

THE QUARTERLY BULLETIN OF THE  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

Volume Two

1947

Number Four



### THE REWARD OF PHILOSOPHY

By Paolo Caliari (called Veronese)

*Felton Bequest, 1947.*

When Veronese came to Venice from Verona in 1554, he was twenty-six years of age, and already an experienced painter whose original talent enabled him to hold his own with the great Venetian masters of the high Renaissance, Titian and Tintoretto.

Typical of the age in which he worked, Veronese was mainly a painter of religious or allegorical subjects, usually commissioned by churches and monasteries. His natural feeling for the graces and material beauties of the fashionable world found expression in the introduction of the splendid palaces, elaborate costumes, soldiers' buffoons and musicians associated with the life of the Venetian nobles.

In "The Reward of Philosophy," though based on a complicated allegorical theme, the artist has not allowed the "story" to take the upper hand, and it in no way interferes with the bold sweep of the pictorial design as a whole. A Venetian noble in a black costume is seated before an open book, and gazing earnestly at the female figure in the foreground, who symbolises "Contemplative Life." In the background "Active Life" holds the crown and sceptre, while Venus and the huntsmen, representing "Worldly Life," stand unheeded. Cupid, the God of Love, lies asleep at the nobleman's feet.

The allegorical element is handled unobtrusively, and the picture lives by its glowing colour and the rhythmic and well-balanced composition.

## NATIONAL GALLERY SOCIETY

It is generally believed that our National Gallery is in a proud position by reason of the Felton Bequest, the Templeton collection, the Kent ceramics, and many classical pictures—each section is in itself unparalleled south of the Line. Yet it has many needs. It has many beauties—but many shortages. Indeed, considering the demands made upon it by the new awareness and activities of mid-twentieth century people, and considering all it could do for them and for their descendants, to-day it has as many needs as ever. All its hundred years it has been short of staff, and money, and public interest, and public criticism. I am not decrying the glories of the Gallery or distinguished work that has been done for it, when I say that we are still far short, in services rendered to their community, of the average galleries of British and American cities.

It is to help in the remedy of these shortages that the National Gallery Society of Victoria is now being formed. The Society will seek public support, get money, provide services for a wide membership and endeavour to support the Trustees' activities on the whole important front of public relations. The Society has risen from the work of a small body of appreciative men who have given much thought and time to its constitution, and it is being launched with great confidence that it will secure wide support. Needless to say, it has the good wishes and approval of the Gallery Trustees.

I remember the time when the Government grant for the purchase of works of art was nil. The staff was meagre and under-paid; the galleries ill-lit; drawings and prints (including Blake, Rembrandt and Meryon) were crowded in an attic; the Director was inaccessible; the building shoddy and unkempt. We were painfully aware that art had no votes. Gradually a change has come about, and for the last three years the State has increased our annual grant for purchases. We have better and larger staffs, more money for maintenance, and, most important of all, we have secured, with the support of all parties, the great island block of land on St. Kilda Road just across Princes' Bridge—a noble site for new galleries and auditorium.

It is, I believe, part of this changing thought that has brought the National Gallery Society into being. Melbourne is going to extend its appreciation and use of beauty. It is going to live more with beautiful things and know more of beautiful creations of the past and give more value to beautiful ways of life. The younger folk in particular are reaching out for a more balanced and beautiful environment, and, although there are no particularly young people on the body of men who produced the soundly-fashioned new Society, the hopes that belong to youth are still in them, and they have laid foundations that can carry all ages and classes.

The functions of the new Society are set out in four clauses:—

- A. To stimulate and sustain public interest in the Gallery; to extend the influence of the Gallery throughout the community; and to enhance its cultural significance.
- B. To assist the Trustees generally in the pursuit of these aims.
- C. To provide facilities and services for its members.
- D. To create a fund for the furtherance of these objectives.

Similar Societies exist in most British and American cities which can boast of a good gallery. In London the Society is mostly a collecting organisation to save great works of art for the nation. It is called the National Art Collections Fund, and it has intervened with great sums of money to buy treasures for British galleries. In the British provinces and in America, gallery or museum societies work more upon the lines of issuing publications; holding lectures and special visiting days, financing exhibitions, and generally keeping about the galleries a considerable stir of interest and discussion.

The founders of the Melbourne Society aim at being of substantial use to the Government and to the Trustees in raising public interest in the new building scheme. I gather they hope to befriend country galleries and will go into the University and schools in the cause of education in art.

The new Society is completing its constitution and will make its own announcements in due course. A large membership is hoped for.

KEITH MURDOCH.





ANTHONY HIGHMORE      By Joseph Highmore  
*Felton Bequest, 1947.*



JOSEPH HIGHMORE      Self Portrait  
*Felton Bequest, 1947.*



PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG GIRL      By Joseph Highmore  
*Felton Bequest, 1947.*



AN INTERESTING AND INSTRUCTIVE EXHIBITION of the work of an outstanding eighteenth century English painter, Joseph Highmore, was recently held in the Childers Gallery. The scope and variety of the exhibition was made possible by the generosity of Archdeacon Morgan-Payler, of Bal-larat, who is a direct descendant of the artist. Archdeacon Morgan-Payler loaned to the Gallery the delightful "Family Group" and six portraits. Works from our own collection included four examples of the famous Pamela series, of which the remaining eight are divided amongst the National Gallery, the Tate Gallery, London, and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Joseph Highmore, the son of a coal merchant, was born in London and was articled to an attorney in 1707, but, employing all his leisure in the study of art, he finally abandoned a legal career for painting. A pupil of Sir Godfrey Kneller's, Highmore also became acquainted with William Hogarth and the French artist Gravelot, both of whom influenced his style. Highmore soon achieved success as a portrait painter and received a number of notable commissions.

He and his daughter Susannah were intimate friends of the novelist Samuel Richardson. They belonged to a small circle which met in Richardson's house to hear the author read passages from his latest book. The Reverend William Duncombe, another member of this circle, married Susannah Highmore in 1761. When Richardson published his novel "Pamela" in 1744, Highmore created a series of paintings illustrating twelve characteristic incidents from the story.

Highmore's series of illustrations gives us, for the first time in English painting, a genre picture of English country life. We are introduced into stately and sparsely-furnished early 18th century country house interiors; we see a coach-and-four in front of an imposing mansion, a charming enclosed country garden, and, above all, the natural and graceful behaviour of men and women in the course of everyday life—differing greatly from the studied and solemn poses assumed for official portraiture. Highmore painted his realistic subject matter with the animated flow of line and composition characteristic of baroque art.

His lively appreciation of the English character, the rather coarse humour expressed with an elegant refinement of technical means, epitomises the age in which Joseph Highmore lived and worked.



LADY DAVERS ILLTREATS PAMELA.

From a Series of Twelve Illustrations to Samuel Richardson's Pamela. Painted by Joseph Highmore, Engraved by A. Benois and L. Truchy, 1745.

GEMS FROM THE ART MUSEUM.

No. 8

The Rodney Jug of Derby, 1782.

*Felton Bequest.*



SOME OF THE FINEST OF THE EARLY DERBY WARES were those produced for table services, one piece of which, these days, is a treasured possession. Tureens, teapots, jugs and cups and saucers were copied in form and decoration from the expensive wares of Louis XVI.'s Sevres. Naturally, they could not compete with this richly-subsidised manufactory, but if the porcelain of the Chelsea Derby period did nothing else, it established a style that influenced other English factories of the time and succeeding periods.

The earliest known Derby painter was Edward Withers, and to his brush is ascribed the flower painting on the "Rodney Jug," here illustrated. It was made to commemorate Admiral Rodney's victory over the French fleet under Admiral Count de Grasse, in a battle off the West Indies, on April 12th, 1782. The victor was raised to the peerage two months later, and it was probably on this occasion that the jug was made. The date of the battle is inscribed under the spout, which is in the form of the head of Lord Rodney in a cocked hat. The form of this particular jug has evidently been taken from Meissen coffee pots, examples of which may be seen in nearby cases. A rare Chelsea Derby mark D under a crown is inscribed on the base in purple enamel.

Withers excelled as a painter of flowers in the conventional style which prevailed before Billingsley initiated a freer and more fluent treatment. The pink rose was a favourite with all flower painters, especially those at the Derby factory, and a typical Derby mannerism is the single flower spraying well out from the main group of flowers, as illustrated on the Rodney jug.

Withers was a convivial and cheerful character, with many of the weaknesses of the "artistic" temperament.

Eventually the weaknesses were to undermine his whole career, but before that happened he was the jovial president of the Derby Painters' Club, and it is said that he painted the Rodney Jug especially for the use of the Club meetings.

The jug was purchased in London, on the advice of Mr. Bernard Rackham, in 1938, from the Wallace Elliot Collection, under the terms of the Felton Bequest. It may be seen, with other examples from this famous collection, in the Verdon Gallery.

JOSHUA N. McCLELLAND.

## THE WAKEFIELD EXHIBITION

Two hundred and twenty-three pictures from the British Council's Wakefield Collection are to be shown at the National Gallery, Melbourne, early in September.

The British Council was, in part, responsible for arranging in London last year an Exhibition of the paintings of Picasso and Matisse. They caused a more than mild sensation. The Wakefield Collection will not raise Melbourne's temperature to the same feverish degree. It is intended to be representative rather than provocative, though it is to be hoped that artists and others will be stimulated by some of the many techniques exemplified in it. The Collection gives a fair and comprehensive review of the work of British artists of this century in water-colour and the various graphic arts, and shows the remarkable width and variety of their purposes and techniques.

No less than a hundred and fifty-eight artists are represented. These include people of such reputation as Sir Muirhead Bone, Brabazon, Frank Dobson, Augustus John, Paul and John Nash, Sickert, Steer and Gilbert Spencer. The high standard of recent British book illustration is to be seen in the wood cuts, wood engravings, etc., by John Farleigh, Robert Gibbings, Eric Gill, Blair Hughes-Stanton and Leon Underwood.

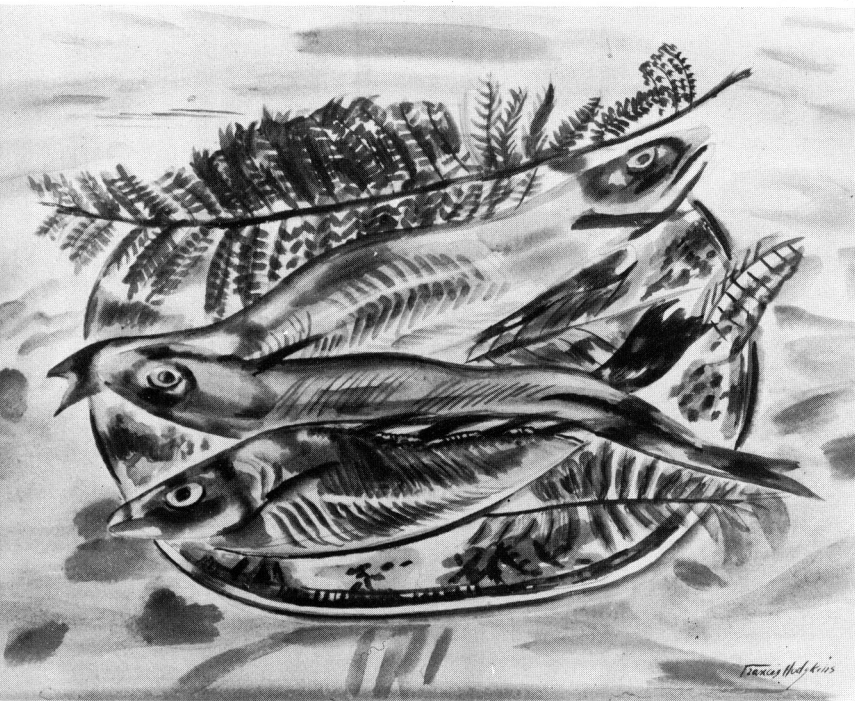
Specially noteworthy are the phantasies of that strange genius, David Jones, the brilliant delicacy of the drawing of Anthony Goss, and the pictures of Frances Hodgkins, the New Zealander who, late in life, escaped from academic commonsense into a magic world of imaginative colour and pattern of extraordinary beauty; she died a few months ago.



CHRISTCHURCH, NEWGATE STREET

Water Colour by John Piper

*From the Wakefield Collection.*



FISH Water Colour by Frances Hodgkins

*From the Wakefield Collection.*

There is also a pleasant drawing by Christopher Wood, and among the exponents of the more advanced tendencies of to-day are Piper, Tunnard, Minton, Robert Colquhoun and Cecil Collins.

Here then is a wide congregation of talent. In it can be discerned some of the main characteristics native to British art—romanticism (often running to eccentricity), lyricism, love of line, and especially of fantastic line, a certain austerity of paint, a reverence for water-colour and for illustration (unshared, for instance, by the French), and above all, a poetic devotion to nature and, in particular, to the landscape of England.

The British Council sets out not only to project British culture abroad, but also to encourage other countries to send examples of their culture to Britain. Might I suggest that at some time in the near future the people of the British Isles be given the opportunity of seeing what Australia is doing in the graphic arts. It would be good news to hear, one of these days, that an Australian counterpart of the Wakefield Collection was on its way to the Old Country.

BRIAN JONES.



A NOTEWORTHY EVENT SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE was the formal handing over to the Trustees by Sir Alexander Stewart of the major works purchased in London last year under the terms of the Felton Bequest. These included the Veronese, the Turner, Rubens and Sickert and a selection of Oriental ceramics, all of which were temporarily displayed in the McArthur Gallery. The ceremony was attended by a large and representative gathering.

In recent months a good deal of rearrangement has been carried out in the Art Gallery and Art Museum. Eighteenth century French and English furniture has been attractively re-grouped at the entrance to the Barry Hall, while the oak is now displayed in the Buvelot and Childers Galleries. A small court has also been made near the lift, for the showing of selected Australian sculpture. Repainting of the galleries is not yet completed, as the installation of a new lighting system may necessitate further changes.

In May, Mr. Alan Sumner took over duties as Assistant Instructor to Mr. Dargie and Mr. Griffin.

### RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE ART GALLERY INCLUDE—

#### OILS.

The Shore at Flinders, Francis Roy Thompson	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Purchased
Sketch for Frosty Morning, Fred McCubbin	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Purchased
A Quiet Cup of Tea, Julian Ashton	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Purchased
Yachts at Frankston, Alan Moore	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Purchased
The Blind Girl, James Quinn	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Purchased
Suffolk Lane, George Bell	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Purchased
Still Life, J. Bergner	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Allan R. Henderson	Donation Fund
Dividing the Fishes, J. Wigley	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Allan R. Henderson	Donation Fund
The Kitchen Table, Charles Bush	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Purchased
Australian Landscape, William Frater	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Purchased

#### WATER COLOURS.

Ruined Cathedral, Charles Bush	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Purchased
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#### MISCELLANEOUS.

Drawings by Edward Heffernan, Ena Joyce, James Wigley, T. J. Sentry and Jean Appleton	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Purchased
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#### ART MUSEUM.

97 Pieces of Chinese Porcelain, Bronze and Paintings	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Felton Bequest
Head of a Monster, Chinese, Marble	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Felton Bequest

### GENEROUS DONATIONS TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY AND ART MUSEUM INCLUDE—

Interior with Figures, Oil, Gwen John	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Presented by Mrs. C. H. Collins Baker
Portrait of His Mother, Henry Rayner (drypoint)	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Presented by the Artist

#### TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA.

Sir Keith Murdoch (Chairman)	Allan R. Henderson, LL.M.
J. D. G. Medley, M.A. (Vice-Chairman)	A. T. Smithers, A.I.C.A.
H. W. Kent (Treasurer)	D. Max Meldrum
R. D. Elliott, C.M.G.	E. N. Dewar (Secretary)

#### FELTON BEQUESTS COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Sir Frank Clarke, K.B.E., M.L.C. (Chairman)
Major-General H. W. Grimwade, C.B., C.M.G.
Sir Alexander Stewart
The Hon. Sir Owen Dixon, K.C.M.G.
Sir Keith Murdoch (Representative of the Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria)
Colin G. Rigg (Secretary)

Director of the National Gallery	-	-	Daryl Lindsay
Assistant Director	-	-	Robert Haines
Assistant Keeper of the Prints	-	-	Dr. Ursula Hoff
Hon Curator of Chinese Art	-	-	H. W. Kent
Head of the National Gallery Schools	-	-	William Dargie
Drawing Master	-	-	V. Murray Griffin
Assistant Drawing and Painting Master	-	-	Alan Sumner

Free lunch-time lectures in the new Lecture Hall, Swanston Street entrance, were resumed on Thursday, 27th March, at 1.15 p.m., and will be held on the second and fourth Thursday of every month until further notice.

*Catalogue of the Art Gallery (unillustrated, price one shilling), and a selection of postcards, coloured reproductions, illustrated catalogues, etc., etc., are on sale at the Swanston Street entrance to the Gallery.*

Cover Design in this issue is a Bronze Figure, "The Bather," by Maurice Lambert. Purchased 1945.