



Bathurst Lapidary & Collectors Club Inc

NEWSLETTER

Issue 245 – January – February 2024

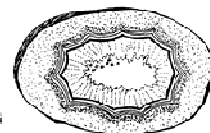
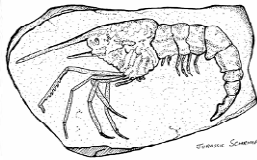
MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE FIRST WEDNESDAY EACH MONTH AT
12 NOON - EXCEPT JANUARY AT THE CLUBHOUSE (OLD EGLINTON

FIRE SHED), PARK STREET, EGLINTON.

Enquires 63315404 or write P.O. Box 9156, Bathurst 2795

Editor amcrae@lisp.com.au

www.philas.org.au/bathurst

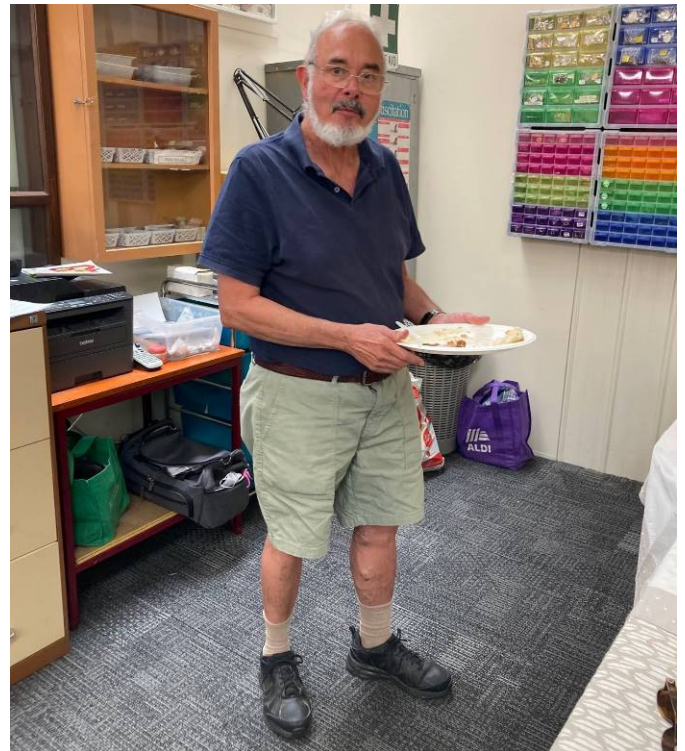


JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2024 - UPCOMING PROGRAM

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 10th January | Wednesday - The Club Rooms will reopen for a 9.00 am start. |
| 15th & 16th January | Monday and Tuesday Kid's Holiday Workshop 1 - Beginners only. Unfortunately, no other details. |
| 22nd & 23rd January | Monday and Tuesday Kid's Holiday Workshop 2 – More advanced group. Unfortunately, no other details. |
| 7th February | Wednesday - first Monthly Meeting for 2024 – 12noon (after the normal Workshop Session). Remember your 'Latest Acquisition'. |
| 6th March | Wednesday – Monthly Meeting – 12noon (after the normal Workshop Session). Remember your 'Latest Acquisition'. |
| 22nd March | Friday – Seniors Week Historic Talk titled 'Australiana in the Applied Arts – a trip down memory lane!!' by Paul Storm from Sydney. A fascinating Australiana talk and trip down memory lane for 'Seniors Week'. The talk includes everyday items that were often decorated with Australian themes from your school ruler and bottle opener to your oven door and the plasterwork in the ceiling over your head. Paul's talk will take place at 2.30pm in the Bathurst District Historical Society Museum, East Wing Bathurst Courthouse, Russell Street. Light refreshments will take place at the end of the talk. Entry by gold coin donation on entry. To celebrate Seniors Week the Bathurst District Historical Society Museum will offer free admission to Seniors from 11am to 2pm. |
| 29th March – 1st April | GEMBOREE 2024 will be held over Easter at Willunga in South Australia - booklet may be downloaded from AFLACA website https://aflaca.org.au/gemboree/ It is the 60th National Gem & Mineral Show. Don't forget entries must reach the Committee by Monday 15th March, 2024. See some superb displays of lapidary entries. There will be lots of fascinating crystals, fossils, rocks, minerals, gemstones, faceting, prospecting equipment, lapidary equipment and jewellery for sale. See the International Faceting Challenge, which is a world class faceting competition, run and sponsored by the Australian Faceters' Guild. |
| 3rd April | Wednesday – Monthly Meeting – 12noon (after the normal Workshop Session). Remember your 'Latest Acquisition'. |
| 12th to 14th April | Friday to Sunday – Reliance Bank Royal Bathurst Show - Lapidary Section - again we will be operating the section for lapidary at this year's show. The show conducts well over 2,600 competitive classes spread over 35 sections. The Lapidary, Allied Crafts & Beadwork is section A5. A number of members have already completed some entries for this event. Paul will be contacting everyone to let you know final details. Give it a go. |
| 1st May | Wednesday – Monthly Meeting – 12noon (after the normal Workshop Session). Remember your 'Latest Acquisition'. |
| 5th June | Wednesday – Monthly Meeting – 12noon (after the normal Workshop Session). Remember |



There seemed to be a lot of reminiscing from yesteryear as some members recalled various club outings such as to the Jenolan Caves for special tours and dinner and talk, quartz crystal gathering at Oberon, the old gold mine named the Big Oaky Mine at Wattle Flat, the old steam driven mining equipment at Black Springs and the four-day trip to the opal fields at Lightning Ridge.

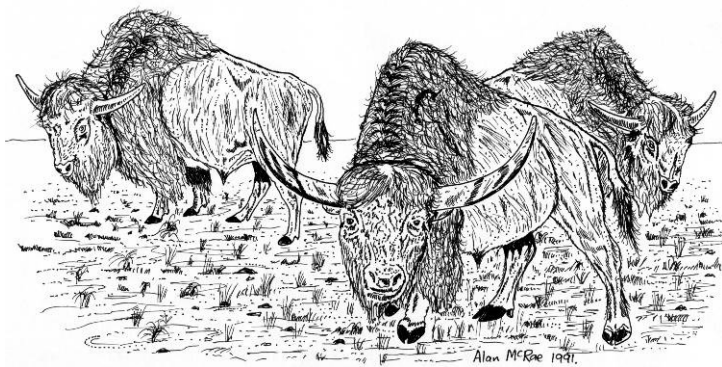


ANCIENT BISON FOSSILS

The earliest bison, called 'bison latifrons' or the 'giant long-horned bison', was the bulkiest and heftiest bovid to live on the North America continent. Male fossils have been found with horns spanning over six feet from tip-to-tip matching some of the modern bulls and cows still in America.

This extinct species of bison which roamed from Alaska down to Mexico lived throughout the Pleistocene epoch. Another older and larger type of bison was known as the *Bison antiquus*, which died out some 22,000 years ago during the last Ice Age from around 15,000 years ago. Some large bulls could weigh over 3,800 pounds. They shared the plants and small trees with other megafauna mammals such as the Woolly Mammoth and American Mastodon of the late Pleistocene period in North America.

All the types of male bison, and even those today, would use their large horns to defend themselves against other bulls and wild predators such as wolves and giant bears. If they were attacked by natives or other large mammals they would charge and slash, and gore its assailant.



– obsidian arrowheads made by the early American tribes to hunt bison.

There are three main areas in South Dakota in the United States of America which incorporates the Black Hills and Badlands, along with the western prairie, which has yielded tens of millions of fossils from giant dinosaurs and lots and lots of relics to small ammonites to other prehistoric life, much just under the soil. Palaeontologists have excavated just below the surface and unearthed a rich and historic past.

The traditional native Americans existed for many thousands of years, coexisting with the bison on which they could survive. In the 1800s

Left - Bison are large mammals with large humps at their shoulders and large heads. They sport hairy beards with thick coats that the beast sheds in the springtime and early summer. The early Indians hunted them for their meat, bones and hides, with nothing on the animals wasted by the tribes.

Right



the European settlers, the Army, traders and hunters decimated millions of bison leading to the catastrophic and appalling destruction of the Indian people and their society. This disastrous slaughter of the native buffalo left millions of tons of bison bones marking out the devastation like grave markers. When the early settlers realised they could get money for the old bones they augmented their meagre incomes by collecting and selling the bones. The bones were crushed up to make fertilizer, glue and ash, the latter was added to clay in American potteries to make bone china, which was sold in European cities.



Left – A bison fossil incisor tooth which are commonly dug up throughout Yukon, Alaska, United States, Siberia, the North Sea and Isle of White as well as Calgary Alberta, in Canada. Some of the teeth grew up to three inches in length, especially the molars which were very durable. They ate mainly grass selecting the new shoots of the native grasslands, in spring and summer.

Some of the fossilised bison teeth exhibit blue vivianite mineralization as they have been in some South Dakota waterway thousands

of years ago after they died in the rivers, streams and waterways as the enormous herds crossed over them during their annual migrations across the extensive plains.

Right – A bison vertebrae which has calcified over many hundreds of thousands of years.

The bison was not just food but they supplied the natives with shelter, tools, clothing, jewellery and tools, as well as in their ceremonies.

The native American Indians used almost the whole animal, especially from the bison's bones. They would scrape out the longer bones to fashion them into flasks or cut holes with rock drills to craft out a flute. The women would make awls, bodkin needles and sewing needles from split bones. The men would make barbs for their hunting spears. Other bones would be conveniently shaped for knives, scrapers and burnishers, the latter for working with hides which would be made into clothing or tepees. Teeth were often made into necklaces, some of which were put on people after they died.



There are plenty of collectors who converge on the Dakota fossil site along with students who want to make some pocket money by finding fossils to sell. They stroll around in their bare feet in the marshes and swamplands. This enables them to more easily locate the fossils and grab them. If they were lucky they might find a group of vertebrae from a bison's backbone or just a single thoracic vertebrae.

Prehistoric Indian hunters killed and processed their bison as soon as all the animals were dead. Some hunts involved just a few bison, whilst others could exceed over 200. Large pieces of meat would be sliced off the animals and put out near their teepees to dry in the sun.

Some Indian tribes would herd the stampeding bison towards a precipice forcing the bison to jump off. This method either killed the bison or severely wounded them, the Indians then finishing them off.

The bison tended to spend their winter months in more isolated areas which were more sheltered from the high winds and extreme cold. These sheltered areas tended to have some available forage. When travelling the ancient herds followed the major rivers as watering holes and smaller streams tended to dry up.



Then during the animals' summer period, they travelled over the short grass plains after they had calved around May. The bison travelled in large herds, it is thought in groups of 35 or so up to well over 1,000, unless they were calving when they formed and traversed the plains in what palaeontologists have called 'nursery herds'. Often it has been found that the mature bulls formed their own herds.

The native Indians often held large communal bison hunts during the summer for their summer meat. Then during the winter months as they moved to their wintering grounds where they were killed when needed.



Bison could also be herded into crude coracles before being speared or shot with a bow and arrow. Otherwise, a bison herd would be attacked with the Indians on their horses using arrows and spears. Later they had guns to use. In most cases women and children helped corral the beasts.

Left - An American native hand knapped stone spearhead.

ONE SILVER RUSSIAN RUBLE ISSUED BY THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA 1798

Russian coinage holds a special fascination to coin collectors due to both the coinage itself but also the nation's history at the time of each mintage. Early Russian coins are renowned for their size and thickness, which in many cases, were issued in quite large numbers. Russia holds the record for the second largest coins ever issued, except for the Swedish plate money. These large Russian coins weighed over 2.2 pounds.

The Russian ruble, also spelt rouble, appeared during the 14th century and went on to be the second oldest coinage after the British Pound Sterling. It later became the first currency in Europe to be decimalized in 1704, at a time when the ruble equalled 100 kopeks.

The trade ruble in this article was issued during the reign of Paul I, the son of Peter III and his wife, who was the famous and overbearing Catherine the Great. His mother saw to it that Paul did not rule in his own right by keeping him away from the Russian Court and any of Russia's affairs. This silver coin was struck over 215 years ago.

Paul I was born on 1st October, 1754, in Russia's Saint Petersburg. His mother saw to it that her son received a good education and brought in a number of teachers to teach the young boy several languages. The pampered boy became very hot-tempered with his impulsive outbursts and impulsiveness.

It was 1796 before Tsar Paul I was able to assume power and have coins minted after his mother died. Having seen the Russian Army deteriorate during his mother's time he set about reforming the military forces. He quickly became an absolute ruler in Imperial Russia.



Left – the obverse of the one silver Jefimok Trade Ruble of Paul I, Emperor of Russia minted during 1798. Paul I was the Czar of Russia from 1769 until his assassination in March 1801. It shows a cross monogram consisting of four 'P' letters in Cyrillic and the Roman numeral I in the centre for Paul I, forming the cross. Around the edge it has the date and the words '1798 · МОДЕТА ЦЕНА РУБЛЬ' which translates as '1798 · Coin worth a Ruble.'

The coin was struck at the St. Petersburg Mint as seen by the initials of the mint's master Mikhail Bobrovshchikov.

During the reign of Peter I, The Great from 1682 to 1725, mainly during the 18th century, it was decided to overstrike some of Russia's copper coins. Russia, during this time, had many copper mines and enormous reserves of copper which is why many of the copper coins are so thick and bulky. Overstriking was soon widespread especially during Catherine II's thirty five year long reign. However, it stopped in 1797 under orders during Tsar Paul I's reign.

In 1797 Paul I introduced a recoinage programme after unsuccessfully trying to change his mother's new standard the previous year. Then, after Catherine died, Paul ascended to the throne as Czar he was able to reverse his mother's decision on Russia's monetary standard. This saw the melting down of any earlier coins and then being turned into denominations that corresponded to the Czar's new monetary standards.

The recoinage production took place at five mints in Russia including of course St. Petersburg and Moscow, as well as Nizhny Novgorod, a branch of the Moscow Mint as well as Annensk and Ekaterinberg.

Right – The reverse of this Russian 1798 silver ruble shows a series of swirly ornaments with a square frame in the centre and a double border. Wording from Psalm 115:1 is in four lines inside the square frame – “НЕ НАМЪ, НЕ НАМЪ. А ИМЯНИ ТВОЕМУ” and “С·М· М·Б” which has been translated as ‘Not to us, not to us and to the name of thee.’

As Paul I brought in the changes to his military there was a great deal of anger and resentment amongst his soldiers. Consequently, a conspiracy group was planned by his personal consultants as well as his Guard officers. The plotters wanted to put Paul's son, Alexander I, born in 1777, onto the Russian throne. The killing was also approved by his son.

On 23rd March, 1801, Czar Paul hosted an elaborate dinner party in his Mikhaylovsky Palace. After finding him in his bedchamber the high-ranking assassins murdered him by stabbing him with a sword and then strangling him. The assassination saw the end of the 46 years old which foresaw many of his coins melted down.

On 4th April, 1801, he was interned in Peter and Paul's Cathedral in Saint Petersburg in Russia.



CRYSTAL MINERAL PLATES SOUGHT BY COLLECTORS

This plate of fine needle-like yellow-brown gypsum is from South Australia and would make a welcome addition in many a mineral collection, in fact fine gypsum specimens are already very popular amongst mineral collectors. This ‘butterscotch’ gypsum is from the Pernatty Lagoon near Mount Gunson.

The fragile plate, on this page, shows the sprays of lustrous transparent yellow-brown prismatic gypsum crystals in a cluster and is fully crystallized all around. Gypsum is a calcium sulphate - CaSO_4 .

These impressive and fine gypsum crystal clusters precipitate from the mineral-rich tidal waters in the lagoon. The colours of these types of specimens vary widely depending on the impurities in the waters at the time.

Gypsum is a very common mineral and contains water in its structure. The mineral formed in seams of sedimentary rock and is found world-wide, the water containing calcium and sulphates then evaporating and replenishing itself.

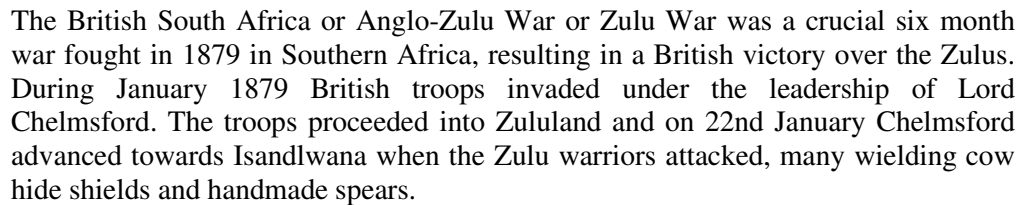
Miners who worked gypsum mines in the 1800s and early 1900s for any length of time were not totally aware of the effects on their body the mineral could cause. Miners in very closed in areas would have problems with their upper respiratory system and get skin and eye irritations. Ultimately, they could die of cancer at an early age.

Gypsum colours can include grey, white, yellow, light red, brown, orange, beige, pink, green as well as colourless.

Gypsum is widely used in the manufacture of wallboards which are used to cover walls and ceilings. It's also used to make plaster in the construction of homes as well as mixed into a patching compound for wallboard repair. It is also used as a fertilizer which helps break up severely condensed clay soils making them more porous and thus enabling the soil to absorb more moisture.



Many people are fascinated by the Zulus who lived in South Africa. The Zulu kingdom was led by Cetshwayo, who became the king of the Zulus in 1872. He was not willing to yield to the British domination and began assembling a significant and well-disciplined army of some estimated 50,000 warriors. Cetshwayo established his royal villages at Ulundi.



The British troops were annihilated, losing 800 British soldiers and commandeering almost 1,000 rifles, along with ammunition. Later that day a second Zulu force, led by Cetshwayo's brother, Dabulamanzi kaMpande, tried to overrun the British depot at Rorke's Drift. However, the British knew they were coming and made preparations. The battle lasted around twelve hours where 120 British soldiers killed more than 500 Zulu tribesmen. The Zulus were using many of the captured British guns, however they were not trained to use them.

Left – The obverse of the silver British South Africa campaign medal known otherwise as the Zulu War Medal with its 1879 clasp. It features the young Queen Victoria's diademed head, left facing portrait with the legend 'VICTORIA REGINA' on either side of her head. This medal was issued to W.M. Cross, later of Bathurst.

The medal was made of silver with a scrolled silver swivelling suspender which hung from a ribbon of yellow and black. The medal disc measures 35.5mm. The obverse was designed by William Wyon, R.A.

Officially it was called the South Africa Medal, the soldiers usually called it the Zulu War Medal. Instituted by the British Government in 1880 it was presented to

members of the British Army forces and the Colonial Volunteers, including Australians. It was eligible for soldiers who were involved in a string of South African tribal native wars in South Africa from 1877 to 1879, most particularly for the infamous Zulu War of 1879.

The Zulu War of 1879 is recalled for its highs and lows but notably for the catastrophic defeat of the British Army at the Battle of Isandlwana and succeeding heroic Defence of Rorke's Drift.

To be able to receive the ‘1879’ clasp soldiers had to have participated in this campaign, including those present at Islandlwana and Rorke’s Drift. In the latter battle there were eleven Victoria Crosses (VC) and five Distinguished Conduct Medals awarded to survivors.

There were a number of foot soldier regiments who served in the Zulu War. In addition, there were two squadrons of Mounted Infantry of 150 troopers each. These were made up of men from the 3rd, 13th, 24th and 80th regiments. There were also other British units including two Royal Artillery Batteries, six guns along with 175 men assigned to each battery.

Right - The reverse of the Zulu Medal with its 1879 bar and featuring beneath the words 'SOUTH AFRICA' is an elegant image of the lion which symbolises Africa, with a protea bush in the background. Mr. W. Wyon's son, Mr. Leonard Charles Wyon, designed the reverse of the medal.

The recipient's military number, rank, name and their regiment are engraved around the edge.

One soldier who fought in the war was John Key, a corporal at the time and a member of the 2nd/24th Foot, who later became a lance sergeant. Of the eleven



Victoria Cross medals awarded, seven went to members of the 2nd/24th Foot.

The battle was fought during January 1879 and involved the British troops in the defence of a mission station under Zulu attack at Rorke's Drift, a British depot, some 145 miles north of Durban.

Around 150 British soldiers held off about 4,000 Zulu warriors, who had earlier claimed a decisive victory in a battle at Isandlwana, to Rorke's Drift's east. About 500 Zulu warriors died in the battle compared to Britain's 17, with Zulu forces retreating as British reinforcements approached.



Mr. William M. Cross established his veterinary surgery in Bathurst, and his wagon can be seen on the bottom right of the image which was taken before 1920. His wagon pulled with one horse is taking part in a street procession around Bathurst.

Mr. Cross had learnt much of his trade in the Army Veterinary Corps caring for their military horses though he did undertake more formal training and study for which he received a Veterinary Surgeon's Certificate. He was also a farrier replacing and shoeing horses, as well as dealing with sick and injured animals. At the rear of

his establishment he had his infirmary stables.

In the National Advocate of 11th June, 1889, was a story under the heading – “A Freak of Nature - Mr. William Cross, Veterinary Surgeon, has drawn our attention to the fact that a resident of this city is the possessor of a cow which recently gave birth to a calf deformed in such an extraordinary manner that it eclipsed most of the freaks of nature which come to light. It was such an unnatural production that, had it survived, it would have had to walk about with its body in an inverted position. The right hind leg was joined to the right shoulder, and the other hind leg to the left shoulder, all the four legs protruding upward from the back. The body was shaped like a ball, the head being the only natural looking portion of the animal, but even that was turned upside down.”

William Cross was expected to do post mortems to determine why some animals had died. William was expected to travel throughout the district to check on animals, building up quite a reputation in the process. Some were even noted in other Bathurst newspaper editions.

Much later whilst living in Sydney, John Cross sold his medal for around \$80,000



TEN BOB NOTE

Most of our older members, well those born before 1963, may recognise the two images in this article.

They were the last ten shilling note to circulate before decimal currency was introduced on the 14th February, 1966, when the Government declared the note equivalent to our nation's new one dollar notes upon decimalisation.

The last print run of the ten shilling notes took place in

1961 and saw some 557,548,000 ten shilling notes printed. This note has the serial number AH 30 494729 and was signed by Dr. H.C. Coombs, Governor of the Reserve Bank of the Commonwealth of Australia and Rowland Wilson,

Secretary to the Treasury. These notes were printed from 1952 until 1961.

Previous page - The obverse or front of the brown and orange ten shilling note features a portrait of Captain Matthew Flinders, seen in an oval on the righthand side. He had sailed through Bass Strait with his next achievement being to circumnavigate Tasmania. Flinders was the first sailor to completely survey Australia's southern coast. He went on to circumnavigate our continent. Ironically, Matthew Flinders was the man to first use the name 'Australia' in his records and notes.

The note has the traditional watermark which features Captain Cook in the blank left oval. It was issued during the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. At the bottom left is the Australian Coat of Arms.

With the coming of Federation, the Australian Government finally passed the Australian Notes Act of 1910. This informed the nation that the issue of the new notes would be the duty of the Commonwealth Treasury. The initial trials took a while as plates were needed to be engraved and suitable printing machines had to be shipped out from Britain.

The history of the ten shilling note began with the first issue which took place on 1st May, 1913. It was a blueish note which Australian citizens could be paid for in gold. In 1914 the note issue had the words in red capital letters 'HALF SOVEREIGN' overprinted as it was equivalent to the nation's gold half sovereign, though future issues could only be paid in notes themselves.

Right – the reverse or back of the ten shilling note showing the 'first' Parliament House in Canberra which had been opened in 1927.



POTTERY OF THE VOC - THE DUTCH UNITED EAST INDIA COMPANY

The Dutch East India Company, Verenigde Oostindische or VOC, was, in the past the largest ocean going trading company in the world from 1602 to 1799. Once established, and they were making plenty of money, they placed orders with several Dutch and German pottery works to produce sets of plates, cups, dishes, soup terrenes and other items. These would be utilised mainly by the officers, whereas the crew mostly used pewter.

The Dutch East India Company also ordered glass and stoneware bottles each time a new ship was commissioned. Other orders would be submitted as a ship sailed home, the orders

to be completed a few weeks before leaving port again. At times glass bottles were brought back to Holland where the cyphers would be added, and the bottles refired.

Right – A common four-sided, black glass Dutch gin bottle.

Left – Another such bottle was known as a Bellamine from the 1600s and 1700s from German Rhineland. It held wine or beer with the image of the brutal Dutch Cardinal Bellarmine on it, a much hated churchman, so much so once the bottle was empty it would often be smashed.

The Dutch sailors were given rations of an alcoholic beverage which was made from fermented soybeans, this drink being issued as part of the mariner's rations. It was particularly popular in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Dutch company had a good deal of their pottery with the initials VOC made by a number of the Japanese pottery works in the potter's district of Arita. From 1650 to 1690 the

Arita potters supplied huge quantities of export quality earthenware and porcelain which was collected by the Dutch trading ships from Imari, a port near the Arita pottery kilns.



The porcelain that the Dutch East Indian Company shipped to Europe in their sailing ships during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was well sort after by European households. The porcelain catered to Western tastes by adapting some of the shapes of their designs which would then be decorated by the Japanese ceramic artists.

To ensure that they would find a ready market the Dutch Company often had made wooden or earthenware models of designs they believed would be appealing to Europeans and sent those to Japan to be copied. The potters from Arita also copied the popular Chinese blue and white underglaze porcelain.



The symbol of the Dutch East India Company was a crude rampant lion which was stamped onto all sorts of equipment made of metal, such as their flintlock pistols, large brass canons and military swords.

Amsterdam in the late 1500's was a teeming shipping port of great wealth and sustenance. It was certainly not uncommon to see several heavily laden cargo sailing vessels move through the Zuider Zee and into the port of Amsterdam. This area had relied on its seaborne trade for generations past and the canals were lined with brick warehouses full of trade items. The harbour was always full - all one could see was a sea of ropes, rigging and furled sails.

In 1599 the first Dutch ships returned with bags of spices from the East Indies, the fabled spice islands on the other side of the world. The lightermen on the docks began work almost immediately to unload these spices from the

depths of the ships. The expedition's financial backers were well pleased, with some four hundred percent profit sometimes. Ventures were often financed by collective financial efforts by a number of Dutch warehouse owners in the northern provinces of the Union of Utrecht.

Right - A typical Dutch sailing ship built by Dutch shipwrights in their massive shipyards, many powered by windmills.



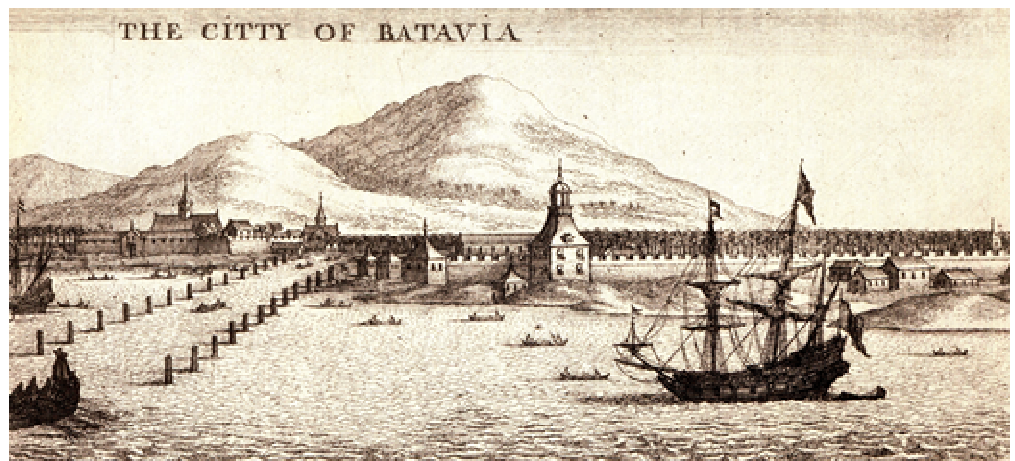
There had been some upheaval between France, England, Portugal, Spain and some other countries before the province of Holland incorporated the sizeable towns of Amsterdam, Gouda, Rotterdam, Haarlem, Delft and Leiden and became the most populated and rich.

On 20th March, 1602, a large group of wealthy merchants of Amsterdam formed the Dutch United East India Company known as the VOC aiming to eliminate wasteful competition between the Dutch and monopolise the Oriental and spice trade. Thus, with the blessing of the nation's political masters they waged war on the overseas competition, literally. They could recruit civil, military and naval personnel, fight wars, to build forts and trading ports. Often, they made their own 'laws' up as they went so they were often the judge, jury and executioner.

The Dutch shipwrights managed to design and build the finest cargo ships of the time. The Dutch ships had better rigging and needed fewer foreign merchants to use them. They even purchased Dutch vessels rather than their own countries. Over the time the VOC would build almost 1,500 ships and provide work for some 800,000 people, mainly men and some women.

Right - One famous port was at Batavia in Java, the Dutch East India Company HQ from the early 1600s.

The Dutch United East India Company even bought and sold slaves in defiance of Spain's monopoly on this abhorrent trade. If they did not have the manpower the company paid privateers to raid and destroy other trading settlements and confiscate ship's cargoes.



To keep up the constant demand for money which was used in the trading and purchasing of goods, the VOC Executive Committee met several times a year, sometimes for as long as three weeks to consider the amounts of money that had been requested from the Governor General in Batavia. Planning was essential as it could take up to

three years to get a decision, then have coins minted and silver bars produced by the various states in Holland or collected from the Spanish mints in Mexico and Peru and delivered to Batavia by ship, if the sailing ship was not wrecked.



Left – a typical silver ‘VOC’ bar from the wreck of the *Brendenhof*, a Dutch East Indiaman transport ship that was becalmed and carried onto a reef by currents some 120 miles south of Mozambique and 13 miles off the East Coast of Africa on 6th June, 1753. It was enroute from Zeeland to Batavia. On board were barrels of Dutch East Indies copper Duits of Zeeland along with 29 chests of silver and one of gold. This rare silver bar is countermarked with the VOC monogram “Z” above (Zeeland) and “M” below (Middleburg -

partly obscured assay mark of Fluer de Lis and the initials ‘F.E.’ (Francois Englesen Jr.)



Left - The VOC cypher surrounded by a wreath, along with another VOC cypher on the ceramic base of this serving pot with its lid.

Right – The container’s base with the VOC cypher underneath in the glazed blue and white design.

Each expedition that left the Netherlands had a ‘Commandeur’ in charge and there was generally at least one VOC officer to keep an eye on things for the company, especially the large amounts of silver and gold coinage that was used to purchase goods onboard.



At one stage the Dutch had thirteen times as many ships as the English. They traded in anything profitable from German wines, Peruvian silver, Chinese porcelain, Baltic timber, West Indian sugar, North American tobacco, Flemish tapestries, Swedish copper, East Indies spices to West African slaves.

Left - Another better quality and larger Dutch East India Company’s glazed ceramic serving pot and lid.

The trading colossus became too big to handle from such a distance and became weighed down with corruption, problems with smuggling and uncontrollable administrative costs and by the late 18th century saw the business going bankrupt. It was officially dissolved in 1799. Their possessions and mounting debts were absorbed by the Dutch Batavian Republic Government.

DID YOU KNOW?

+ Matters at the Sunny Corner mine have been going along satisfactorily as reported in the Bathurst Free Press

newspaper on 27 May, 1885, with work on the four Pacific smelters being pushed on with all vigour. A number of new arrivals from the United States of America have appeared on the scene, presumably to work these smelters when completed. Locals were looking forward confidently to an impetus to the place in the spring.

+ On 10th June, 1898, the well-known local trotting horse, Tempest II., belonging to Dr. Machattie, died in the morning. At this time there were quite a large number of 'professional' horse breeders around Bathurst and district.

+ On Wednesday night the 29th of September, 1852, the barn of Mr. William Lee Junr., near Bathurst towards O'Connell was observed to be in flames about midnight and being built of timber slabs and shingled. It contained a quantity of straw which was burnt to the ground before assistance could be procured to quell the flames. The building, which was a substantial one, was situated about 70 yards from Mr. Lee's dwelling house and no one connected with the establishment had occasion to visit it for many hours previous to the fire. A large and heavy log which was placed in a slanting position against the door, in the absence of other fastening, was found on the following morning rolled some distance away. With these circumstances considered, the conclusion arrived at is, that the fire was the work of an incendiary. Fortunately, the barn contained nothing of particular value. We perceive that Mr. Lee offered a reward of £20 for the apprehension of the miscreant.

+ Authorities in Sunny Corner in May 1885 reported that they were pleased to say that the health of the town was first class. No cases of sickness whatever were reported, and the medicos of the place complain of the little doing in their particular line of business. "This state of affairs seems strange in the face of the reports which were in circulation a short time ago, alleging that the fumes from the smelters were poisonous and very injurious to the workmen. Some are now inclined to think that the immunity from sickness is due to their presence. In conversation with a gentleman of large experience in silver mining, he informed me that lead fumes prevented epidemics; that where there were lead fumes pulmonary diseases may be contracted, but that they prevented the breaking out of, and in fact killed, epidemics."

+ Copper is what gives malachite its beautiful green colour. It is derived from nations with a history in copper mines, such as places like Russia, Mexico, the Congo, United States, Zambia and of course Australia. The ancient Egyptians used and wore malachite for jewellery as well as carving ornaments from it. It was ground up to produce makeup. Their slaves mined the green banded mineral in a region somewhere between Mt. Sinai and the Isthmus of Suez as early as 4000 BC. Egyptian hieroglyphs have been discovered by archaeologists which describe malachite as being an integral part of a number of their deities' life. In Britain some 3,800 years ago examples of malachite were mined with the Ancient Britains using bone and stone tools at the very old underground Great Orme Bronze Age Mines from 1700–900 BC.

+ In October 1853 there was a serious accident. A respectable young man named Wetherell met with an accident at the Shearer's Arms in the Village of Peel, which besides causing extreme pain, appeared likely to lead to serious consequences. The sufferer had latterly been gold digging upon the Winburndale Creek, and having occasion to visit the village, called at Mr. Howard's Hotel, when it was observed that he carried a brace of pistols stuck rather romantically, but very foolishly, through his belt. Shortly after his arrival an explosion was heard outside which, as subsequently appeared, had been caused by one of his pistols going off accidentally, the ball passing downwards through the ankle and shattering the heel bone. Mr. Wetherell was removed to Bathurst where he was progressing favourably under the care of Dr. McHattie.

+ In late September 1852 Mr. Frederick Morgan, publican of Bathurst, was charged for buying the gold stolen from the Bathurst Mail Coach, knowing the same to be stolen. He was fully committed to take his trial at the next Supreme Court in Bathurst. Application for bail was made by his Attorneys, Messrs. Macintosh and Serjeant, but refused. Chief Constable Sherman deposed that from the information received he visited the residence of William White, now committed for being concerned in the mail robbery and found in his possession £154, of which £84 was in a book of Bathurst notes of the Union Bank of Australia. Later George Ferguson, accountant of the Bathurst branch of the Union Bank of Australia, deposed that new notes dated the 1st May, 1852, and numbered consecutively from 258,801 to 559,600 were given to Morgan in a cashed cheque. Mr. Thompson, postmaster of Bathurst, proved the receipt of the mail bags and supposed that the contents were principally gold. The weight was from 20 to 25lbs., and Dr. Gray repeated the evidence given on a former occasion respecting the gold operated upon by himself for Mr. Layard. He also identified several portions of the gold.

+ Most mineral medications incorporate compounds which encompass some of the powerful metal elements. Some of the chief ingredients can include mercury, lead, arsenic, iron, silicate, magnesium, sulphate, calcium, aluminium, copper as well as other essential ingredients. Some of the essential minerals required for nutrition may include – chromium, sodium, iodine, zinc, potassium, sulphur, manganese and phosphorus.

© Alan McRae – FAIHA

– Newsletter Editor 1983 – 2024