

Friends of Caroline Chisholm

NEWSLETTER

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A contemporary news report about Caroline Chisholm is the lead article in this issue. It is significant for the specific details it has about the 1844 bush journey to Goulburn she undertook with unemployed emigrants, including the route and individuals who helped with provisions, accommodation and the like. Most helpers were well-off and Anglican (but not all), and they did not themselves benefit from Mrs Chisholm's efforts on that bush journey. She brought out good-heartedness in others.

From the 1840s to the 1860s, contemporary newspapers and periodicals in Australia, Great Britain and Ireland regularly carried reports about her innovative Christian responses to social needs. The late Mary Hoban documented many of those reports, as well as others in New Zealand and India (but none from the United States, where Mrs Chisholm's renown had spread). Mary Hoban's records, which are in

the Melbourne Archdiocese's archives, provide an excellent resource for the formal historical study the Church requires before beginning any Cause. More research is necessary to locate all — or as many as possible — of the extant historical references to Caroline Chisholm's heroic virtue.

What will facilitate that search is the on-going digitalization of historical newspapers, books, periodicals, and archival materials (such as letters and diaries). Friends willing to contribute could contact the editorial team.

Digitalization of historical images, improved access and broader permitted uses are evident in our second article. Its four images and the accompanying explanation supplement what we know from the textual sources for the subjects in question. The grim location of the land grant in Darlinghurst is unmistakable, for example, and we can more readily appreciate why Bishop Polding did not establish a Magdalen there.

One of Numerous Examples of Primary Sources

Caroline Chisholm's generosity and her adventurous bush journeys appeal to a great many Australians now, just as they did to her contemporaries. A newspaper report of one bush journey is reproduced here. It ran on page 2 of the 18 November, 1844 issue of *The Australian*, which was published in Sydney from 1824 to 1848.

MRS. CHISHOLM'S EXPEDITION.

This eminently benevolent and enterprising lady has returned, from her expedition into the interior, to find service for the unemployed and distressed operatives, who accompanied her, and we are not only happy to congratulate her on the successful issue of her spirited and generous undertaking, but deem it our duty to record to her credit a few of the results and incidents of her journey, which will be read, we feel assured, with as much interest and admiration as they were first heard by ourselves.

Our readers will doubtless remember, that about a month or six weeks ago, Mrs. Chisholm, having obtained a dray and some small supplies, set out for Goulburn, with a band of distressed operatives, of both sexes, both single and married — the latter with "encumbrances," of course, as children, in these dismal times, have usually been called. This journey was the spontaneous, and almost unassisted undertaking of this philanthropic and heroic lady.

It is not flattery, but merited praise, to characterise the compassionate and disinterested generosity which suggested so benevolent an enterprise, as eminent philanthropy; and the arduous exertion, the patient endurance, and matronly propriety, with which it was carried into effect, as a specimen of female heroism of which her own sex may be proud — of which the world, in these "puling times" of luxuriant effeminacy, exhibits but few examples; and to

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Revealing Historical Images

The Trove facility on the National Library of Australia's www.nla.gov.au website is providing greater access to extensive holdings of historical images. Click the Trove box on the homepage, then select "Pictures, photos, objects" and enter your search terms.

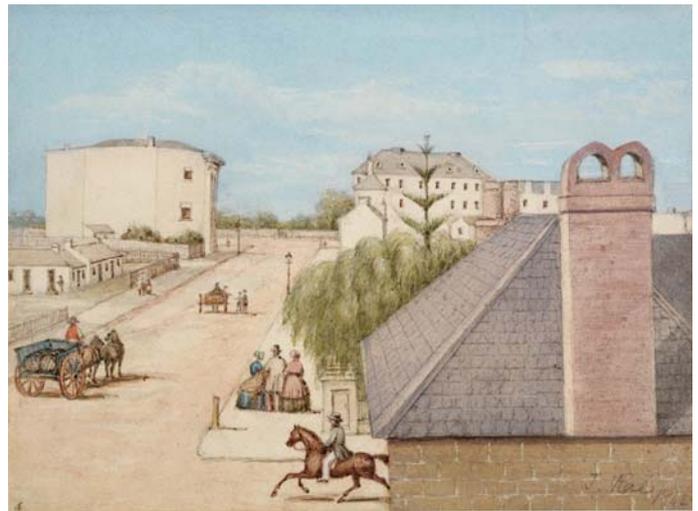
The four images in this article are from the NSW State Library's collections and were downloaded free through Trove.

John Rae's watercolour shows much more than the title it was assigned by a library cataloguer. As explained in this Newsletter's January, 2017 issue, the modest single-level building on the left housed in 1842 not just the Government Printing Office but also the Female Immigrants' Home run by Caroline Chisholm. In fact, her operation of the home and its associated employment activities, including regular bush journeys, were among the biggest local news stories in 1842. The long-established printing office continued its unassuming work and faced only one minor controversy in that year (the temporary lending of type to Sydney newspapers), whereas the library — whose largely blank wall towers over the single-level building — had not yet been built.

The most prestigious building in Bent Street was the Australian Club, but Rae chose not to portray it in any of his watercolours or sketches. The Australian Club commenced as a well-off gentlemen's club in 1838, when it leased the building and, within a few years, bought it. The building is shown in two images, and so is a sturdy two-storey stone cottage.

While the Australian Club is not in Rae's 1842 watercolour, the slate roof, chimneys and side wall of the stone cottage are in the foreground. Rae also depicts chimney pots or caps, which are not in the later photographs and may have been a creative addition, but otherwise it is the same stone cottage in the three images.

The perspective in Rae's watercolour was made possible because he either sketched the view from the top veranda of the Australian Club or imagined it as arising from that vantage point. In doing so and omitting the Australian Club, Rae could well have been exercising "his



Bent St showing Old Government Printing Office and the Library, 1842, John Rae, Dixson Galleries, NSW State Library, DG SV/SpColl/Rae/10*



Australian Club [Bent and O'Connell Sts] Photographs of Public & Other Buildings, &c., 1872 Dixson Library, NSW State Library, File No. FL14540216



Australian Club and Creswick Hotel, Bent Street, Sydney Photograph—albumen photoprint (early 1880s?) Mitchell Library, NSW State Library, File No. 1227706

Revealing Historical Images

quiet sense of humour”, which Nan Phillips sees “revealed in his work” [*Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry for John Rae (1813-1900)].

Mrs Chisholm’s own sense of humour could at times be described as quiet, but, when writing about certain members of the Australian Club in her 1842 book, she ventured into satire, though not wholly successfully, on my reading. Fear of unrest in the Colony and the concern of the property classes at extending rations to newly arrived unemployed emigrants were raised in *Female Immigration Considered*. Mrs Chisholm names some of her targets and then writes, “. . . something must be done, the crisis is approaching”.

“Oh, we must have a ‘Nine-o’clock:’ that is, a solemn, silent, *secret* meeting! A. starts in the morning, and meets B., and says, in a tone of solemn import, ‘the club at nine!’ This solemn summons passes from one to the other, and it will be a sight worth seeing — to view the awful, quiet, stepping of these gentlemen up Bent-street at nine. The men of Bold Measures meet not to dine, but sup: with great solemnity they take their seats; their appearance is awful and imposing; the waiter feels the effects’, and so the strained narrative goes on. [Reproduced in pages 55 and 56 of *Unfeigned Love*.]

Although attention in this article has been on the visual focus of the single-level building, the significance of Mrs Chisholm’s activities in it, and the omission of the Australian Club, Rae might have included another gentle slight against the Club. Prominent in his watercolour are the well-turned out horseman, a fashionably dressed group of three, and a drayman and others in plain attire; all of them are either moving away from the Club or facing away from it — none is going to, or looking in the direction of, the Club.

The inclusion of ordinary and better-off townspeople is a key feature of three-quarters of the 25 sketches and watercolours in Rae’s *Views of old Sydney: 1842*, which is held in the Dixon Library and can be accessed through the Trove facility. Buildings and scenery must have had less appeal to him than human society.

The fourth image is an 1872 photograph of Darlinghurst Gaol taken by Charles Pickering under the direction of James Barnett, the Colonial Architect. The Gaol is viewed from a North-East aspect. The rough thoroughfare along the Northern wall is Burton Street, and beneath the Eastern wall is Darlinghurst Road. The area within the paling fence and below the fence comprise the present-day Green Park. In 1837, one acre of that area was given as a land grant to Bishop Polding for the purpose of setting up a Catholic Magdalen for unmarried mothers and prostitutes.

The Gaol’s external walls were erected by 1824, but internal construction began in earnest only in 1836. At the time the land grant was made, the Gaol’s imposing, if not intimidating, structure would have been obvious. The site was clearly unsuitable for a Magdalen, and none was built there. This outcome aggrieved some of the Catholic community, who opposed Mrs Chisholm’s 1841 plan to open the Female Immigrants’ Home. In particular, they criticized her aim to “serve all”, irrespective of country or creed. They wanted her to assist Catholics alone, as related in “What Brought About the Catholic Opposition” in the July, 2016 issue of this Newsletter.



Darlinghurst Gaol (N.E. Corner)
Photographs of Public & Other Buildings, &c., 1872
 Dixon Library, NSW State Library, File No. FL14540339

The digital copies of the four images accessible via the Trove facility have even higher definition, which allows considerable enlargement. Details that cannot be appreciated here become more apparent. For instance, can you pick out the guard to the left of the North-East watchtower?

Rodney Stinson

One of Numerous Examples of Primary Sources

which, therefore, the public of this Colony is the more deeply bound to accord to it this tribute of their gratitude, admiration, and regard.

After leaving Sydney Mrs. Chisholm and her followers journeyed the first day as far as the Lansdowne Bridge, where they bivouacked for the night in the bush, Mrs. C. herself sleeping under the dray. Next day they reached the Cowpastures, and were most hospitably received and treated by Charles Cowper, Esq., M.C., and his lady, at Wivenhoe. Thence they proceeded onwards towards Camden, receiving contributions of one sort or another from the Rev. Mr. Hassall and other respectable settlers as they passed by.

At Camden they received liberal supplies, and were cheered on by the sympathy and kindness not only of the Messrs. M' Arthur, but even of their thriving tenantry in the township. One of the latter of the name of Reilley did not like the idea of Mrs. C. travelling in no better conveyance than a common loaded dray, and offered her his gig or tilt cart to take her over Razor Back, and another rejoicing in the cognomen of "Pat" Currie, assisted them very materially by the loan of a leading horse.

From Camden they journeyed over Razor Back to Picton, where they were hospitably treated and supplied by Major Antill. Next day they reached "Lupton's Inn," where the party were kindly assisted and lodged, free of expense, in barns and out-houses, where they passed the night comfortably.

To the credit of the worthy landlord be it said (and may it ever stand in his favour on licensing day) when Mrs. Chisholm asked what was to pay, she was bluntly told that she would get her bill at the door when she was ready to start, and there she found a gig prepared for her, into which honest boniface handed her, and wished her every success on her journey.

And thus did Mrs. C. and her little band of pilgrims journey onwards, receiving assistance and marks of kindness from many on their way, whose names we cannot remember, until they at length arrived in Goulburn.

Mr. Bradley, M.C. gave Mrs. C. authority to draw upon him for necessaries, and indeed, after getting all the poor people settled to their heart's content, such had been the liberality of their incidental supplies by the way that they had no lack of any thing, but enough and something left as a reserve for, another journey.

Yes, gentle reader, it is the intention of Mrs. Chisholm to follow up the good work which she has so successfully begun, and show still farther what even a helpless woman, imbued with the spirit of philanthropy and the soul of enterprise, is capable of achieving in so noble and charitable a cause.

And will the Government, we ask, or the public of the Colony, any longer refuse to this public benefactress the assistance and means she requires to facilitate her undertaking? The question, if it implied a doubt would be an insult to humanity!

The rates of wages which Mrs. Chisholm obtained for her party averaged as follows: — For single women, from £9 to £12; for single men, as laborers and farm servants, from £12 to £17 10s.; for families, £12 to £15, with a weekly ration of 20lbs. meat, 20lbs. flour, 3lbs sugar, 6oz. soap, milk of two cows, and half an acre of ground for gardening.

Besides a general demand for laborers, Mrs. Chisholm has orders for the following trades: — Harnessmaker, bricklayer, brickmaker, carpenter, joiner, tin brazier.

Notes: "MC" indicates membership of the Legislative Council; "M' Arthur" is Macarthur, who was Anglican, as were Antill, Bradley, Cowper and, of course, the Rev Hassell. The other men named were workers in Camden, probably former convicts employed by the Macarthurs; Lupton, the original licensee, had died years before, but his (remarried?) widow stayed on; "boniface" (usually Boniface) was a slang or popular term for the landlord of a tavern or inn, said to have originated from Farquhar's 1707 play, *Beaux' Stratagem*.