michie, Esq; Robert Owen,Esq; A.B.Spark, Esq; Edwin Suttor, Esq; R.J.Want, Esq; Dr.Hill; Dr.Mitchell; Robert Lowe, Esq., M.C., Captain Pollard; and J.Rae, Esq; and that George Miller and R.Owen, Esq., be the Auditors.(27)

Earlier Hipkiss had made the additional proposal that the Committee 'would not be all artists'.(28) With Cowper's list of officials, it was a foregone conclusion that the colonial gentry, and not the artists, would control the Society's affairs.

The Fine Art Society was to be seen as particularly important to the advancement and refinement of Australia.
Apart from its stated benefits (all echoing normal British beliefs in the value of the arts), there may also have been an unstated, purely colonial reason for its foundation. A future which promised active and visible cultural activity might provide a counter to the old image of 'Botany Bay' - the convict paradise. Although transportation to New South Wales had effectively ceased in 1840, the external image of the colony had persisted. Visitors to the colony frequently expressed surprise at the British appearance and nature of the place. This image would be enhanced by a society which, in its exhibitions, encouraged the display of European and British works of art.

Following Cowper's speech and motion, Mr. Robert Owen took the floor. Owen, a Sydney solicitor and now a newly appointed member of the Society's committee, observed that the Society should aim to form a permanent gallery. This, he thought, could house 'the paintings of European masters or copies of them' which would serve as models for study, so raising the standards of both taste and practice in the arts. He suggested that ways should be investigated to raise funds for the purchase of imported works of art. (29)

Another motion at this meeting directed,

That all persons paying in advance one guinea or more per annum, shall be members for the current year, and shall be entitled as such to free admission to all exhibitions of the Society, and to vote at all general meetings.
- a fee which effectively ensured that the wealthier classes would retain control. That section of Sydney’s population responded well to the call. By 15 June the Society (now termed The Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia) was able to publish the names of office bearers, the committee, and a list of members which totalled 193 in all.

Conrad Martens, Samuel Elyard and Mrs. Steadman Christie were notable inclusions amongst the artists while the emancipist artists, Charles Rodius, Joseph Backler and George Edwards Peacock were conspicuous by their absence.

This list was published just one week before the first exhibition opened, yet between them Rodius, Backler and Peacock were to account for eleven of the colonial works on show; all were loaned by gentleman patrons, none of them emancipists.

In this notice the objects of the Society were restated, with some slight shift in emphasis to include sculpture and to embrace the idea of forming an academy. The objects of the Society were again stated differently in a notice published on Thursday, 17 June. Now, only five days before the opening of the exhibition, the Society’s notice read:

The main object of the Society is to encourage Art in this colony, to provide instructive amusement for the community, and to elevate public taste. (30)
Chapter Four

Clearly, the reference to 'instructive amusement for the community' was aimed at increasing attendances at the exhibition and hence raising revenue for the society. The statement was the first sign of a shift from the lofty attitude adopted by the committee to one which might reflect something of popular taste in the community. By the time of the second exhibition in 1849 the shift was more pronounced.

This first exhibition was indeed aimed at 'instructive amusement' and was meant to be seen as collection of fine art on a wide-ranging basis. The community was invited to lend 'paintings of merit'.

Works by famous European artists reflected the status and cultured attitudes of their colonial owners.

Despite the fact that the notice invited artists, 'whether members of this society or not' to exhibit their works themselves only two responded. One was John Rae, the committee member, and even he showed only two of his own works mixed with others from his collection; the other was the sculptor Charles Abraham.

This remarkable lack of response by colonial artists suggests that their attitude was at odds with the Society and the concepts which guided the 1847 Exhibition. They may have hoped for something like a Royal Academy Exhibition of modern art in the antipodes; instead they were relegated to a role of minor importance.

As early as 1817 in England it had been observed that
exhibitions provided an opportunity to artists, 'of arriving at that excellence in their professions which public institutions are so well calculated to promote'. (31) Sydney's artists, in 1847, would have supported that view, but organisers of the first exhibition saw more merit in the doctrine that the Fine Arts would, above all, have a civilising and refining influence on the public at large.

Discussing Picture and Sculpture galleries a Sydney commentator emphasised the democratising nature of exhibitions:

There the high born, political foes and rival traders, can meet divested of all angry feelings; and throwing aside their absurdly haughty notions of caste join the mechanic and the labourer, in admiration of the magical productions of the artist's pencil, and the sculptor's chisel. (32)

This is a rather ironic type of justification given the exclusive nature of the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia. It reflects the rhetoric rather than the reality of the situation because neither the 1847 or 1849 exhibitions arranged by the society produced results approaching this ideal. Such a statement would have been particularly galling to Peacock who, in 1855, remained between two worlds despite his efforts in the very galleries discussed.

Under-patronised colonial artists might have been excused for wanting more in return for their work than the opportunity to elevate the lives and tastes of the working
classes. They resented occupying an inferior social position. When they banded together in 1850 one of their stated objectives was to secure 'their elevation to that position in the community to which they are entitled': hence their expectations of a society formed to promote the Fine Arts in 'Australia' (sic) were not all centered on matters of sales and income. (33)

These particular notions were to lead to major changes in the composition of the Society's 1849 exhibition. Where there had been only one artist on the Committee of management in 1847, there were eight in 1849. Where only two artists exhibited their own work in 1847, some thirty-two did so in 1849. In combination, these artists showed a total of 149 paintings and sculptures in the second exhibition. In the exhibition of 1847, 32% of the works on show were by colonial artists; in 1849, 62% were locally produced. The emphasis had swung away from colonial gentlemen showing their imported treasures to Sydney artists showing their latest productions.

While it is clear that artists were making themselves more prominent in organising their own affairs, some credit is also due to the gentlemen of the Society for being prepared to relinquish a degree of control. The 1849 hanging committee consisted of three artists: Conrad Martens, William Nicholas and James Armstrong Wilson. But achieving greater autonomy led to unexpected problems within the artists' ranks. The hanging committee,
apparently given carte blanche by the Committee of Management, adopted a blatantly selfish attitude to the placement and display of works. The Sydney Morning Herald lamented that justice and fairness had not prevailed:

we are bitterly disappointed, not less indignant and disgusted that the hanging of the pictures has been abandoned to a few artists who have been allowed to make everything subordinate to their own views and wishes, to appropriate the best places to their own productions without limitations of space and to thrust all others...into holes and corners. (34)

The report did not supress the names of the guilty, emphasising that there was a 'Wilson Gallery' a 'Martens Gallery' and a 'Nicholas Gallery'. In fact, Wilson with 19 works, Martens with 25 and Nicholas with 24 were far better represented than any other colonial artist.

Peacock was one of the artists whose work suffered at the hands of the 1849 hanging committee, although he lent only one work himself and altogether had but three in the exhibition. Reviewing his painting Double Bay Port Jackson, Residences of T.S. Mort and H.G. Smith Esqs., the Sydney Morning Herald claimed that the merit of this picture should have ensured it a far better situation in the exhibition. The painting was described as

A very pleasing little picture, carefully painted, exhibiting extreme fidelity to his landscape as well as skill in minute handling and high finish. (35)
The painting, loaned by Sydney auctioneer Mr. P. Hervey, has not been traced but Peacock's work, View from Glenrock looking N.E. - Double Bay in Port Jackson NSW 1846, [Illus. 27.-cat. 43] incorporates similar elements. On the left is the commanding 'Greenoaks', a house which had been re-modelled in 1846 by Edmund Blacket for its new owner, T.S. Mort. Below and to the right stretches the village of Double Bay. This was the view seen from 'Glenrock', the residence of H.G. Smith. Smith, a prominent Sydney merchant and banker lived, at this time, in what he described as a 'bachelor tower', the 'Octagon', built on the highest part of the Glenrock estate. (36)

Peacock places a strong emphasis on human triumph over the wilderness, selectively placing Blacket's medieval gables against one of his own favourite motifs - the shattered tree. In combination, they signify not simply a triumph, but an English triumph, at a time when both architects and artists in the colony were intent on giving their clients, 'something that looked like some English prototype'. (37) Peacock has adopted and expanded the effect of architecture as a signifier of British culture in the antipodes. He used such signs repeatedly in his paintings.

Peacock's other exhibited works in 1849 were Citadel of St. Sebastian, the property of Dr. Arthur a'Beckett and The Rustic Meal, the property of the artist. As was the case with the Sydney landscape, neither was exhibited in an
advantageous position. The subjects depicted in each of these works were outside Peacock's normal interests. However, they may well have been painted as copying exercises, since by the end of the eighteenth century in Britain the genre of rustic landscape painting was well established through the works of Thomas Gainsborough, John Constable and the Scot, Sir David Wilkie. Wilkie, reached the height of his fame in the decade prior to Peacock's arrest and trial in London and his work would have been seen in New South Wales in the form of engravings or in reproductions illustrating the British journal, Art Union. It has already been noted in Chapter Two that Peacock seems to have adopted some of the stylistic manner of Gainsborough.

Shortly after this exhibition the Australian Society for Artists was born, from a desire to promote equitably the work and status of local practitioners. The group - which did not include Martens, Wilson or Nicholas - sought a total break from the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia.

These events help demonstrate the growing independence of artists in the colony. In a less obvious way they point to a blurring of the strict class lines which had predominated in the colony during the first half of the century. It would be a long time before Australian art threw off the shackles of what was later termed the 'cultural cringe', but emancipist Peacock and his
contemporaries were closely involved in an artists' revolution which made the first tiny movement towards that end.

Rather ironically comparable problems had occurred on a national scale in eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain where artists had deplored the expenditure of large fortunes on Italian and Dutch paintings. Also considering themselves under-patronised, modern British artists saw many such importations eroding patronage and recognition that might have been directed to them. The lines of the poet Shee tell of their attitudes;

Disdain it not, ye critics! nor decry
Your country's arts, nor view with adverse eye:
Indulgent still, the rigid brow unbend,
And e'en in censure shew that you befriend:
Prize not the skill of foreign realms alone,
Nor think it taste to stigmatise your own:
With generous bias lean towards British art,
And rather wrong your judgement than your heart.

Shee's sentiments could be applied with even greater force to the Sydney art scene at the time the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia was founded, although from the Sydney painters' position, 'foreign realms' would have to have included their contemporaries at 'home' and there is no evidence that they saw themselves (or wished to be seen) as in any way distinct from their northern counterparts. Their resentments unfortunately, were directed at one another, almost as soon as they were given any real public visibility.
Notes - Chapter Four

(1) SMH, 26 July 1847, p2.
(2) The Ossian poems were produced by the poet James Macpherson in the late eighteenth century.
(3) Bell’s Life in Sydney, 14 April 1849 p2.
(4) ibid.
(6) S.M.H. 24 May 1847, p3.
(7) ibid.
(8) S.M.H. 24 May 1847.
(9) Rev. John West, The Fine Arts; A Lecture Delivered at the Request of the Committee of the Launceston Mechanics Institute, Launceston, 1848.
(10) Trevor Fawcett, op.cit., Introduction.
(12) 'Pictor', The Atlas, 26 June 1847, p308.
(14) Hobart Town Courier 13 June 1849 p4.
(15) ibid.
(16) ibid.
(17) S.M.H. 30 June 1847.
(18) S.M.H. 16 May 1847, p3.
(19) ibid.

(20) ibid.

(21) S.M.H. 7 May 1847 p3.

(22) S.M.H. 17 June 1850 p3.

(23) S.M.H. 17 June 1850, p3.

(24) S.M.H. 25 May 1847 p1.


(27) ibid.

(28) S.M.H, 24 May 1847 p2.

(29) S.M.H. 25 May 1847 p3.

(30) S.M.H. 17 June 1847 p1.


(32) The People’s Advocate 3 February 1855, p8.

(33) S.M.H. 20 March, 1850, p1.

(34) S.M.H. 2 June 1849, p3.

(35) S.M.H. 26 September 1849, p3.

(36) ADB, Vol 2. p452.

George Edwards Peacock was painting in Sydney at a time when Art Unions came into popularity and prominence. His involvement with this movement manifested itself in a number of ways. As a painter his work was chosen on several occasions for prizes in Art Unions and raffles. Secondly, he made attempts through the Australian Society of Artists to gain a charter so that the Society, the first in Australia to be composed of practitioners, might conduct their own Art Unions. He had associations with James T. Grocott, Mr. Ross of Bridge St., William & Frederick Ford, and Kern and Madder, all entrepreneurs who at varying times promoted Art Unions in Sydney. Finally he was associated, as an exhibitor, with the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia. This society had conducted an Art Union in conjunction with their 1849 exhibition and later, in December 1850, sought a government charter so that they might conduct Art Unions on a regular basis.

These activities came at a time when Peacock had established a small market for his work and appeared anxious to increase his income from painting sales. He had developed into a well respected artist who could no longer be classed as purely an amateur or student. Indeed his paintings such as View from Woolloomooloo Bay Port Jackson NSW taken from the Lower Domain Road 1849
Chapter Five

[illus.28.-cat52], and Port Jackson NSW North Head and Middle Harbour from Middle Harbour 1849 [illus.29.-cat.49], are the type of works that were most popular with Sydney residents. Admired for their local content, accuracy of description and sense of mood, his harbourscapes were, by 1850, hanging in many Sydney homes.

Art Unions, flourishing during 1849 and 1850 in Sydney, provided hope and the prospect of greater economic security for a number of artists bordering on professionalism. The build-up had been a slow one, for signs of the Art Union movement had been seen in Sydney some ten years earlier. The depressed decade of the 1840s, however, had not been conducive to speculative activities.

Edward Barlow, lithographer, printer and entrepreneur may well have been the first man in Sydney to conduct an Art Lottery. His lottery for 160 imported English engravings 'by Martin and others' took place in July 1838, when prizes were drawn from a 'Wheel of Fortune'. (1)

Barlow was adopting methods of marketing art which were fashionable and successful 'at home'. Prior to the lottery he had pursued more conventional methods of promoting his business; a newspaper advertisement for his colonial productions announced:

Persons wishing to send their friends a trifle characteristic of the Colony will find a variety of Sydney Views, Profile Portraits of the Aborigines, and prints constantly on sale, which from their correctness will be found acceptable presents. (2)
An Art Union – or ‘Lottery’, the term preferred by Barlow – was a different approach, and would indeed have been a ‘Great Novelty’ for Barlow and his Sydney customers in July 1838.

Art Unions were relatively new in Britain in 1838 but had been operating on the continent for some forty years. At the end of the eighteenth century, a Parisian, M. Hennin, had proposed the formation of a society which would assist artists to sell their work. He advocated a modified system of lottery which avoided French laws forbidding this type of gambling. Later, and with official approval, this association merged and became one with the Société de Amis des Arts. The Société received its constitution in 1816 and during the ensuing twenty years purchased more than 1200 works of art from young artists who were ‘rich in talent but poor in friends’. (3) Those works were all distributed to subscribers. Similar institutions sprang up in provincial cities throughout France, and Germany also developed societies which were designated Kunstverein or Verein der Kunstfreunde.

In Britain, Art Unions had begun in Edinburgh. At a meeting in December 1834 the "Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland" was formed. Subscriptions were fixed at one guinea per annum and a committee was established to select and purchase works of art. As with the continental system, these works were distributed to subscribers by lot. The association did not seek to make a
financial profit; it genuinely sought to promote the work of Scotland's painters, sculptors and engravers. By 1839 the Art Union could report that sales from the Edinburgh exhibition were expected to exceed 3,000 pounds, or ten times their amount prior to the establishment of the association five years earlier. (4)

Between the time of Barlow's lottery and the Society for Australian Artists' application for charter, much happened in both Sydney and Parramatta to stimulate interest in Art Unions and similar schemes. Virtually all gave their raison d'être as a genuine desire to promote the Fine Arts and cultivate taste in colonial Australia, but many were 'get rich quick' schemes which, by 1850, had convinced the government of the need to introduce legislation aimed at controlling the operations of Art Unions.

Barlow's raffle of 1838 had offered imported prints for prizes, but by the 1850s colonial painters had made their presence felt. Indeed, in March 1850 J.T. Grocott in Sydney was able to announce an Art Union, the prizes for which were all painted by colonial artists.

Between October 1841 and January 1842, Maurice Felton had exhibited works at his residence in Hunter Street, Sydney. Finally he disposed of these by a lottery which was drawn on 14 January 1842. The event was part of the tentative beginnings of Art Unions in Sydney, but it could not really be compared with the 'Edinburgh' system. This
system was well known and admired by settlers in the colony. Educated men such as Mr. Bram, the drawing master of Sydney College, recognised the benefits that would flow to the artists and public alike if Art Unions could be established in the colony. Consequently Bram had assisted Felton in the promotion of his exhibition and sale.

Critically Felton's exhibition attracted some positive attention:

Yesterday we paid a visit to Mr. Felton's very interesting show of pictures, in Hunter street. We would strongly advise all our readers to afford themselves half an hour's such amusement as is presented by this exhibition. The pictures will be disposed of presently by lottery, at one pound per ticket, and winners will possess some creditable specimens of Mr. Felton's talents in the delightful art of painting. Two portraits of the Queen are excellent, the one particularly, which represents Her Majesty in a simple morning costume. Some good private portraits adorn the walls of the room set apart for the exhibition. There are, besides, some beautiful views of the interior of the country. A lovely seat of A.B. Spark, Esq., is very interesting. A sketch of the tombs of Judge Bent and Major Ovens, on Garden Island with the accompanying foliage, deserves notice. On the whole we were pleased with our visit, and wish Mr. Felton every success in the object he has in view. (5)

Felton's lottery, like Barlow's, was an isolated event.

Whilst Felton's work was admired, it appears that his sale was not a resounding success. (6)

After the failure of Felton's sale in Sydney at the end of 1842 no more Art Unions took place there until May 1847. Parramatta, however, saw the staging of Art Unions in 1845, April 1846 and June 1847. The first of these, the
Scottish Art Union, was organised by Howard Bower who timed
the event to coincide with the Christmas and holiday
period. Bower, described by Rivett as a 'jack of all
trades', was involved with theatrical production and was
closely associated with the Parramatta artists Joseph
Dennis and William Griffiths. Dennis had been a scene
painter at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney before
becoming involved in the cultural life of Parramatta in the
1840s. He exhibited in the 1847 exhibition in Sydney and
his painting Lot and his Daughters leaving Sodom and
Gomorrah was the centre of some heated criticism when
Grocott's third Art Union was conducted in July 1850.

William Griffiths was an associate of Peacock's during
1850 when they were amongst the foundation members of the
Australian Society for Artists. Griffiths had exhibited his
portraits at the "Australian Arms Inn", Parramatta in
December 1843, demonstrating his belief that the town was
ready to support activities such as Art Unions. For some
time he had conducted a 'Portrait Club' which was of
considerable importance to artistic activities in the main
centre outside of Sydney throughout the 1840s.

Griffiths had earlier discussed his ideas with John
Skinner Prout, the progressive English artist who had
arrived in Sydney during December 1840 and later had
painted in the Parramatta district. It has been shown
in an earlier chapter that Skinner Prout's advanced ideas
of forming a colonial art society had been negated by the
economic difficulties which then prevailed. Skinner Prout had also been somewhat disillusioned by Sydney and its 'cultured' society after his series of six lectures on painting had attracted only sparse attendances. Although he continued to earn his living from art, he doubted that Parramatta was ready to support Art Unions. (10).

Griffiths, with his more intimate knowledge of colonial tastes continued to believe otherwise.

Reminiscing in 1847, Skinner Prout recalled that on his arrival in Sydney he had to confess my surprise was increased when observing how considerable a taste for the elegancies of life was manifested in the furniture and fittings of the better class of residences; the walls of many of which were hung with paintings varying in merit, but, on the whole, just as one would be likely to meet with in similar establishments in England.(11)

This observation would have been equally true for Parramatta and tends to contradict the idea that the town was not yet ready for Art Unions. Skinner Prout had also observed that the surprising taste for decoration and paintings was a result of 'persons emigrating to the colony having brought their "household goods" with them'.(12) By 1845 Skinner Prout was settled in Hobart, but Griffiths' faith in Parramatta's likely support for Art Unions had been vindicated.

For what was to be a highly successful Scottish Art Union, Bower selected twenty-two imported oil paintings by
British artists. The painters represented included Robert McInnes, James Stark, Andrew Geddes and Charles Runciman whose works had been purchased in Edinburgh and shipped to Australia. Colonial art from either Parramatta or nearby Sydney was not considered attractive enough for this Art Union which was conducted on a grand scale.

The publisher of the Cumberland Times, Benjamin Isaacs, gave a great deal of publicity to the Scottish Art Union and in particular praised McInnes' *The Italian Bowlers*. Two years later this painting was offered as a prize in an Art Union conducted by W & F Ford in Sydney. Then the property of Mr. Clark Irving and valued at two hundred and fifty pounds, the work was highly praised by the Sydney Morning Herald in an article which had much to say about Art Unions and art exhibitions in the colony.

Bower's Scottish Art Union was drawn on 5 January 1846. He had succeeded in selling 250 tickets, a promotional feat which made this the outstanding Art Union of the early colonial period. Patrons of this first Art Union at Parramatta included W.C. Wentworth, William Manning (later Sir William Manning) and Hannibal Hawkins M'carthur. Manning won *A View Near Runnymede* by Stark, while Macarthur won Runciman's *Gil Blas while Counting his Ducets is Stopped by a Robber*. Two colonial gentlemen were keen art patrons, active in cultural circles.

One factor which made this Art Union such a success was that all twenty-two prizes were by British artists.
Known to a majority of shareholders. The opportunity to own an original oil from the home country depicting a familiar scene or illustrating a popular folk tale proved a powerful inducement to both art patrons and gamblers in the colony. Furthermore, prestige accrued to the owners of such works. When some of the prize paintings from Parramatta were exhibited in the 1847 Sydney exhibition, the catalogue provided equal billing for the owner and author of the work. Even in a colony which had, for some time, been beset by economic problems, many were prepared to risk a guinea when the return was likely to furnish nostalgia, entertainment and prestige.

Although his work was not included, William Griffiths approved of the Art Union because he could see that in the long term such activity would be beneficial to local artists. Griffiths' experience at Parramatta made him one of the prime movers in the application, lodged by the Australian Society for Artists in 1850, seeking to conduct Art Unions on their own behalf.

Bower was quick to capitalise on his success with Parramatta's first Art Union. Just three months after its drawing, he sold seventy subscriptions in the second Art Union. For this he selected a further five imported paintings, including two by the popular Runciman. The lottery was fully subscribed in eleven days and was drawn in April 1846. Then a third Art Union was conducted at Parramatta. It opened in June 1847, at the same time as the
Chapter Five

Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia opened its first exhibition.

The Parramatta Art Unions had a decided effect on the art scene in Sydney. In the 1847 Exhibition, for example, paintings which had been won at Parramatta were clearly listed as "A Prize From the Scottish Art Union", denoting that some special significance could be attached to the work.(17) As with all other works, the owner was also prominently listed. The Italian Bowlers, exhibited by its new owner, warranted a special entry in the catalogue - a eulogising extract from the Report of the Committee of the Scottish Art Union. The committee congratulated themselves and the artist in turn, referring to 'the intrinsic beauty of the acquisition they have made' and 'the very marked and honourable position which the skill displayed in its execution has achieved for Mr. McInnes'.(18)

Both the Art Union Committee and the Society Exhibition Committee regarded themselves as promoters of outstanding contemporary art from Britain. Even though the exhibition claimed to display works by Watteau, Teniers, Gainsborough and Raphael, amongst other famous names, one suspects that the exhibition works were a reassurance to the committee. They at least could be guaranteed as genuine works by modern British masters.

Colonial artists continued with single and special purpose Art Unions. In January 1847 an interesting Art Union had taken place in Adelaide. S.T. Gill, after
returning from the ill-fated Horrocks expedition, failed in his attempts to sell drawings made during the journey. As an alternative Gill arranged to raffle his pictures in what was Adelaide's first Art Union. Charles Sturt was a successful subscriber and was able to present four of Gill's sketches, which he had won, to Queen Victoria when he visited England in 1847. (19)

In Sydney at this time an active period of art promotion was beginning. Patronage was actively sought for Art Unions and artists anticipated exciting results from the forthcoming exhibition recently announced by the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia. Both Hobart and Parramatta had already shown that a taste for the arts did exist behind the utilitarian colonial facade.

The Sydney stationer William Moffitt displayed R.S. Lauder's painting, The Gwee Chrom reluctantly conducting the Glee Maiden to a place of Safety, at his Pitt Street premises in May 1847. When the first Sydney Exhibition opened on 22nd June the painting was prominently featured in both the exhibition and catalogue; a special note was included to the effect that this work had been a prize in the London Art Union. This reference was to a series of fairly small-scale Art Unions conducted by stationers and art dealers, the brothers William & Frederick Ford from their George Street store in Sydney during 1847 and 1848. (20)
Chapter Five

A prospectus for the 'Sydney Art Union' was published by the Fords on 6 November 1848. (21) This was to be by far their most significant Art Union, offering thirty prizes, half of which were works by colonial artists.

There were two works by G.E. Peacock listed as prizes; *View of the Three Brothers Camden Haven* [illus. 20.-cat. 87] and *View of Double Bay from South Head Road*. The former was a view which repeatedly engaged Peacock's attention for he painted it at least three times. Apart from the Ford Art Union version painted in or before 1848, he made a small version [illus. 30.-cat. 60] in 1852 and a more detailed and larger version [illus. 20.-cat. 87] the same year. This last work is now part of the Rex Nan Kivell Collection (R.N.K. 805) in the National Library, Canberra. No evidence exists to show that Peacock ever travelled to Camden Haven, on the north coast of New South Wales although it is possible that he had seen the area during his time at the penal station of Port Macquarie in 1837-1840. A more plausible explanation for the choice of this subject is the fact that Conrad Martens painted at Camden Haven, and Peacock may well have copied his work. (22)

The painting is composed to a formula adopted by so many colonial artists. Trees on the left and right and a dark tonal band across the foreground develop a 'U' shaped frame through which the viewer is invited to look. As the light rakes from left to right more tonal bands are created. Further emphasis on depth and distance is promoted...
Chapter Five

by the roadway which leads in from the lower edge of the frame and the carefully considered aerial perspective which has the pastel coloured mountains fading into a receptive sky.

His work at the weather station at South Head meant that he was tied to the city, and more particularly to the the harbour. Unlike John Skinner Prout, Peacock was not able to set off in quest of the picturesque. He was not able to journey to exotic locations such as Lake St.Claire in van Diemen's Land or Mount Kosiuscko in the south-west. Unlike Martens or von Guerard he was unable to seek commissions to paint homesteads in the interior. Peacock painted Sydney almost exclusively.

Some emphasis is placed on this close connection by a letter Peacock addressed to the Colonial Secretary on 12 August 1851. The artist requested that he be allowed 'leave of absences for a couple of months'. In support of his request Peacock added;

Having never during above eleven years asked such a favour; indeed I may add never on the average been absent above three nights a year since I have held my present post; I feel that this application will not be looked on as unreasonable.(23)

For virtually all of his painting career Peacock never left Sydney and was faced with Port Jackson, on a daily basis, in all of its moods. Nevertheless, there were moments when he looked elsewhere for subject matter.
Chapter Five

Camden Haven is forty two kilometres south of Port Macquarie on the north coast of NSW. The Three Brothers are 'remarkable hills contiguous to each other extending from one to five miles inshore and forming the east extremity of a high range stretching out from the interior'. (24)

The Camden Haven painting was number six on a list of thirty prizes. The second Peacock painting was number twenty-two, indicating that it was one of the small oils for which he was best known. The subject matter of this work was also typical and would have been attractive to Sydney subscribers.

Many local artists benefitted from the staging of this Art Union. By 1848 the Fords had developed a philosophy about Art Unions centering on the encouragement of colonial art. Their views differed from those which had been expressed previously because they emphasised the role of the artist in cultivating public taste insisting that the sale of pictures was central to both their commercial and philosophical concerns. These attitudes were made clear in their statement published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 6 November 1848:

Whilst the advantages arising to a community from the cultivation of a taste for the Fine Arts are universally acknowledged, the diffusion of works of art and a competition among artists together with the encouragement by sale of pictures, are at the same time necessary. Seeing how extensive and how beneficial have been the Arts Union both in the United Kingdom and on the Continent, and in the hope that the present may, with proper management, become the germ of a
similar establishment in this colony, Messrs. W. & F. Ford have, in addition to the pictures obtained by them from the collections of the late Sir Maurice O'Connell, H.H. Macarthur Esq., and others, purchased works from the following artists, viz.:- Martens, Gilfillan, Wilson, Peacock, Garling, Fowles, Mrs. Berkley, E. Thompson and others. (25)

A number of those artists included were to become involved in the ideological struggles which occurred in the following two years.

Martens and Wilson, who were later to align themselves with the 'establishment' in Sydney, were represented in this Art Union by six works. A Martens oil painting, View of Fort St., and the North Shore from Flagstaff Hill, was listed at the top of the colonial works, while J.A. Wilson's chalk drawings Reverie and Devotion were listed at numbers 13 and 30 respectively. William Nicholas, the third of the 'establishment' trio, showed Infant Piety, a drawing. John Alexander Gilfillan, who resided in Sydney for the major part of 1848, was represented by two of his New Zealand works, Port Underwood, Middle Island, New Zealand and Whaling Station, Kapiti. Two months prior to the Art Union he had delivered two lectures at the Sydney School of Arts. (26)

Of the other artists represented E. Thompson showed a New England landscape, Joseph Fowles showed two marine works, The Fleet Beating Out of the Bay of Trafalgar during the gale two days after the memorable Victory and The Carysfort Entering the Heads of Port Jackson. Frederick
Garling Jnr. showed an unidentified marine work.

All of the paintings in this Art Union were hung at a free exhibition during the month of November, with the Fords seeking to attract subscribers. Apart from private efforts such as Felton’s, this was the first time that works of colonials had been considered likely to attract subscribers. Whilst the Fords’ philosophy was an admirable and attractive one, their judgement may have been somewhat astray. Even though imported works formed half of the prize list, support for this Art Union was lacking and, as was the case with others to come, the drawing was repeatedly delayed to allow further subscriptions to be sold. The lack of interest persisted despite a number of prestigious works from the estate of Sir Maurice O’Connell being amongst the prizes. These included Drunkenness, ‘a celebrated painting by Gerard von Thorstor’, and two views of the Bay of Naples by Thoming.

The Fords’ Sydney Art Union was advertised to close on 30 November 1848, then 12 December; it was not finally drawn until 22 December 1848. Delays of this type became necessary to the organisers who faced financial loss unless the required number of tickets were sold. Patrons became annoyed by the delays and the Art Union movement was criticised for not being ethical or businesslike.

The Ford brothers were not discouraged by the difficulties experienced in 1848. In November 1849 they advertised their Final Art Union, which was to be something
of a clearance of accumulated stock. After selecting this marketing method they sought two hundred subscribers at one guinea each, offering two oil paintings, eleven watercolours and 187 framed and unframed engravings as prizes. Conrad Martens was the only colonial artist represented. His work comprised two watercolour views of Sydney Harbour and a third watercolour, *Elizabeth Bay from Darling Point*. (27)

Much more significant for colonial art and artists was the Art Union conducted in conjunction with the 1849 exhibition by the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia. After payment of one guinea, subscribers and their families were admitted to the exhibition and given a ticket in the Art Union to be drawn at the conclusion of the exhibition. The significance of this Art Union lay, not in its success, but in its failure. Artists who expected to benefit from the exhibition and Art Union were deflated by its failure and consequently began to look elsewhere for both encouragement and sales.

Conrad Martens was one artist who, while noticing the failure of the event, still managed to benefit. Martens had been on the three-man hanging committee for this exhibition and had ensured that his own works were prominently placed. Some months later when commenting about the Art Union he wrote:

*There was not a single picture sold during the exhibition but fortunately for me, the*
prizeholders were almost unanimous in selections of my works. (28)

Martens' share of the Art Union tickets was fifty pounds, but as he explained to his brother Henry, there were two winners who were obliged to pay an extra five pounds each so that he might receive an equitable price for the particular works selected.

He made a 'haul' of sixty pounds from this Art Union but no other artist would have fared as well, since there were only 62 subscribers in all. (29) This was a disappointing result for the organisers who had expected much more support from a Society which represented the cultural elite of the colony.

An individual businessman who experienced many difficulties (and some successes) in conducting Art Unions in Sydney was James T. Grocott. His part in the establishment of Sydney's earliest art society has been discussed in a previous chapter. Grocott was central to the Sydney art world during the late 1840s and early 1850s. His active encouragement of colonial art meant that he came into close contact with G.E. Peacock and that circle of artists working in and around Sydney. His promotions and ideas, some of them questionable in their integrity, won him both friends and enemies.

Conrad Martens, who personally found raffling pictures 'disagreeable work' was critical of Grocott's methods and ethics. He wrote:
There is a puffing fellow here who has been getting up what he calls Art Unions, but I know him too well to have anything to do with him. He gulled the public by saying that he gave prizes to the artists for the best pictures but he kept the pictures and his prizes were, in fact, much below my prices. (30)

Although he had 'raffled a picture or two', Martens took no part in Grocott's Art Unions conducted in 1849 and 1850. (31) Although providing work for at least the Ford's Art Union, he was not prepared to operate on Grocott's terms, which, needless to say, took into account a good profit margin for the dealer.

One distinct group of artists was prepared to support Grocott. It included Peacock and most of the artists who later formed the Australian Society for Artists. Unlike Martens, most of these saw Art Unions as a viable and welcome way of selling their work. By selling paintings, advocating the formation of art societies, conducting art unions and publicising local artists in the Sydney press, Grocott, although driven by commercial motives, provided encouragement, recognition and hope for would-be, full-time professional painters where previously very little had existed.

James Turner Grocott, by trade a copper plate printer, had arrived in the colony aboard the Margaret on 28 March 1841. The twenty year-old Grocott was accompanied by his brother, Alonzo. His early business dealings were not successful and by March 1842 his name appeared in the insolvency lists. (32) His bankruptcy was discharged, and a
year later the resilient Grocott brothers established the Phoenix Printing Office at 476 George Street, offering their services as both engravers and printers. In March 1845 they announced the addition of a new stationery establishment at the same address. Later James Grocott was listed as an auctioneer and wine merchant, but by the time he married Annie Lucas in 1847 he was retailing music and musical instruments. At this time too, Grocott had his first dealings with Sydney artists, a liaison that soon saw him active in the foundation of the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia.

Grocott would have observed the growing interest in the Art Unions at Parramatta and those conducted by the Fords in Sydney. Further encouraged by the 1849 exhibition and its associated Art Union, he decided that the time was right to stage an Art Union of his own. Given his established connections with local artists over the previous two years, it was logical for him to choose to offer colonial art as prizes. There were other advantages in this move. As Martens had observed, Grocott was able to bargain effectively with local painters and so their work came far more cheaply than that imported from Edinburgh or London. Prizes for various categories were offered, Grocott retaining the prize-winning paintings, which, in turn, became prizes for successful subscribers.

The system attracted a good deal of publicity for Grocott, his Art Unions, and the artists involved. Through
this avenue, for example, George Edwards Peacock gained his share of positive critical attention. Reviewing the prizes on offer for Grocott's Art Union of June 1850, The People's Advocate considered that amongst the paintings on show 'a splendid gem of a landscape, Buttermere Lakes, by Peacock, would do credit to any exhibition'.(34)

Colonial audiences were accustomed to hearing such adulation only in reference to imported paintings. To be spoken about in the same terms, justifiably or not, meant that the names Peacock, Christie, Willis, Smith, Dennis and others became increasingly familiar to Sydney audiences. During that period they came to represent, through Grocott's continued publicity, the core of Sydney's artistic talent; her 'prize-winning' artists. In one important sense these painters may be considered as a group or 'stable', in much the same way as modern commercial galleries promote their chosen artists.

The concept of Art Unions appears to have been welcomed by a majority of colonists. This was particularly so at the time Grocott organised his first Art Union in Sydney at the end of 1849. People here were frequently subscribers to Art Unions conducted in Edinburgh or London, and British organisers employed agents in the colonies. Conrad Martens had been a subscriber to a London Art Union in the hope that he would become the owner of a prestigious and valuable painting from 'home'. Writing to his brother Henry, Martens commented on news that he had read in a
It appears by the advertisement of the Art Union Committee that they will select pictures for winners of prizes who may be out of England if requested to do so. This I have done thro' Mr. Ford who is their agent here if I should be a fortunate one but I do not intend to subscribe this year.(35)

Martens seems content to have had his prize selected for him, indicating that winning any picture whatsoever from London would make him a 'fortunate one'. In other parts of the same letter Martens makes it clear that his financial position in 1849 was not strong. He cancelled his subscription for that reason, not because of any diminution of his desire to own a painting by any of his British contemporaries.

Whilst public approval was evident for the principal of Art Unions (such as those in Parramatta of 1846-47), there remained some criticism of the way Art Unions were conducted. Similar reservations to Martens' were held by the Sydney correspondent of the People's Advocate writing over the pseudonym of 'Colonna', although in general he echoed the British and Colonial approval of Art Unions.

'Colonna observed;

If there is any species of Lottery which ought to be exempted from the reprobation with which all such speculations are regarded by right-minded men it is an Art Union.(36)

His view was that the cultural and enlightening benefits generated by Art Unions placed them above the ordinary
Chapter Five

Lottery. The latter, he believed, was unjustified gambling, an activity which was to be eschewed.

Although verbose, 'Colonna' was an astute observer of Sydney's cultural life. His views, expressed in letters to various newspapers figured prominently in discussions on the formation of Art Societies and the conduct of Art Unions in particular. He was conscious of the social benefits that might flow from the promotion of artists and of the Fine Arts contrasting this with the utilitarian nature of the colony. For example, of Art Unions he asked

If in such countries as England and Scotland these exhibitions have been advantageous at once to the public and the workers how much more necessary are they in this country where there is no inducement to cultivate the arts - where there are neither authors nor literature - where men seem so devoted to the real and the useful, that they have no time to pay attention to the imaginative or the ornamental.(37)

This was a version of the argument that provided a basis for many early attempts to stimulate cultural activity in the developing colony. In this context Art Unions were seen as something which would complement undertakings such as art exhibitions, art societies and public lectures in the newly-established Mechanics' Institutes. Prior to 'Colonna's' writing, exhibitions had been staged, societies formed and lectures given in various parts of the colonies. In Sydney, some measure of consideration and private debate had been given to the future development of the arts. As a result, the seeds of discontent which produced the
Australian Society of Artists, had already been sown.

Art Unions were regarded as both a continuance and widening of activity in the field of Fine Art. 'Colonna' claimed 'I, in common with many others hailed with pleasure the announcement of Mr. Grocott's Art Unions'. (38) The promoter was, nevertheless, singled out for criticism as well as praise. Writing after three Grocott Art Unions had been completed, the correspondent felt that he was in a reasonable position to decide whether or not his earlier expectations and hopes had been fulfilled.

'Colonna' was Grocott's most severe critic. Seeing an important future for Art Unions, 'Colonna' advocated that they be regarded not as 'private speculations but essentially public institutions'. (39) Hence Grocott was automatically singled out:

As a private individual he has too much interest in the pecuniary arrangements to act towards either artist or subscriber with that degree of liberality which ought to characterise such exhibitions. (40)

Implicit in this argument was the concept that Art Unions should become a state-run or 'national' institution where 'abler and more disinterested hands', might be trusted to conduct equitable ballots. (41) Disapproval of Grocott's excessive profit-taking was not apparently confined only to Martens!

James Turner Grocott had begun organising his first Sydney Art Union during November 1849. He took advantage of
‘gold fever’, announcing boldly that his Art Union was
‘Better Than California’, implying that if one must gamble
then it was better to do it at home.<sup>42</sup> Initially he
advertised for 400 members at one guinea each; first prize
was to be valued at sixty pounds.<sup>43</sup> There was, according
to another Grocott advertisement just five days later, an
‘extraordinary demand for tickets’, forcing the promoter to
announce that the lists would be closing on 25
November.<sup>44</sup> He later advertised that subscriptions might
be had through his country agents, Mr. Lipscombe at West
Maitland, and Captain Sullivan at Wollongong.<sup>45</sup>

By 24 November Grocott was still actively seeking
subscribers; he also released some details of the prizes
then. The first fifteen had cost him 232 pounds while a
further 145 were ‘valuable framed engravings’, varying in
value from 3 guineas to one guinea. Grocott, continuing the
American gold theme, was now offering, as an alternative to
both the first and second prizes, a steerage passage for
two parties to California and a purse of ten pounds, if
agreed to the day before the drawing. This, in each case,
was in addition to the paintings on offer.

The engravings, all imported, served to promote
memories of England, Scotland and Ireland. The paintings
were a mixture of local and imported works, one of which
was Peak of Teneriffe by R.A. Smith.<sup>46</sup> The subscription
remained one guinea, but Grocott had also lodged 100
pounds to be spent on prizes for original works of art. It
was hoped that this 'would be the means of producing many colonial artists who are now unknown'. (47)

According to Martens' interpretation, this was inequitable to colonial artists because the value of Grocott's prizes did not match up to the prices he (Martens) was charging for similar work. On the other hand Martens had a low opinion of the artistic talent in the colony and did not share the unbounded optimism and tenacity of men such as Grocott. Optimism and tenacity were essential qualities for an art dealer to have in Sydney during the 1840s depression.

A pessimistic mood had prevailed for some time about the local economy. With Grocott's first Art Union there were some doubts, expressed publicly, that the drawing would take place on December 1st as arranged. Grocott, who possessed considerable promotional skill and a positive attitude always, replied with an advertisement in which he asked for it to be 'distinctly understood' that there should not be the 'slightest possibility' of the drawing being postponed, adding that 'only 57 shares remain unsold'. (48) Despite these emphatic claims, Grocott managed to extend the drawing for a further week without admitting failure. On December 1st he advertised that his Art Union would now be drawn at the Royal Victoria Theatre on Friday next, the 7th December, at half-past seven o'clock instead of being at the City Theatre, as was originally intended, it being found totally inadequate to accommodate half the
number of persons who are desirous of being present at the Drawing. (49)

In fact, as was the case with subsequent Art Unions, the likelihood was that too many subscriptions remained unsold and Grocott, regardless of his reassuring claims, was simply stalling for time. To his credit, he arranged a free concert for subscribers. Several popular vocalists sang with the theatre's orchestra in a programme which must have added a festive air to the drawing of the Art Union.

Grocott was to follow the pattern established in this first promotion when he conducted three more Art Unions throughout 1850. Other promoters were also active in the same period, including Kern and Madder of Hunter St., J.R. Clarke and W & F Ford. The latter, apart from conducting their own Art Union, were part of a much wider network. They were the Sydney agents for a London-based British Art Union; when the first Parramatta Art Union took place in December-January 1845 the Fords were the Sydney representatives. (50) Of the Sydney promoters, only Grocott and Kern and Madder actively promoted colonial art.

Grocott was satisfied with his first Art Union and aware of his increasing importance as a promoter of colonial art. Only twelve days elapsed between the drawing of the first Art Union and the announcement of the second. When the advertisement appeared it appealed to colonial artists to enter a competition, the prizes for which totalled one hundred guineas. The money was to be allocated
over eight categories including the best oil painting (thirty pounds), the best watercolour (twenty pounds) and the best group of Australian flowers in watercolour painted by a lady (five pounds). In addition to the eight colonial works Grocott was to add '492 other valuable pictures etc. etc., amounting in all to 500 guineas'.(51) What the promoter did not make clear was that the 'etc. etc.' in the prize list included a quantity of printed sheet music (from his music store) as individual prizes.

Encouraged by willing involvement from local artists, Grocott drew up plans for the sale of 500 subscriptions at one guinea each and, confident that he would 'meet with the approbation of all patrons of the Fine Arts' announced that he would in future hold an Art Union every three months.(52)

After consultation Grocott and the artists agreed that a committee of nine be appointed to judge the various categories listed for competition. Early in March the prize winning artists were announced. They were

H.R. Smith — for historical or composition picture in oil; 30 pounds.
F. Willis — for the best landscape in oil; 20 pounds
Mr. Wilson — for the best crayon drawing but awarded to Mrs. Steadman Christie in consequence of Mr. Wilson's production being a copy, and too small.
Miss Cousens — for the best piece of needlework; 10 pounds.
Mrs. Christie — for the best group of Australian Flowers; 5 pounds
Miss Troy — for the second best piece of needlework 5 pounds.(53)
The prize for the best landscape in watercolour was not awarded because there were no entries. (54)

This Art Union passed without any controversy about the judge's decisions. At the artist's meeting it had been resolved that a Ladies Committee be appointed to judge the Needlework and Flower Drawing prizes for which only women could compete. (55)

Henry Robinson Smith won the historical picture prize without competition. He was also a competitor, with Kerr and Ellis, in the landscape section won by F. Willis, an artist who had arrived in the colony only a few months before the Art Union was conducted. Willis' painting of cattle in a landscape was described as being

of a quality very seldom found in this country. The composition and drawing are excellent and characteristic; the tone is mellow, a most agreeable warmth being diffused throughout and the atmospheric effect is well preserved. A smaller picture by the same artist is not unworthy of his talent. He has evidently studied Cuyp and other true pictorial imitators of nature. (56)

The same reviewer noted that two oil paintings by Conrad Martens had been entered for the landscape prize. They were both of Bathurst Cave and described subjects which 'offered opportunities of exhibiting strong effects of light and shade.' (57) So in February 1850 Martens was prepared to try for the prize offered by Grocott but by September, after failing in his objective, Martens came to
believe that Grocott was a ‘puffing fellow’ who was ‘gulling’ the public and artists alike! (58)

Martens had exhibited three of the Bathurst cave paintings in the 1849 Sydney Exhibition, offering each for sale. (59) Two of the works had been painted ‘on the spot’, and Martens considered, because of their subject and method of execution, that these were amongst the most interesting of his recent work. (60)

Other artists mentioned as taking part, but not winning prizes, in this Art Union included Joseph Fowles, Richard Hipkiss, Frederick Garling, Thomas Agars Newall, Thomas Tyrwhitt Balcombe and J.(?) Ellis. Although Peacock was not mentioned in reviews it is likely that he did participate. Grocott was praised for his organising efforts in this, his second Art Union. He had undertaken ‘in the midst of most cloudy times’ to stage a sale offering premiums to colonial artists. (61) His efforts had not been ‘overabundantly responded to’, yet several pictures sent in exhibited the outstanding talent of their authors. (62) Reaction to this particular Art Union may have been slow simply because of the brief four weeks allowed for the painting, framing and delivery of works. The drawing took place on 27 March 1850.

Not all of Sydney’s Art Unions were conducted on a formal basis or large scale; some lasted only a few hours. On 20 June 1850, at Kern and Madder’s in Hunter Street, there took place a Fine Art Raffle. First prize for this
'little affair' was 'a very beautiful copy of a fine old picture in the collection of Mr. Aldis, executed by Mr. Peacock of South Head' (63). William Henry Aldis was a tobacconist and importer of George Street. He had loaned six works to the 1847 exhibition. Only one of these had been a landscape, *A View of Snowden, North Wales* by an unknown painter (64). It is possible that this was the work copied by Peacock although no further evidence can be offered to support this supposition.

Twenty-eight members competed for this prize by throwing dice. Although *Bell's Life in Sydney*, a sporting journal, considered that nothing was out of place with the raffle, this was the very sort of activity which caused legislation to be introduced against Art Unions late in 1850.

Peacock's painting was won by Mr. Frederick Foster, while the unsuccessful gamblers included the noted Sydney gentlemen George and Captain Fitz Roy and Captain Oliver. Praising all concerned for their efforts in this raffle, the writer considered that three important considerations had been brought to light: further proof of the artistic talent in the colony had been shown; taste and liberality was to be found amongst possessors of fine paintings; and that Mr. Aldis was to be congratulated for his generosity in lending his painting to be copied. Finally, the journal was proud to claim that 'there is a judicious disposition to encourage the Fine Arts amongst our sporting
aristocracy'. (65) Kern and Madder's raffle came at a time when James T. Grocott was hoping to attract patronage, sporting or otherwise, for his next venture.

Grocott's third, final, and most controversial Art Union took place between June and September 1850. Some eighteen months earlier there had begun a move to regulate lotteries in the colony. The Government had called the Legislative Council together earlier than planned to discuss the application of English law in relation to lotteries in the colony. In England lotteries (though not Art Unions) had been declared a common nuisance. (66) The resulting government legislation will be discussed later but for the moment it is important to realise that for Grocott, and all other promoters of Art Unions, there was a perceived threat to their activities throughout 1849 and 1850. The threat became a reality towards the end of 1850, and realising the imminence of legislation, Grocott decided that this third Art Union would be on a grander scale than previous efforts.

According to resolutions established by the artists themselves, a panel of judges was established to select prize-winning paintings in eight categories. The judges appointed were Mr. E.H. Pollard, Dr. George Bennett, Mr. John Brown, Mr. Rowlan Ronald, and Mr. Clark Irving. As usual it was noted that the latter was 'the fortunate possessor of The Italian Bowlers'.

The selection of these particular men, all connected
with Sydney's cultural establishment, emphasised the conservative basis on which the contest was judged. It also shows the confined nature of the Sydney art world during the late 1840s and early 1850s. Grocott, aware of the differing ideologies of gentry and artists, here played a diplomatic role. Always the astute businessman, he would also have been conscious of flattering men of this ilk, all of whom would have been either past or potential clients. It is not likely that such a conservative panel would have been selected by the artists alone.

Dr. George Bennett, a medical practitioner and naturalist, was a prominent figure in the Australian Museum. He had loaned paintings to both the 1847 and 1849 exhibitions in Sydney. John Brown had been a member of the Committee of Management for both the exhibitions and had also loaned works on each occasion. E.H.Pollard, a broker, had been a committee member in 1847 and had loaned fifteen works that year. Clarke Irving, a merchant, pastoralist and politician was on both committees and in 1847 had loaned a total of five works.

It has been noted in Chapter Two that Peacock won first prize for an oil painting in this raffle and was awarded twenty guineas and a silver medal. The painting was the untraced Buttermere Lakes.

Thomas Tyrwhitt Balcombe's Australian Stockmen, measuring 3' 6" x 3', was awarded thirty pounds and a silver medal for the Composition category. Second prize
went to H.R. Smith for a work titled *First Love*, and Smith was also awarded second prize of fifteen pounds for his *Punt at Penrith* in the landscape section won by Peacock. Joseph Fowles won the Marine Painting prize with his *Action at Sea* while Mrs. Steadman Christie was awarded five pounds for the best crayon, a female head.({67})

Two weeks after the competition winners were announced, J.T. Grocott published the Catalogue of Ten Prizes for his third Art Union. Surprisingly, only four works which had won prizes in the competition figured in the list. First and second prizes were to be a watercolour portrait of the winner painted by William Nicholas plus a 'splendid rosewood Cottage Pianoforte'.({68}) Third prize was Balcombe's *Australian Stockmen* and fourth prize was Dennis' *Lot and His Daughters Leaving Sodom and Gomorrah*, a picture which measured 6' x 5', and had been described in the press, prior to judging, as a 'gallery picture'.({69}) Peacock's *Buttermere Lakes* was listed as fifth prize while Fowles' *Action at Sea* and Christie's *A Head* were seventh and ninth prizes respectively.

The announcement of the catalogue of prizes, along with those paintings awarded prizes in the competition caused a deal of controversy. When the competition winners were announced on 24 June, Grocott also published some brief comments by the judges on three works which had caused some concern. Joseph Backler, Peacock's probable acquaintance from convict days at Port Macquarie, had
Chapter Five

entered a work entitled Acteon and Diana which the judges considered was 'a copy of Titian's celebrated picture in the Stafford Gallery'. (70) This assessment drew a heated reply from the emancipist artist who, two days later, took space in the Sydney Morning Herald to reply:

This assertion is as unfounded as it is insulting and unjust to me; and I am sure that the subscribers to the Art Union will support me in my request that the authority on which I am so charged with plagiarism, may be declared, and published by the Judges. (71)

The following day, Grocott replied to Backler's notice, and in a very direct way cast further aspersions on the artist's integrity. He wrote:

Sir, I beg to assure you that a more barefaced and impudent attempt at plagiarism was never offered to a liberal and enlightened public. If you have sufficient effrontery left to inspect the engraving from the Stafford Gallery you will be fully convinced that you have made a great mistake in venturing to place in competition a production possessing not the slightest pretence to originality, the picture being an exact copy. (72)

Sensing a minor scandal, three Sydney newspapers reported on this dispute. The main arena was The Sydney Morning Herald but Bell's Life in Sydney also gave detailed coverage. Injecting a note of humour this paper claimed that Grocott was wrong and that it was not an exact copy, rather 'it is not a bit like'. (73) One week earlier the People's Advocate had reported:
Acteon and Diana, by Backler, if original, which we doubt, is about the most perfect representation of human anatomy that the exhibition presents. (74)

So opinions on the quality of this work varied, the Sydney press, Brockett and the panel of judges all welcoming the opportunity to enter the fray and prove they were not philistines. Many thousands of imported engravings had arrived in Sydney by 1850; therefore, it is not surprising that Backler, and in turn the judges, were able to refer to a work which, in colonial terms, may easily seem obscure. The Backler dispute, coming as it did at the period when subscriptions went on sale, gained valuable publicity for the project. Indeed, it has been suggested by one observer that the whole affair may have been managed by Brockett to attract attention. (75)

Controversy of another type was generated - in this case after the completion of the Art Union - by the correspondent 'Colonna'. Confessing that he did not know who the judges were, 'Colonna' went on to claim that 'nothing but the grossest ignorance, or the most perverse partiality could have guided their decisions'. (76) In this, and other letters to the paper, 'Colonna' showed that he had little time for Sydney's 'very sapient' gentry who would impose their taste on the masses. 'Colonna' firmly believed that Dennis' Lot and his Daughters should have been awarded first prize and that Balcombe's Australian Stockmen was 'little better than a caricature'.
Dennis, declared 'Colonna', was an artist who had 'studied and thought much'. This work, described by the correspondent as an 'historical picture - the highest walk in art' exceeded anything else he had seen in the colony. After a long tirade against the judges 'Colonna' concluded by claiming that many of the artists whose work was exhibited in the Art Union agreed with him and were 'surprised and disappointed, at a preference so unjust and so unwarrantable'. (77)

Not all the artists agreed with this point of view and assessment of Lot and his Daughters. One correspondent, signing himself 'An Artist', replied that the conception of the work was quite acceptable but its execution was well below Dennis' best standard. Friends had been 'astonished' when he had decided to show the work publicly, and the correspondent asserted that the 'colouring, drawing, effect and size were all much against it being a favourite'. (78)

The writer did not comment on the Backler dispute which had, by then, diminished in importance, but he did defend Grocott against 'Colonna's' attack and the call for nationally controlled Art Unions. 'An Artist' claimed that the committee of the 1847 exhibition had frittered away the revenue from admissions and that the 1849 exhibition had been a 'signal failure', concluding 'So much for national protection to art'. (79)

Indeed national protection for art had been in the minds of some colonial politicians for some time. As in
most facets of colonial life, legislators here remained most conscious of developments in British legislation. (80) During 1846 England had adopted a Games and Wagers Bill which had a direct bearing on the conduct of Art Unions. In Sydney, from early 1849, it had been considered that some type of state control should be placed on Art Unions.

Art, artists and works of art occupied a special place in the minds of some members of the New South Wales Legislative Council. On 30 May 1849 George Nichols, the first native-born Australian to be admitted a solicitor in N.S.W. introduced a Bill ‘for the better protection of works of art’. The Bill sought to prescribe punishment for any person who damaged any ‘picture, statue, monument etc., in any place of worship or any work of art or science in a museum, gallery etc.’ (81) The Bill met no opposition, being assented to on 13 July 1849. Exactly one year later Nichols, seeking to improve the lot of colonial artists, moved for leave to introduce a Bill to legalise Art Unions in the colony.

Nichols argued that Art Unions should only be conducted by organisations which held a charter granted by His Excellency the Governor, and that the N.S.W. Bill should be based exactly upon the English Bill which dealt with the same concerns. Supporters of this Bill claimed that it would protect those who, in good faith, sought to promote and encourage the Fine Arts in the colony. They would be considered separate and distinct from those who
might be prosecuted under the Games and Wagers Bill, recently assented to by the New South Wales Legislative Council. Individuals such as James Grogott, seeking to conduct an Art Union for personal gain, stood outside the parameters of the Bill and had absolutely no chance of obtaining a charter. Voluntary associations would also be obliged to convince the Attorney General of their good intentions.

There was virtually no debate on the necessity or worth of this Bill during its first reading. The Sydney Morning Herald reported that the Attorney General did not oppose the Bill, he asked only if the Bill did resemble its English counterpart and if it was thought the Bill would provide protection for colonial artists. George Nichols was able to assure the Attorney General on both counts. When the Bill was read for a second time in July, the Attorney General objected to the clause which suggested it should be implemented from 1 January 1851. This, he claimed, would ‘afford parties opportunities for several months of committing acts which the Bill expressly intended to prevent’. (82) He sought to have the Bill become effective on its assent. The Art Union bill was read for a third time in August and assented to on 10 September 1850.

Three days later Conrad Martens wrote to his brother Henry in England. Always opposed to the raffling of art works, Martens confided, ‘now I am glad to find a "games and wagers bill" has put a stop to anything of that kind,
Art Unions and all’. (83) Martens was, perhaps, the one artist in Sydney to welcome the demise of the Art Union.

Just four days after the Bill had been passed, James Grocott announced his Fourth Art Union with a large advertisement in the Sydney press. (84) J.R.Clark of George Street also announced a new Art Union, calling for 250 members at one guinea each. Neither organiser was deterrred by the new Act, but both Art Unions were scheduled for drawing before the end of 1850, indicating that a brief period of grace had been unofficially awarded to organisers with plans already under way.

The terms set out by Grocott are interesting because they stress his efforts to comply with the approved English methods of conducting Art Unions. No longer would he offer sheet music as prizes and each subscriber would receive a work of art at least equivalent in value to the subscription. Furthermore, he had engaged the services of a ‘celebrated Mezzotint engraver’ to produce a series of engravings for prizes. (85) This unnamed Sydney artist was one of ‘superior talent in this delicate and difficult branch of the art’. (86) Grocott claimed, rather grandly, that the artist’s ‘first rate plate of a famous subject...will be in all respects equal to those received from the London, Irish and Scotch Art Unions’. (87)

Above all Grocott emphasised, in large type, that his Fourth Art Union would be conducted ‘on the same principle and in conformity with the ACT OF PARLIAMENT made and
passed in England....' (88) Nowhere did he mention the Art
Union Bill, so recently passed by the New South Wales
Legislative Council.

The Bill put an effective end to Art Unions in Sydney
and despite the announced arrangements, there is no record
of this fourth Art Union actually taking place.
Nevertheless, J.T. Grocott emerges as an important
entrepreneurial figure in Sydney during the late 1840s and
early 1850s. He had a close and productive, if short,
working relationship with Peacock and many other artists.
Grocott brought local artists to the notice of Sydney
patrons. His sales plan demanded some degree of
recognition, if not fame, for the artists of his stable. As
part of that group Peacock received publicity in the Sydney
press and his work became better known. However, as Mundy
had earlier observed, an emancipist such as Peacock might
be free to traffic on equal terms, but success in business
or the arts was no passport to the parlours of the gentry.

Peacock's association with an increasing range of
Sydney artists meant that he finally found a group in which
he was both welcome and productive. Although Grocott was
probably regarded highly by Peacock and most other Sydney
artists, it did not prevent them developing plans to
organise their own Art Unions, and do away with the
middle-man.

(2) *The Australian* 3 April 1838, p1.


(5) *The Australian*, 7 October 1841. (6) This set of circumstances was often repeated in colonial Sydney. Conrad Martens, for example, received acclaim in the press but frequently complained that he could not make satisfactory sales. Marshall Claxton enjoyed much acclaim in both Sydney and Melbourne in the early 1850s; his arrival was described as a 'national benefit'. Nevertheless, Claxton was disappointed in his efforts to sell worthwhile quantities of his work in the Australian colonies.


(8) *ibid.*, p11.

(9) *ibid.*, p9.

(10) *ibid.*, p9.

(11) *Hobart Town Courier* 13 June 1849.


(13) *ibid.*, p12.

(14) *ibid.*, p15.

(15) *ibid.*, p16.

(16) *ibid.*, p16.

(17) This practice continued in the exhibition of 1849 when
three paintings were listed in this way. A fourth, Gil Blas
while Counting his Ducets is Stopped by a Robber had
changed hands being then owned by the Messrs. Ford who
conducted Art Unions in Sydney c1847-9.
(19) A.McCulloch, Artists of the Australian Gold Rush,
(20) Rivett, op.cit., p18.
(21) S.M.H. 6 November 1848.
(22) A precedent for this suggestion may be considered with
the paintings of St.Paul's Island, discussed in Chapter
(?)
(23) Colonial Secretary, In-Letters,1851, A.O.N.S.W.,
51/7889.
(24) Bailliere's NSW Gazetteer and Road Guide, Sydney,
1866.
(26) Kerr, Joan, (Ed.) Dictionary of Australian Artists:
Working Paper 1: Painters, Photographers and Engravers:
1770-1870; A-H, Power Institute of Fine Arts, University of
Sydney, 1984, p282
(27) S.M.H. 28 November 1849.
(28) Conrad Martens to Henry Martens, correspondence, MSQ
313, 19 Nov. 1849, ML.
(29) ibid.
(30) Conrad Martens to Henry Martens, correspondence,
MSQ313, 13 Sept. 1850, ML.
Chapter Five

(31) ibid.

(32) The Australian 22 March 1842.


(34) People's Advocate, 22 June 1850 p2.

(35) Conrad Martens to Henry Martens, correspondence, MSQ313, 13 Sept. 1850, ML.

(36) People's Advocate 14 September 1850.

(37) ibid.

(38) ibid.

(39) ibid.

(40) ibid.

(41) ibid.

(42) S.M.H. 5 November 1849.

(43) ibid.

(44) S.M.H. 10 November 1849 p1.

(45) S.M.H. 22 November 1849.

(46) People's Advocate 24 November 1849 p2, see also p10.

(47) ibid.

(48) People's Advocate, 24 November 1849 p10.

(49) People's Advocate, 1 December 1849 p2.

(50) Cumberland Times and Western Advertiser 13 December 1845 p3.

(51) S.M.H. 12 January 1850 p3.

(52) Bell's Life in Sydney, 19 January 1850 p3.

(53) S.M.H. 2 March 1850 p3.

(54) S.M.H., 2 March 1850 p3.
Chapter Five

(55) S.M.H., 19 January 1850 p1.

(56) *Bell's Life* 9 March 1850 p2 & on Aelbert Cuyp
1620-1691 - one of the most important 17th c. Dutch
painters was re-discovered by late 18th c. English
collectors - is better represented in English collections

(57) *Bell's Life* 9 March 1850 p2.

(58) A work from this Bathurst series is now in the
collection of the A.G.N.S.W. - another is in the Mitchell
Library - they demonstrates the view that Martens, like his
contemporary John Skinner Prout, was often below his best
when painting in oil.


(60) ibid.

(61) *Bell's Life* 9 March 1850 p2.

(62) ibid.

(63) *Bell's Life in Sydney* 22 June 1850 p2.

(64) Catalogue, S.P.F.A.A. Exhibition, 1847. N.B. This is
the title of the J.M.W.Turner painting owned by Bishop
Nixon in V.D.L. - reputedly the first painting by Turner in
oils. (65) *Bell's Life in Sydney* 22 June 1850 p2.

(66) *Bell's Life in Sydney* 13 February, 1849.

(67) S.M.H. 24 June 1850, and 8 July 1850.

(68) S.M.H. 8 July 1850.

(69) *Bell's Life* 22 June 1850 p2.

(70) S.M.H. 24 June 1850.

(71) S.M.H. 27 June 1850 p1.
Chapter Five

(72) S.M.H., 28 June 1850
(73) Bell's Life, 29 June 1850.
(74) People's Advocate, 22 June 1850 p2
(76) People's Advocate, 14 September 1850.
(77) People's Advocate, 14 September 1850.
(78) People's Advocate, 21 September 1850 p2.
(79) ibid.
(80) The Art Union of London for 1846 attracted more than 16,000 subscribers. It was conducted 'By The Authority of Parliament' and had as President His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge. The council was comprised of thirty-six eminent gentlemen who distributed 10,000 guineas worth of art works. A major aim was to give encouragement to artists beyond that afforded by the patronage of individuals. The Honorary Secretary for N.S.W was William Ford. S.M.H., 29 October 1847 p1.
(81) S.M.H., 6 June 1849.
(82) Bell's Life in Sydney, 20 July 1850.
(83) Conrad Martens to Henry Martens, correspondence, MSQ 313/2, 13 September 1850, ML.
(84) Bell's Life in Sydney, 14 September 1850 p3.
(85) Bell's Life in Sydney, 14 September 1850 p3.
(86) Bell's Life in Sydney, 14 September 1850 p2.
(87) ibid.
(88) ibid.
CHAPTER SIX - THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF ARTISTS; 1850

The Australian Society of Artists was formed at a preliminary meeting held at the Royal Hotel, George Street, Sydney on Monday 18 March 1850. (1) The stated objective of the Society was 'the general improvement of the Fine Arts, and for conducing to the social welfare of the Artists themselves, and their elevation to that position in the community to which they are entitled'. (2) George Edwards Peacock was a founding member, a member of the first executive committee and, later, chairman of the Rules committee.

During the period 1810–30, the British Isles had witnessed a rapid increase in the establishment of societies and institutions devoted to the promotion of the arts. In particular this growth was most obvious in provincial centres. (3) In Sedbergh, and later in London, Peacock would have witnessed the increasing popularity of the arts, and it is likely that his interest in painting and painters of the day resulted as a consequence.

Apart from British artist's concerns with professionalism and economic factors, a particular notion stood behind much of the reason for the development of art
societies. This contributing notion, fostered by the landed
gentry who increasingly sought refinement and
sophistication in their lives, is well contained in the
following statement:

The arts bestow an intellectual grace upon
society; they refine the taste and soften
themanners....provide a counteracting influence
to the gross and sordid spirit, which is too
often the result of undivided attention to
necessary pursuits.(4)

By the late 1840s Sydney saw a similar combination of
circumstances arising. There were enough artists on the
verge of professionalism and enough wealthy and settled
families in the rapidly developing city to bring about an
approximation with British provincial towns of the
preceeding three decades.

The call to establish art societies in Sydney would
have come as no surprise to Peacock; his upbringing and
painting on a semi-professional basis led to his inevitable
involvement with the cultural groups that arose with
Sydney's increasing refinement. Seeking some control over
their own destinies, Peacock and other Sydney artists
thought it an appropriate time to break away the Society
for the Promotion of the Fine Arts. A number of them
resolved to form their own society, one that was unique to
Australia. This society, with the important word 'Artists'
in its title, was established in the wake of the two
exhibitions staged by the Society for the Promotion of the
Fine Arts in Australia and at a time when Art Unions were increasing in popular appeal.

'Colonna', both a critic and supporter of Art Unions, also held strong views about the formation of a Society of Artists. In publishing these views he placed himself beside Grocott in a call for the unification of the Sydney art world. 'Colonna' had failed to notice that 'An Artist' had previously given an indication that such a Society was already in the formative stages when he had written:

Colonna, however, will never have again to complain about the judges, as the Artists have hit upon a plan which must give satisfaction to all. (5)

The plan was the mooted formation of the Society for Australian Artists. Art Unions had produced, as one important by-product, the realisation that artists might band together, avoid patronising gentry and, at the same time, support themselves by raffling their work. James Turner Grocott, 'Colonna' and 'An Artist' found themselves in accord with this plan and, ironically, with one another.

Grocott's efforts on behalf of Sydney's artists were well appreciated and he was defended in the press by 'An Artist'. In describing Grocott's early efforts to bring about the formation of the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia, 'An Artist' also wrote of the unsatisfactory results that had come from its two exhibitions:
After a year and a half had elapsed, the money accumulated by the charge made for admission was frittered away, disgracefully to the parties concerned. A second attempt was made, about two years ago, and a miserable one it was. I know for a fact that one of its warmest supporters declared that nothing should again induce him to take part in any proceedings which had for its object an exhibition; nor has he ever distinguished himself since that time.<ref 6>

This accusation reveals some of the reasons for the undercurrent of disapproval for the original fine arts society and points to some of the reasons behind the formation of the Australian Society of Artists.

"Colonna" also recognised the ideological split between the two societies. To him it was a case of The Gentry versus The Artists. In a later letter he proclaimed

Be it known then that in this city there are two societies, one called the old, the other called the new society of artists; and that although they both profess the same object, yet there is one essential difference between them - the former includes one artist, the latter has has associated with it almost all the talent (professional) of the colony.<ref 7>

In the same letter, the perceptive "Colonna" summed up the opposing societies in a more detailed and judgemental way

On the one side we find a solitary artist, surrounded by a phalanx of amateurs and connoisseurs, in whose taste and judgement we are by no means disposed to place implicit confidence; on the other an array of professional gentlemen, who being compelled to look after the pounds, shillings and pence, as one of the rewards of their exertions, will be
by far the most likely to study the interest of
the public as well as their own.

This presented art-making in the colony, for the first
time, as something of an industry; an industry peopled by
professionals who were motivated by the opportunity to sell
their work. They are contrasted with the gentry who, not
concerned with generating income from art, promoted the
notion of elevating taste in the community. Covertly they
sought to retain their inherited right to cultural
hegemony. In supporting the artists, "Colonna" claimed it
was them, and not the gentry, who could provide most
benefit for the public.

Pursuing the questions of taste, instruction and
leadership "Colonna" made the interesting observation that

The day is gone when the name of a great man, or
would-be great man, will in any way influence a
people. We are beginning to reason for
ourselves, even in matters of taste, and judge
it as it seems meet, heed less of the approval
or disapproval of the fortuitous children of
rank.<8>

His remark adds another dimension to the differences
between the artists and the gentry. On the wider scene it
reinforces the notion that even before the discovery of
gold, Australians were beginning to enjoy a measure of
social independence and recognise that a more democratic
society was emerging. The period of the gold rush
accelerated, defined and strengthened attitudes which
already existed.
The differences between artists and gentry were intensified by the perceived failure of the exhibitions staged in 1847 and 1849. While those differences were most easily seen in financial terms, other concerns were less visible. Resentment of authority, a sentiment which Peacock must surely have held, was widespread in the colony. Cultural domination and the perpetuation of British and European examples and standards rankled colonial artists. They saw, because of the intervention and dominance of the gentry in cultural activities, a continuance of controls and manipulation which were no longer suited to a changing way of life in the colony. Praise was given to the Australian Society for Artists for taking a stand which saw them remain independent of any ruling-class interference. "Colonna" who was given, at times, to quite verbose writing, announced clearly,

I am happy, then, to be able to say that the new society of artists have not solicited the protection of any little great man - that they are determined to stand or fall by their own merits, and that all they want is a clear stage and no favour. (9)

This new society was later to find that it did need 'favour' from the establishment. For the moment, however, "Colonna's" praise was justified and no doubt well received by the artists. Peacock, who had more to gain than most, was instrumental in the democratic activity necessary to found the society.
Peacock and his co-founders of the Australian Society for Artists were, in an important sense, exercising their right to become independent in a community which had been based, from the beginning, on the principles of authoritarian rule. Cultural pursuits, such as they were, in a utilitarian colony, had always been the preserve of connoisseurs, the rich and the well educated. As the colony grew it was expected that those conventional ways would be maintained. The guardians of such principles were entrenched in the older of Sydney's Fine Art societies.

The letters of "Colonna" included some passages which revealed his socialistic views:

Learning and intelligence are the inheritance of the many, and not confined to the few. All the garbage of official patronage - all the tinsel which decorates honorary presidents and other such worthies, will not force down the public throat institutions which the world at large does not approve of, or open the public pocket to draw forth its cherished money for their support. (10)

These views would have been welcomed by the artists who helped found the Australian Society for Artists because they highlight yet another major area of conflict - that of self-determination as opposed to autocracy in cultural and economic pursuits. Self reliance in the creation, organisation, display and sale of the fine arts in the colony was a vital concern of the new group.

They sought even greater autonomy, by opting for something close to a trade society. Even so, amateurs were
welcome in this society. Trade and craft societies had been formed in the colonies since the 1830s. Most were shortlived with an existence of ten years or more being considered exceptional. Membership numbers were limited; a large society might have up to sixty members while a small society might have only twenty members or less.(11)

Prior to the 1850s some mechanics' societies had organised strikes. When Sydney printers and compositors went on strike in 1840, the Australian spoke out against them but did not denigrate the notion of unions or societies in general. Indeed the newspaper acknowledged the worth and place of societies such as that of the Australian Artists by claiming, 'Societies which are formed to forward trade, and to secure, all things considered, reasonable salaries are admissible and proper'.(12) By the early 1850s trade and craft societies were on the verge of general acceptance even if they remained small and died young.

The Australian Society for Artists may be considered typical for its time. Membership was small and it lasted barely twelve months.

Another Sydney commentator, noticing the essential differences between this and and the gentry-led Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia, praised its formation espousing principles that anticipated the basis of trade unionism in Australia. Addressing the artists of the group he wrote;
We need scarcely remind them that "Union is Strength" and without such unanimity their genius and talent will have little chance of being fully developed or properly rewarded. (13)

It serves to point out once more that colonial artists were not satisfied with the economic rewards or increase in social status which had been generated by the 1847 and 1849 exhibitions. Group members and observers alike recognised that social status was as important as financial reward.

Some thirty years earlier professional American artists had experienced a need for a transformation in the composition of art societies.

The first generation of native artists, grateful for whatever attention the mercantile and professional aristocracies bestowed, gave way in the 1820s to a more demanding and self-conscious group.....they longed for organisations which would uphold their status and allow them to control their own professional destinies. (14)

In a similar way, some Australian colonial artists, not ungrateful for the patronage already received or the efforts of the gentry in forming the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia, believed that their affairs would be best managed by themselves.

As was the case with their American and English equivalents, both early art societies in Sydney recognised the role they might play in establishing teaching academies. Gentry and artists alike considered that the propagation of art was a responsibility which fell within their domain. A School of Art was planned by the Australian
Society of Artists as 'one of its leading features in the original objects', although there was, however, no sign of this school after the first nine months of the Society's life. (15) In a similar way, founders of the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia considered that the establishment of a gallery in Sydney would provide encouragement and inspiration for the young artists of the colony. Some twenty years elapsed before a gallery came into being; then it was not established by this society, which had expired in 1857.

In other parts of Australia art societies were introduced during the 1850s. The Victorian Fine Arts Society held its first exhibition in Melbourne on 29 August 1853 while a subsequent society, The Victorian Society of Fine Arts was founded on 20 October 1856. In Adelaide the South Australian Society of Artists was established in the same year.

In essence, the Victorian societies were in the same mould as the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia. The Victorian Society of Fine Arts appointed a provisional committee of nineteen men on 22 April 1853. Only four of them were painters. By the time of their first exhibition in August the same year there were still only seven painters on the now established committee of nineteen.

The second, and distinctly separate society, was styled the Victorian Society of the Fine Arts. Whilst its
committee included such noted artists as Charles Summers, J.A.Gilfillan, Eugen von Guerard, William Strutt, Ludwig Becker and Nicholas Chevalier, the non-practitioners ensured control for themselves by adopting a rule which stated first that the committee should number fifteen and secondly that no more than six should be professional artists!

The patronising tendency of the Victorian Art Society is demonstrated in a resolution passed by its committee in May 1853 concerning the visiting English painter Marshall Claxton who was held in high regard by colonial art patrons who saw him as representing something of the fine art establishment from home. Their resolution read:

That the exhibition committee shall intimate to Mr. Claxton Esq., that the expenses of sea transit and land carriage here will be borne by the committee out of the proceeds of their Exhibition, and that he be requested to invite say three others of the leading artists in Sydney to contribute pictures not exceeding six pictures or half a ton in measurement to the exhibition. (16)

Claxton's invitation to select works by Sydney artists saw him acting as agent for the Victorian committee.

Both of the early Victorian societies were dominated, not by painters, but by patrons and connoisseurs. In this respect they differed from the Australian Society for Artists.

In January 1850 Peacock had contracted to buy the property on which he resided. The purchase price for the
land, near the Flagstaff at South Head, was to be thirty pounds per annum for the following twenty years. His salary as a meteorologist, which at that time was fifty-four pounds fifteen shillings per annum, would not have been sufficient to support this purchase. Doubtless Peacock expected he would earn money from painting, his only alternative means of income.

For all members one clear benefit offered by the Society was the prospect of selling more paintings. In Peacock’s case membership also offered a degree of regained respectability, the value of which was intensified when he was elected to the committee and later, on occasions, to chairmanship.

At least three Society members, Joseph Fowles, William Griffiths, and Henry Robinson Smith were established painters, while William Hetzer was a professional photographer of some note. Richard Hipkiss, who had played a role in the formation of the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia three years earlier, was a member, as was William Pitt Wilshire, the brother of Sydney’s second Lord Mayor, James Wilshire.

Yet another interesting member of the Australian Society for Artists was William Augustus Miles (1798–1851) who had been Commissioner of Police and Police Magistrate in Sydney. Miles, a man of wide-ranging interests was involved with a number of societies. In a letter to J.P. Townsend, a friend in England, Miles wrote
We have established an Australian Society of Science and Natural History and I am one of the Hon. Secretaries. The Society of Artists has also been established and they have done me the honour to make me their President.(17)

With an interest in both natural history and drawing, Miles was attracted to the rock carvings of Sydney's Aboriginals. Some sketches of these carvings, held by the Mitchell Library, Sydney, are the only known extant works by Miles. Although President of the Society he was, perhaps, the least experienced of the artist members.

In 1847 Miles' accounts as Commissioner of Police had been queried and examined. Subsequently he was found guilty of carelessness. After further charges of insobriety in 1848 and a change of duties, Miles found that the Legislative Council had refused to sanction his salary for 1850. He went into an enforced early retirement and died on 25 April of the following year.(18)

William Griffith of Parramatta was one of the most active and professional artists in the colony during the years leading up to the formation of the Artists' Society. He had shown work in the exhibitions of 1847 and 1849 in Sydney and had also been a major contributor to the Exhibition of Fine Arts at the King's School, Parramatta in October 1847. Griffith was well known in that district for his unique 'Portrait Club' and his supportive attitude to early Art Unions. When John Skinner Prout had discussed and encouraged the formation of an Art Society at Parramatta as early as 1843, Griffith figured prominently in the
plans. (19) Although he may have been expected to be a foundation member of the Australian Society of Artists, Griffith did not join the Society until early December 1850, some ten months after its foundation. (20)

The professional photographer William Hetzer was also admitted to the Society during the meeting in early December. Hetzer, from Germany, had only been in the colony for ten months. He was a well-trained practitioner and amongst the earliest in Australia to consider photography as a form of art. Hetzer, with other Sydney photographers, such as the Freeman Brothers, Charles Norrie, Douglas Kilburn and Thomas Glaister, proved to be an effective businessmen and soon after 1850 it became obvious that they had a highly attractive product which could effectively erode the sale for paintings.

This threat was recognised and confronted by the portrait painter Charles Rodius who campaigned against the camera with a series of newspaper advertisements. He claimed that he could guarantee a correct likeness 'at the same expense as a Daguerreotype or Photograph and depicting the brilliancy of the eye, and avoiding the stiffness which destroys so much from the correct expression of the latter'. (21) (Rodius, of course, had no hope of limiting the popularity of the photograph.)

William Griffith also felt the impact of the camera. According to William Moore, 'The introduction of the Daguerreotype brought a sudden change and henceforth the
artist's life was a grim struggle’. (22) Other artists such as Claxton, Martens and O.R. Campbell were more flexible in their attitudes to photography. Both Claxton and Martens used the camera as an aid to painting while Campbell, who believed that photography 'would ultimately hold an important position in the world of art', forsook painting for photography in 1859. (23) By December 1850 the threat from the camera would have been apparent, though perhaps not fully understood. Accordingly, it comes as something of a surprise that Hetzer was admitted to a Society which remained, in essence, a fraternity of painters.

Mrs. Steadman Christie and Thomas L. Dodd were schoolteachers. Mrs. Christie, who conducted a seminary for young ladies at 170 Elizabeth Street, painted in watercolour and made crayon drawings. She had exhibited work at the exhibitions of 1847 and 1849 and had been awarded prizes in Grocott's Art Unions. Thomas L. Dodd conducted an academy in partnership with his daughter at Bourke Street, Surry Hills. He had also shown works in 1847 and 1849. When the Australian Society of Artists submitted its first application for a charter in 1850, Dodd was chairman of the rules committee. Christie and Dodd, both amateurs, were aware that they stood to benefit by their association with the colony's more professional artists.

One such professional was Henry Robinson Smith whose work was recognised soon after his arrival in the colony. His lithograph of Joseph Coquelin (The Baker) appeared in
Heads of the People, issue number five, on 13 November 1847. Although his work was not shown in the exhibition of 1847, four of his paintings were hung in 1849. He became a prominent exhibitor in the Art Unions conducted by Grocott, winning several prizes for large historical paintings. In November 1850 a committee was formed to commission a portrait of W.C. Wentworth M.L.C. There was some conjecture as to who should paint the portrait but Bell's Life in Sydney had no doubts in the matter. They knew of no better artist in the colony than H.R. Smith, and claimed that some of his recent work, including 'Portrait of a Lady', was of 'a high order of painting'.(24)

Smith's greatest critical acclaim, however, came after the demise of the Australian Society of Artists. In January and July 1855, for example, he received glowing praise for his portrait of Sir Charles Fitzroy. In its early stages the portrait had been admired by the Sydney Morning Herald.(25) The People's Advocate commented later that the likeness was 'one of the best we ever saw; it is a living startling one' and added that it was 'unquestionably one of the finest specimens of portrait painting we have seen in this colony'.(26) The same report described Smith's classical landscape paintings as being of great merit and 'full of poetry'. Although obviously a versatile painter, Smith relied on portraiture to produce a regular income. Apart from Governor FitzRoy, his sitters included prominent businessmen and politicians such as David Jones and George
Allen Esq., M.L.C. (27)

Smith also had an eye for the unusual:

At Mr. Piddington’s, in George Street, is now to be seen a very faithful likeness of an old veteran, who, after many years service in arms for his country, is now reduced to earn a scanty living by selling brooms. “Old Waterloo”, as he is generally called, resides in Double Bay, under a rock, and the picture represents him sitting in front of his rude home. The figure is well designed and executed, while the corner of the bay is represented with that grace and fidelity which characterises all the works of the artist - H.R. Smith of this city. (28)

His versatility, growing reputation and quality of work made Smith a valued member of the fledgling Society.

From the late 1840s the work of Joseph Fowles became familiar in Sydney. In later years he was described as ‘the well-known marine and animal painter’, but when he joined the Artists’ Society his best known work was Sydney in 1848. (29) This publication, issued in twenty parts between 1848 and 1850, consisted of eighty engravings made after his drawings. Intended for an English audience, the engravings depicted in great detail, Sydney’s shops, streets, public buildings etc., etc., which Fowles had observed and recorded with great care. His membership of the Society reinforced the notion that established artists stood to benefit from association with other professionals. Contact with amateur members may have put Fowles in touch with prospective pupils. From at least 1850 Fowles was a teacher in Sydney and, as was the case with Conrad Martens,
taught art in privately established schools. (30)

Fowles had been active at Parramatta in the early part of his Australian career. Like Peacock and others of the Sydney circle, his work had been exhibited at the exhibitions of 1847 and 1849 and he had earned some prize money through Grocott's Art Unions. These events had made artists much more aware of one another's work and, by early 1850, some sense of 'esprit de corps' had developed.

Fowles and William Griffith, who together provided a link with Parramatta, were the only art teachers to become members of the Artists' Society. Had the Society established an academy, as was planned, Joseph Fowles would have taught there. Although the academy never eventuated, Fowles earned a living teaching art in Sydney and Parramatta until at least 1867.

George Edwards Peacock was the only emancapist member of the Australian Society of Artists. Though this may have generated some awkward situations from time to time, it did not diminish the importance of his role in establishing Society rules and his drawing up of the petition for a charter. Peacock, although not a professional artist, had demonstrated a degree of artistic skill and his work had popular appeal. This, combined with the very useful nature of his legal background and training, meant that he was both welcome and productive in a cultural and trade oriented Society otherwise composed of 'free' people. In social terms this group provided the perfect place for
Peacock. He was not associated with emancipists or gentry, but with professionals of his own desired status.

A preliminary meeting was held at the Royal Hotel, George Street on Monday 18 March. Those present agreed that it was both possible and necessary to form an Australian Society of Artists. The meeting was adjourned until the following Monday and advertisements were placed inviting artists and amateurs to attend. At this second meeting of the Society on 25 March 1850, a committee was appointed to deal with its affairs. The committee comprised Messrs. R. Reid Jnr (sic.), W.A. Miles, G.E. Peacock, H.R. Smith and Joseph Fowles with W.P. Wilshire as Secretary. The Sydney Morning Herald reported that:

"It is proposed, at the present stage of the matter, to have periodical exhibitions to which the production of sculptors, painters and every other class of artists shall be admissible."

It was not clearly stated whether work of non-members would be welcome.

The twenty-one people present at the meeting enrolled themselves as the first members of the new society. No complete membership list is extant but Bell's Life reported that 'although many faces were absent which we should have been heartily glad to see, yet there was a goodly muster of professionals and amateurs who entered into the purposes of the meeting con amore'. Some nine months after the initial meeting it was considered that the society 'now
embraces nearly all the professional colonial artists, and some amateurs'. (35)

Monthly meetings of the Society were held at the Royal Hotel in George Street. After the May meeting, Bell's Life in Sydney reported that the Society was progressing steadily and that it seemed to be based on sound principles. Although colonial life demanded a utilitarian approach the paper believed that there was an important place for this Society and applauded its establishment and progress. There was a deal of support from outside the ranks of members. Indeed the report, noting that membership was strictly confined to professional and amateur artists, suggested that if this were not the case its 'ranks would be swelled by numbers who are anxious to encourage the arts in Australia'. (36) The Rules and Regulations of the Society came in for special notice. They were 'admirably framed and reflect the greatest credit upon the committee which was deputed by the general body to form them'. (37) Peacock might well have been pleased by that observation.

During the May and June meetings plans were laid for the first quarterly meeting, scheduled for Monday 1st of July. This meeting, held at the regular venue, would take the form of a 'Conversatizione'. Members were asked to display as much of their work as possible 'including any that may have been produced at former meetings'. (38) At the meeting the display of sketches and drawings in watercolours, pencil and crayons provided a forum for
'interesting and instructive' discussion. In particular the work of H.R. Smith, F. Willis, W.P. Wilshire, G.E. Peacock. Joseph Fowles and Mr. Wickham were mentioned as 'admirable'.

Oil paintings by Richard Hipkiss and a crayon drawing by W.G. Moore, the auctioneer, were singled out for critical attention. This was the largest and most successful meeting to date, and the committee might well have felt pleased with themselves when it was later reported that such meetings 'tended to inspire a general feeling for the Arts in the colony'. Furthermore, several patrons had attended this 'Conversatizione'. This encouraged the notion that future Society exhibitions would serve to strengthen links between artist and patron.

In terms of membership the society progressed well, but the names of prominent artists of the 1840s and 50s were missing from its list. Closer examination shows, however, that many were unavailable to the society for a variety of reasons. For example, G.F. Angas was in South Australia, while William Dexter, O.R. Campbell and S.T. Gill had not yet arrived in Sydney. Edward Winstanley, Raphael Clint and Maurice Felton were dead by March 1850 while John Skinner Prout had returned to England. His cousin Samuel Prout Hill resided in Hobart at the time the Australian Society for Artists was formed.

Three other prominent artists, Conrad Martens, William Nicholas and James Armstrong Wilson owed their allegiances
to the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia, the society which had appointed them collectively their hanging committee during the previous year. This 'split' in Sydney's artistic ranks deprived the foundling society of a number of members. Martens and Nicholas, two of the colony's most experienced artists, would have provided measures of professionalism, status and credibility, the very qualities the society sought to cultivate. Martens would have been first choice to head the mooted academy while Nicholas was Sydney's most published artist and well known through his work for *Heads of the People*. The third artist, James Armstrong Wilson, who had exhibited nineteen of his own works at the 1849 exhibition, later settled with his wife and children in the McLeay River District. He was not in Sydney when the Australian Society for Artists was formed. Nevertheless, like Martens and Nicholas he would undoubtedly have remained loyal to the society from which he had gained considerable recognition and respect in the preceding year.

Wilson had cultivated the friendship of Sir Charles Nicholson who had been president of the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia since its foundation in 1847. Furthermore his greatest friend in the colony was Conrad Martens. During his earlier residence in Van Diemen's Land, Wilson had renewed a shipboard acquaintance with Sir John and Lady Franklin and was a person who continually sought out contact with influential
people. A cultured and much travelled person, though not rich, Wilson's position in Sydney society was such that he was frequently invited to Government House for social occasions. These aspects of his life have been illuminated in the reminiscences of his daughter, Anne Hale Chapman. She recalled that

When Governor Gipps was Governor of Sydney my father and mother use to be invited to Government House my mother accepted the 'Invitation' but could not attend as she had not a dress that would be fit altho she had good ones but not such as would be good enough for the 1st Artist in Sydney - she could not get one under five pounds which perhaps she would not have an opportunity of wearing any other time & one could not attend always in the same dress but my father always went; he looked so nice dressed in Black Cloth Evening dress - black silk stockings and pumps, Breeches were worn then (in fact) regular Court Dress. It is there he met Sir Charles Nicholson, they became great friends my father being a highly educated man & could speak on any subject.(41)

These observations, although coloured by time and memory, serve to point out the 'social' nature of some Sydney people of the day and provide a better understanding of the attitudes which obviously prevailed in Societies such as the one which sought to elevate taste and control the production, exhibition and sale of the fine arts in the colony. Wilson, along with Martens and Nicholas had exerted a great influence on the 1849 exhibition. In the process they effectively alienated many of Sydney's art practitioners.

When "Colonna" referred to the Society for the
Promotion of the Fine Arts having 'one artist' member, he referred to Conrad Martens. Apparently the correspondent did not take account of William Nicholas, who lived until 1854 and could have been considered for membership of the new society were it not for his loyalty to the old guard.

Martens regarded himself as something of a singular figure in the Sydney art world. He bowed only to the very occasional arrival of some noted artist from England. When Marshall Claxton arrived in Sydney, Martens wasted no time in introducing himself and was flattered to learn that he had been described to Claxton as the only artist in the colony. Indeed Martens rightly considered himself as the colony's most experienced and professional artist and it was this standing which made him something of a 'figurehead' in the eyes of the conservatives who dominated Sydney's older art society.

Martens was never content with the prevailing economic conditions in the colony (and he did suffer adversely during the recession of the 1840s) nor was he content with art patronage in Sydney. He also considered that he stood well above the generally low artistic standards prevailing in the colony, an observation which had been strengthened by his dominance of the 1849 exhibition. These factors, in combination, produced in Martens, a desire to stand alone. Commenting, in a very dismissive manner, about the formation of the new artists society in Sydney Martens wrote;
In my opinion there is not talent enough in the colony at present to support a thing of the kind and therefore I do not move in the matter. There are some chaps here who call themselves artists trying to bring about something of the kind.\(^{(43)}\)

His comment directed at 'some chaps who call themselves artists' indicates Martens' lack of respect for his fellow practitioners in Sydney. The observation that they were 'trying to bring about something of the kind' is a condescending one when it is known that the society had already been established for six months, had several times been reported as progressing steadily and had enrolled more than twenty members who comprised almost all of the professional artists in Sydney.\(^{(44)}\)

Two basic assumptions may be made from Martens' declared attitudes. First, he gave absolutely no consideration to joining this Society which aimed at improving the lot of professional artists in the colony. Secondly, he believed that only when he was ready to 'move in the matter' would a Society of Artists be successfully launched.

After the Art Union Act had been passed in September 1850, the Australian Society of Artists drew up an application for a charter. This application, lodged on 19 October 1850, sought the Governor's permission for the Society to conduct Art Unions on their own behalf. A copy of the Society's rules accompanied their application.

The rules, in most instances, were based closely on those of the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in
Australia. The new Society sought a one guinea subscription to their Art Union; this would also admit the subscriber and family to the exhibition. After certain expenses had been deducted subscriptions were to be used to purchase a selection of the art works exhibited. These were to become the lots publicly drawn for in the Art Union. Initially, a committee comprised of Society members was to accept or reject all works submitted for the exhibition. A second committee was to award honorary prizes and make the selections of those works to be purchased for the Art Union lots. Although this committee was also to establish the purchase price for each work, artists were not bound to accept the offer.

Overall this scheme promised obvious benefits for members. Whilst promoting and encouraging the production and distribution of the Fine Arts in the colony it was also potentially of great financial benefit to the artists.

When the application came before the Legislative Council on 28 October 1850 it was referred to the Attorney and Solicitor General for their consideration. The Legislative Council suggested that the legal officers should confer with members of the Artist’s Society about any alterations which might be necessary to the rules or the application’s form.

There were several points which the Attorney General sought to clarify so he called a meeting with a deputation from the Australian Society of Artists. Their two-man
deputation included Peacock who, for the first time in fourteen years, had occasion to employ his skill and training as a solicitor. After discussions had taken place, the Attorney General requested that the Society re-submit their application in an altered form.

Peacock again proved useful to the Society. On 11 December 1850 he forwarded a letter, the amended rules, and a petition to the Governor. This petition, signed by W.A. Miles, W.P. Wilshire, H.R. Smith, Joseph Fowles and Peacock, placed an increased emphasis on the Society's planned role in 'promoting the study and advancement of the Fine Arts in Australia'. It was proposed that the Society would;

establish Exhibitions of Paintings, Sculpture and other works of art....distribute honorary prizes for the best productions in the various branches of Art...establish an Academy and a Gallery of Art; whereby to cultivate and improve the taste for the Fine Arts throughout the Colony

The Art Union Act had directed that Art Unions would only be permitted when they encouraged the Fine Arts and when subscriptions were 'expended solely on and entirely in the purchase of paintings, drawings or other works of Art'.

The artist's deputation discovered that their initial submission had placed too much importance on the Art Union and insufficient on the notion of raising public consciousness and taste in the field of Fine Art.

Early in the new year the Attorney General made his
appraisal of the second submission. His opinions were contained in a letter of reply to the Colonial Secretary on 14 January 1851. He considered that 'the Society in question is not such as the Legislation had in contemplation when passing the Act'. (46) When the Act referred to 'voluntary associations' it did not propose the inclusion of those of a 'professional character'. Rather, the desireable associations were considered to be those, of persons of all classes, formed for encouraging and promotion the Fine Arts with the ultimate object of raising the taste of the community at large as well as that of incidentally benefitting the professors of the arts. (47)

The Art Union Societies of London, Scotland and Dublin provided distant but worthy examples of such Societies. Their office bearers were not artists, but gentlemen of taste 'qualified to decide upon the merits of the works of art without being within the reach of interested motives or of professional jealousies'. (48)

The Attorney General also expressed concern about the direct involvement of professional artists in a Society which appeared to be purely professional. He did not believe that such a Society would 'meet with the same public encouragement as one in which subscribers constituted the "Art Union". After considering these opinions the Executive Council recorded a Minute on 4 February 1851. It stated flatly that the application from
the Australian Society of Artists for a charter could not be complied with.

The Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia had also applied for a charter at the end of 1850. Their application had been lodged some three weeks after that of the Australian Society of Artists. Prior to any decision being announced, the progress of the respective applications had been the subject of a letter published in the People’s Advocate. The correspondent was ‘Colonna’ who continued to concern himself with the wider issues of the Fine Arts in Sydney and the Art Union debate in particular. Supporting the cause of the Australian Society of Artists he wrote:

An application has been made for a charter, and we certainly can see no reason why the Attorney General can possibly refuse so just and so equitable a demand. But it is said that the older Society have made a similar application, and that while the learned gentleman finds himself unwilling to sanction both, he is rather puzzled to decide which of the two is more deserving. (49)

‘Colonna’s’ letter revealed that the artists’ application was not to be judged simply on its merits but that it was now a case of ‘one or the other’. Naturally there was some suspicion that the decision would favour the ‘establishment’ society, given its close links with the ruling class in the colony. For instance, Nicholson was President of the SPFAA and Speaker of the House.

In mid-February, when ‘Colonna’ learned of the
decision to deny the artists' application, he resorted once more to print, hastening to assure both the Attorney and Solicitor General that:

the force of public opinion will prove too strong in the end for private influence or private interest, and that the people will not join in any sentence so unjust as that which prevents artists, as a body, from having power over their own exhibitions. (50)

No doubt 'Colonna' (and many other Sydney people) expected that the old Society would, soon after, be awarded a charter to conduct Art Unions, but this was not the case.

The Executive Council had begun considering that application on 28 January 1851. Incredibly it was referred between the legal officers and the Council at least ten times and the matter was still unresolved in January 1852. The SPFAA eventually fared no better than the artists.

There is no record of any activity by the artists' group after its failure to gain a charter. For a brief period Peacock had aligned himself with some interesting and active people. Together they attracted some worthwhile public support and meetings of the Society had provided the very type of forum that members had sought. The object of the Society 'to establish an Academy and a Gallery of Art' was a worthy one, and had this and other goals been realised George Edwards Peacock may well have remained a 'noted figure' in Sydney's art world.
Notes - Chapter Six

(1) S.M.H. 20 March 1850 and Bell’s Life in Sydney, 23 March 1850.
(2) S.M.H. 20 March 1850.
(3) Trevor Fawcett, op.cit., p.1
(5) People’s Advocate, 21 September 1850 p2.
(6) ibid.
(7) People’s Advocate, 14 December 1850.
(8) People’s Advocate, 16 October 1850, p7.
(9) People’s Advocate, 14 December 1850.
(10) People’s Advocate, 14 December 1850.
(11) F.K.Crowley, Colonial Australia, p569.
(12) Australian, 16 January 1840.
(13) Bell’s Life in Sydney, 23 March 1850.
(14) Neil Harris, The Artist in American Society p98.
(15) S.M.H., 7 December 1850 p5.
(20) Bell’s Life in Sydney, 7 December 1850, p2.
(21) Bell’s Life in Sydney, 4 April 1855.
(23) S.M.H., 28 November 1859.
(24) Bell’s Life in Sydney, 16 November 1850 p2.
(25) S.M.H., 27 January 1855.
(26) People’s Advocate, 14 July 1855.
(27) Bell’s Life in Sydney, 30 April 1853, p2.
(28) People’s Advocate, 4 January 1851 p3.
(29) People’s Advocate, 14 April 1855 p3.
(31) The Reid noted here was, most probably, Richard Read Jnr., the portrait painter who had loaned several works for the 1849 Exhibition. There was a J.T.Read (or J.A>) painting in Sydney in the late 1840s and he also contributed work to the 1849 Exhibition. Consequently there is a possibility that he was the Read of the committee. The Reid of the original A.S.F.A. did not appear on a list of committee members made on 11 December 1850; this would align with the "disappearance" of Richard Read Jnr., about this time as noted by Buscombe and the A.D.B.
(32) S.M.H., 27 March 1850 p3.
(33) ibid.
(34) Bell’s Life, 23 March 1850 p2.
(35) S.M.H., 27 March 1850 p3.
(36) Bell’s Life in Sydney, 4 May 1850 p2.
Chapter Six

(37) ibid.

(38) S.M.H., 27 June 1850 p1.

(39) Bell's Life in Sydney 6 July 1850 p2.

(40) ibid.

(41) Reminiscenses of Anne Hale Chapman (nee Wilson) from 1835-1903. MSS 2837, ML.

(42) Conrad Martens to Henry Martens, MSQ 313, March 1851, ML.

(43) Conrad Martens to Henry Martens, MSQ 313, September 13, 1850 p6, ML.

(44) Bell's Life, 4 May 1850, p2.

(45) Art Union Act 1850.

(46) Attorney General's Office to the Executive Council, 51/578, 14 January 1851, ADNSW.

(47) ibid.

(48) ibid.

(49) People's Advocate, 14 December 1850.

(50) People's Advocate, 18 February 1851 p4.
At South Head Peacock lived on the fringe of a rapidly developing city. In a significant way he was influenced both by the urban and the rural way of life which provided him with subjects for his paintings. The urban was always viewed by Peacock with certain limitations. He was uninterested, as were most early Victorian artists, in depicting the squalor and working class areas of large cities. Such conventions dominated in the type of Victorian culture which prevailed in the colonies. (1) On rare occasions, however, Peacock put aside these British nineteenth century conventions to move into the heart of the city— to the quayside for example— to paint people at work.

In Van Diemen's Land, John Glover had avoided painting images of the city almost entirely, while in Sydney Martens and Peacock often chose to paint with their backs to the city centre as they looked out across fine and picturesque vistas of the harbour and its surrounding countryside. Even when these artists chose to include images of Sydney in their work it was almost always from a safe distance—a distance which would obliterate the details of working life there. Glover, Martens and Peacock had all formulated their ideals in and around London in the early nineteenth century. Despite the presence of social observers such as Dickens and (earlier) Hogarth— both exceptions rather than
the rule - the working classes, their lives and work situations, were not considered attractive or profitable subjects for literature and art.

Martens and Peacock had inherited a tradition which demanded 'aristocratic' views of the city. Realism, frankness and the display of a social conscience were not qualities which motivated Victorian patrons to buy paintings. They sought views which dispelled any polluting contact with classes of people, events or places they considered beneath their social status. Consequently when Peacock painted labourers near the Custom House in 1845 ([Illus.31.-cat.22] and [Illus.32.-cat.23], he may well have realised the decreased possibility of selling the work (or done it only because he had a commission).

John Glover had painted views of London and Rome from a comfortable distance, but most often he had chosen rural scenes which satisfied the demand for the ideal and romantic. In Van Diemen's Land he was financially independent, able to discard convention and develop a pantheistic vision, concentrating his energies almost exclusively on the landscape of his adopted Deddington. Glover was a wealthy pioneer settler; Martens and Peacock in Sydney were urban-based artists dependent on some market for their work and tethered to a city which was far from romantic or God-given in many of its aspects. As convention demanded, they were necessarily and carefully selective when confronted with the diverse elements of city life.
Some of the English conventions of rural picturesqueness were modified to suit the Sydney landscape. The term 'picturesque' has come to convey a number of different meanings. In the context of this discussion the word is best understood if the definitions of the Reverend William Gilpin and Richard Payne Knight are kept in mind. For Gilpin 'picturesque' meant 'that kind of beauty that would look well in a picture',\(^2\) while Knight considered that the picturesque was the 'true representation of the visible appearance of things'.\(^3\)

While Peacock worked mostly at picturing the beauty of his everyday surrounds in a naturalistic way, examples may be shown where he settled on more exotic subjects. These can be categorised under a third definition of the picturesque as outlined by Sir Uvedale Price, who argued that it was an 'aesthetic category distinct from both the sublime and the beautiful, and distinguished by roughness, sudden variation and irregularity'.\(^4\) In *Morning at the Heads of Port Jackson or The Pilot's Lookout*, 1850, [Illus.33.-cat.55] Peacock isolates such characteristics in the scene, with a motivation which varied from time to time.

Most often Peacock retained a 'topographical' or naturalistic approach to a subject yet rendering this (via colour and atmospheric effects, distncing and point of view) in a way that revealed his hopes and dreams for the future of the city. This combination of picturesqueness,
selected viewpoints and a romantic dream for the future provides an iconographical key to Peacock’s painting.

Other men made observations of Sydney’s future in the same light. Erasmus Darwin had written, in verse, of his own perceptions for the future of Botany Bay. The poet’s image, romantic though it was, aligned with the images later painted by Peacock. Darwin had envisaged a city where ‘Embellished villas crown the landscape scene’. (5) The poet imagined and hoped that from insignificant beginnings a great and classical city would grow. That this was far from the designed purpose for the settlement mattered little to Darwin. Peacock from his vantage point along the South Head Road witnessed and recorded the unfolding of Darwin’s prophecy of hope made in this poem:

Where Sydney Cove her lucid bosom swells,
Courts her young navies, and the storm repels;
High on a rock amid the troubled air
HOPE stood sublime, and wav’d her golden hair;
Calm’d with her rosy smile the tossing deep,
And with sweet accents charmed the wind to sleep;
To each wild plain she stretch’d her snowy hand,
High-waving wood, and sea-encircled strand.
‘Hear me,’ she cried, ‘ye rising Realms! record
‘Time’s opening scenes, and Truth’s unerring word.’
‘There shall broad streets their stately walls extend,
‘The circus widen, and the crescent bend;
‘There ray’d from cities o’er the cultured land,
‘Shall bright canals, and solid roads expand.—
‘There the proud arch, Colossus-like, bestride
‘Yon glittering streams, and bound the chaffing tide;
‘Embellishe’d villas crown the landscape-scene,
‘Farms wave gold, and orchards blush between.—
‘There shall tall spires, and dome-capt towers ascend,
'And piers and quays their massy structures blend;
'While with each breeze approaching vessels glide,
'And northern treasures dance on every tide.'-
Then ceas'd the nymph-tumultuous echoes roar,
And JOY'S loud voice was heard from shore to shore-
Her graceful steps descending press'd the plain,
And PEACE, and ART, and LABOUR, join'd her train.

Lieutenant Daniel Southwell, mate on the Sirius,
lamented the lack of 'charm'g seats, superb buildings, the
grand ruins of stately edifices', adding sadly that, 'Tis
greatly to be wished these appearences were not as delusive
as in reality they are'.(6)

During 1789, at his Etruria pottery, Josiah Wedgwood
had cast a medallion in clay sent from Botany Bay. The
medallion, depicting Hope encouraging Art and Labour, under
the influence of Peace was inspired by Darwin's verse.(7)
[Illus.34.] Considered to be the earliest sculptural work
concerned with the colony it expresses, in a neoclassical
mode, similar attitudes to those later adopted by Peacock.

The architect Edmund Blacket planned great secular and
religious buildings which had a central place in the future
of Sydney as he would have it. The claim has been made that

often one finds a correlation between the dreams
of the topographers and those who attempted to
change the city through building and
planning.(8)

Peacock's dream for Sydney's future was no less visible
than that of Darwin's or Blacket's. The dream was given
substance by his depiction of private and public
architecture (but only that of quality and class), glimpses
of grand gardens rambling down to the harbour’s edge and
distant, hazy views of the city. On the borderline of the
civilised city, Peacock sometimes reinvented the
Aborigines, including them in his paintings both for their
curiosity value and as signifiers of the barbarity overcome
by European presence and dominance.

Peacock presented all of his subjects clothed in
colour which had decidedly Romantic connotations. Unlike
Martens, Peacock’s skies were peaceful; most often suffused
with the pink tinges of late afternoon. He was not
concerned with the drama of weather changes and cloud
formations, two scientific aspects of the landscape which
intrigued his mentor. Martens carried with him his training
and experiences aboard the Beagle with such dedicated men
of science as Fitz Roy and Darwin and deliberately sought
out conditions in Sydney which allowed him to employ his
expressive skills as they related to both the dramatic and
scientific aspects of weather. Peacock had undergone no
such experience or training; he confronted the landscape
with an attitude that was surprisingly optimistic and calm.

When combining architecture and landscape Peacock
sought warm colour harmonies, suggesting a peaceful and
balmy mood. Indeed his work indicates that, despite the
great disruption to his life, Peacock had developed a deep
affection for Sydney, its harbour and surrounding bays and
Chapter Seven

In the world that Peacock knew and described, humanity, not nature, would prevail. Nature, however, would provide the benign setting in which the human spirit would be nurtured.

Peacock painted many buildings, both new and old, in his quest to display the progress of the colony. In particular, he lavished attention on the new Government House, painting it many times from a number of viewpoints.

Of course the colony lacked any sense or display of antiquity. William Woolls noticing this had written:

It is a remark frequently made by persons who have immigrated to New South Wales, that this colony is not only devoid of any venerable remains of antiquity, but that it is also deficient in those scenes which contribute so much to enliven and dignify the histories of other countries.(9)

His subject matter shows that Peacock was largely in sympathy with Woolls' observation. The painter, raised in a family that nurtured a well developed sense of tradition, saw that buildings such as the new Government House, the Supreme Court and sculptures such as E.H. Baily's Sir Richard Bourke [Illus.35.] would become exemplars of the history of the colony. Such monuments enshrined the prevailing values of British culture. Woolls, like Peacock, did not despair of the new land, he saw that:

Australia is by no means deficient in objects of interest to persons of refined taste. She may, indeed, be poor in works of art, but she is rich
in those of nature. Instead of splendid piles and victorious triumphs, she can boast of her clear Italian sky, her woolly flocks, her vine and fig; while her stupendous mountains and awful glens are far superior to all the paltry works of human skill. (10)

Peacock, painting some ten or fifteen years after Woolls had made his observations, certainly revelled in the natural beauty and wonders of the harbour and its surrounds in his art. The experience of a compelling closeness with nature was now enriched and expanded by a vital concern with the emergence of buildings and monuments destined to become the colony’s own ‘antiquity’. His enchantment with the landscape of Port Jackson and ever-increasing human occupation of it are concerns which dominate his work.

The oldest building in the colony, the original Government House, was strictly functional and displayed nothing of the grandeur and dignity normally associated with the seat of Government. Nevertheless, it did represent, in a tangible way, a connection with the colony’s beginnings. As such it stood, after vacated by Governor Gipps, as a monument to the ever increasing rate of the colony’s progress, a historic monument to be recorded before its demolition. Peacock’s painting of this house is relaxed and sympathetic but displays an air of desolation. [Illus.36.—cat.32] There is nothing of the stiff formality which is easily associated with the architecture of its successor. The one represents a crude adaptability to new surroundings; the other, placed
conspicuously on the slopes above Bennelong Point, speaks
of authority, importance and a tranference of European
sophistication to the antipodes.

Peacock's concern with architecture may be seen again
and again in his paintings of the Supreme Court, the
Customs House, and the private villas of the wealthier
colonists on the picturesque bays of the harbour and along
the heights above Woolloomooloo. The works provide a record
of the way Sydney developed in the 1840s and the 1850s.
More importantly for a study of this painter's work, they
reveal a great deal about his interests in, and attitudes
to, the growing affluence and sophistication of the colony.
Woolls saw benefit only in nature; Peacock looked to the
ever developing emergence of a dignified classical spirit
in the hope that this would achieve the antipodean dream, a
new Athens in the natural setting of Sydney and its
splendid surrounds.

For Peacock the building of the new Government House
represented a significant development in his 'antipodean
dream'. For many in the colony, this building was
illustrative of increasing wealth and signalled also the
social progress that had been made as the colony left
convictism behind. Such attitudes were typical and meant
that there was an immediate and steady demand for images of
the building.

Conrad Martens, Joseph Fowles, Henry Curzon Allport
and John Skinner Prout were just some of the artists who
depicted the new Government House. Of these it was Martens and Peacock whose images were the most Romantic. Martens, especially in his earliest paintings of the building, adopted a thoroughly Picturesque attitude to the work. Accepting the rare opportunity to work directly from a motif which would reflect their understanding of the ancient past, Sydney artists of the 1840s and 1850s welcomed the new Government House with enthusiasm. The prominence and importance of the building meant that each of Sydney's citizens had both typical and personal reactions to the building.

Peacock took a wide view of the building and its picturesque setting. No other colonial building could have meant as much to him. Grand in style and scale, the new Government House was an imposing monument to British presence in the southern hemisphere. In Government House, Sydney, 1850, [Illus.37.-cat.54] Peacock describes the harbour, its softly romantic surrounds and a building, which, with its castellated turrets, was as English a confection as could possibly be imagined. As this building rose above the trees tops on Bennelong Point, Peacock's considered hopes for an increasingly sophisticated city in the south rose with it.

Government House 1850, was not a hurried work. The building had been included in a number of Peacock's paintings before this date. Here, however, he finally comes to terms with the building, its setting, its surroundings
and the authoritative air with which it is charged.

Edward Blore's plans had been in Sydney since 1834, but it was not until 1837 that the building had got under way. When the "Prince George" sailed into Port Jackson in May of that year, final approval for the building had not yet been given. This came from Downing Street on 27 July 1837. (11)

During the next two years Peacock was at Port Macquarie, but by 1843 the 'Palace' as it was dubbed by the Sydney Morning Herald, was virtually completed. Whilst the Colonial Architect, Mortimer Lewis, and the Civil Engineer, Colonel George Barney, had made some practical changes to the plan and construction, the essential flavour of the building, as designed by Blore, remained. It was the building's highly romantic and lofty quality which penetrated the vision of artist Peacock as he witnessed its growth.

Peacock began painting in Sydney in 1843 and continued for nine years. During that period he included the new Government House in a number of paintings. He had, at the beginning of his colonial painting career, made small oil studies of the original Government House in Bridge Street. [Illus. 36.-cat. 32]. That building together with the new Government House, still under construction, was described by John Hood in 1841:

Old Government House is a respectable-looking, unpretending mansion, with a verandah in front;
and is of rather picturesque appearance from its irregularity...However a new one has arisen, and a very handsome structure it is...somewhat Elizabethan in style, but not exactly...it is a residence quite equal to the circumstances and income of a Governor of Australia.(12)

When he painted the respective Government Houses, Peacock sought to convey different attitudes to each. The original Government House, occupied by Governor George Gipps until 1843, was painted in a rather whimsical style with the animals that grazed on the front lawn (sheep and camels) enjoying a remarkable prominence. This house, which had grown by instalments since Phillip's time, presented the almost comical architectural face of settlement (now long past and in decay). By contrast the new building was, to Victorian gentlemen in Sydney, the very epitome of architectural sophistication. It was designed and built in a style that would be fashionable in Sydney for the next three decades.

On 25 May 1842, the Herald reported that the Ensign of St. George had been hoisted on the new building in honour of the Queen’s birthday. Conrad Martens' painting Government House 1842 shows the building with the Union flag flying.

Grand architectural schemes have always proved an attraction to artists and photographers; the many images of Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Opera House attest to this. Just as these gave rise to artistic expression and social response in the 20th century, so did the new Government House in the 1840s.
Peacock in Government House 1850 (Illus.37.-cat.54) chose to set the painting in a dramatic late-afternoon light. Long shadows are cast by people and trees, while the foreground is raked by a golden shaft of light reminiscent of of Turner or Claude. The west facade of Government House is contrasted against a background of bushland; the British flag, as in Martens' image, dominates the skyline. Towards the right edge of the painting Peacock includes part of Francis Greenway's stables. This inclusion of an ambitious relic of the Macquarie era not only describes the extent of the Governor's estate and emphasises implicit notions of both power and wealth, it also links the old and the new.

The same use of light is evident in Custom House and Part of Circular Wharf, Sydney, N.S.W. 1845, (Illus.32.-cat.23). Here Peacock takes a much more intimate view of day-to-day life in the city than was his normal practice. The bustling quayside, dotted with men working, competes for attention with the imposing building of the Custom House. Both are located in a broad band of light which dominates the middle-ground. This work and Government House 1850, demonstrate that Peacock had observed closely (quite possibly from the works of Martens in Sydney) the fashionable landscape conventions of the day. Nevertheless, in Custom House and part of Circular Quay Wharf Sydney NSW 1845, (illus.32.-cat.23) he breaks a cardinal rule of composition by situating a large, dark-toned, tree in the centre of the painting. As a result, the painting is
divided into two distinct areas; the architecture of the Custom House, which was not grand enough for Peacock to make it a subject in its own right, and the activity on the quayside.

A second painting of the Custom House was made in 1845, the year after the building had been erected to plans by the colonial architect, Mortimer Lewis. In this work, Custom House and Circular Quay 1845, [Illus.31.-cat.22] Peacock showed a willingness to take a closer viewpoint still. This necessarily involved him with a depiction of the working-class people who laboured around the quayside. Here there are a series of contrasts. The bland architecture of the Custom House is deliberately juxtaposed with the fanciful new Government House in the distance. The grace and elegance of sailing vessels moored in the harbour is contrasted with the plodding horse and cart in the foreground, and, more obviously still, with the labourer who struggles away from the quay with a heavy sack across his shoulders. For Peacock, this is a rare work because it shows the reality of life in Sydney as opposed to the romantic notions more frequently addressed in his paintings. Even when Peacock depicts gardeners at work Craigend [Illus.38.-cat.86] and Mr. Gregory's Garden [Illus.40.-cat.83], he does so to emphasise the status of the owners, who are invariably absent.

The artist's nostalgia for his own days in the legal profession may, perhaps, be evident in his work Supreme.
Court House, Sydney, 1845. [Illus.40.-cat.24]. Be-wigged lawyers stroll with clients on the unmade paths leading to the Grecian-style Court House. Peacock views the scene - excluded from the world of justice and the law - on the other side of South Head Road. He carefully positioned himself so that the work could include the new Government House in the middle-ground. The recently completed Supreme Court House, again by Mortimer Lewis, with Greek doric columns and pediment dominating its facade, was, like Government House, another public face of the British institutions and their accompanying attitudes which permeated the colony.

For Peacock this building had a dual significance. While representing links with his own professional past it was, in a less tangible way, an addition to those architectural markers which plotted the transference of a respected and powerful culture to the antipodean wilderness. The latter was, by 1845 - when he received a conditional pardon - a major concern of the artist.

At least as early as 1824 when Joseph Lycett painted 'The Residence of John McArthur Esq., Near Parramatta N.S.W.', there was a sense abroad that 'polite society' had been established in the colony. (13) This consideration, partly based on the civilised and planned nature of Macarthur's landscape gardens, was strengthened by the obvious taming and pushing back of the bush. Landscape gardening became a pursuit which signalled the arrival of
cultured man in the new colony.

Altered attitudes to the land, brought about by a growing sense of permanency, meant that aesthetic considerations partly replaced those utilitarian attitudes which had prevailed in the earliest days of the colony. This new emphasis on aesthetics and quality of life saw the establishment of numerous societies, several of which were dedicated to the Fine Arts and to botanical and horticultural pursuits. By 1836, for example, the Australian Floral and Horticultural Society had been established in Sydney and three years later a Horticultural Society was established in Hobart Town.

John Glover, at Hobart and later at Deddington, made detailed studies of the gardens which surrounded his houses. In a work which he later displayed in London, (Hobart from the Garden where I Lived) Glover sought to establish his ideas of the close correlation between nature, the garden and civilisation. As if to magnify this connection he inscribed on the verso of his canvas:

John Glover 1832 Hobart Town, taken from the garden where I lived. The Geraniums, Roses etc. will give some idea how magnificent the garden may be had here. Government House is to the left of the church, the Barracks on the eminence to the right.

Glover, a man given over to the land in all of its aspects, and yet a long-time city dweller as well, saw God, civilisation and permanency represented in the cultivated
Chapter Seven

English gardens cleared from the wilderness.

When the fine houses of Woolloomooloo Heights began to rise in the 1830s gardens and gardeners were to play a prominent part in their establishment.

The settling of the colony had prolonged the life of the ‘Landscape Movement’ which had been prominent in England during the eighteenth century. In America Andrew Jackson Downing had written popular and persuasive texts on landscape gardening during the 1840s. His works, Treatise on Landscape Gardening (1841) and The Architecture of Country Houses (1842) emphasised his dedication to romanticism and to the Gothic Revival style. With Calvert Vaux he won the competition which gave birth to New York’s Central Park, a 340 hectare park based on the English principles of the picturesque. In Sydney the leading exponent of the movement was Thomas Shepherd. His Lectures on Landscape Gardening in Australia was published, by William McGarvie, in Sydney, during 1836.

Thomas Shepherd was born in Fifeshire, Scotland in 1870. Brought up on the estate of the Earl of Crawford where his father was head gardener, Shepherd learned the rudiments of landscape gardening at an early age and had studied under Scotland’s master gardener, Thomas White Snr. Shepherd left England, bound for New Zealand, in 1826. Prior to his departure, he had been granted land in Van Diemen’s Land but later exchanged this, with Governor Darling’s approval, for twenty-eight acres in Chippendale,
not far from the centre of Sydney. Out of gratitude, the
grant was named the Darling Nursery.

During 1834 Shepherd had delivered four lectures on
the horticulture of Australia. Then, in June 1835, he gave
the first of a series of seven lectures on Landscape
Gardening at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts. He spoke
before a 'crowded and highly delighted audience' who had
come to hear Australia's first public lectures on the
subject. (16) Shepherd was ill at the time this series was
undertaken and lived only a short time longer. He died in
Sydney on 31 August 1835. (17)

Shepherd aimed to increase the prestige and status of
his profession. As was the case with painters in Sydney,
gardeners were often considered tradesmen on the level of
craftsmen/labourers. Shepherd was at pains throughout his
lectures to point out the scientific and artistic bases of
the work and the amount of study required before one could
hope to be successful. In this sense professional landscape
gardeners may be compared with the painters and printmakers
in Sydney who sought, through a variety of means, to alter
public perception of their worth. Shepherd carried with him
some of the solid landscape gardening traditions
established in eighteenth century England by men such as
'Capability' Brown and Repton as well as his own master,
Mr. White. During the lecture series Shepherd took every
opportunity to praise the profession which he followed:
Landscape gardening...is justly considered a science of design and taste founded on principles common to other sciences, such as Architecture and Landscape Painting, the objects of which are similar. (18)

His reference to Landscape Painting was repeated often in the series emphasising the creative and imaginative aspects of his work. This comparison and its espousal before audiences of Sydney gentry aided the artist’s cause and again pointed to the growing concern with higher standards and ideals amongst the creative talents in the colony.

Shepherd considered that Landscape Painters and Pastoral Poets were close allies of the Landscape Gardener because they worked on the same subjects. His is a very Picturesque viewpoint:

By the art, skill, and taste of the Landscape Gardener, a more sublime, picturesque or beautiful scene, and state of things, is formed, than nature could present, if left entirely to her own exuberence or sterility. He improves upon nature, by directing her powers, and renders them generally agreeable to the sight of the beholders such objects as might, without his skill of arrangement, be contemplated with indifference or aversion. It is for this reason that a very close connexion subsists between the Landscape Gardener, Landscape Painter, and Pastoral or Landscape Poet. The one creates the scene, which the second paints, and the third describes. The subjects on which they work are the same, with this difference, that the range of the Landscape Poet is under, and more varied, than those of the others, and is addressed to the eye and the ear, while the others are confined to the impressions made on the mind through the eye. Whence it appears, that the Landscape Painter is much indebted to the Landscape Gardener for the vast variety of pleasing and striking objects that are made to harmonise with each other in
scenery which the Gardener has brought into view, but which if left to nature could not have been viewed to advantage, nor presented as pleasing objects in his Landscapes. For a like reason, the Landscape Painter is much indebted to the Landscape Gardener for concealing objects which are disagreeable to the eye, and for filling up broken defects in a scene which he could not have represented on canvass as a complete whole. (19)

As a gardener, wrote Shepherd, he had studied Landscape Painting so that it would,

fit me to ascertain the true principles of this fine art, for the purpose of enabling me to draw an embellished design, and to create true characters in Landscape Scenery.

Also he declared that he needed, 'a slight knowledge of music and poetry, for the purpose of raising my imagination to effect sublime scenery'. (20) Indeed, some of the gardens planned and executed by Shepherd were to become subjects for Peacock during the following decade. In the mid-nineteenth century there was a close correlation between landscape gardening which shaped the emerging urban environment and landscape painting. Professionally planned and maintained gardens developed at intervals along the eastern shores of Port Jackson.

There seems little doubt that Peacock relished the task of painting these picturesque gardens. Set against the splendour of Port Jackson the gardens, for Peacock, and indeed for their creators and owners, became a symbol of the frontier between man and nature; between civilisation
and apparent wilderness. Clearly, Peacock in his painting shared some of Shepherds's stated philosophies. 'Mankind', through the control of gardens, demonstrated refined tastes and dominance over the wilderness. Peacock, in his work, also acknowledged the English eighteenth-century notion of the garden as an art form. Not only was this a common British notion but ties with Shepherd might have been even closer - at least geographically. Shepherd's first master, Thomas White had resided in Yorkshire, and many of his major commissions were carried out in the county where the young George Edwards Peacock was raised.

Peacock's East View of Mr. Gregory's Garden, Potts Point, Port Jackson 184 [Illus.39.-cat.83]. demonstrates the artist's self-immersion in nature. In true Victorian spirit, nature is the major subject. No longer does it serve simply as a background for human activities.

In Peacock's painting of the garden many such factors appear to be at work. The gardener in the foreground provides a symbol of humanity reorganising nature which is to be controlled to serve civilised demands. It should be noted that the same gardener, barrow and tools appear in the painting Craigend, Sydney, NSW, 1849, [illus.38.-cat86]. This garden is grand, exotic and rambling but retains, through the carefully planned pathway and the judicious placing of the love-seat, a sense that it is indeed something controlled. The range of strategically placed garden tools emphasises this idea.
Chapter Seven

Nature's unembellished glories are evidenced, however, by the waters of Port Jackson and above all this, the sky. Dominating this work, the sky demonstrates the boundlessness of nature and indicates the spectacular differences between the rural arcadia of Sydney and -say- a crowded and polluted city such as London. If this concept of adherence to nature is pursued, one must take note of Kenneth Clark's claim that, 'all aspects of the new religion of nature meet and mingle where the old religions had focussed their operations: the sky'.(21) Here Peacock's sky occupies more than half the entire work.

Considering the ecclesiastical background and context in which Peacock grew up, there are enigmatic qualities in works such as this. The garden, so prominent here, seems to provide the exact meeting point for civilisation and nature. In this sense the garden, operating as a diety substitute, provides a sense of contact, solace and retreat at the one time.

From 1837 four other influential books on horticulture, gardening and domestic architecture were available in Sydney. The author, J.C.Loudon advocated the gardensque style and considered that gardens should not be made by architects or builders but by professional plantsmen. Such a style, Loudon claimed, should be based on a profusion of plants, placed in an apparent random nature, but retaining some overall scheme.
According to the gardenesque school all trees and shrubs planted are arranged in regard to their kinds and dimensions, and they are planted at first at, or as they grow thinned out to, such distances apart as may best display the natural form and habitat of each, and at the same time, in general point of view, unity of expression and character are arrived at and attained as effectually as they were under any other school. (22)

The planner of Mr. Gregory's garden seems to have been a follower of Loudon's advice. So too were the gardeners who planned the grounds of 'Craigend' [Illus. 38.-cat. 86] and 'Barham' [Illus. 41.-cat. 100] in Craigend, Sydney, N.S.W. 1849 [illus. 38.-cat. 86] Peacock depicts a well-planned garden which admirably displays the gardenesque concept of allowing each tree, plant and shrub, space in which to establish its own identity and characteristics. The garden tends to dominate this work despite the striking neoclassical porches and other architectural qualities of 'Craigend' in the middle-ground. In turn the gardener is prominent in the foreground and his barrow and tools become a visual obstacle which must be overcome before the many details of nature, humanity, decoration and architecture may be assimilated. The regulatory role of the gardener is defined in his handiwork by which he is surrounded.

'Barham' is also set in a garden which says a great deal about the quality of the house, its residents and their social position. The house was commissioned in 1832 by Edward Deas Thomson, then Clerk of the Council and later to succeed Alexander Macleay as Colonial Secretary. It was
designed by John Verge, described by a contemporary as;

an architect who has done so much for the embellishment of Sydney and its environs. To his judicious taste we are indebted for the elegancies of most of the villas on Woolloomooloo Hill, some of which are worthy of the suburbs of London. (23)

Architects and their work were also measured against standards prevailing at 'home'. Verge undoubtedly contributed to that transplantation of British culture which Peacock apparently so admired. Verge may be considered beside Shepherd as a contributor to the growing awareness and need for professionalism in colonial artistic practice.

The synthesis of the gardener's and architect's skills are here celebrated by Peacock, who at this time was struggling on the fringes of professionalism. Although these works were most probably painted on commission, Peacock appears to have placed emphasis on elements which had significance for him. Nevertheless, they are telling 'portraits' of the owner's estates, drawing attention to wealth, power and social position.

The villas 'Craigend', 'Barham', and 'Tarmons' were all prominent on Woolloomooloo Hill which, by the mid-1840s, had become the elite residential area of Sydney. Not only the gardens but the architecture and the obvious connections with class, status and success proved strong attractions to Peacock, the impoverished convict who seems
to have been unable to relinquish his memories of a more dignified life.

View of Part of Wolloomooloo and Mr. Barker's House and Mill with Bradley Point 1844, [Illus.9.-cat.19] is a work which typifies the artist's close links with the area. Painted from the site of 'Craigend', this work shows Thomas Barker's mills and his residence, 'Roslyn Hall'. In the mid-distance the gabled house is 'Larbert Lodge' which stood near the site of the present King's Cross Post Office. In the background is Bradley's Head while the foreground characteristically displays the settler's progression through the wilderness.

Thomas Barker (1799-1875) engineer, manufacturer, grazier and philanthropist, had built these mills in 1826. When Peacock painted this work Thomas and his brother were in partnership as Barker and Company, a business which existed until 1860.

A visitor to Barker's villa in 1841 commented:

I have just returned from a visit to an old acquaintance who possesses one of the most splendid villas in the neighbourhood of Sydney, in the midst of an extensive and beautiful garden. The interior of the mansion is handsome and spacious, and fitted up with good taste...Mr. Barker is a gentleman very justly esteemed and is an active member of many of the excellent public institutions in Sydney; and his ample fortune and high respectability are just those lights that settlers in this distant land should keep before them, as guide to show what may be accomplished by prudence, activity and strict integrity.

His gardens are most beautifully arranged. Here I saw the almond, the fig, the citron, the
blossom, the newly-set fruit, and the ripe fruit of the orange, all on the same tree; the lemon, the loquat (an excellent Chinese fruit, the size of a plum and in taste resembling the gooseberry) the pomegranate, the grape, nectarine, apricot and pear, the date, the aloe, the sugar cane, the strawberry, and, better than all, the delicious water melon. The white cedar is also there, and the bamboo, the dark Norfolk pine, with its pelican pouch, and the weeping willow, in all their vigorous and graceful perfection. Fifty hives of bees amuse the leisure hours of my excellent friend and his lady. (24)

Whilst Peacock's painting does not depict the gardens it does emphasise, in the foreground, the nature of Sydney's surrounds. Peacock has been able to contrast this with images of industry and some of the elegant houses on the ridge to the east of the city.

Peacock's paintings record the phenomenon of Europeans in the process of turning the antipodean wilderness into a 'civilised' colonial outpost of some grandeur and importance. An integral and unavoidable part of this conquest was the peaceful (as Peacock saw it) confrontation which took place between the indigenous people and the white settlers. The artist proffered the well established view of the Aborigines as being subdued dwellers on the fringe of a new but absolutely dominant society. This society continued to push out from the city which displayed increasing numbers of architectural cameos reminiscent of the best from 'home'.

The works in which Aborigines were included most often necessitated a rearrangement of the artist's viewpoint because, characteristically, he displayed his own version
of the common beliefs. The Aborigines, subdued and
dignified, are never part of the city; never in the city.
They remain on the periphery, looking into a landscape, the
background for which is provided by a straight-line cluster
of European buildings. Such distant views provide meaning
for the Aborigine’s social position as well as their
physical location. Although John Eyre had depicted
Aboriginals in this way some thirty years before, it
remained a valid method of expression for Peacock.

Peacock’s *Port Jackson and Sydney from the South Head
Road Above Rose Bay*, 1850, [Illus.43.-cat 129] contains the
elements which characterise his works dealing with the
Aborigines. The artist, in this work, faces the distant
city so that its outskirts provide the setting for a
peaceful meeting between black and white.

A white settler coming from the city meets two
Aborigines. The wilderness from which they have come is at
their backs. Both parties are armed, the white man with a
rifle, one of the Aborigines with a spear and woomera.
There is, however, absolutely no hint of violence; the
white man, arms folded on top of the rifle’s barrel, leans
perfectly relaxed. Weapons have become impotent and
discarded symbols of power. The Aborigines, one laying on
his side by the road, the other chatting quietly to the
settler, present no threat of any kind.

The harbour and its foreshores dominate the
middle-ground of this work. The Aboriginal presence serves
to remind that these same shores were, just over sixty years before, undisturbed tribal lands. Ancestors of the natives depicted had hunted, fished and existed totally within that landscape, but any sense of loss is greatly overshadowed here by the sense of achievement Peacock continued to perceive in the development of Sydney as a city.

City and the Harbour of Sydney N.S.W. from the Height above Vaucluse [Illus.19.-cat 63] also depicts Aborigines in the foreground.(25) The natives, in a primitive state, are gathered around a fire. They are camped on a prominent ledge from which they may look across the harbour to the burgeoning city of Sydney. Their primitiveness is deliberately contrasted with the sophistication of steam-driven and sail vessels on the harbour and with the city itself, back-lit by a dramatic late-afternoon sunset.

In this larger-than-normal work, Peacock again turns to face the city. Although European settlement is evident everywhere, there are no white people in direct contact with the Aborigines. The two worlds are apart. Accordingly Peacock is able to generate sympathy for the displaced Aborigines while continuing to celebrate the achievements of the colony. This is certainly a view seen through European eyes, yet we are situated beyond the settled area, on the outer edges of the city; in the territory to which the Aborigines are now obliged to retire. They look over and across to the city as it spreads in every direction,
inexorably thrusting them farther and farther from their tribal lands. In romantic works such as this Peacock entirely ignores the undeniable truth that for the preceding decades the remaining Sydney Aborigines had become city-dwellers besotted by the worst aspects of European civilisation. Once more the realities of the city are denied and replaced by an idealised view, one surely more acceptable to prospective patrons.

Earlier, artists such as W.H. Ferynhough, Charles Rodius and Augustus Earle had chosen to depict Sydney's Aborigines in degraded situations. In readily saleable and relatively inexpensive prints and drawings, these artists presented the town natives as drunken, wretched creatures who had salvaged neither pride nor hope. When Conrad Martens included Aborigines in his work he was sometimes faced with a dilemma. In an early painting, Bridge Street Sydney, 1839, he included lay-about Aborigines in the town. In other works such as Cox's River and Illawarra 1848 where Martens painted the bush, he included Aborigines as natural and expected aspects of the scene, much in the manner of John Skinner Prout. However, with his lithograph View of Sydney from the North Shore 1842, Martens decided against including the images of two Aborigines in the foreground. In the first version of this work Martens had depicted two Aborigines, one of whom held a large bottle. In the final version they were replaced by two European women who chatted amicably as they rested by the roadside.(26)
Peacock was never faced with such a decision. For him the Aborigine was always an exotic and meaningful inclusion in his work. Long after tribal Aborigines had departed the outlying Sydney areas he continued to include them as symbolic elements in his paintings. A further, and very telling, example is provided in *Port Jackson N.S.W., View in Double Bay, South Side, Middle Head in the Distance (Near Sunset)* 1847. [Illus.43.-cat.48].(27) In this idyllic scene two fishermen are at leisure in a small rowboat. On the shore of the narrow bay are two Aborigines who appear to stand guard over territory which long ago was taken from them. They are not the degraded natives of Fernyhough and Earle; rather they are proud but tragic signifiers of a departed era, used here by Peacock with a mixture of romanticism and false evidence of a co-existence that never was. The native figures dominate the composition; there is little doubt that their inclusion was arranged, as was the case with the lithographed work, to excite the interest of potential patrons.

In his most startling inclusion of an Aborigine, Peacock shows a native standing in shallow water, and spearing fish off Kirribilli Point. By 1850, when the painting *No.3 Sydney from Kirribilli Point, Government House and Fort Macquarie*, [Illus.44.-cat.3] was made, Sydney was becoming a crowded and busy city. Something of this pace is evident in this scene which details just how rapidly the central business district around the quayside
had developed. Although the artist has come much closer to the city than ever before he manages to remain at some distance by placing himself on the largely unsettled North Shore.

In keeping with previous practice the native fisherman is still not 'in the city' but nevertheless provides a remarkable contrast with the sophisticated architecture of the New Government House just a few hundred metres across the harbour. The native also contrasts with the steam and sail vessels and with the small boat of the fisherman close by. Two ladies shaded by parasols sit at the stern of another boat and are rowed by the boatman - all seem to be oblivious of the Aboriginal fisherman.

Port Jackson sometimes served as a background for Peacock's paintings but far more regularly it was the dominant subject. Although the artist sought to locate a classical heritage in Australia he was, at the same time, especially responsive to the grandeur and natural picturesque qualities of the harbour. Peacock was aware of the uniqueness of Australian scenery especially Port Jackson, the type of scenery that England did not have nor had ever seen. The inquisitiveness of the earliest artists had dissipated by the 1840s and painters were taking a wider view of their surroundings.
Notes - Chapter Seven


(6) Daniel Southwell, HRNSW, ii 666.


(10) ibid.


(12) ibid., p.119.

(13) Robert Dixon, The Course of Empire, Melbourne, 1986,
p75.

(14) ibid., p156.


(16) Thomas Shepherd, Lectures on Landscape Gardening, 1836, Introduction.

(17) Bernard Smith, Documents on art and taste in Australia, Melbourne, 1975, pp38-9.

(18) Thomas Shepherd, op.cit., p3.

(19) ibid., pp8-9.

(20) ibid., p15.


(22) Howard Tanner, The Art of Gardening in Colonial Australia, p49.


(27) This is more likely Double Bay. C/F Rocky foreshore & angle of Middle Head.
CONCLUSION

'Time eventually positions most photographs, even the most amateurish, at the level of art'.

Susan Sontag

This thesis has examined the art world of colonial Sydney during one of its most critical periods. It has been proposed that professionalism in the visual arts was struggling for a foothold when George Edwards Peacock was active here as an artist. His paintings then were not regarded as high art. The numerous views of Sydney Harbour as seen from along the South Head Road were, to colonists, colourful records or souvenirs of the place that had become their new home. Peacock, and the others who sought to earn money for their work, were considered craftsmen. Even the best of them, Conrad Martens, was obliged to give lessons, mend frames and produce multiple copies of his own work in order to earn a living in his chosen field. Something of a double standard applied though because painting and sketching on an amateur basis was considered to be a genteel and socially desirable pursuit.

This thesis has demonstrated that patrons here considered artists from 'home' should be given major portrait commissions and that imported works from Edinburgh and London were always preferred, in the aesthetic sense, over local productions. However, time has lent enchantment to the works of the period and Sontag's dictum, uttered in
the 1970s, has some relevance to the paintings of Peacock, Martens and the others.

The twenty years between 1837 and 1857 saw much activity but few, if any, painters were able to sustain an ethical, professional career. Although a number of clever schemes were devised to promote and sell art, dealers and gallery owners were hampered through lack of patronage. Prior to 1840 there was virtually no market for colonial paintings. It was only after 1850, when photography became established, that there grew up a regular, predictable and profitable market for images produced in the colony.

Nevertheless, there were times when colonial artists had to be employed, and Grocott's commissioning of some 120 works for the India Company provides a fascinating, though isolated, example of colonial art production on a large scale. Conrad Martens supported a home and family for some thirty years on the proceeds of his work as an artist/craftsman and earlier Augustus Earle had painted prolifically for patrons here.

George Edwards Peacock, never a sound manager of his own financial affairs, did not accumulate any wealth from the sale of his paintings. He began painting in 1842 and during the following decade much happened to suggest that he was following a profitable course. Although there is evidence to show that he sold a reasonable number of works and received publicity from time to time in the Sydney press, Peacock was never in a position to paint on a fully
professional basis.

The complex range of Peacock’s motivations has been discussed but his new (part-time) career was as much a product of his evident need to regain self respect and social standing as it was a means of supplementing his small, regular income from permanent work at the meteorological station. There were moments when he looked as if he had succeeded. His membership and prominence in the Society for Australian Artists during 1850 provided one of those moments. The few months in early 1850 when he was providing prizes for Brocatt’s Art Unions was another. More significantly, the association with Brocatt during that period, meant that he was put before the public as a ‘noted colonial artist’.

He enjoyed the patronage of prominent Sydney gentlemen – Governors Fitzroy and Bourke were amongst them. It seems certain that many of his small oils depicting Sydney Harbour in romantic moods returned with travellers to Britain. Peacock clearly encouraged the export of his work by providing detailed titles for his paintings – particularly those featuring the landforms of the Harbour. Brocatt’s claim that he had shipped cases of colonial pictures out of the country bears further investigation and may reveal that many of Peacock’s works reached Britain under those circumstances.

Peacock’s participation in the exhibitions arranged by the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia
in 1847 and 1849 permitted a more intimate examination of those shows. It has been demonstrated that a shift in the balance of power became evident after 1847. The Sydney gentry relinquished much control and the artists played a more prominent part in the second exhibition. Even then, however, jealousy and self-promotion stood in the way of equitable presentation of some artist's works.

As an emancipist Peacock did not gain any recognition or respect from those establishment exhibitions or their committees. Indeed the stigma of convictism was present for Peacock in all that he did. The formation of the Australian Society for Artists, divorced as the members were from the organisers and favourites of the gentry-based Society, meant that Peacock could operate as an artist in his own right but just as importantly could employ his legal knowledge and communication skills to benefit the new group. Despite his efforts the Society had a brief life after it was refused permission to conduct its own Art Unions. Peacock's slim opportunity for continued social acceptance went with the dispersing of the group.

Paintings produced by artists during this period reflected colonial concerns and needs. Joan Kerr has suggested that 'vistas and visages' were the subjects that interested patrons most. They sought, from local artists, images of their surroundings and possessions. The professional Martens, never a portrait painter, limited himself almost entirely to landscapes and 'house
portraits'. Peacock, always with one eye on Martens, followed a similar course. Indeed many of his paintings bear the unmistakable influence of Martens, his direct contemporary.

The very idea that colonial painters produced such work should not surprise. They simply continued artistic practices that were popular in the English provinces from which they had come. In a similar way patrons here had tastes closely aligned with their counterparts at 'home'. Martens, when lecturing in Sydney nominated those painters whom he considered exemplary. Clearly Peacock also knew and admired the work of particular English painters such as Gainsborough, Turner and Constable. In Peacock's case he painted in the style and manner of a gentleman amateur. However, in the limited colonial market that New South Wales provided, Peacock found that his art could do more for him than provide simple satisfaction.

He painted in watercolour, but small oil paintings constituted, by far, the major part of his output. Here he differed from Martens but it has been shown that Peacock had good reason for his choice of medium.

One hundred and forty years have passed since Peacock recorded the vistas of Sydney Harbour and the domestic and public architecture of the growing city. This simple fact means that his works now have gathered a patina of historical (and artistic) significance. The Catalogue of Known Works which accompanies this text shows that many of
Peacock's works have survived in public and private collections and this body of work provides some revelations. It reveals a city in the making. It reveals a way of life which seemed slow paced and idyllic. Finally it reveals much about the tastes, class attitudes and expectations of a formerly utilitarian society which was slowly developing, during those important decades of the 1840s and 50s, some small degree of recognition and patronage for its colonial artists.
APPENDIX ONE

Peacock’s Patrons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patron</th>
<th>Catalogue No. or Exhibition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atwell, Courtney</td>
<td>(cat.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’Beckett A.M.</td>
<td>(cats.116, 117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’Beckett Sir A.W.</td>
<td>(cat.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker, W.</td>
<td>SPFAA 1847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourke, Sir, R.</td>
<td>(cat.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowden Geo.</td>
<td>(cats.14, 98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyd, J.C.</td>
<td>SPFAA 1847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzroy Governor</td>
<td>(cat.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory, Mr.</td>
<td>(cats. 80, 83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hervey, P., Auctioneer</td>
<td>SPFAA 1847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang, Gideon Scott,</td>
<td>(cat.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacKellar, Dr.</td>
<td>(cat.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manning W.</td>
<td>(cats.34, 38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundy, Lt.Col.</td>
<td>(cat.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Connell Sir M.</td>
<td>(cats. 30, 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rae, John</td>
<td>SPFAA 1847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogers, [Solicitor -‘Craigend’],</td>
<td>(cats. 124-128)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, Thomas</td>
<td>(cat.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wise T.A.</td>
<td>(cat.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young, A.W. Sherrif,</td>
<td>SPFAA 1847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CATALOGUE OF KNOWN WORKS

AGSA, Art Gallery of South Australia.
ANL, Australian National Library.
CL, Christies London
CS, Christies Sydney.
DG, Dixon Galleries, Sydney.
LJM, Leonard Joel, Melbourne
ML, Mitchell Library, Sydney
SPF, Small Picture File.
SS, Sotheby's Sydney
SM, Sotheby's Melbourne

1. The South Australian Alps at First Seen by Messrs Hove1 and Hume on 8th November 1824.
   oil
   21 x 29.5cms
   signed G.E.Peacock
   Collection: ML (2ML144) - presented by Mrs.G.F.Roberts, 1922-3.

2. Sydney from the Heights of Vaucluse.
   a pair of oils
   ea. 19 x 25.7cms.
   unsigned
   Collection: ML (2ML 149 & 150)

3. View of Government House, Sydney
   oil on wood panel
   24.8 x 31.1cms
   unsigned
   illustrated: CS, catalogue as above, SPF ML.

4. Dan Cooper's House
   oil on board
   19.6 x 26.2cms.
   unsigned
   private collection
   illustrated SPF, ML.

5. Four Views of Sydney
   (a) The Heads from The Gap
   (b) Sydney Harbour from Governor Bourke's Statue.
   Sydney From Vaucluse.
Catalogue.

(d) The Heads From Vaucluse
oil on board
ea. 11.5 x 15.1 cms.
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML638)

6. Sydney From Governor Bourke’s Statue.
oil
19 x 26 cms
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML152) —
comment: The painting shows Pinchout levelled
for Fort Dennison which suggests that it was
done in the 1840s.

7. Sydney From The North Shore
oil on canvas
13 x 25.7 cms
unsigned
collection ML (ZML151)

8. Glenrock - Darling Point
oil
21.6 x 30.5 cms
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML492)

oil
signed and dated: G.E. Peacock 1840.
illustrated: SPF, ML.

10. Four Views of Sydney, 1843.
    (a) Port Jackson from the Statue of Sir Richard
        Bourke
    (b) Sydney from North Bank of the Harbour
    (c) Rose bay, Port Jackson
    (d) Government House, Macquarie Street, from
        Botanical Gardens.
unsigned
oil
ea. 11.4 x 15.2 cms.
collection: ML, (ZML239)

11. Old Government House Gates
oil
unsigned
collection: ML (ML702)
12. **Government House, Sydney from the Statue of Sir Richard Bourke**
   oil on board
   13.7 x 18.8cms
   unsigned
   collection: ML (ZML657)

13. **Lyons Terrace, Hyde Park, Sydney 1844.**
   oil on copper
   16.5 x 23.2cms
   collection: ANL, (RNK 5021)

14. **Point Piper, Rose Bay, Port Jackson, 1844.**
   oil on board
   11.5 x 15.6cms
   unsigned but label on verso reads G.E.P. 1844.
   collection: DG (DG430)
   offered for sale: LJM, 11/5/1977
   illustrated: SPF, ML., LJM catalogue as above.

15. **A View From Craigend House of St.James Church, Catholic Cathedral and the College in Hyde Park, Sydney, NSW, 1844.**
   oil on board.
   24 x 34cms
   unsigned
   collection: DG (ZDG373)

16. **View From Craigend, Looking up the Harbour, Sydney on the Left 1844.**
   oil
   23.8 x 33.6cms
   unsigned
   collection: DG (ZDG374)

17. **View From Craigend, Looking up the Harbour, Sydney on the Left 1845.**
   oil
   24.6 x 34.3cms
   unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1845.
   collection: DL (ZDL14)
   companion to No.17.

18. **(View of Part of Woolloomooloo...)** View North from Craigend looking over Woolloomooloo and
Catalogue.

Port Jackson 1845.
 oil
24.6 x 34.3cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1845
collection: DL (ZDL15)

19. View of Part of Woolloomooloo and Mr. Barker’s House and Mill, with Bradley’s Point 1844.
 oil on board
24 x 33.6cms
unsigned
collection: DG (ZDG372)

20. View of Woolloomooloo from the South Head Road and Craigend 1844.
 oil on board
47 x 62cms
unsigned
collection: DG, (ZDG376)

21. Woolloomooloo Bay 1844.
 oil
17.3 x 22.7cms
unsigned, but label on verso in ink, titled ‘Woolloomooloo (sic) Bay and signed G.E.P. 1844.
collection: ML, (ML721).

22. Custom House and Circular Quay 1845.
 oil
22 x 28.2cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1845.
collection: DG (ZDG35)

23. Custom House and Part of Circular Quay Wharf, Sydney NSW 1845.
 oil
22 x 29cms
signed: G.E. Peacock 1845
collection: DG, (ZDG38).

 oil
Catalogue.

14 x 19cms
signed and dated 1845
collection: ANL, (NK120)
illustrated: SPF, ML, and J. Hackforth-Jones,
The Convict Artists' p92.

25. Lyons Terrace, Sydney 1845.
oil
17.5 x 25.3cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink,
titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1845.
private collection

26. Supreme Court House, Sydney 1845.
oil on cardboard
14 x 19cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink,
titled as above and signed G.E.P., 1845.
collection: ML, (ZML659)

27. New Supreme Court House, Sydney, 1845.
oil on wood
14 x 19.7cms
signed and dated 1845
collection: ANL (NK119)

28. Sydney from the North Shore 1845.
oil
unsigned
collection: DG, (ZDG313)

29. Sydney Harbour
oil
31.5 x 44.7cms
unsigned
private collection
offered for sale: Sotheby's, London, 7/12/1971, lot 78.

oil
20.3 x 26.6cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink,
titled as above and signed G.E.P., 1845.
collection: ML, (ML721)
Catalogue.

illustrated: S. Morout, This Was Sydney, and Howard Tanner, Converting the Wilderness: The Art of Gardening in Colonial Australia, p33.

31. Tarmons, Woolloomooloo, Residence of Sir Maurice O'Connell
   oil
   20.3 x 26.7cms
   unsigned
   private collection

32. View of old Government House, Sydney, as it appeared when vacated by Sir George Gipps in 1845.
   oil on board
   17 x 22.5cms
   unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1845.
   collection: ML, (ZML658)

33. House with two domes, on the shores of a small bay: possibly Henrietta Villa, Point Piper seen from the back
   oil
   private collection

34. No.1, The Heads of Port Jackson NSW from off North Head, S.E. squall, 1846.
   oil
   14.7 x 20.8cms
   unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1846.
   collection: DG (ZD6333)

35. No.2 Port Jackson NSW The Floating Light (Morning) 1846
   oil
   15.2 x 20.3cms.
   unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1846.
   collection: DG (ZD6333)

36. No.3 Port Jackson NSW From the South Head Road above Rose Bay, 1846
   oil
   15.2 x 20.6cms.
Catalogue.

unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1846. collection: DG (ZDG 335)

37. No.4 Government house and Fort Macquarie, Sydney from the Botanical Gardens, 1846 oil 15.2 x 20.6cms unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1846. collection: DG (ZDG 336)

38. No.5 Port Jackson NSW View down Woollomooloo Bay from near Mr. Manning's House, 1846 oil 15.2 x 20.3cms unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1846. collection: DG (ZDG338)

39. No.5 Port Jackson NSW with Distant View of Sydney from near South Head 1846 oil 12 x 16cms unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1846. private collection.

40. No.6 Port Jackson NSW Woollomooloo - Lady Darling's and Piper Points in perspective, from the Domain, 1846 oil 15.2 x 20.6cms unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1846. collection: DG (ZDG337)

41. South Side of Port Jackson (Woollomooloo, Darling and Piper Points from the Government Domain 1846 oil on board 14.6 x 19.6cms unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1846. (a further label on verso reads ‘View from Domain looking towards South Head'. Painting by Peacock, a pupil of Conrad Martens). collection: ML (ZML494)
42. **Sydney NSW from Garden Island - Government House to the left (a view including Fort Macquarie)** 1846

oil
30.5 x 42.9cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1846. collection: DL (DL7)

43. **View from Glenrock looking -(?)- Double Bay in Port Jackson NSW** 1846

oil on board
14.6 x 19.7cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1846. (further labels on verso read 'View from Glenrock Darling Point showing Greenoaks (now Bishopscourt) at left hand side and 'Painting by Peacock a pupil of Conrad Martens).
collection: ML (ZML493)

44. **View of Port Jackson, with Sydney, looking west from the South Head Road above Rose Bay** 1846

oil
22.2 x 28.8cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1846.
collection: DL (ZDL 13)

45. **View of the Heads of Port Jackson NSW looking North from a hill above Vaucluse Bay** 1846.

oil
22.3 x 28.7cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1846.
collection: DL (ZDL 12)

46. **Port Jackson NSW Distant View of Sydney from above Rose Bay on the South Head Road** 1847

oil on cardboard
14.3 x 19.4cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1847
collection: ML (ZML 238)

47. **Port Jackson NSW from the heights above Double Bay, looking North** 1847

oil on cardboard
Catalogue.

14.3 x 19.5cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink,
titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1847
collection: ML (ZML237)

48. **Port Jackson NSW View in Double Bay S.Side**
Middle Head in the distance (near sunset) 1847
oil
23.5 x 33.6cms.
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink,
titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1847

49. **Port Jackson NSW North Head and Middle Head from Middle Harbour** 1849.
oil on board
19 x 25.4 cms
signed: G.E. Peacock; label on verso inscribed in
ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock,
1849.
private collection.
a pair with No. 50.

50. **Port Jackson NSW Sydney with Fort Macquarie**
looking up the harbour from off Garden Island
1849.
oil on board
19 x 25.4 cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink,
titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1849.
Private collection.
a pair with No. 49.

51. **Sydney from Woolloomooloo**
oil
39 x 56.8cms
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML 72)
illustrated: S. Mourot, *This Was Sydney*, p116.

52. **View from Woolloomooloo Bay Port Jackson NSW**
taken from Lower Domain Road 1849.
oil
24.7 x 32.4cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink,
titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1849
collection: DG (ZDG 219).
Catalogue.

53. View of Lyon's Terrace Hyde Park Sydney NSW 1849
oil
signed lower right; label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock, 1849.
collection: DG (ZDG 218)

54. Government House Sydney 1850
oil
30.8 x 46.6cms
unsigned
collection: DG (ZDG206)
illustrated: Howard Tanner, Converting the Wilderness: The Art of Gardening in Colonial Australia, p47.

55. Morning at the Heads of Port Jackson or the Pilot's Look-out 1850
oil
24.4 x 34.6cms
signed: 'G.E.Peacock 1850' l.r., and label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock, 1850.
collection: DG (ZDG 204)

56. Near Watson's Bay 1851.
oil
22.8 x 34.3cms.
signed: 'G.E.Peacock 1851' l.r.
collection: DG (ZDG 205)

57. Vaucluse 1851.
oil
24.7 x 35cms
signed: G.E.Peacock 1851, l.r.
collection: ML, (2ML 236)

58. Double Bay, Port Jackson as seen from South Head Road 1852.
oil on board
14.7 x 19.8cms.
signed: G.E.Peacock., l.r. and label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock, 1852.
private collection.
59. parsley Bay, Port Jackson 1852.
oil on board
14.7 x 19.8cms
unsigned, but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock, 1852.
private collection.

60. The Three Brothers Mountains, near Camden Haven, East Coast 1852.
oil on board
14.7 x 19.8cms.
signed G.E. Peacock, i.r: and label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed with another signature.
private collection
offered for sale: SS, 24/6/1971, lot 40.
illustrated: SPF, ML.

61. A View of Sydney taken from Darlinghurst showing Woolloomooloo Bay 1852.
oil
35.5 x 76.5cms
signed: G.E. Peacock and dated 1852, i.r.
collection: ML, (ML 676).

62. A View of Sydney taken from Darlinghurst showing Woolloomooloo Bay 1852.
private collection
N.B. this is similar to No.61 but has additional features (i.e. cows, rocks and trees) in the foreground.
further details at PXn 288, ML.

63. City and Harbour of Sydney, NSW, from the height above Vaucluse
oil
36.8 x 89cms
unsigned
collection: ML, (2ML 155)

64. City and Harbour of Sydney, NSW, from the height above Vaucluse
chromolithograph, C. Risdon Lithographer,
65. **City and Harbour of Sydney, NSW from the height above Vaucluse**
   chromolithograph
   Details as No. 64
   collection: DG (DG XVI 12)

66. **City and Harbour of Sydney, NSW from the height above Vaucluse**
   chromolithograph
   Details as No. 64
   collection: National Gallery of Victoria.

67. **View of Sydney and Harbour.**
   1860.
   chromolithograph
   Details as No. 64
   collection: ANL

68. **City and Harbour of Sydney, NSW from the heights above Vaucluse.**
   chromolithograph
   Details as No. 64

69. **Government House**
   oil
   11.4 x 15.9cms
   collection: DG, (ZDG 245)

70. **House with Two Domes.**
    private collection.

71. **Government House, Sydney, and Fort Macquarie from Farm Cove**
    private collection
    c/f No. 114.

72. **Parsley Bay**
    oil
    unsigned
    23.8 x 33.3cms.
Catalogue.

collection: DG (ZDG 34)

73. **Sydney Harbour**
hand coloured lithograph
16.4 x 29.1cms size of plate; 21.7 x 33.8cms size of sheet
from nature and on stone by G.E.Peacock J.Allan Lith. Printer.
collection; ML, (In Pencil sketches, watercolours etc. by Martens, Brierly,...f20)

74. **Heads of Port Jackson 1852.**
oil on board
14.7 x 19.8cms
signed: G.E.Peacock, l.l. and titled as above on verso with another signature.
private collection
offered for sale: SS, 24/6/1971, lot 35.

75. **Shark Bay and Watson's bay, Port Jackson 1852**
oil on board
14.7 x 19.8cms
signed G.E.Peacock, l.l., and label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.P., 1852.
private collection.

76. **Vaucluse Bay, Port Jackson, 1852.**
oil on board
14.7cms x 19.8cms
signed G.E.Peacock, l.l.: and label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.P., 1852.

77. **Sydney Harbour from Double Bay**
private collection.

78. **View of Port Jackson looking NW from near Lady Darling's Point**
oil
22.5 x 29.3cms
Catalogue.

79. Sydney from St.Leonards on the North Bank of Port Jackson 1845.
oil on card
18 x 23cms
collection: ANL, Canberra.

80. North East View of Mr. Gregory’s garden – Potts Point, Port Jackson 1849
oil on board
25.3 x 32.9cms
unsigned but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1849
collection: ANL, Canberra, (NK 124)

81. View from Sir Maurice O'Connell's Residence, Woolloomooloo, Sydney, NSW 1845
oil on canvas
22.9 x 30.5cms
unsigned
collection: ANL, Canberra (NK 121)

82. Woolloomooloo Bay, Port Jackson NSW 1844
oil on board
18.7 x 24.9cms
unsigned
collection: ANL, Canberra.

83. East View from Mr. Gregory’s garden, Potts Point, Port Jackson, 1849
oil on board
25.5 x 33cms
unsigned
collection: ANL, Canberra, (NK 122)
illustrated: Howard Tanner, Converting the Wilderness: The Art of Gardening in Colonial Australia, p65.

84. North View of Potts Point, Port Jackson 1849
oil on board
unsigned
collection: ANL, Canberra, (NK123)

85. No 3, Sydney from Kirribilli Point, Government House and Fort Macquarie 1850
Catalogue.

86. Craigend, Sydney, NSW c1849
oil
25.2 x 34.8cms
Collection: ANL, Canberra (NK 3378)
Illustrated: Howard Tanner, Converting the
Wilderness: The Art of Gardening in Colonial
Australia, p33; P.McDonald and B.Pearce (Eds.)
The Artist and Patron, Aspects of Colonial Art
in New South Wales, catalogue, p44.

87. The Three Brothers Mountain near Camden Haven,
East Coast 1852
oil on canvas
40.5 x 58cms
unsigned
Collection: ANL, Canberra (RNK 805)
Illustrated: P.McDonald and B.Pearce (Eds.) The
Artist and Patron, Aspects of Colonial Art in
New South Wales, catalogue, p107.
Note: Rex Nan Kivell attributed this work to
Conrad Martens.

88. View of the Heads of Port Jackson, NSW from
above Vaucluse Bay 1846
oil on canvas
25.4 x 34.3cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink,
titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1846.
private collection
Illustrated: D.Thomas, Outlines of Australian
Art, Melbourne, 1973, Pl.6.

89. Figures in a Landscape
watercolour on tinted paper
17 x 28cms
signed
private collection
offered for sale: CS, October 1974, lot 7.

90. View of Sydney from Vaucluse
oil on wood panel
24.7 x 30.5cms
unsigned
private collection
Catalogue.

offered for sale: CS, October 1974, lot 393.
illustrated: CS, catalogue October 1974 Pl. 25.
NB, a pair with No.3.

91. View of Sydney, Port Jackson, from near South Head 1844
oil on copper
16 x 23cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink,
titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1844.
private collection
offered for sale: CM, March 1975, lot 352.

92. No1 Port Jackson, A View from Lady Darling's Point North West 1847
oil on board
15.2 x 20.3cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink,
titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1847.
private collection
offered for sale: CS, October 1973, lot 408.
illustrated: CS catalogue, October 1973, Pl.VI.

93. Port Jackson, New South Wales, View in Double Bay, looking towards St.George's and Middle Heads, Morning 1847
oil on board
15.2 x 20.3cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink,
titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1847.
private collection
offered for sale: CS October 1973, lot 407.
illustrated: CS, October 1973, Pl.V.

94. Parsley Bay, Sydney Harbour, with Middle Head in Background
oil
20.3 x 29.1cms
unsigned
private collection
offered for sale: CL, 19/2/1971. lot 27.

95. Port Jackson, Part of Double Bay 1844
oil on paper
11.3 x 14.6cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink,
titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1844.
private collection
Catalogue.

May 1975.

96. **Port Jackson Looking West from Point Piper** 1844
oil on paper
11.3 x 14.6
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1844.
private collection

97. **Australian Landscape**
watercolour
signed l.r.
private collection
offered for sale: G.K.Gray, 7/11/73, lot 58

98. **Government House** 1844
oil on canvas
16.5 x 22cms
private collection

99. **Sydney Heads and Harbour**
40.6 x 53.3cms
unsigned
private collection
offered for sale: Lawsons, Sydney, 29/9/1964, lot 345.

100. **The Residence of the Hon. E.D. Thompson, Sydney, NSW** 1845
oil on board
18 x 24.7cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1845.
collection: DG, (2D6355)
illustrated: Howard Tanner, *Converting the Wilderness: The Art of Gardening in Colonial Australia*, p34.

101. **Port Jackson, NSW, Showing Observatory** 1845
oil
35.5 x 76.5cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock. 1845.
private collection
Catalogue.


102. Port Jackson NSW - View on the Vaucluse Road above Rose Bay 1847-1848
oil
33 x 38cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock 1847-1848.
private collection
offered for sale: Berkelouw's Catalogue No.122, February 1968, lot 444 (a pair with No.103).

103. Sydney, NSW, Looking up the Harbour from Garden Island 1847-1848
oil
33 x 38cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1847-1848.
offered for sale: Berkelouw's Catalogue No.122, February 1968, lot 444 (a pair with No.102).

104. Hyde Park, Sydney from Woolloomooloo
oil on card
13 x 18cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1845.
private collection

105. Landscape
oil on panel
14.5 x 19.5cms
unsigned
private collection

106. View down Woolloomooloo Bay from Below the Colonial Secretary's Garden
oil
12.8 x 17.3cms
collection: DL, (DL39)

107. **Port Jackson - View from the road to Lady Darling's Point over Woolloomooloo - Government House etc with Garden Island**
    oil on card
    14.8 x 20.6cms
    collection: DL (DL40)

108. **Distant View of Sydney from the South Head Road**
    oil on card
    12 x 16.5cms
    collection: DL (DL41)

109. **View of Middle Harbor (sic) Port Jackson 1845**
    oil on canvas
    17.7 x 24.9cms
    unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Feacock. 1845.
    collection: DG (ZDG 438)

110. **Double Bay**
    oil on board
    14.6 x 19.7cms
    private collection
    NB a pair with No.111.

111. **View of Camden Hills**
    oil on board
    14.6 x 19.7cms
    offered for sale: LJM, 20/4/1072, lot 255.
    NB a pair with No.110.

112. **Homestead**
    oil on canvas
    28.5 x 48.8cms
    private collection

113. **Port Jackson Looking West from Darling Point**
    oil on wood
    21.6 x 29.2cms
    unsigned
    private collection
    offered or sale: LJM, 20/6/1969
Catalogue.


114. **Government House and Fort Macquarie 1845.**
- oil on canvas
- 25 x 37cms
- unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1845.
- private collection
- offered for sale: LJM, May 1975: Pickles, Sydney, March 1976

115. **Port Jackson looking West from Point Piper 1844**
- oil on card
- 11 x 15.5cms
- signed and dated and inscribed on verso.
- private collection
- offered for sale: LJM, May 1975.

116. **Sydney from the Harbour off Macquarie Fort during a S.S.Easterly Squall 1847**
- oil on board
- 15.5 x 20.5cms
- unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1847.
- private collection
- offered for sale: SM, 23/3/83, lot 47.

117. **View of Middle Harbour, Port Jackson, NSW at Sunset 1846**
- oil on board
- 15 x 20cms
- unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1846.
- private collection

118. **Rose Bay, South Side of Port Jackson, Looking up into North Harbour 1846**
- oil on board
- 15 x 20.5cms
- unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1846.
- private collection
Catalogue.

119. **Port Jackson NSW View of the Straits from South Head Cliff 1847**
oil on board
15 x 20.5cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1847.
private collection

120. **Port Jackson NSW View down the Harbour from Woolloomooloo Point; Embracing Darling Point, Piper Point, Clark's Island and end of Garden Island 1847**
oil on board
15 x 20cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1847.
offered for sale: SM, 23/3/83, lot 51

121. **Port Jackson, View Eastward from the Height above Middle Harbour 1847**
oil on board
15 x 20cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1847.
offered for sale: SM, 23/3/83, lot 52

122. **Port Jackson NSW Distant View of Sydney from the South Head Road above Rose Bay 1847**
oil on board
15 x 20.5cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1847.
private collection
offered for sale: SM, 23/3/83, lot 53

123. **No.1, View of Craigend Darlinghurst, Port Jackson 1843**
oil on board
15 x 22cms
unsigned; but inscription on verso in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.Peacock. 1843.
private collection
offered for sale: CS, 7/10/1986, lot 255
Catalogue.

124. **No 6 South East View from Craigend 1844**
oil on board
15 x 22cms
unsigned; but inscription on verso in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock. 1844.
private collection
offered for sale: CS, 7/10/1986, lot 256

125. **No 2. Port Jackson looking North East from Craigend 1844**
oil on board
15 x 22cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock. 1844.
private collection
offered for sale: CS, 7/10/1986, lot 257

126. **No 3 View of Sydney from Craigend, Darlinghurst 1844**
oil on board
15 x 22cms
unsigned; but inscribed on verso in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock. 1844.
private collection
offered for sale: CS, 7/10/1986, lot 258

127. **No 5. View towards the Heads of Port Jackson from Craigend 1843**
oil on board
15.5 x 22cms
unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock. 1843.
private collection
offered for sale: CS, 7/10/1986, lot 259

128. **No 4. View North from Craigend 1844**
oil on board
15 x 22cms
unsigned; but inscribed on verso in ink, titled as above and signed G.E. Peacock. 1844.
private collection
offered for sale: CS, 7/10/1986, lot 260

129. **Port Jackson and Sydney from the South Head Road above Rose Bay 1850**
oil on panel
25.5 x 32.5cms
Catalogue.

signed l.r. unsigned; but label on verso inscribed in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1850.
illustrated: SS, 22/10/1986, cover of sale catalogue.

130. **Port Jackson NSW 1847**
*oil on card*
17 x 22.1cms
unsigned
collection: AGSA

131. **View in Double Bay, Port Jackson, Sydney 1847**
*oil on card*
17 x 22.1cms
unsigned
collection: AGSA

132. **Port Jackson Heads: A Calm Morning after Heavy Gales 1847**
*oil on card*
17 x 22.1cms
unsigned
collection: AGSA

133. **Port Jackson, NSW North East View From Above Darling Point (looking up into north harbour) c1845-9**
*watercolour*
private collection offered for sale: CL, 10/6/1986, lot 180
NB, a coloured lithograph after this work appears in F.Eldershaw, *Australia as it Really was its Life, Scenery and Adventure*, London, 1854, facing p44. - Litho is titled View from Mt. Adelaide.
illustrated: SPF, ML.

134. **Port Jackson, NSW North West View in Double Bay – Darling Point (residences of Mr. Sillitoe on the left and Dr. Nicholsons and Sir T.L.Mitchell) c1845-9**
*watercolour*
private collection offered for sale: CL, 10/6/1986, lot 178
NB, a coloured lithograph after this work
Catalogue.

appears in F.Eldershaw, *Australia as it Really was its Life, Scenery and Adventure*, London, 1854, facing p211. - Litho is titled *Double Bay*, Sydney illustrated: SPF, ML.

135. **View of Darling Point Port Jackson NSW** c1845-9
watercolour
private collection
offered for sale: CL, 10/6/1986, lot 179
NB, a coloured lithograph after this work appears in F.Eldershaw, *Australia as it Really was its Life, Scenery and Adventure*, London, 1854, facing p48. - Litho is titled *The Willows*, Darling Point.
illustrated: SPF, ML.

136. **Parsley Bay, Sydney Harbour**
oil on board
12.3 x 18.2cms
signature: 'Conrad Martens' applied L.R.

137. **from path leading to Hall (?)**
c1845.
oil
11 x 15cms
private collection.

138. **Government House and Fort Macquarie from the Botanical Gardens** 1844
oil on card
12.5 x 16.5cms
unsigned: but inscription on verso in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1844.

139. **Port Jackson Looking East from Sir Richard Bourke’s Statue** 1843
oil on card
12.5 x 16.5cms
unsigned: but inscription on verso in ink, titled as above and signed G.E.P. 1843.
Bibliography

Books


Bibliography


Bibliography


Hood, John, Australia and the East, 1843, (D.L. 84/254)


Kerr, Joan and Broadbent, James, Gothick Taste in the Colony of New South Wales, The Davis Ell Press, Sydney, 1980.


Bibliography

Maclehose, James, Picture of Sydney and Strangers' Guide in N.S.W. for 1839, John Ferguson, Sydney, 1977, (first published 1839)


Mudie, James, The Felony of New South Wales, Lansdowne, Melbourne, 1964. (First Published 1837)


Novak, Barbara, Nineteenth Century American Painting, Sotheby's, New York, 1986.


Bibliography


Articles


Manuscripts

Bibliography

**Newspapers**

*Sydney Morning Herald*

*Bell's Life in Sydney*

*The Australian*

*The People's Advocate*

**Catalogues**


Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia, First Exhibition, 1847.

Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia, Second Exhibition 1849.


Bibliography

Theses


G.E. PEACOCK

AND ART IN

COLONIAL SYDNEY:

1837-1857

VOLUME TWO - ILLUSTRATIONS

MASTER OF ARTS (HONOURS)
THESIS
SUBMITTED BY

GARRY P. DARBY B.A.

SUPERVISED BY
PROFESSOR JOAN KERR

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY
POWER FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT

1989
ILLUSTRATIONS

Illus.1.  cat.13.
Lyons Terrace, Hyde Park, Sydney 1844.
oil on copper
16.5 x 23.2cms
collection: ANL, (RNK 5021)

Illus.2.  cat.80.
North East View of Mr. Gregory's
garden - Potts Point, Port Jackson
1849
oil on board
25.3 x 32.9cms
collection: ANL, Canberra, (NK 124)

Illus.3.  cat. 46.
Port Jackson NSW Distant View of
Sydney from above Rose Bay on the
South Head Road 1847
oil on cardboard
14.3 x 19.4cms
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML 238)

Illus.4.  cat.8.
Glenrock - Darling Point
oil
21.6 x 30.5cms
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML492)

Illus.5.  
Thomas Gainsborough
Sunset: Carthorses Drinking at a
Stream c1760

Illus.6.  
Thomas Cole (1801-1848)
Oxbow: The Connecticut River Near
Northampton 1846.

Illus.7.  cat.7.
Sydney From The North Shore
oil on canvas
13 x 25.7cms
unsigned
collection ML (ZML151)

Illus.8  cat.12.
Government House, Sydney from the
Statue of Sir Richard Bourke
oil on board
13.7 x 18.8cms
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML657)
Illus.9. cat.19.  
View of Part of Woolloomooloo and Mr. Barker’s House and Mill, with Bradley’s Point 1844.  
oil on board  
24 x33.6cms  
unsigned  
collection: DG (ZDG372)

Illus.10. Conrad Martens (1801-1878)  
From a set of 20 Lithographs titled: Sketches in the Environs of Sydney 1850-51.

Illus.11. cat.4.  
Dan Cooper’s House  
oil on board  
19.6 x 26.2cms.  
unsigned  
private collection

Illus.12. cat.  
Conrad Martens  
Governor Bourke’s Statue Overlooking the Harbour, Sydney 1842  
collection: ML.

Illus.13. cat.6.  
Sydney From Governor Bourke’s Statue.  
oil  
19 x 26cms  
unsigned  
collection: ML (ZML152)

Illus.14. cat.133.  
Port Jackson, NSW North East View From Above Darling Point (looking up into north harbour) c1845-9  
watercolour  
private collection

Illus.15. cat.134.  
Port Jackson, NSW North West View in Double Bay – Darling Point (residences of Mr. Sillitoe on the left and Dr. Nicholsons and Sir T.L. Mitchell) c1845-9  
watercolour  
private collection
Illus.23. cat.30.
Tarmons, Woolloomooloo, Sydney
Residence of Sir Maurice O'Connell
1845.
oil
20.3 x 26.6cms
unsigned
collection: ML, (ML721)

Illus.24. cat.51.
Sydney from Woolloomooloo
oil
39 x 56.8cms
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML 72)

Illus.25. cat.125.
Port Jackson looking up North East
from Craigend 1844
oil on board
15 x 22cms
unsigned
private collection

Illus.26. cat.47.
Port Jackson NSW from the heights
above Double Bay, looking North 1847
oil on cardboard
14.3 x 19.5cms
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML237)

Illus.27. cat.43.
View from Glenrock looking -(?)-
Double Bay in Port Jackson NSW 1846
oil on board
14.6 x 19.7cms
unsigned
collection: ML, (ZML493)

Illus.28. cat.
52.
View from Woolloomooloo Bay Port
Jackson NSW taken from Lower Domain
Road 1849.
oil
24.7 x 32.4cms
unsigned
collection: DG (ZDG 219).
Illus.29. cat.49.
Port Jackson NSW North Head and Middle Head from Middle Harbour 1849.
oil on board
19 x 25.4cms
signed: G.E.Peacock
private collection.

Illus.30. cat.60.
The Three Brothers Mountains, near Camden Haven, East Coast 1852.
oil on board
14.7 x 19.8cms
signed G.E.Peacock, 1.1.
private collection

Illus.31. cat.22.
Custom House and Circular Quay 1845.
oil
22 x 28.2cms
unsigned
collection: DG (ZDG35)

Illus.32. cat.23.
Custom House and Part of Circular Quay Wharf, Sydney NSW 1845.
oil
22 x 29cms
signed: G.E.Peacock 1845
collection: DG, (ZDG38).

Illus.33. cat.55.
Morning at the Heads of Port Jackson or the Pilot's Look-out 1850
oil
24.4 x 34.6cms
signed: 'G.E.Peacock 1850' l.r.
collection: DG (ZDG 204)

Illus.34. Henry Webber and William Hackwood
Hope Encouraging Art and Labour, under the influence of Peace 1789

Illus.35. E.H.Bailey
Governor Sir Richard Bourke, 1842.
Illus.36. cat.32.  
*View of old Government House, Sydney, as it Appeared when vacated by Sir George Gipps in 1845.*  
oil on board  
17 x 22.5cms  
unsigned  
collection: ML, (ZML658)

Illus.37. cat.54.  
*Government House Sydney 1850*  
oil  
30.8 x 46.6cms  
unsigned  
collection: DG (ZDG206)

Illus.38. cat.86.  
*Craighend, Sydney, NSW c1849*  
oil  
25.2 x 34.8cms  
collection: ANL, Canberra (NK 3378)

Illus.39. cat.83.  
*East View from Mr. Gregory's garden, Potts Point, Port Jackson, 1849*  
oil on board  
25.5 x 33cms  
unsigned  
collection: ANL, Canberra, (NK 122)

Illus.40. cat.26  
*Supreme Court House Sydney 1845*  
oil on cardboard  
14 x 19cms  
unsigned  
collection: ML, (ZML659)

Illus.41. cat.100.  
*The Residence of the Hon. E.D. Thompson, Sydney, NSW 1845*  
oil on board  
18 x 24.7cms  
unsigned  
collection: DG, (ZDG355)

Illus.42. cat.129.  
*Port Jackson and Sydney from the South*  
*Head Road above Rose Bay 1850*  
oil on panel  
25.5 x 32.5cms  
signed l.r.  
private collection
Illus.43. cat.48.  
*Port Jackson NSW View in Double Bay*  
*S.Side Middle Head in the distance*  
*(near sunset)*  
1847  
oil  
23.5 x 33.6cms.  
unsigned  

Illus.44. cat.3.  
*View of Government House, Sydney*  
oil on wood panel  
24.8 x 31.1cms  
unsigned
Illus.1.

Cat.13.

Lyons Terrace, Hyde Park, Sydney 1844.

oil on copper

16.5 x 22.2 cms.

collection: ANL, (RNK 5021)
Illus.2.  
cat.80.  
North East View of Mr. Gregory's  
garden - Potts Point, Port Jackson  
1849  
oil on board  
25.3 x 32.9cms  
collection: ANL, Canberra, (NK 124)
Illus.3.  cat. 46.
Port Jackson NSW Distant View of Sydney from above Rose Bay on the South Head Road 1847
oil on cardboard
14.3 x 19.4cms
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML 238)
Illus. 4.
cat. 8.
Glenrock - Darling Point
oil
21.6 x 30.5cms
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML492)
Illus. 5. Thomas Gainsborough
Sunset: Carthorses Drinking at a Stream c1760
Illus. 6. Thomas Cole (1801-1848)
Illus. 7.

Cat. 7.

Sydney From The North Shore
oil on canvas
13 x 25.7cms
unsigned
collection ML (ZML151)
Illus. 8

Cat. 12.

Government House, Sydney from the
Statue of Sir Richard Bourke
Oil on board
13.7 x 18.8 cms
Unsigned
Collection: ML (ZML657)
Illus.9.
cat.19.
View of Part of Woolloomooloo and Mr.
Barker's House and Mill, with
Bradley's Point 1844.
oil on board
24 x33.6cms
unsigned
collection: DG (ZDG372)
Illus. 10. **Conrad Martens (1801-1878)**
From a set of 20 Lithographs titled: 
*Sketches in the Environs of Sydney* 
1850-51.
Illus.11. cat.4.
Dan Cooper's House
oil on board
19.6 x 26.2cms.
unsigned
private collection
Illus. 12. cat. Conrad Martens
Governor Bourke's Statue Overlooking the Harbour, Sydney 1842
collection: ML.
Illus.13.  cat.6.
Sydney From Governor Bourke's Statue.
oil
19 x 26 cms
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML152)
Illus.14. cat.133.
Port Jackson, NSW North East View From Above Darling Point (looking up into north harbour) c1845-9
watercolour
private collection
Illus. 15.  cat. 134.
Port Jackson, NSW North West View in Double Bay - Darling Point (residences of Mr. Sillitoe on the left and Dr. Nicholsons and Sir T. L. Mitchell)
c1845-9
watercolour
private collection
Illus.16.  
cat.135.  
View of Darling Point Port Jackson NSW  
c1845-9  
watercolour  
private collection
Illus.17. cat.9.
*View of Amsterdam Island*, 1840.
oil
signed and dated: G.E. Peacock 1840.
Illus.18. cat.61.
A View of Sydney taken from
Darlinghurst showing Woolloomooloo Bay
1852.
oil
35.5 x 76.5cms
signed: G.E.Peacock and dated 1852,
l.r.
collection: ML, (ML 676).
Illus.19.  cat.63.
City and Harbour of Sydney, NSW, from
the height above Vaucluse
oil
36.8 x 89cms
unsigned
collection: ML, (ZML 155)
Illus.20. cat.87.
The Three Brothers Mountain near Camden Haven, East Coast 1852
oil on canvas
40.5 x 58 cms.
unsigned
collection: ANL, Canberra (RNK 805)
Illus. 21.
cat. 101.
Port Jackson, NSW, Showing Observatory
1845
oil
35.5 x 76.5cms
unsigned
private collection
Illus. 22. cat. 35.
No. 2 Port Jackson NSW The Floating Light (Morning) 1846
oil
15.2 x 20.3cms.
unsigned
collection: D6 (ZD6333)
Illus. 23.  cat. 30.
Tarmons, Woolloomooloo, Sydney
Residence of Sir Maurice O’Connell
1845.
oil
20.3 x 26.6 cms
unsigned
collection: ML, (ML721)
Illus. 24.  

cat. 51.  

Sydney from Woolloomooloo  
oil  
39 x 56.8 cms  
unsigned  
collection: ML (2ML 72)
Illus. 25. cat. 125.
Port Jackson looking up North East
from Craigend 1844
oil on board
15 x 22cms
unsigned
private collection
Illus.26.  cat.47.
Port Jackson NSW from the heights above Double Bay, looking North 1847
oil on cardboard
14.3 x 19.5cms
unsigned
collection: ML (ZML237)
Illus. 27.  cat. 43.
View from Glenrock looking (??-)-
Double Bay in Port Jackson NSW 1846
oil on board
14.6 x 19.7cms
unsigned
collection: ML, (2ML493)
Illus. 28.  cat. 52.
View from Woolloomooloo Bay Port
Jackson NSW taken from Lower Domain Road 1849.
oil
24.7 x 32.4cms
unsigned
collection: DG (ZDG 219).
Illus.29.  cat.49.
Port Jackson NSW North Head and Middle Head from Middle Harbour 1849.
oil on board
19 x 25.4cms
signed: G.E.Peacock
private collection.
Illus. 30.  cat. 60.
The Three Brothers Mountains, near Camden Haven, East Coast 1852.
oil on board
14.7 x 19.8cms.
signed G.E. Peacock, 1.1.
private collection
Illus. 31.  cat. 22.
Custom House and Circular Quay 1845.  
oil
22 x 28.2 cms
unsigned
collection: DG (ZG635)
Illus. 32.  cat. 23.
Custom House and Part of Circular Quay
Wharf, Sydney NSW 1845.
oil
22 x 29 cms
signed: G.E. Peacock 1845
collection: DG, (ZDG38).
Illus. 33.  cat. 55.
Morning at the Heads of Port Jackson
or the Pilot's Look-out 1850
oil
24.4 x 34.6cms
signed: 'G.E.Pacock 1850' l.r.
collection: DG (ZDG 204)
Illus. 34. Henry Webber and William Hackwood
Hope Encouraging Art and Labour, under the influence of Peace 1789
Illus.35. E.H.Bailey
Governor Sir Richard Bourke, 1842.
illus.36.  cat.32.

View of old Government House, Sydney,
as it Appeared when vacated by Sir
George Gipps in 1845.
oil on board
17 x 22.5cms
unsigned
collection: ML, (ZML658)
Illus. 37.  cat. 54.
Government House Sydney 1850
oil
30.8 x 46.6 cms
unsigned
collection: DG (ZDG206)
Illus. 38.  cat. 86.
Craigend, Sydney, NSW c1849
oil
25.2 x 34.8 cms
collection: ANL, Canberra (NK 3378)
Illus. 39. cat. 83.
East View from Mr. Gregory's garden,
Potts Point, Port Jackson, 1849
Oil on board
25.5 x 33 cms
Unsigned
Collection: ANL, Canberra, (NK 122)
Illus. 40.
cat. 26
Supreme Court House Sydney 1845
oil on cardboard
14 x 19 cms
unsigned
collection: ML, (ZML659)
Illus.41. cat.100.
The Residence of the Hon. E.D. Thompson.
Sydney, NSW 1845
oil on board
18 x 24.7cms
unsigned
collection: DG, (ZDG355)
Illus. 42.  cat. 129.
Port Jackson and Sydney from the South
Head Road above Rose Bay 1850
oil on panel
25.5 x 32.5cms
signed l.r.
private collection
Illus. 43. cat. 48.
Port Jackson NSW View in Double Bay
S. Side Middle Head in the distance
(near sunset) 1847
oil
23.5 x 33.6cms.
unsigned
Illus.44.  cat.3.
View of Government House, Sydney
oil on wood panel
24.8 x 31.1cms
unsigned