

Matthew Fishburn
Science — Natural History — Voyages
[November 2023]



[NAVIGATION] ROBERTSON, John.

Fine and interesting Autograph Letter, Signed, to his publisher John Nourse.

Dated: Portsea, 24 October 1755.
Description: long single-page letter on bifolium, 32 x 20.8 cm., laid paper watermarked "GR" and "Pro Patria," address panel with local postal stamps.
Condition: very good, a little creased especially at the edges, roughly opened at the original seal.

PUBLISHING THE STANDARD TEXTBOOK ON COOK-ERA NAVIGATION

A superb letter by the great mathematician relating to his negotiations for publishing his famous *Elements of Navigation*, **the textbook which trained several generations of navigators and cartographers from Cook to Flinders**. The letter is sent to Robertson's publisher John Nourse, who not only published the first four editions of the book but was perhaps the most important scientific bookseller of his generation.

Robertson (1712—1776) had a long and important career, being involved in many practical and theoretical developments in navigation and mapping. In 1747 he was appointed assistant to James Hodgson at the Royal Mathematical School at Christ's Hospital in the City of London, and two decades later was appointed clerk and librarian to the Royal Society. He was also involved in tri-alling Harrison's chronometers.

First published in 1754, Robertson's *Elements of Navigation* was considered important enough that it was updated and republished every decade or so, meaning that it was used and studied by everyone from Philip Carteret to Bligh to Matthew Flinders, and undoubtedly by Cook as well. Notably, the fourth edition of 1780 was revised by William Wales, astronomer and member of Captain Cook's second voyage.

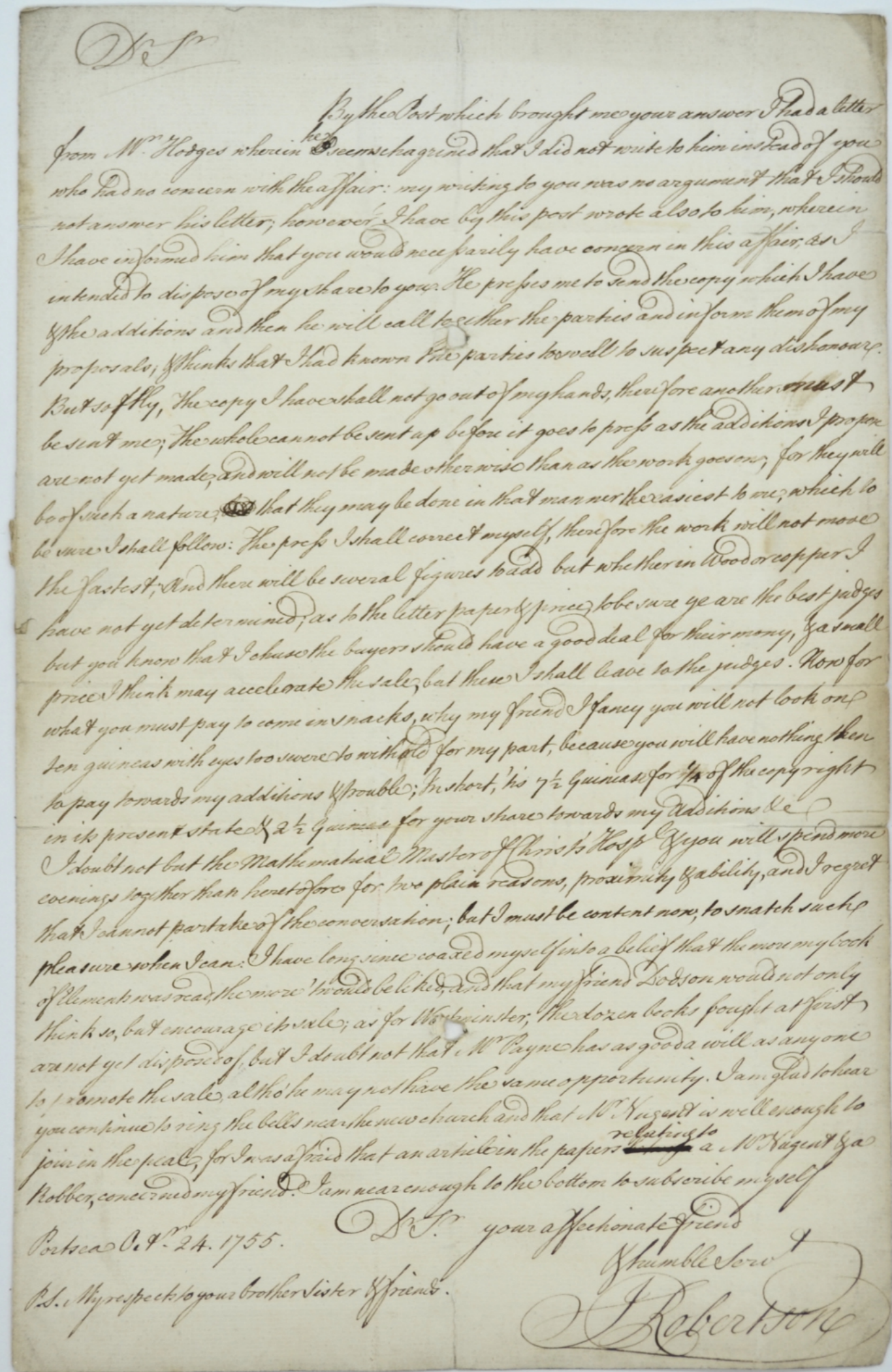
The present letter is particularly **revealing of the increasingly complicated negotiations that were taking place among booksellers**, keen to be part of what was clearly a great professional success. Robertson writes that he has been prompted to write after hearing from one Mr. Hodges (most likely James Hodges of London Bridge, a known associate), regarding the shares in the book. Importantly, the main section of the letter clearly shows that Robertson was already working on a major revision of his book, as Hodges was angling for him to "send the copy which I have & the additions" but this he will not agree to, countering "But softly, the copy I have shall not go out of my hands, therefore another must, be sent me."

The letter actually sketches out Robertson's style of working, noting that the only way agreeable for him to proceed will be to correct from the press itself ("therefore the work will not move the fastest" he admits in passing) and that he had not yet determined whether the necessary figures would be better executed in wood- or copper-engraving.

He is seeking 10 guineas from Nourse, "7 1/2 Guineas for 1/4 of the copy-right in its present state & 2 1/2 Guineas for your share towards my additions &c" and that he has no doubt but that the Mathematical Master at Christ's Hospital will be happy to work with Nourse (the timing of the letter implies that Robertson must be referring to the newly appointed James Dodson, the successor to his long-time boss James Hodgson who had died in October 1755). A full transcript is available on request.

\$1675

References: ADB; Wallis, Carteret's Voyage, vol. I, p. 144



579



Lord Sydney 45

[SAYERS, James].

Engraved portrait of Lord Sydney in 1784.

[2]

Published: London, Jas. Bretherton, 14 July 1784.
Description: etching, full-length portrait, 175 x 113 mm. (plate size).
Condition: very good.

RARE PORTRAIT OF SYDNEY JUST BEFORE THE BOTANY BAY PLAN

A fine portrait of Lord Sydney just prior to his involvement in the plan to equip the First Fleet for Botany Bay. This is **a rare and rather sensitive portrayal of Sydney**, who was for many years dismissed by historians but has lately found favour in the more nuanced work of Andrew Tink and others.

Thomas Townshend, First Viscount Sydney (1733—1800), was a politician his entire life, but spent the 1770s in opposition (not least for his tepid support for the American cause). In 1783 he was granted his peerage, and at the end of the year was made Home Secretary under William Pitt. It was while serving as Home Secretary that Townshend became heavily involved in the First Fleet, and ultimately led Governor Phillip to name the new township after him (David Collins also dedicated his book to Lord Sydney as the “originator of the plan of colonization for New South Wales”).

The portrait is by James Sayers (1748—1823), an attorney of independent means who quit his profession to become a political caricaturist. “His allegiance was with the Tory William Pitt and he directed his satire against Charles James Fox and his Coalition Ministry. Underlining the power of the political print in the late eighteenth century, Fox is said to have declared that Sayers’ caricatures had done him ‘more mischief than the debates in Parliament or the works of the Press’” (National Portrait Gallery).

\$725

References: ADB (“Arthur Phillip”); National Portrait Gallery (online); ODNB; Tink, Lord Sydney (2011).

ROBSON, Thomas.

A moving and lengthy Autograph Letter, Signed, to his daughter, Mary Smail Robson at Grosvenor Square.

[3]

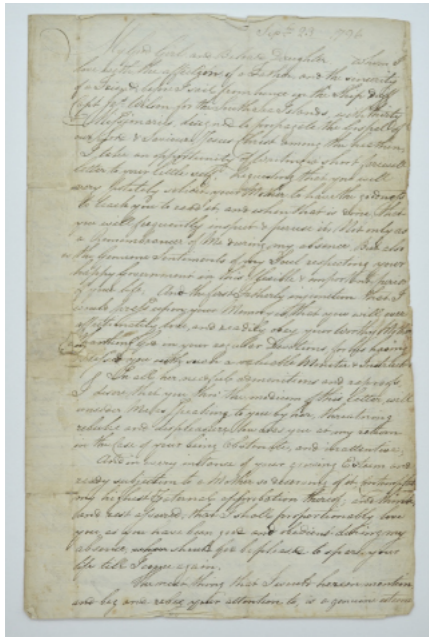
Dated: [Spithead], morning of 23 September 1796.

Description three-and-a-half page autograph letter, signed, on laid paper watermarked "J. Smith", 32.5 x 21 cm., docketed in two different hands, red postal stamp and fragments of red wax seal.

Condition: very good, quite creased and browned especially to the address panel.

AS THE DUFF VOYAGE PREPARES TO THE SOUTH SEAS

A remarkable and quite moving letter, written days before Captain Wilson and the South Seas missionaries sailed on the *Duff* for Tahiti. Robson wrote the letter as a keepsake for his only daughter in the great bustle as they readied to sail, "in haste and in the hours allotted for rest."



Few original documents give such a rich insight into the mood on board, not least because this humble and pious letter is written by Robson, rated as a gunner, as the ship was being readied to sail from Spithead, off Portsmouth. It goes without saying that original material relating to this voyage, which had such an enormous impact on the Pacific, is very rare: **no other manuscript of Robson's is recorded** and, indeed, to have anything written from such a perspective is highly uncommon, not least as he would soon make the abortive second voyage of the *Duff* as well, being captured by a French privateer off Cape Frio in February 1799.

In the published account of the voyage it is stated that Wilson and the missionaries made a real effort to ensure that even the sailors on board the *Duff* were appropriate for such a voyage, but even so it is a surprise to see how devout Robson truly was. The letter was sent to his "only daughter" Mary Smail Robson (and her Mother). At the time, Mary was six, which is why he hopes she will "very politely solicit your Mother to have the goodness to teach

you to read it, and when that is done, that you will frequently inspect & peruse it. Not only as a remembrance of Me during my absence, but also as the Genuine Sentiments of my Soul respecting your happy Government in this flexible & important period of your life."

What follows is in part an homily on behaviour and religion, of particular interest for the **care and attention he was clearly expecting to be taken in his daughter's education**, with mention of his hope that she will in due course be given a copy of the "Holy Scripture... to add one of those invaluable Books to your little Library, which fail not to read frequently, and I hope and pray that God, the author thereof, will enable you as you advance in years & stature, progressively to love, & cheerfully obey its sacred precepts."

He also fervently hopes that in the case that her mother be "detained" from attending church (was she unwell?) that little Mary will nonetheless "take your place at Well Street Church" where she must be sure to learn her text and sing the psalms, just as she has already learned to have learnt to say her "Graces" so



that perhaps "by next Summer you will be able to rehearse some of your Catechisms to Mr. [Alexander] Waugh amongst the rest of the little folks." Waugh was a mainstay of the congregation and of the London Missionary Society.

The letter concludes with an added message to his wife, who was still in hopes of visiting before they sailed although they were both evidently quite circumspect: "My thoughts as yours about coming to London has been manifold but am loath to set any bad precedent or ask anything of Capt. Wilson that he might seem unwilling to grant. Perhaps a line addressed to him from yourself may have [peculiar] influence." He does not need any money and nor does he need his bed: "I should not know where to put it."

He then adds that they expect that the sacrament may be administered to the "Members of this floating Church of Christ on Sabbath next the 4 of Septr. I suppose by Dr. Hawes [Haweis] at or about Eleven in the forenoon. Perhaps Mr. Waugh might think himself favored by being informed thereof. T.R."

At the end of the letter are notes in two different hands which suggest that it was indeed a treasured keepsake, the first reading "Letter written by Mr. T. Robson to his only daughter on board of the *Duff*, Capt. Wilson, when on her first voyage with the Missionarys for the South Sea Islands."

\$3850

References: The Universal Navigator (1805); Wilson, A Missionary Voyage to the Southern Pacific Ocean (1799).

[BRITISH LEGION OF ST. DOMINGO].

A fine Autograph Letter from a senior French émigré officer in Newport to his superior in Cavendish Square, London.

[4]

Dated: Southampton, 25 September 1796.

Description: bifolium, 22.5 x 18.7 cm., on laid paper watermarked "W. Elgar 1796", indistinct postal stamps, original red wax seal.

Condition: very good, a little browned and frayed at the top edge, the ink with some offsetting and fading.

"NOS HOMMES DE BOTANY BAY"

A fascinating and enigmatic survival: a senior officer of the French Royalist Army in exile expresses his exasperation that his attempts to outfit his troops are constantly thwarted by customs delays but that he hopes to be helped by "our men" of Botany Bay.

The letter therefore provides a remarkable insight into the way in which the enormous pressures of the war with France affected every aspect of life in Britain in these difficult years.

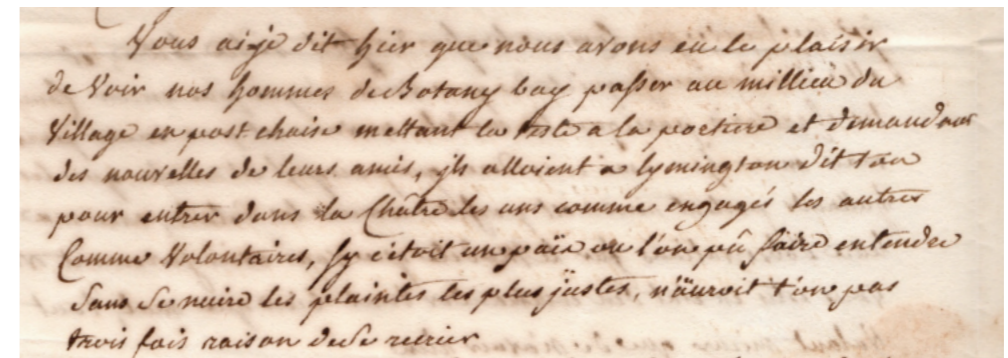


Unsigned, the letter can be attributed to an officer by the name of St. Maurice (perhaps connected to some French colonists in French Martinique) and it was sent to a high-ranking comrade-in-arms the Count d'Argout, then living in Cavendish Square, London. It is full of military information relating to **the difficulties in outfitting his troops, as well as showing that he knows many key figures in the Royalist cause**, none more important than the Marquis de Bouillé, the ardent royalist who had organised the infamous attempted flight to Varennes, and who is actually singled out by name in the *Marseillaise* as a reviled representative of the bloody despots.

Writing in great haste, the letter reveals that the officer had just received a letter from d'Argout, and is worried that all of his observations in a recent letter may have caused his friend some alarm.

The precise details given in the letter (they are in Lymington awaiting transport to the Isle of Wight in late September 1796) means it is possible to pin down the precise force, which is no mean feat given the endlessly shifting reorganisations of the time. It is apparent that it refers to a draft of new recruits – at least some of whom would have been veterans of other disbanded Royalist forces – mustering at the Isle of Wight to be sent out as reinforcements for what was called the 'British Legion of St. Domingo' under the command of the Comte de Montalembert. Inspected by General Abercromby a few months later, he criticised the bulk of the recruits as "very inferior" (Atkinson, VI, p. 269). Their losses in the disastrous West Indies campaign were immense.

Crucially, the letter notes, every day they are forced to wait on the transports opens them up to the risk of men deserting, causing all manner of frustrations as he has been forced to register (or actually confine?) them ("*mais il n'y a pas*



d'apparence qu'ils arrivons encore aujourd'hui, cela nous met a la diable de plus en plus fait deserter &c. &c. &c. et mé contenie parceque l'on ets obligé de consigner tout le monde").

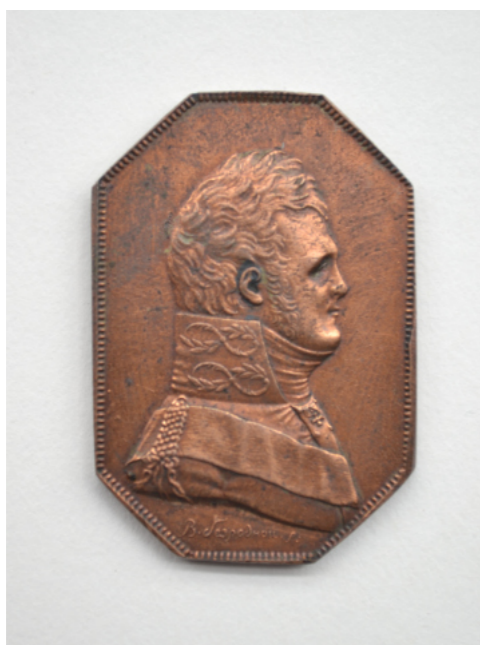
This passage is followed by another in which he **describes the arrival, the day previous, of "our men of Botany Bay"** ("*nos hommes de Botany Bay*") who passed through the village in a post-chaise, apparently lounging about at the door and asking after their mutual friends. They plan, the letter continues, to come to Lymington and enter the "*Châtre*" – apparently his shorthand for the corps associated with the name of the Comte de la Châtre, originally raised in 1793. He confirms that they plan to enlist, many as volunteers, followed by a cryptic passage about the possibility of making a peace which would give them three reasons to cry out (ie. three cheers?).

More work needs to be done to unravel this, but it would seem that they had managed to secure some extra recruits from among those condemned to transportation; perhaps there is even a connection to the transport ship the *Ganges*, which arrived at Portsmouth on 25 September as part of a small fleet of ships (see *General Evening Post*, 27 September 1796). It is difficult not to suspect that such a history must be behind the final rather desperate hope that they will make camp on the Isle of Wight soon, before the "bad spirit" in the legion ("*le mauvais esprit donnera dans la legion*") gets any worse.

The letter signs off with more farewells and his hope that the "Hullands" (Uhlans?) will embark tonight or tomorrow, and that he will certainly sail on the packet from Southampton at midday for Cowes.

\$1825

References: Atkinson, 'Foreign Regiments in the British Army, 1793—1802' (esp. parts III & VI, 1943 & 1944—1945); HRA; Trove.



[KRUSENSTERN] BEZRODNY, B. & Carl LEBERECHELT.

Bronze medal for the circumnavigation of the Krusenstern voyage.

[5]

Struck: [St. Petersburg], 1806.
Description: bronze medal, 38 x 28 mm.
Condition: extremely fine.

COMMISSIONED BY ALEXANDER I FOR THE KRUSENSTERN VOYAGE

An unusually fine example of the rare medal struck for the successful voyage of Krusenstern on the *Nadezhda* and Lisiansky on the *Neva* to the Pacific, the first Russian circumnavigation.

Although dispatched chiefly to establish diplomatic ties with Japan – with little success – the voyage is now studied more closely for its **important survey of the Pacific, most notably the time spent at Nuka Hiva and in Hawaii in 1804**, and for the voyage made by the *Neva* to the Northwest from their base in Kodiak, Alaska.

Russian ambitions for the Pacific had been rattling around St. Petersburg since the time of Peter the Great, but all of the plans were repeatedly shelved, most famously the proposed expedition of Grigory Mulovksy and Cook voyage veteran James Trevenen, who had hoped to sail in the late 1780s but were thwarted by the renewed outbreak of the Russo-Swedish War.

Krusenstern had sailed with Mulovsky as a young officer and spent some six years serving in the Royal Navy in the 1790s as his own apprenticeship in such ambitious voyaging, but it was only the accession of Emperor Alexander I in 1801 that brought the plan to fruition. Much in the manner of many of his peers (George III and Cook; Louis XVI and La Pérouse; Napoleon and Baudin), it was Alexander's personal interest in the plan which finally got the project begun in earnest, although a rival proposal by Rezanov and the Russian-American Company complicated matters significantly, especially as the Company was near bankrupt in 1802. After much political wrangling the Krusenstern and Rezanov proposals were combined into an overly ambitious plan that would seek to simultaneously **open up Pacific trade and seek a Japanese treaty**. At the same time a smaller second ship commanded by Lisiansky, the *Neva*, was commissioned with serious scientific ambitions that were effectively destroyed when he ended up serving as a Russian gunboat on the American coast, famously at the Battle of Sitka. Lisiansky would become a stern critic of the Russian colonial government.

As was often the case with such medals the two sides are executed by different artists. Here, the obverse portrait of the Emperor was by Vasily Bezrodny (1783—after 1859) while the reverse, featuring the depiction of the *Nadezhda*, was by the better-known Carl Leberecht (1749—1827) who was the German-born Chief Medallist to the Russian Court at St. Petersburg.

Silver examples are known (in Greenwich, for example), but either version does seem to be **very rare in commerce**. The presumption is that the silver medal was given to the higher ranks, bronze to the crew: the reported number of total crew on both ships was only 129, which may explain the medal's scarcity.

\$2600

References: Diakov, *Medals of the Russian Empire*, 305.1; Howgego; Royal Museums Greenwich (online); Smirnov (1908), 353/a.

[6]

[CHAMBERLAIN WORCESTER] [SHAW & NODDER].

Georgian chocolate cup, complete with stand and lid, featuring a glorious hand-painted depiction of an Australian 'Striped Headed Manakin' after Shaw & Nodder.

Produced: Worcester, Chamberlain manufactory, c. 1810—1815.

Description: slightly tapered cylindrical cup with twin ring-handles, complete with loop-finial lid and matching saucer, standing approx. 12 cm. tall, large hand-painted panel, gilt, each piece with maker's mark.

Condition: superb original condition.

AN AUSTRALIAN PARDALOTE, LIKELY FROM COOK'S THIRD VOYAGE

An exquisite bespoke depiction of an Australian 'Striped Headed Manakin' (now *Pardalotus striatus*) hand-painted on a piece of Chamberlain Worcester for an unknown client around 1810. Such wares, made to order for individual clients, are extremely uncommon, and are almost never seen with any Australian subject.

The beautiful little bird was particularly attractive to European collectors, having first been **described and figured by Latham in 1783** in the second volume of his *General Synopsis of Birds* (1783) with a fine plate (no. LIV) **based on a bird "in the possession of Sir Joseph Banks."** Latham was later able to identify it as an Australian species in his first *Supplement* (1787), where he noted that he had made the identification from the papers of William Anderson (1750—1778), the surgeon who sailed on Cook's third voyage; meaning that the type locality was in fact Tasmania, where Anderson had called.

As then occurred with scores of Latham's original descriptions, Gmelin used Latham's published account as the basis for what would be the first scientific description (1789, but not figured there).

The bird was figured a second time in an early issue of Shaw and Nodder's influential journal, the *Naturalist's Miscellany* (plate dated 1 May 1794). The accompanying text implies that Shaw and Nodder were copying Latham's record, as seems to be confirmed by the fact that while watercolours of other Australian Pardalotes are in the known corpus of early colonial natural history: this striped species is not apparently recorded in the works of the First Fleet artists, for example.

The one small mystery is that Nodder's plate – and therefore the image done by the unknown bird painter working for Chamberlain's as well – has improved the colouring from Latham's original, especially around the eye. Perhaps there were new specimens they had access to (certainly Nodder was in the thick of this ongoing work).

This pretty cup was made by the firm of Robert Chamberlain (c.1736—1798), who had trained under John Wall before starting his own firm in the 1780s. The firm had an enviable reputation for finely painted porcelain, famously making an extravagant service for Nelson and Lady Hamilton, as well as being frequented by the Prince Regent (Museum of Royal Worcester).

The fact that the present cup exhibits almost no wear must suggest that it is in fact what is known as a Cabinet Cup: "very ornately decorated cups... intended purely for ornamental purposes, rather than for drinking from. Some of these cabinet cups were very expensive single pieces priced in keeping with complete tea services of quite fancy and complicated painting... Most examples were equipped with saucers or stands, and some also had covers" (Godden, *Chamberlain-Worcester Porcelain*, p. 225). Some of the more intricate exam-



ples recorded by Godden were sold for 3 guineas or more per piece, an enormous price for the era.

Such is the quality of Chamberlain's porcelain that the firm's wares are well-represented in international collections, but precisely similar designs featuring, for example, **strictly contemporary natural history illustrations, are rare, the more so with any Australian reference** at a time when pheasants, partridges or the occasional phoenix were more the rage (the famous Princess Charlotte service of 1816—1817, for example).

Godden's extensive catalogue of Chamberlain includes nothing precisely like the present cup – indeed nothing with any identifiably Australian content – but he does reproduce plates which show either a markedly similar style of bird painting (notably fig. 147), a very similar style of other natural history painting, such as shells (plate XVII; fig. 368) or feathers (figs. 382; 383), or a similar dotted-gilt patterned border (figs. 265; 387).

Such wares are all broadly dated around 1810—1815 or a little later, as is confirmed by the simple maker's mark present here.

\$5750

References: Binns, *Catalogue of a collection of Worcester porcelain in the museum at the Royal Porcelain Works* (1882); Godden, *Chamberlain-Worcester Porcelain, 1788—1852* (1982); Hobson, *Worcester Porcelain* (1910); Latham, *General Synopsis of Birds*, vol. II (1783) and *Supplement* (1787); Museum of Royal Worcester (online); Shaw & Nodder, *Naturalist's Miscellany*, vol. V (1794).

BROWN, Robert.

Asclepiadeae, Recensitae A Roberto Brown. Ex idiomate anglico transtulit D. carolus Boriwogus Presl. Edidit. Casparus Comes Sternberg.

[7]

Dated: circa 1820.

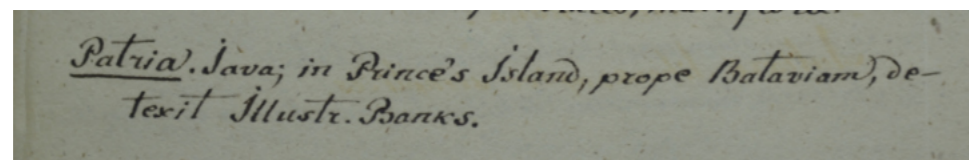
Description: 68-pp. manuscript, wove paper, in a tan half calf binding with marbled boards, old paper shelf-mark label to base of spine.

Condition: very good, the binding with some scuffs and bumps, especially to the extremities.

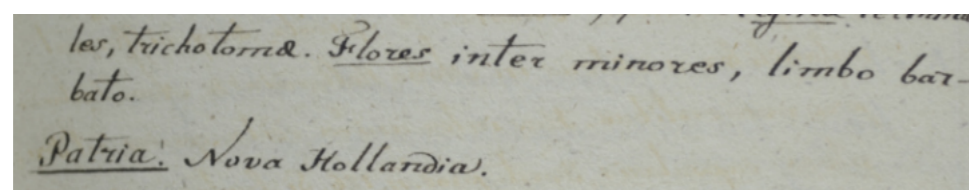
AN EARLY MANUSCRIPT COPY OF ONE OF BROWN'S RAREST BOOKS

A remarkable survival, a handsome contemporary transcription of one of the rarest of Brown's books, including descriptions of many Australian plants collected on the *Investigator* voyage, from the important Latin edition as published in Prague in 1819.

Robert Brown (1773—1858) was one of the great figures of Australian science and botany. He sailed with Flinders on the *Investigator*, returning to England in 1805 becoming librarian and curator to Sir Joseph Banks. After the death of his great patron in 1820 Brown was given control of the Banks herbarium, and in later life worked for many years at the British Museum.



Patria. Java; in Prince's Island, prope Bataviam, detexit Illustr. Banks.

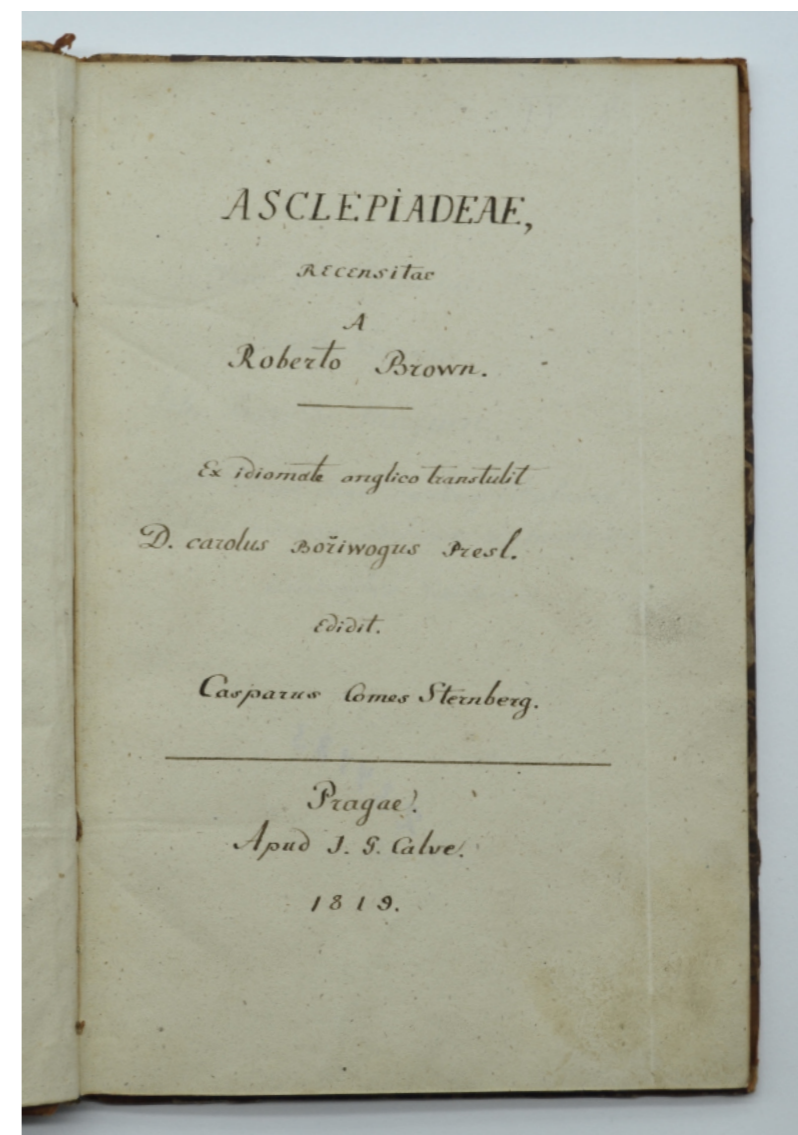


*las, trichotoma. Flores inter minores, limbo barbato.
Patria. Nova Hollandia.*

The history of Brown's books in print is famously complex, not least as almost all were privately published and he was reticent – almost to the point of obsessive – about who was even allowed to be presented with a copy of his books. To cite the most obvious example, although he first printed part of his famous *Prodromus* of the botany of New Holland in 1810 he not only never completed the book but little more than a handful of copies are known.

While working on the *Prodromus* Brown had clearly developed a particular interest in Asclepiadoideae (a subfamily of tropical plants in the family Apocynaceae). Brown's interest in them was piqued during the *Investigator* voyage when he was **able to collect many different specimens on the northern coasts of Australia** – all discussed here – but he kept this detailed account as a separate project because of the large number of particularly South African and also some South American plants he also wanted to include. Indeed, with the continual reference to the gardens of Kew, Banks and the collections made by Francis Masson, it is quite apparent that this was a pet project undertaken with the particular encouragement of Banks in particular.

Brown did publish, in English, this work in an article in the *Memoirs of the Wernerian Society* (1810—1811) but never produced a separate monograph. Only in



1819, in Prague, was a full monograph published, as the title makes clear, having been translated into Latin by Karel Borivoj Presl (1794—1852) who published several botanical works; and edited by Kaspar Maria von Sternberg (1761—1838), who established the Bohemian National Museum in Prague and is a founder of the discipline of paleobotany.

Although presumably **published to make Brown's work ever so slightly more accessible on the Continent**, even this Latin translation has always been extremely rare indeed, probably confirming that the present manuscript, clearly of a very early date, was prepared because of the original owner's inability to locate a copy. It is even possible that it may be the actual manuscript prepared for the printed by Presl and von Sternberg, although it has to be said that given it is an almost line-for-line copy of the book as printed, this remains only one hypothesis.

The original Prague-printed book is quite rare: Stafleu & Cowan only recorded the copy in Utrecht (now listed as missing on their website) but several more are listed at some of the grander botanical collections like the New York Botanical Garden and the Gray Herbarium Library at Harvard, as well as a number of older collections on the continent such as Berlin, Bayern and Bonn, etc. The only copy noted in Australia is recorded at the University of Sydney.

\$4950

References: ADB; not in Ferguson; compare Pritzel, 1218 & Stafleu & Cowan, 826 (note).



[CROWN DERBY] [ROBERT BROWN].

Derby plate with a depiction of the “Tooted Leaved Hibbertia”.

[8]

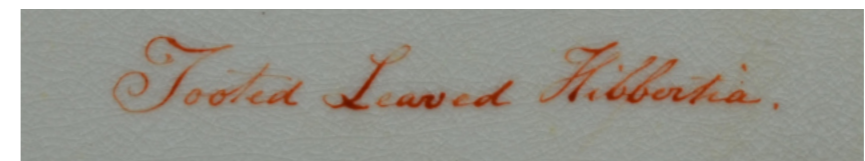
Produced: Derby, circa 1818.

Description: hand-painted Derby ware dessert plate, approx. 22.4 cm diameter, gilt rim.

Condition: some fine crazing and discolouration especially at the rim, but very good.

ONE OF ROBERT BROWN'S AUSTRALIAN PLANTS ON A DERBY PLATE

Very rare: a striking example of an Australian native plant figured on Derby porcelain, painted around 1818, immediately after the particular “tooth-leaved” Hibbertia, endemic to the east coast, was first scientifically described and illustrated. The fact that Derby (and indeed other European makers of the era) issued these hand-painted works figuring the very latest botanical discoveries is relatively well-known, but the actual details of individual examples are only poorly recorded, and **any of these wares seem to be only rarely offered for sale.**



Because of the known details of the early scientific notices of the Hibbertia it is possible to reconstruct the background of how and when this plate was issued. The first recognised type of Hibbertia was published by Andrews in 1800, but the first really extensive work on the plant was done by the French botanist Candolle, basing most of his findings on unpublished work by Robert Brown (APNI). Thanks to the support and friendship of Brown, Candolle was able to describe 19 different varieties in his *Regni Vegetabilis Systema Naturale* (1818—1821). The “Hibbertia dentata” was the third in that list, published in the first volume of 1818, where it is stated to be known from eastern Australia and the d’Entrecasteaux Strait in Tasmania, and that living specimens were being grown at Kew, Paris and the “h. Lamb” (the garden of Aylmer Bourke Lambert).

The most likely original on which the plate was based was the very first published engraving of the plant, in the famous *Botanical Register* for 1818 (vol. 4, no. 282). The accompanying text confirms that the plant was not known at the time of the second edition of the *Hortus Kewensis* (1812) and that it had “not been till now represented by any published figure. The drawing was made at the nursery of Messrs. Whitley and Co. at Fulham, where it is cultivated in the greenhouse, and flowers usually about March.”

Derby porcelain was first manufactured in the mid-eighteenth century and took the name “Crown Derby” from 1773 (not becoming Royal Crown Derby until 1890). The early decades of the nineteenth-century had seen the firm re-establish itself under the direction of the canny businessman Robert Bloor. The mark on the verso is in the style associated with the period 1806-1825; given that the plate would not predate any of the published engravings, a relatively firm date of production can be confirmed, circa 1818 or immediately after.

The plate itself is in excellent original condition, with just some of the light crazing as would be expected in work of this era.

\$3450

[9]

[BAUDIN] PRÊTRE, Jean Gabriel (attrib.).

‘Autour à collier roux – jeune premier âge.’

Dated: [Paris], c. 1821.

Description: watercolour and gouache on wove paper, watermarked J. Whatman, 58 x 34.5 cm., unsigned, with old ink and pencil captions and annotations in at least two different hands.

Condition: superb original condition, the paper just lightly browned.

A BROWN GOSHAWK FROM THE BAUDIN VOYAGE

An exquisite watercolour, the original artwork for the first ever scientific illustration of this Australasian bird of prey, based on a specimen collected by Maugé on the Baudin voyage and deposited in the natural history museum in Paris.

As is well-known, a planned volume of natural history that was meant to accompany Péron and Freycinet’s official account of the voyage (1807–1815) never saw the light of day, with the result that it was often decades before some of the birds collected were given their earliest scientific notice, including several – as here – which were first illustrated **to accompany one of the great natural history projects of the era**, the Dutch zoologist C.J. Temminck’s *Nouveau recueil de planches coloriées*.

The painting is the original for one of Temminck’s plates by Jean-Gabriel Prêtre (1768–1849), one of the preeminent natural history artists of the era. As a young man he studied under the Paris-based Dutch painter and engraver Gerard van Spaendonck and was one of the chosen artists who worked with Josephine at Malmaison. Prêtre came to know Temminck during the latter’s sojourn in Paris (circa 1805–1806) and cemented their close working relationship by providing the original artworks for many of the plates based on specimens in Leiden for *L’Histoire naturelle générale des Pigeons* (1813–1815).

Recognised as one of the finest contemporary natural history artists, Prêtre was then chosen to become one of the two lead artists on Temminck’s magisterial *Nouveau recueil de planches coloriées*, together with Nicolas Huet. Huet had a similar background to Prêtre – including work for Josephine – and both had, by the 1820s, long been established as official artists for the *Musée national d’histoire naturelle* in Paris.

One of the grandest natural history publications of the age, Temminck’s book – as its name suggests – consciously set out to illustrate birds that had been missed or overlooked for the magnificent eighteenth-century ornithological illustrations of Daubenton/Martinet known as the *Planches enluminées*.

Preliminary work on Temminck’s book was begun in 1820, when the Baron Cuvier issued a prospectus, and it was not completed until 1836, ultimately including a total of 595 plates (including five double-plates). Given its size and complexity the work had a typically complicated bibliography, but **Prêtre’s plate, based on the current design, was issued as plate no. 93 in the 16th livraison around November 1821.**

Temminck gave the bird the French name of the ‘Autour à collier roux’ on the plate, but the original wrappers of each livraison, which had important scientific notes printed on the back (Dickinson), further recorded that this was a juvenile of what was then called the *Falco torquatus* from New Holland. A specimen of the mature male bird had already been illustrated on plate 43 of the book.

Few birds have caused so much angst to ornithologists, partly because the young bird and its adult plumage are remarkably different, and partly because it is



Autour à collier jeune premier âge

very difficult to differentiate a young Brown Goshawk (*Accipiter fasciatus*) from a Collared Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter cirrhocephalus*).

Current research, especially that of Jansen, now suggest that the bird on Temminck's plate – the present bird – is indeed a Brown Goshawk that was brought back by Hamelin on the *Naturaliste* and given to the Museum in Paris in 1803, where it still remains (MNHN-ZO-MO-1999-2128). In the secondary sources which discuss the actual bird it is sometimes stated that the manuscript notes on the base of the mount read “jeune d. l'année” but it is now confirmed that this actually reads “jeune d. 1e. année.” (that is, young of the “première” year, precisely as on the caption of the present picture).

The adult bird that was also depicted in the *Nouveau recueil de planches coloriées* was another Baudin specimen, which is also still in the Paris museum, the base of which specifically notes that it was collected in Timor by Maugé: Jansen has since compared this with a known record from the voyage which confirms that it must have therefore been one of the birds collected by Maugé in Kupang Bay, Timor, between 22 August and 13 November 1801 (Jansen, 2017).

However, the precise locality of the present juvenile bird is less resolved (there is nothing explicitly recorded on the stand) and **there is one piece of strong evidence that it may actually have been acquired in mainland Australia**. Lesson in his *Traité d'Ornithologie* (1831) showed that he knew both of the Baudin specimens, separating out his note to describe both an adult and another of a “jeune âge.” His comment on provenance is vague but important, writing of the latter: “**Cet épervier habite la Nouvelle-Hollande** (Mus. de Paris; Péron), où il est nommé *bilbil*.” (p. 61)

Lesson must have got the ‘Bilbil’ reference from Vigors & Horsfeld (1827, p. 181—183: “the native name of this Hawk is *Bilbil*. It is a bold bird, and makes great havoc among chickens”), who used the name on the authority of George Caley, the Sydney-based collector who worked for Sir Joseph Banks.

\$14,250

References: Anker, *Bird Books and Bird Art* (1973), p. 46; Dickinson, Kamminga & Van der Mije, ‘Temminck's new bird names introduced in the early parts of the *Nouveau recueil de planches coloriées d'oiseaux* in 1820–22 (2022; online); Jansen, ‘René Maugé's ornithological collections from Kupang Bay, West-Timor, Indonesia, August–November 1801, with special regard to type-specimens’ (2017; online); Lesson, *Traité d'Ornithologie* (1830), p. 61; Temminck, *Nouveau recueil de planches coloriées d'oiseaux* (1838), vol. 1, livraison 8, plate no. 93 (and cf. no. 43); Van der Mije, Kamminga & Dekker, ‘Type-specimens of non-passerines in *Naturalis Biodiversity Center*’ (2022; online); Vigor & Horsfeld, ‘A Description of the Australian Birds in the Collection of the Linnean Society’ (1827).

[TENCH] GRIFFITHS, Anselm John.

Impressment Fully Considered, with a view to its gradual abolition...

[10]

Published: London, J.W. Norie, 1826.

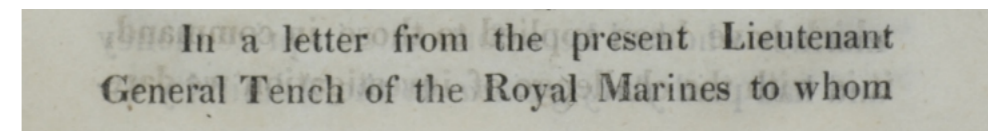
Description: octavo, in attractive tan half calf, marbled boards.

Condition: very good.

PRINTING AN IMPORTANT LETTER BY WATKIN TENCH

First edition: a fascinating work of great interest for understanding the complex question of impressment, one of the great issues of the era, including a **hitherto unnoticed discussion by Tench regarding his own career as a recruiting officer** soon after his return from New South Wales. The letter, written to a great friend, is a substantial insight into Tench's professional career.

Known letters by Tench are incredibly rare – remarkably so, for a lifelong diarist who repeatedly referred to his correspondence in print. Perhaps as few as a half-dozen original letters of his are known, with a handful more – as here – recorded in contemporary books and newspapers.



More, even details of Tench's biography are quite elusive, especially relating to this early part of his career immediately after his return from New South Wales on HMS *Gorgon*: it was in this period that Tench found time to meet Sir Joseph Banks (apparently getting a relatively frosty reception), get married and attend the notorious court-martial of his superior officer James Meredith before, as the present letter attests being sent to Gloucestershire on recruiting duty as the impending war with France became more pressing.

The book is written by Anselm Griffiths (c.1770—1842), the son of the Rev. John Griffiths of Kingston-upon-Thames, first went to sea as a midshipman on board HMS *Juno* as a boy in 1781 and was widely experienced, including sailing to China on the East Indiaman *Barwell* in 1785. He had a long career in the RN, saw action during the Glorious First of June and the Battle of Cape St. Vincent before retiring from the sea in 1813. Griffiths had a close and enduring friendship with Tench, who had earlier subscribed to his friend's earlier book *Observations on some points of Seamanship* (1824).

“In a letter from the present Lieutenant General Tench of the Royal Marines to whom we applied, he writes...” (41—42).

“In reply to your queries, I have not the smallest hesitation in declaring, from perfect acquaintance with the Marine recruiting service both in the American war, and the two wars which have succeeded, that there is not the slightest foundation for supposing that the severity of naval discipline operated to prevent the marines from obtaining recruits, in a much larger proportion than any part of the army, whenever the two services beat up together.

IMPRESSMENT

FULLY CONSIDERED,

WITH
A. J. Griffiths
A VIEW TO ITS

GRADUAL ABOLITION.

BY

CAPTAIN ANSELM JOHN GRIFFITHS, R. N.

“FIAT JUSTITIA, RUAT CÆLUM.”

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY J. J. HADLEY,
CHELTENHAM;

PUBLISHED BY J. W. NORIE AND CO.

AT THE NAVIGATION WAREHOUSE, AND NAVAL ACADEMY, NO. 157,

LEADENHALL STREET,

London.

1826.

“To confine my statements to the two last wars. I was recruiting at Stroud, in Gloucestershire, in Jan. 1793; in the course of that year raised and passed one hundred and eight good recruits, at the low bounty of five guineas, including every expence to the recruit, the party, and the officer. At this period every recruit cost the *Line* ten pounds. In 1795 our bounty was raised to eight guineas, at the commencement of 1796 to fifteen pounds; the latter great increase arose from ceasing to employ the army to act as marines. From this period our success in procuring men always kept our ranks filled, although our establishment was increased to above 31,000 men!”

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While recruiting at Stroud, at Sherborne, and at Bath, it frequently happened that old marines who had been fortunate in prize money and had paid forty guineas to the Admiralty for their discharge, came to me and re-enlisted in their former service.” (42—43)

\$2250

References: ADB.

[SOUTHWELL] BUTLER FAMILY.

Manuscript memoir of the life of the Reverend Weeden Butler, the uncle of Daniel Southwell.

[11]

Dated: c. 1831.

Description: small unbound manuscript notebook of 46 pp. (six blank), 210 x 133 mm., three engraved portraits bound in (see note), simple cover sheet of laid paper with family bookplate pasted-in on the verso, stitch-sewn.
Condition: excellent.

THE GREAT SUPPORTER OF FIRST FLEETER DANIEL SOUTHWELL

A charming and very personal manuscript, collecting various material relating to the life of the Reverend Weeden Butler. The manuscript amounts to a potted biography of Butler, apparently prepared by one of his descendants in the years after his death in 1823 and evidently kept in the family.

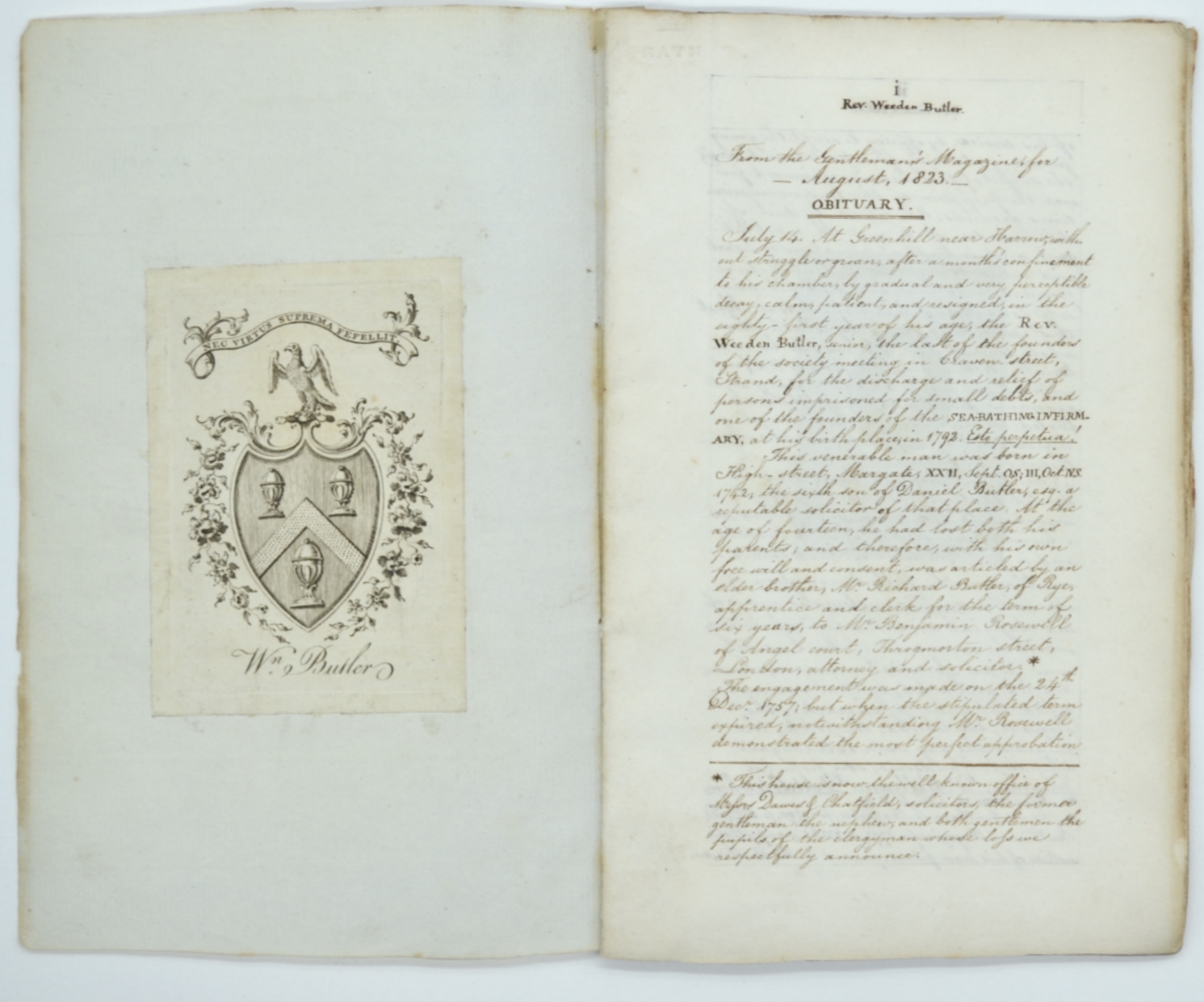
Weeden Butler (1742—1823) was an English cleric and miscellaneous writer. As a young man he had worked for the clergyman William Dodd who was hanged for forgery in 1777, a connection which helped Butler establish himself as the master of a well-regarded school in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. Butler had a long and interesting career, and was not incidentally interested in the fledgling Botany Bay project, because not only was he **the uncle of Daniel Southwell** (Daniel's mother Jane was Butler's sister) but he was also **related to a young man called Daniel Butler who had sailed on the *Prince of Wales* transport** (Daniel is normally described as Weeden's son, but this does not appear to be correct: I suspect he may have been another nephew). A remote acquaintance of Sir Joseph Banks (Butler petitioned him unsuccessfully on behalf of his nephew Southwell in 1792), he was also known to figures like John Coakley Lettsom and John Shortland (the latter the naval agent to the transports of the First Fleet).

This family manuscript, complete with the Butler bookplate, is therefore important as a relic of the milieu of the First Fleet. One of the more striking aspects of the known history of the First Fleet is that although there is a wealth of original letters from many of the key participants, it is **rare to discover anything about the life of their correspondents**: the opportunity to understand anything about the "other-half" of the story is important in this regard, especially when they were writing to people who weren't conspicuous public figures. This is true of the young naval officer Daniel Southwell, who wrote chiefly to his mother Jane and his uncle the Reverend Butler. The Southwell letters are one of the more significant caches of early material, of particular interest because he was a relatively junior officer and because the great bulk are private and quite candid in nature.

Additionally, the present manuscript also includes four contemporary engraved portraits of close acquaintances of Butler's, including his great mentor Dodd and an unusual example of a profile bust of Lettsom.

The manuscript must surely be in the hand of one of Butler's children or grand-children, although it was not done by the most obvious candidate Weeden Butler junior, because his death in 1831 is recorded (and this date is also the latest mentioned, giving an approximate date of composition).

A full list of the contents of the manuscript is available on request, but doubtless the key inclusions are a long obituary that was published pseudonymously in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August 1823, here confirmed to have been writ-



ten by his son Weeden Butler junior and which is the source for most of the known details of Butler's life, including a transcription of a letter written to him by the great botanist Thomas Martyn in 1814; an original poem written by Butler to his wife in the immediate aftermath of the hanging of Dodd; as well as a large number of his (unpublished?) letters to correspondents including the Rev. Robert Hoadly-Ashe DD, Mr. Nichols (editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*), the critic of John Hawkesworth's edition of Cook's voyage, Mr. Joseph Cockfield, and Bishop John Douglas (the editor of the official account of Cook's third voyage).

Material relating to the Butler (or indeed the Southwell) family is most uncommonly offered for sale. A major group of Southwell manuscripts is held in the British Library and some others, of note for Revolutionary America, are in the Clements Library (MI) and the University of South Carolina.

\$4400

References: ADB; SLNSW online catalogue.

SABINE, Rev. James.

Lengthy Autograph Letter, Signed, to his brother-in-law John Danford of Aldgate High Street in London.

[12]

Dated: Bethel, 21—25 September 1834. Description: lengthy ALS on bifolium, wove paper, address panel with postal stamps and red wax seal. Condition: very good and legible, some browning of the paper, quite worn along the old folds with tears, a few words missing where originally cut open at the seal.

“UP HERE IN THE DARK” – A FRIEND OF ROWLAND HILL IN VERMONT

A fascinating and detailed account of life an Episcopal minister and author in Vermont. The letter, amounting to more than 2000 words, provides a remarkable insight into the difficult conditions experienced by Sabine, who was struggling to maintain his ministry and was flirting with millennial thinking: “a day of darkness and sin and rebellion is nearer at hand, even at the door.”

Sabine (1774—1845) was born in Hampshire, England and joined the Ministry in 1800, working initially in England before being posted to Newfoundland in 1816, moving to Boston MA in 1818 where he wrote and published *An Ecclesiastical History* (1820) and a *Sermon, delivered in the Church in Essex-Street, Boston, December 22, 1820, being the Second Centennial Celebration of the Landing of the Fathers at Plymouth* (1821). While in Boston Sabine came to embrace the Episcopal faith, leading directly to his appointment to Christ Church Episcopal Church, Bethel, in 1830 during which time he published several more sermons, notably in the magazine *The Protestant Episcopal Pulpit* as published in New York. Sabine remained the rector in Bethel until his death on 3 October 1845, when he was briefly succeeded by his son the Rev. John Sabine.

Before leaving England he had married, in 1800, Ann Danford of Gloucester, whose brother he writes to here: John Danford was a successful London haberdasher and – as is made clear throughout Sabine’s letter – an associate of the evangelical preacher Rowland Hill. The letter not only attests to his close friendship with Danford, but also makes clear that Danford was also used to handling his affairs in England: more reason for his concern at the longer than usual silence, not having received any letters from him in five months and missing his detailed updates situated, as he is, up in the “mountains.” He therefore begs Danford to write care of his poste restante, the famous Boston booksellers R.P. & C. Williams.

It is quite clear that Sabine could be quite critical of the political scene, particularly noting that everything in Vermont had been “thrown into no small perplexity by our King (the President), our absolute monarch, unhinging the National Bank” – such attacks on President Jackson were becoming quite common in the time he was writing as a result of his political stoush with the Second Bank. Sabine claims that Jackson’s reforms only proved the “slender and precarious foundation” on which all their trade rests, leading to “much complaining and distress.”

Wishes that more attention were paid to the 12 million people living in the States, and not the 100 million of “a few years hence” – especially as such numbers will cannot be a “great people” as there “is not unity enough among them to make them any one thing – one people – one nation.” “America,” he asserts, “vaunts like the King of the Chaldees” (that is, Nebuchadnezzar).



He is happy in Bethel, although admits that his family “would like a more refined state of society, and I do not wonder at it, for here we have rusticity in perfection.” Even so, there are so many sects that a “standing ministry” can scarcely be supported, and the claims of “Cobbitt” (William Cobbett) on Minister’s salaries are grossly exaggerated, with churches constantly closing due to the inability to raise even \$300 a year, including that of his son John in the north of the state. On Cobbett, he adds a sidenote that “From all I can learn of him he appears to be **as great a rascal as any that walks the earth**, a hypocrite and [deformer].

In another passage he writes in some detail of how he had been reading Rowland Hill’s *Life* (New York: 1834) – Sabine clearly knew both Hill and the editor Edwin Sidney personally, and here comments that the work does “not quite equal my expectations.” It is “read by few and understood by less,” and he believes that his offer to write a review will not be taken up. Sabine remains terribly interested in the fate of Hill and the Surrey Chapel, and begs Danford for more information when it comes to hand.

The letter wraps up with a long note on the work of his son, John Theodore, and the health of his wife Ann, then 60 and showing some “febleness and other marks of decline” as she nears “the end of so long a journey.” His own health is improved, ever since he stopped attending the respected faculty at Boston and submitted himself to a Boston-based “Quack” who dosed him with something that has done wonders.

In a postscript he adds that both he and his son John “want to read the most judicious works on the 2d. coming of Christ – Melville perhaps or any others you shall think worth reading.”

The letter was sent from Bethel on 27 September and arrived in London (via Liverpool) on 6 November 1834.

\$835

References: Cox, *The Illustrated Historical Souvenir of Bethel, Vermont* (1895), pp. 17—18; Sabine, *The Family and Descendants of Rev. James Sabine* (1904); Worldcat.



DAUSSY, Pierre & Paul-Émile WISSOCQ.

Carte générale de la mer des Indes.

[13]

Published: Paris, Dépôt générale de la Marine, 1865 (dated on lower margin).

Description: hand-coloured engraved map, 67 x 98 cm.

Condition: a few spots but a good and strong impression, with an early ink manuscript track chart of a voyage in the western Indian Ocean.

1865 FRENCH DÉPÔT DE LA MARINE MAP OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

Rare: mid-century issue of this important Indian Ocean map, with original outline colour. Befitting its accuracy, the map has signs of use by a contemporary voyager, a voyage being plotted from False Bay in South Africa to Madagascar, the Comoros Islands, then back to Mauritius and Reunion.

The earliest version of this map was originally issued in 1837 (as on the cartouche), this example is updated to 1865. Although not stated as such, it was clearly envisaged as a **modern update of one of the most famous Indian Ocean maps**, de Manneville's 'Carte reduite de L'Ocean Oriental depuis le Cap de Bonne Esperance jusqu'a L'Isle Formose' of 1775. De Manneville's original map had been, in turn, given an overhaul by Louis de Freycinet in the years after his return from the Baudin voyage, the contours of western Australia moving from the rather crude version of de Manneville's original (basically reproducing the Dutch landfalls as published by Thévenot in the later 1600s), to a completely new version based on Freycinet's General Chart of 1808.

With due deference to the enhanced accuracy of some parts of the coast, including sections which are derived from English sources (Cambridge Gulf and Melville Island, most obviously), it is still broadly Freycinet's work which is reproduced here, most obviously because it retains several of his French names up and down the coast.

The map was produced by two quite significant figures of the era. Daussy (1792-1860) was a French hydrographer who, as a young man, worked under Beautemps-Beaupré and was later appointed to the Bureau des Longitudes, becoming chief of the cartographical office. Wissocq (1804-1873) worked as young man as a hydrographer in Paris, but later became a famous civil engineer and early proponent of the railways.

Like all Dépôt (and indeed Admiralty) maps, this chart was regularly reissued, but given the hard usage to which they were subjected and the rules about out-of-date examples being taken out of circulation, examples of any are uncommon: the NLA, for example, has a copy of the 1853 issue (MAP RM 2942), almost identical except that it does not include the lines of magnetic declination which have been added here.

\$1350

References: Catalogue des Charts, Plans, Vues de Côtes, Mémoires, Instructions Nautiques (January 1847), p. 1, no. 863; NLA catalogue (online); Trove.

[MITCHELL, Francis].

Lengthy but incomplete Autograph Letter, Signed, to his brother, James Mitchell of Brechin, Scotland.

Dated: Wellington, New Zealand, 6 September 1844.

Description: three-and-a-half page letter on wove paper, 23 x 18.8 cm., apparently missing the concluding page, but otherwise good and legible, with 'paid at Wellington' stamp and other postal marks, parts of the original black wax seal (the latter very fragile).

Condition: generally very good and legible, evidence of old tape repair to seal, worn at the old folds.

"THERE WAS ANOTHER ROW WITH THE NATIVES AT BAY OF ISLANDS..."

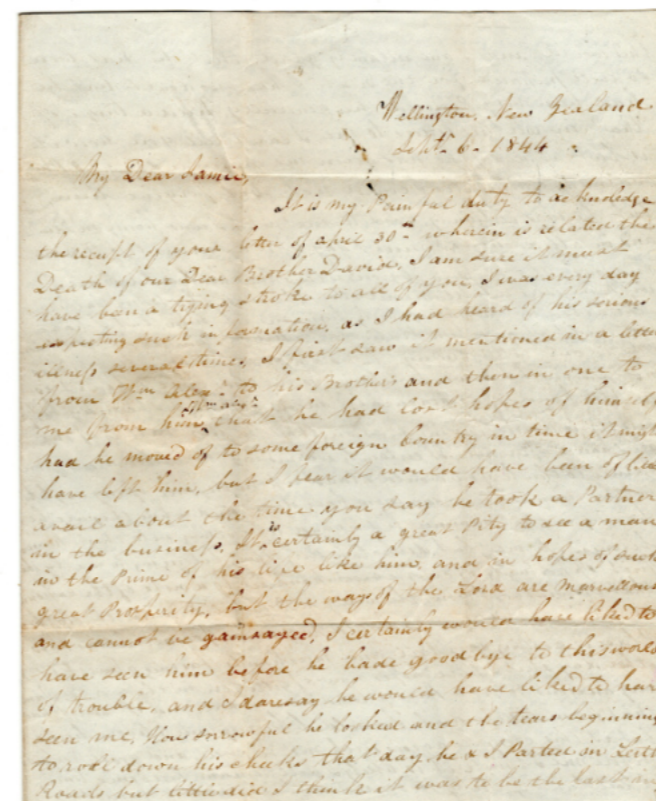
An intriguing and early letter written from Wellington in New Zealand, incomplete but genuinely substantial, including Mitchell's thoughts on the economic slump of the 1840s and notice of the conflict at the Bay of Islands. Given that Mitchell listed his occupation as a farmer and his age as only 17 when he emigrated on the *Martha Ridgway* in 1840, the letter is remarkably considered and literate.

The internal evidence of the letter confirms three important points: firstly, that it was written to his brother James at East Mills, in Brechin; secondly that Mitchell was particularly close with the Alexander brothers, that is, James Alexander (1818—1895) of Whanganui and Alexander (1820—1873), usually associated with Hawke's Bay; and thirdly, that Mitchell was only recently married, given the distinctly newly-wed tone of one important passage regarding his "Gudewife" and how she is very anxious to get a piece of land" but how "she will get some thing to do by and by perhaps) by the time she has as many crying out Ma as Margret has".

This is more than enough evidence to confirm that the author must have been Francis Mitchell, who gave his age as 17 (that is, born c.1823) when he **emigrated on board one of the earliest New Zealand Company ships** the *Martha Ridgway* in 1840. Not only was this the same ship on which the Alexander brothers were recorded as sailing, neither of them much older than Mitchell, but as much to the point, the Alexanders hailed from Dun, Forfarshire, a short 5 or 6 miles down the road from Brechin.

Mitchell's arrival in Wellington was so early, that finding records relating to his time in New Zealand is difficult, although more will surely be discovered. His name is recorded in 1841 as working for William Mein Smith in the Surveyor General's Department and he was on the local jury list by 1845. He is also known to have married, in New Zealand, a newer emigrant called Mary Robertson (1821—1887) apparently on 15 April 1844. Francis and Mary are recorded as having one child but, unlike his friends the Alexanders, who saw off the difficult first years and remained in the area, Mitchell was apparently forced to take work on an England-bound ship in January 1846. By then his health was not terribly good (again, perhaps explaining his comment here that he is thinking of staying on in New Zealand "as this climate agrees with me very well"). Sadly, Mitchell was returning to New Zealand on the barque *Indian* after two years away when he died 29 January 1848, "aged 25 years," from an inflammation of the lungs and brain, that left him delirious and incapacitated (see his short obituary in the *New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian*).

For such a young man the letter is quite accomplished, especially given it begins with news of the death of his brother David. Although badly affected by the news of his brother's death, "it is a serious loss to you and me," he is also wor-



ried about its impact on an already complicated family dynamic in Scotland, notably his step-mother, a "bitter enemy."

Despite the interest of this stormy family relationship, of course much of the interest lies in Mitchell's account of his life in Wellington, which he records in some detail

("this place is getting very dull, and merchants failing almost every other day"). This section is followed by an important passage on the ongoing Maori Wars:

"There was another row with the natives at Bay of Islands on this island, **the British Flag was hoisted and the natives went and pulled it down and tore it to pieces**, and annoyed the settlers very much. On the Governor hearing the news he started [of] in a Man of War, and sent for more troops to Sydney to come to the place, where the natives got very much frightened at seeing so many redcoats and begged for peace and delivered up a great many of their arms and promised to disturb the settlers no more. The same must soon be done here."

Although addressed at Wellington, internally the letter suggests that he was writing from Whanganui, around the point to the west (he comments at one point that his brother's letter had arrived "last week" but only reached Whanganui "this week," and that the ship that had carried his brother's letter will be gone before he is able to get his reply "around." He ultimately recorded sending the letter on the *Bella Marina*.

The assumption must be that there was an additional sheet to the letter (given that he doesn't sign-off as one would expect) but as the end of the extant letter has him reverting to questions about his goods coming from Britain, it is probably fair to assume that it was chiefly family and/or business matters.

\$1485

References: Ancestry (online); Hutt Valley Timeline 1822—1855 (online); McPhail, *The Blenheim People* (2015); *New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian* (12 April 1848); NZETC; *Scottish Water Mills* (online); Te Ara; *Whanganui Chronicle* (16 July 1895).

Sir,

Salem North Carolina Sept. 29th 1849

I trust you will excuse a stranger for calling your attention to a matter calculated to enlist the sympathy of every feeling heart. It is the freedom of eight slaves.

About six years past an elderly gentleman by the name of Thomas Adams willed to me his slaves (which were his only property) expressing a desire that I should emancipate them. At that time he was much involved in debt. Many of his creditors brought suit & pressed payment, his negroes being his only property were about to be sold to make payment. After applying to neighbors & the neighbors to assist him to no avail, he then applied to me & begged me to intercede in his behalf to prevent the negroes from being sold, promising me a bill of sale for them. I accordingly paid off most of the claims & he made me a bill of sale for the slaves, I not being able to loose the money paid out.

He died nearly two years ago. And after a series of continued litigation from that time to the present with his heirs who were nephews & nieces living in Alabama & Mississippi, I succeeded in establishing my title to the negroes. In consequence of this litigation, the costs, together with the demands at present against the estate, with those I have paid off, amount to near a thousand dollars.

From the fact that the freedom of these slaves was a matter which Mr. Adams had very much at heart, I am desirous to set them free if I can have that amount refunded me. The negroes would bring at this moment more than (\$3,000.) three thousand dollars if I would sell them; but this is something I wish to avoid if possible.

[SLAVERY] STARBUCK, Darius Henry.

A remarkable Autograph Letter, Signed, relating to the fate of an enslaved family in North Carolina.

[15]

Dated: Salem, NC, 29 September 1849.

Description: detailed two-and-a-half page letter on bifolium 32 x 20.2 cm., signed D.H. Starbuck, on wove paper, postal stamps and address to last page.

Condition: very good, water damage and old repairs to address panel but textually complete.

PLEADING WITH GERRIT SMITH FOR "THE FREEDOM OF EIGHT SLAVES"

A quite remarkable letter, testament to the confused and brutal realities of slavery in the 1840s, as a prominent lawyer describes the fate of an extended family, "given" to him in the will of an old family friend.

The letter was written by Darius Henry Starbuck (1818—1887), from a prominent Quaker family in North Carolina. A graduate of Guilford College and lawyer, he was a delegate to the North Carolina state constitutional conventions of 1861 and 1865. After the War President Andrew Johnson appointed him to the federal district court, President Ulysses S. Grant making him State Attorney in 1870.

Significantly, **the letter is addressed to Gerrit Smith** (1797—1874), the abolitionist and philanthropist, host of the Fugitive Slave Convention of 1850 and one of the 'Secret Six' who gave financial support to John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859. Smith's house 'Peterboro' (misspelt by Starbuck here as 'Petersborough') in Madison County, New York, would become a famous stop on the Underground Railway. Smith's fame was such that Starbuck, more than 700 miles away to the south, felt he could appeal to him for help and support when all of his other avenues were exhausted.

Starbuck writes that the family group had been the "only property" of a man of Salem called Thomas Adams. Starbuck continues that although Adams had expressed "a desire that I should emancipate them," the labyrinthine debts on the estate had meant that he had only been able to keep the family together by paying off creditors to the amount of \$1000. This brings Starbuck to the heart of his request:

"From the fact that the freedom of the slaves was a matter which Mr. Adams had very much at heart, I am desirous to get them free if I can have that amount refunded me. The negroes would bring at this moment more than (\$3,000.) three thousand dollars if I would sell them but this is something I wish to avoid if possible. But I am not able to lose this amount of money. Hence I shall be under the necessity of continuing them in slavery, or selling part of them to refund me in order to free the balance. Their being all of one family would make this a painful duty to separate them."

The letter concludes with doubtless the most important section, giving unrecorded details of the family: "Perhaps a more minute description of these slaves may interest you. **The two oldest, Syphax & Letty are brother & sister.** Syphax is about 35 years old & has a free woman of color for a wife who has three children by him. Letty is about 32 years old, has a slave husband and six children, the oldest of whom is about 15 years of age."

A full transcription is available on request.

\$3450

[KING] MARKS, C.H. (so called, on the mount).

H.M.G. *Mermaid* in Mount Norris Bay near Melville Island on the North Coast of Australia, 1820 [sic].

[16]

Dated: undated, but c.1860—1880?

Description: watercolour and gouache, 21.4 x 31 cm., mid-twentieth century mount and frame.
Condition: some aging to the paper, the mount a little sunned, but in bright condition.

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF THE MERMAID, AFTER A SKETCH BY KING

A finely rendered and striking image of one of the most dramatic moments of the first voyage of the *Mermaid*, showing the ship's first interview with an imposing Malay fleet on the Cobourg Peninsula in Arnhem Land.

Despite its drama, and despite King's wonderful original sketch on which it is based, part of an album in the SLNSW since the early twentieth century, **no engraving of the scene was ever executed** which means that the caption on the mount is strictly correct, and that this is after a scene "sketched by Adml. P.P. King."

The structure of the scene, the evidence of the album in the SLNSW (see below) and, most particularly, the curious wording of the long caption on the mount, all point to a connection with the famous Conrad Martens watercolour, also based on one of King's sketches, showing the perilous moment at the end of the third *Mermaid* voyage when the ship nearly foundered in a fierce storm on the rocks that fringe Cape Banks, the northern of the two heads of Botany Bay.

The Martens watercolour is now held in the NLA (since 1969) and it now seems apparent that the present work was in some sense its pair, despite having little of the finesse of Martens's highly accomplished work.

This connection is best seen by the information written on the old mount. The first thing to note is that the detailed caption includes one howler: the scene depicted actually took place in April 1818 (not 1820) on the Cobourg Peninsula. In the preceding days the crew had had a fraught series of interviews with men from the Goulburn Islands, culminating in a watering crew being bombarded with rocks from an overhanging cliff (one of the most famous plates in King's *Narrative*). The *Mermaid* then sailed to the west towards Mountnorris Bay, shadowing a large Malay fishing fleet. The size of the Malay fleet was alarming enough that King several times ordered their colours out and had the guns manned, at the same time admitting they were in constant danger of being overwhelmed ("we had no wish," King said at one point, "in our defenceless state, to form a better acquaintance with so suspicious a crew"). It was in Mountnorris Bay that they had their most significant interview as, by King's count, no fewer than 21 Malay proas hove into view, one with the Dutch colours prominent passing very close and hailing them, although King commented that "Macassar" and "Trepang" were the only words the British crew could properly distinguish (*Narrative*, vol. I, pp. 75—78).

A rather more wry and dramatic retelling was that of the second officer John Septimus Roe in a letter to his father. In Roe's version, they had just hoisted in their boat and got their "decks cleared of all lumber, & the 3 Guns being cleared away (a terrible force for a Man of War) they were double shotted, & in case they might think we were afraid of them, & were running away, we bore down for the body of their fleet at anchor under a small island, & upon hoisting our colours & pendant, they all shewed Dutch flags... We took no notice of their waving to us, but with a fine commanding breeze, we passed the whole of them at anchor."



Having thus announced their presence, they had a watchful night, the Dutch fleet (16 sail according to Roe, not King's 21) continued about their business for another day before again getting under weigh, eight of the proas sailing directly for them. With their irons hot and their muskets lying beside them, the *Mermaid* stood towards the sternmost and "passed within 1/2 pistol shot of her on opposite tacks," but they all separated peacefully (*The Mermaid & Bathurst Letters*, pp. 124—126).

Unfortunately, nothing in my research has come to light which sheds any light on the putative artist's name C.H. Marks, despite various promising leads and despite the significant fact that they must have had access to King's drawing at some point in order to create this version.

Perhaps the most important part is that the picture itself does not seem to be signed, meaning that the name is recorded only on the mount. In fact, the name is only one of the several intriguing aspects of the mount, not least that it clearly gives the prefix "H.M.G." (for Gunboat) and not the more commonly seen "H.M.C." (for Cutter) as well as showing King's rank as Admiral, a rank he only obtained in 1855.

Significantly, all of these details were also included on the mount of Martens's Cape Banks watercolour.

The Cape Banks painting has been dated c.1855—1857 and is known to have remained in the King family for several decades. It was with King's son William Essington King (1821—1910) in 1880, when he loaned it to the Melbourne In-

ternational Exhibition, the handbook for which includes the caption he supplied (“H.M. Gunboat off Cape Banks, December 4th 1820. Conrad Martens, from a sketch by Admiral P.P. King”). Of course, this wording in the 1880 handbook is also strikingly close to the two mounts. Although remaining – presumably – in the family after that, the Cape Banks painting was finally offered for sale at Christie’s (London) in March 1969 (lot 147), where it was purchased for the NLA.

More intriguing still, an old photograph of the Cape Banks painting is also part of the same album as King’s original Malay fleet watercolour in the SLNSW (PX*D 270), on the page following King’s sketch of Mountnorris Bay. Although the Cape Banks mount is printed rather than manuscript, the format is otherwise identical, including the lower-right attribution to a sketch of Admiral King, the reference to the relevant page in the *Narrative* at the bottom, even the use of H.M.G. for Gunboat (see inset). More, the album also includes a scrap of what is evidently backing paper relating to the image of the Malay fleet, which may also be relevant here.

All of the evidence suggests that the King family, around the time of their father’s death, not only divvied up the remaining albums and pictures, but occasionally allowed artists to work from the original sketches. Perhaps this was in part due to the parcelling-out of King’s many sketches and manuscripts among his seven sons.

Presumably in this process was when some of the more curious aspects of the caption on the mount were introduced, the incorrect date, the unusual use of “gunboat” rather than “cutter” to describe the *Mermaid* and the anachronistic – at least in terms of the scene being shown – use of “Admiral” P.P. King.

In fact, my feeling is that despite the caption, this is actually a copy of a lost work by Martens (a copy of a copy, that is), in part because of the attempt to render the surf in a characteristic fashion; it may even be that “C.H. Marks” is a red herring, being nothing more than a poor transcription of Marten’s signature. Whatever the case, this is a remarkable survival and likely to be subject to closer study in future.

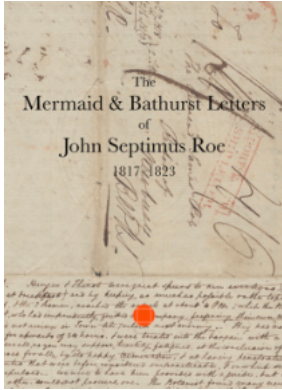
\$6250

References: Fishburn (ed), *The Mermaid & Bathurst Letters of John Septimus Roe* (2021, online); Hordern, *King of the Australian Coast* (1997), pp. 258-261; King, *Narrative of a Survey* (1826); King, *Album entitled ‘Sketches, etchings and photographs, 1809-1872,’* SLNSW, PX*D 270; Melbourne International Exhibition, 1880–1881. Official Record (1882), p. 528; NLA catalogue; Trove.



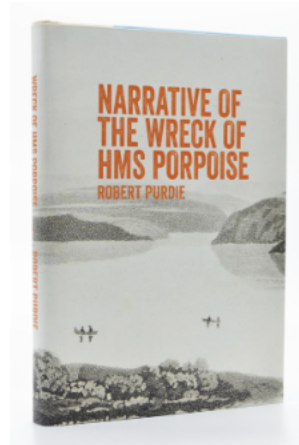
Comparison with (above) the Christie's/NLA image by Martens from a photograph retained with the SLNSW album PX*D 270).

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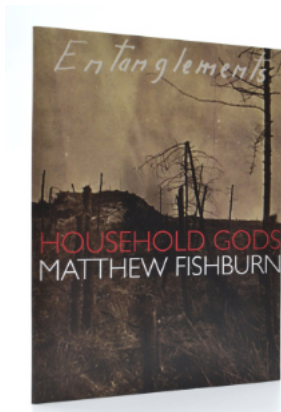
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