



THE QUARTERLY BULLETIN OF THE  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

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The opportunity happily presents itself in this issue of the Gallery Bulletin to say something of the work of the London Adviser to the Felton Bequest, Mr. A. J. L. McDonnell, who has recently been in Melbourne to review the purchases of the past two years and to discuss our future buying policy.

Since October, 1947, Mr. McDonnell, in consultation with Sir Kenneth Clark, and with Sir Leigh Ashton and Mr. Ralph Edwards of the Victoria and Albert Museum, has been directly responsible for bringing to the notice of the Trustees of the Felton Bequest the works of art which have been acquired overseas and presented to the Gallery by that body. His guide has been a general buying schedule drawn up here to fill gaps in our collection, and his method has been to submit photographs of suggested purchases to the Trustees, but the initiative for each particular recommendation came from him. It is to him that we owe, among many others, the Poussin, the Murillo, the Antonis Mor, and a number of splendid examples of period furniture. On his visit to Melbourne, Mr. McDonnell brought with him photographs of a superb el Greco portrait and an important landscape by Hobbema, both of which have since been approved for purchase and should arrive within a few months.

Mr. McDonnell is himself a keen collector; and the Gallery has been enriched by the generous gifts which it has received over the past two years from his private collection. They include thirty-three landscape sketches in oils and ten figure drawings in ink by Rupert Bunny, a coloured drawing by Henry Moore, and an oil painting "Girl in a Black Hat" by Derwent Lees, the last of which Mr. McDonnell presented to the Gallery through the National Gallery Society.

Two other gifts have just been made by him. These are two beautiful Chinese Court Robes of the Ching Dynasty, the hem of one of which is reproduced on the cover of this bulletin. Both are hand woven in silk and gold thread by the Kossu method — a method first used in China during the Tang Dynasty, A.D. 618-906. The design of the robe which is reproduced portrays the four elements, water, earth, air and fire, representing natural law. Floating in the heavens are nine five-clawed dragons, each one in association with a pearl, indicating that the Emperor who wore the robe was all pure and just. Other emblems introduced, and some of which may be seen on the cover, are peaches (longevity), baldacchinos (authority), bats (happiness), fish (conjugal felicity), knots (eternity), pearls (paradise), and so on.

Mr. McDonnell's notes on the portrait group by the 18th century Venetian, Jacopo Amigoni, which is illustrated on the opposite page, will be of interest to readers.

— Laurence Thomas.

Now and again a picture may strike us as being peculiarly expressive of the age which produced it. Take the Melbourne Poussin for example. Ostensibly it represents the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites, but Poussin's ardent classicism has given the Children of Israel the outward semblance of Romans. Yet the reasoned and intellectual inspiration of the picture, and its rhythmic design, are as essentially expressive of 17th Century France as the formal gardens of Le Notre or the flow of Racinian alexandrines.

The Amigoni is another such picture, the product of a gentler and less heroic age, recreating in the imagination the elegant grace and the charm of 18th Century Italy.

In the picture are five people seated in a landscape, the central figure being that of Farinelli, a curious and interesting character, born in Naples in 1705, who became at an early age the most celebrated singer of his day. The first years of his career were spent in the cities of Italy and in Vienna, London and Paris. His success was everywhere instantaneous and in 1738 he visited Spain, intending to spend a few months only in that country, but the few months were extended to twenty-five years, for the charm of Farinelli's voice caused him to become the omnipotent favourite of two successive kings, the discretion and wisdom with which he used his influence giving him the power if not the rank of Prime Minister of





PORTRAIT GROUP by Jacopo Amigoni

*Felton Bequest, 1950.*

Spain, a maker and unmaker of ministries, to whom even the Empress Maria Theresa wrote what have been described as "curiously civil little notes". He received the Orders of St. James of Compostella and of Calatrava, and he wears the badge of the former in the picture. After the death of Ferdinand VI, Farinelli's influence waned, and he returned to his native Italy to settle in Bologna.

Besides Farinelli there are in the group the charming figure of Teresa Castillini, a singer of whom little is known, and that of Amigoni himself holding his brushes. The boy holding Amigoni's palette is an Austrian Archduke dressed as a page.

The remaining personage, in the dress of a cleric, is Metastasio the poet and librettist, the friend of Pergolese and Scarlatti, both of whom set his plays to music. Metastasio and Farinelli were life-long friends and the poet has paid tribute to the upright and amiable character of one who has been described as "a supremely great singer and a supremely powerful favourite".

Those who would like to know more about the personages in this enchanting portrait group are referred to Burney's "Music in France and Italy in the 18th Century" and Vernon Lee's "Studies of the 18th Century in Italy".

— A. J. L. McDonnell.

## ENGLISH GLASS

During the past year the collection of English Glass in the Gallery has been considerably enlarged with the object of providing a fairly complete range of the various types of glass, mainly drinking vessels, in use during the Eighteenth Century or to be more precise from 1685 to 1830.

It was in 1685 that George Ravenscroft discovered a new formula for the manufacture of glass, of a clarity and solidity which had been hitherto unknown and was to place England in the front rank of glass producing countries for some time to come. Before this time glass was being made in England in a light bubbly soda metal similar in texture and design to Venetian and Continental products and very few of these pieces survive or are identifiable.

In order that the development may be more easily followed, glass collectors have classified the types and periods into several main groups and the glass in our own collection will shortly be arranged in these groupings with descriptive tablets so that it is hoped that those interested will be able to study the types and changes of form and texture of the glasses exhibited and even by comparison to identify and date those in their own possession.

Up to the present, in forming our collection, emphasis has been laid on the acquisition of all the main types to be commonly met with, rather than to buy rare and distinguished single items which are not only very costly but, it was felt, would not be so generally useful to the public. It is interesting to learn from an eminent London authority that in this respect the Melbourne Collection compares very favourably with those of the great English Museums; but of course so far with none of the important and priceless pieces for which these Museums are famous. Attention is now being given to the provision of some outstanding pieces and several notable purchases have recently been made in London which will be displayed in the Verdon Gallery in the near future.

The early glasses which were produced in Ravenscroft's new metal were mostly of a form somewhat similar to that illustrated in Fig. 2. The bowl was frequently larger than the stem and the base of the bowl was usually thick solid glass which occasionally enclosed a tear or bubble. Stems as in Fig. 2 were nearly always of "inverted baluster" form. The foot is most frequently folded at the edge. This glass belongs to the group known as Heavy Balusters which date roughly from 1685 to 1725. A domed foot was provided for many glasses after about 1695, stems lengthened in proportion to bowls and stem forms became more complicated with the introduction of various forms of heavy knobs and of the "true baluster" shape. Also new bowl forms appeared such as Waisted and Bell bowls and the base of Funnel bowls became more rounded. The glass shown in our illustration may be dated about 1690.

The next distinctive type of glass is that which for no particular reason has been known as "Silesian" stemmed; but which is now better described by the term "Moulded Pedestal stem". These were manufactured during the



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period 1715, or possibly a little earlier, to 1765. Fig. 5 illustrates the stem type, the glass shown being a small sweetmeat dish of about 1750. Earlier glasses in the group were mainly wines with four sided stems increasing towards the middle of the century to 6 and 8 sides, with the frequent addition of small collars above and/or below the pedestal. Shallow bowled champagne glasses and sweetmeat dishes are commonly found with the later Moulded Pedestal stems.

A typical glass of the Balustroid Group which extended from 1725-1755 is shown in Fig. 3, the stem of which is composed of an annulated knop over a true baluster. This glass which was made about 1730 shows an early use of wheel engraving.

These were followed by Light Balusters 1735-1765 which were made at Newcastle and include some very beautiful tall glasses with slender and elaborately knopped stems. The Dutch discovered that the English lead glass was much more suitable for their fine engraving than their own soda glass and imported large quantities from Newcastle to be engraved and resold in England. Several of these are shown in the Collection but the glass shown in Fig. 4 although a typical Newcastle glass falls into the Composite Stem Group (1740-1770) by reason of its having a section of air twist stem introduced. The bowl is engraved by Jacob Sang with the arms of the House of Brunswick.

Air Twist glasses, the stems of which were decorated with air bubbles drawn out and twisted in a tremendous variety of patterns, date roughly from 1740-1770. Fig. 6 shows a glass made in about 1750 with a simple multiple spiral which is of special interest in that it is engraved with the Jacobite rose to represent the Stuart throne and an oak leaf which had been a Stuart emblem since the Boscobel Oak incident. Glasses such as this were used by various secret Jacobite societies to drink the health of the Pretender.

The next important group is of glasses with Opaque Twist stems dating from 1750-1780. Fig. 7 illustrates one of the hundreds of varieties of twists which were formed by the drawing out and twisting of stems into which canes of white glass had been introduced. The glass shown is notable also for the decoration of the bowl in white enamel by the Beilbys of Newcastle and would have been made about 1765.

There are a great many other beautiful and interesting glasses to be seen in the Verdon Gallery perhaps not the least attractive being the large cut Champagne glass shown in Fig. 1 which could be dated about 1790.

Among the new purchases of 'highlights' to be displayed later in the year are a fine Tazza of the pre-Ravenscroft period dating to about 1665 and believed to have originated from a glass house owned by Charles II's favourite, the Duke of Buckingham. Others include a fine goblet enclosing in its stem a James II Maundy 3d. piece dated 1687, a cordial glass having a bust of William III engraved on the bowl and inscribed "The Immortal Memory", a beautiful giant goblet of the late 17th Century or possibly 1700, several other very large and early goblets and a charming little taperstick of about 1720.

— Rex Ebbott.





GEMS FROM THE ART MUSEUM No. XIII.

IRON TORCHERE.

This magnificent torch-holder, or tall candelabrum, which dates from the first half of the sixteenth century, was formerly in the Cathedral of Siguenza, in Spain.

It is of massive design, 5' 10" in height, standing on three feet, with a stem supported in a two-tier cylindrical fluted column.

There are decorative motifs of ironwork scrolls and conventional leaf pattern design; and traces of an original polychrome decoration in red, blue, gold and white are still plainly discernible.

It was presented to the Gallery by the Trustees of the Felton Bequest in 1949.

MARTELLO TOWERS  
NEAR BEXHILL, SUSSEX.

Drawn and etched by  
J. M. W. Turner, R.A., 1811.

Mezzotinted by W. Say.  
(Third of four States.)

From the "Liber Studiorum"  
Series; Felton Bequest, 1950.



## TURNER'S 'LIBER STUDIORUM'

D. S. MacCOLL, with his habitual penetration, has described Turner's *Liber Studiorum* as the "Authorised Version of English Landscape"; and that Wilson Steer carried a miniature edition in his pocket on all landscape excursions, for reference and inspiration, should be noted by students — for the *Liber* is unique, unparalleled in the history of art and of engraving.

To protect his work against contemporary and future forgery, Claude was accustomed to make a pen-and-ink drawing of each finished picture before it left his studio. These drawings were engraved by Earlom at the end of the Eighteenth Century under the title of *Liber Veritatis*. They do less than justice to Claude's art but their publication had one happy consequence, for it stimulated Turner to wholesome rivalry with the artist he most admired, and inspired the *Liber*. But instead of merely having his pictures reproduced, Turner decided to make a series of drawings to be engraved in mezzotint, to comprise architectural, marine, pastoral, historical, mountainous and epic-pastoral subjects.

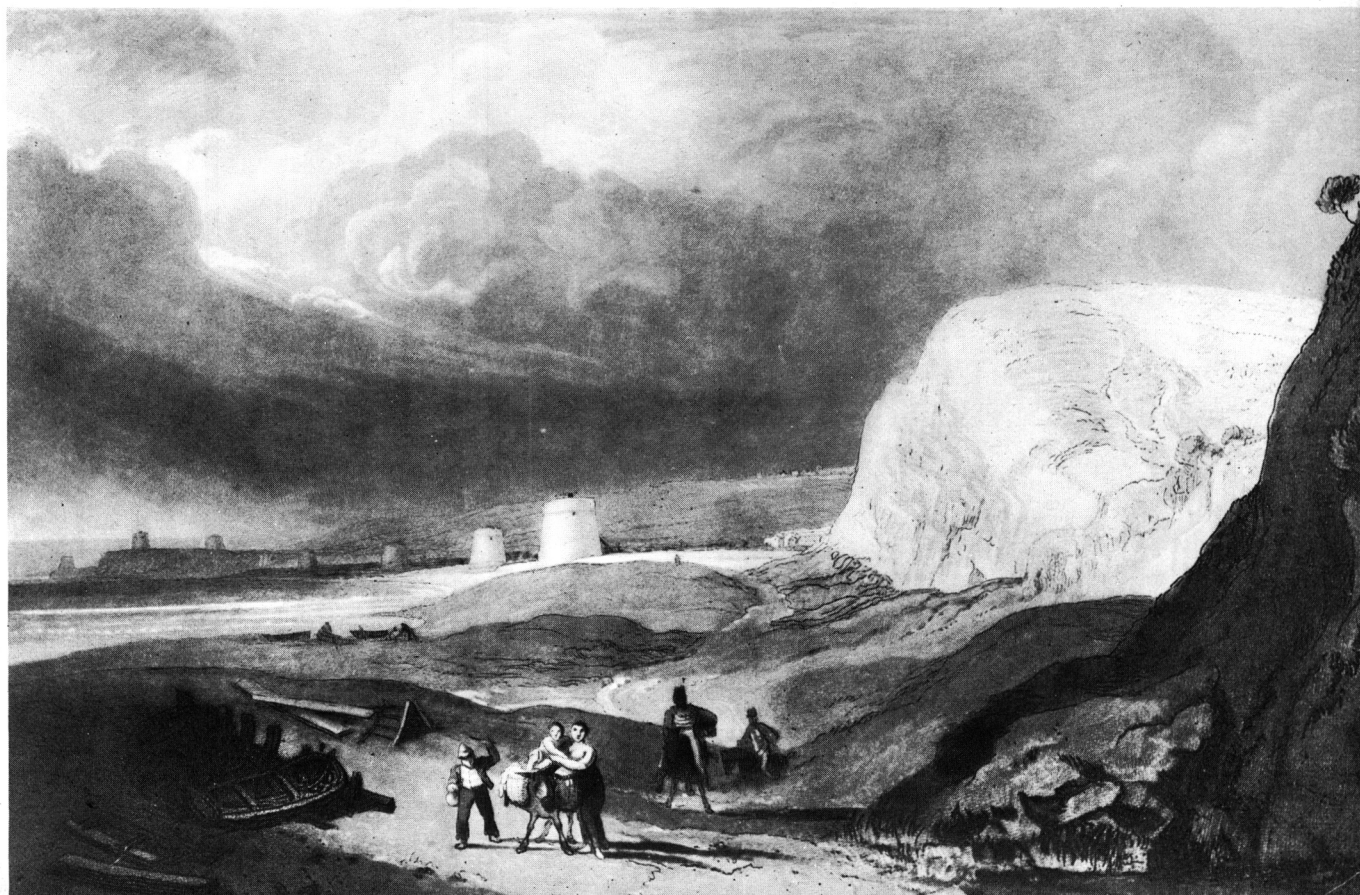
Now mezzotint, splendid for tone and chiaroscuro, is weak in the expression of small form, and Turner knew what he was after when he etched his compositions in bold but finely graded line. He engraved eleven of the seventy-one plates himself, and trained his engravers, schooled in portraiture, to achieve the effects he desired in what was to them a completely new genre.

It is the dominant power of the etchings — the skeleton of his design — that differentiates the *Liber* from all similar publications, and the artist's unremitting supervision of the engraving and printing that makes it a complete expression of Turner's genius.

Ruskin was therefore right in advising students to copy the finished prints, instead of the already fading drawings Turner had made for the engravers: Australian art-students have now that opportunity.

The collection acquired by the Felton Trustees was made by Mr. Harold Wright, one of the few great print experts left to us, and its quality may be estimated by the fact that it contains more of the scarce etchings and engravers' proofs than that of South Kensington.

— Lionel Lindsay.



## RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE ART GALLERY INCLUDE:

### OILS

The Skittle Players, David Teniers .....	Felton Bequest
The Cliff Road, Graham Sutherland .....	Felton Bequest
Lion Attacking a Horse, George Stubbs .....	Felton Bequest
L'Atelier de l'Artiste, Pierre Bonnard .....	Felton Bequest
Regatta at Deauville, Raoul Dufy .....	Felton Bequest
Llanberis Lake and Dolbadarn Castle, Richard Wilson .....	Felton Bequest
St. George Slaying the Dragon, 15th Century Siense (attributed to Domenico di Bartolo) .....	Felton Bequest
Auteuil Racecourse, Maurice Brianchon .....	Felton Bequest
Morning, Jan Nigro .....	Allan R. Henderson Donation Fund
Single Rose, Dora Serle .....	Purchased
Early Morning, Kurra-ba, Roland Wakelin .....	Purchased
The Round Dish, Geoffrey Jones .....	Purchased
West Africa, C. Purves Smith .....	Purchased
Tasmanian Aborigines, Robert Dowling .....	Purchased
Flowers and Fruit, W. B. Gould .....	Purchased
The Shower in the Valley, Arthur Murch .....	Purchased
Winter Sunlight, Domain, Charles Meere .....	Purchased
Native Flowers, Adrian Feint .....	Purchased
Fruit, Paul Jones .....	Purchased
Portrait of Frederick Tregear, J. Muir Auld .....	Purchased
Ure Smith's Garden, Norman Carter .....	Purchased
Goldfields, Sydney Nolan .....	Purchased
Gisborne Village, Phyl Waterhouse .....	Purchased
Flowerpiece, Alan Warren .....	Purchased
In the Park, William Frater .....	Purchased
Beaconsfield Parade, Charles Bush .....	Purchased

### WATER-COLOURS

Old Workings, Broken Hill, Arnold Shore .....	Purchased
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### MISCELLANEOUS

Twenty-one Engravings, Albrecht Durer .....	Felton Bequest
"Liber Studiorum" Series, J. M. W. Turner .....	Felton Bequest
Drawing, Barges on the Stour, John Constable .....	Felton Bequest
Miscellaneous Lithographs, Engravings, Etchings, Monotypes .....	Felton Bequest
Pen and Wash Drawings by Fred Williams, Donald Friend .....	Purchased

### ART MUSEUM

Iron Torchere, Spanish .....	Felton Bequest
Library Table (mahogany), Chippendale .....	Felton Bequest
Clothes Press (mahogany), Chippendale with Wm. Kent influence .....	Purchased

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

Drawing, by Len Annois .....	Presented by the Victorian Artists' Society
Water Colour, by Louis Buvelot .....	Presented by Mrs. Louis Esson
Forty Coloured Reproductions and Lithographs .....	Presented by the British Council
Tobacco Jar (Queensland Cedar) .....	Presented by S. Krimper, Esq.
Two Imperial Chinese Court Robes, 18th Century .....	Presented by A. J. L. McDonnell, Esq.

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Supervisor .....	William Morphet

*National Gallery lunch-time talks are given on the second and fifth Thursdays of each month. (There is, however, a lecture or films EVERY Thursday – some arranged by the Public Library and others by the museums.)*