Much discussion about the desirability or otherwise of reducing the company tax rate in Australia tends to go to such things as comparative corporate tax rates of other OECD countries (which tends to highlight the difficulty in actually comparing such rates due to differing tax frameworks in each country) and the effect of Australia’s unique dividend imputation system. At the heart of this debate is the contentious question of whether a change in Australia’s company tax rate makes any difference anyway. This article seeks to answer that central question.

Recent History
The current campaign for a lower company tax rate was born out of the work done by Federal Treasury in the lead up to the then Labor Government’s 2020 Summit in 2010 and the Henry Review report championed by the then Federal Treasury Secretary, Ken Henry. Australia was then portrayed as a capital hungry-country which needed to attract foreign investment by having relatively attractive corporate tax rates and further postulated that lowering company tax rates would boost productivity and thus wages.

The Henry Review recommendations were largely taken up at the time and the contention and protest whipped up by the various forms of mining tax proposed to fund the corporate tax cut led to the issue being withdrawn from public gaze for several years.

The issue was then reactivated around 2016 by the Coalition Government in the lead up to the 2016 Federal Budget and has remained in the public eye since then as the government seeks to prosecute its case via a long-term tax “reform” plan.

The Economists’ Views
The Business Tax Working Group (“BTWG”) of Federal Treasury produced a report in November 2012 which put the case for a cut in the company tax rate. Amongst other things, the group argued that a lower corporate tax rate “would” attract foreign investment. It is relevant to note that the dividend imputation system, which credits personal tax by the corporate tax rate, means that a cut in the corporate tax rate has little or no effect on domestic shareholders where franked dividends are paid, and that therefore the key impact is on foreign investors and profits retained and not paid out to shareholders.

The BTWG also argued that a reduction in the company tax rate would improve productivity by reducing the hurdle rate of return, thus allowing more projects to go ahead and thus causing more investment to occur. This clearly assumes that there is a store of otherwise viable investment projects ready to go subject only to a reduction in the hurdle rate. The BTWG acknowledged that in the short term the benefits of a lower company tax rate would accrue predominantly to owners of capital, but argued that increased levels of investments would translate to higher productivity and therefore wages in the long term.

The BTWG also sought to test this international finding under Australian conditions. Factors such as competition present, the international mobility of capital investments and possible distortions arising from government regulation, might prevent a direct comparison between Australian and international data. However, the BTWG went on to say that it was relevant to note that the dividend imputation system, which credits personal tax by the corporate tax rate, means that a cut in the corporate tax rate has little or no effect on domestic shareholders where franked dividends are paid, and that therefore the key impact is on foreign investors and profits retained and not paid out to shareholders.

The BTWG acknowledged that in the short term the benefits of a lower company tax rate would accrue predominantly to owners of capital, but argued that increased levels of investments would translate to higher productivity and therefore wages in the long term.

Conclusions
While there are reasonably clear examples internationally of cuts in company tax rates leading to increases in economic activity and positive welfare effects, it is less clear that positive results will ensue in the Australian context due to the existence of distortions in the Australian economy brought about by relatively high economic rents and limited capital mobility.

Three lessons perhaps may be drawn from this:
1. The Australian economy continues to require reform and government needs to lead in this area in seeking to overcome the reform fatigue that appears to have settled in the community so far this century after the significant period of reform over the last two decades of the last century;
2. The results of measures employed internationally, particularly in the area of taxation, may not necessarily be neatly replicated in the Australian economic context; and
3. Any taxation measures taken should be framed within a comprehensive framework of reform which looks to create a co-ordinated series of changes so as to minimise the incidence of unintended consequences including welfare losses.

The group found that international literature, such as Sorenson and Johnson in 2010, found that company taxes reduce real wages, including by increasing production costs and the price of final goods, so that a substantial share of the welfare costs of company taxes are borne by labour. The group’s paper sought to test this international finding under Australian conditions. Factors bearing on the results include assumptions about the degree of market competition, the international mobility of capital investments and possible distortions arising from government regulation, the use of international and domestic products, the size of the domestic economy and the ease of substitution of labour and capital. Therefore, in designing the modelling of a reduction in company tax, it was considered that a pure open and competitive economy was not representative of the current Australian economy due to the existence of economic rents in banking and finance and mining amongst other sectors, i.e. these sectors earn higher rates of return than “normal”. Further, it was considered that there was imperfect capital mobility.

Amongst other things, the group argued that a lower corporate tax rate “could” attract foreign investment. It is relevant to note that the dividend imputation system, which credits personal tax by the corporate tax rate, means that a cut in the corporate tax rate has little or no effect on domestic shareholders where franked dividends are paid, and that therefore the key impact is on foreign investors and profits retained and not paid out to shareholders.


Dymond, Foulds & Vaughan provides a full range of taxation services, including income tax planning, tax minimisation strategies, audit and advisory services.

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I am delighted to provide you with another issue of The News, particularly as once again it includes several superbly crafted feature articles written by our members. It is particularly heartening to see contributions from some new contributors such as Jonathon Bryant and interesting to read of a new book by Zeny Edwards. I do encourage all of you to contribute, please don’t hesitate to contact me to discuss your possibility of doing so.

We are extremely saddened to note the passing of our Vice President David Rozenker-Apted. He was a founder and an active contributor to this Society for more than twenty years. His partner and our esteemed President Roy Lumby has very kindly allowed us to publish a touching tribute he gave at his funeral at page 3 and we are very grateful for that. We offer Roy our sincere condolences.

One of our busy members, Jonathon Bryant, has been involved in a number of major conservation projects and he has produced a fascinating article explaining how the Sydney Water head office was painstakingly transformed into a hotel whilst conserving most if not all of its unique architectural attributes. As Jonathon mentions towards the end of his article which begins at page 6, the Ratings Chamber within the building is “a frozen moment in time from 1939, when classically influenced Art Deco style architecture was about to transition into pure, restrained post-war Functionalism.”

Our incredibly prolific contributor Larisa Sarkadi has given us reason to simply by giving us a few snapshots at page 11 from her recent visit December, to look again at the city state of Singapore and its very rich architectural heritage and seeing a splendid Christmas tree, lit by real candles. Although John Sulman which explores the man as well as his work. Roy Lumby provides a thoughtful feature article on something that surrounds the city worker and yet is often not thought about – sculpture. As Roy puts it, it has a “fragile presence”. This intriguing piece begins at page 14.

Larisa Sarkadi rounds out a bumper edition with a feature article on textile printing between 1940 and 1950, a period of rapid change in the industry which Larisa quite effectively brings to life.

Just a reminder that the Society has embraced technology in organis ing its events and these are now listed and administered through Eventbrite, a superb web based facility specifically geared to the running of group events like ours. The website address is www.twentieth.eventbrite.com.au and from this web site you can keep track of all Society events and keep right up to the minute as to the latest developments affecting you as a Society member. You can also book online and pay online for any Society event, thus securing your place for even the most popular of activities. Keep an eye out too for eNews, a snappy one or two page publication which sets out upcoming events over the next few months.

We have been able to provide you with an outstanding, bumper 28 page newsletter due to the devoted contributions of a few of our members. We encourage contributions of any sort from all of you and are very grateful for that. We offer Roy our sincere condolences.

The next edition is sure to be something special, so why not be part of it?

John Dymond

FROM THE EDITOR

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David Rozenker-Apted

A LIFE 1944 - 2018

by Roy Lumby

David’s start in life was dramatic and tragic. He was born May 1944 in Paris to a well-off and titled Jewish family with a Polish-Prussian background who were active in the Resistance. As he told it, as a very young infant his grandmother was taking him out and saw Nazis arriving at the family home. She placed him in the care of Catholic nuns, who cared for him and other orphans for the duration of the war. He was sent to England in 1947 where he was adopted by Violet and Fred Apted. His mother was devoutly Catholic and of Anglo-French background, his father one of eleven children of a prosperous Welsh builder. They had adopted another child, Ian, in 1939. David’s first memory was of being carried downstairs by his father and seeing a splendid Christmas tree, lit by real candles. Although his relationship with his parents was loving and happy, David and his brother did not get on particularly well until quite late in Ian’s life.

The family moved to Kenya to take up farming – but were forced to flee back to England after the Mau Mau uprising. They eventually settled in Ferring, a village near Worthing in West Sussex. David’s parents determined his religious education should be ecumenical. So on successive Sundays, he would alternate between the local Anglican and Anglican Churches; then on the following Saturday, attend the synagogue in Brighton. He grew up surrounded by animals – dogs, cats, and his much beloved horses. David became an accomplished rider, and spent many hours working and taking part in the activities of a riding school close to his home.

He was privileged to encounter the rich and famous, as Ferring became an exclusive weekend and holiday retreat, and he rode with
individuals who were to become prominent, such as Zoe Wanamaker and Princess Anne. David and his mother travelled widely in Europe, and as he matured he continued this tradition, developing along the way a circle of friends in other countries.

David’s father spent a fair amount of time looking into his family background, tracing it back to the Levant during the first millennium. As a result of these efforts it was found that David could take the family title, thus in due course and after some to-ing and fro-ing he became the Marquis de Rozenker. He was always shy about admitting to the title (except when it came to his membership of the Australian Opera).

After finishing school David embarked on an architecture degree, but after the premature death of his father in 1961 determined instead to work in his company.

David arrived in Australia in December 1969. His first residence was a boarding house at Parramatta, but he subsequently moved to Violet Street in Chatswood. In these early days his stylish English clothes astonished the natives and he was christened “grasshopper” because of a green suit that he wore. David found work with the textile manufacturer Bradmill, learning the technology of fabric production at its mill in Rutherford in the Hunter Valley. Perhaps the fact that his mother ran a textile business in England gave David a secure foundation to build upon. He became a respected national sales representative and was responsible for the design of products in his studio at Rutherford.

David’s time at Bradmill was the happiest of his working life. It was brought to an end around 1984 when Bradmill was acquired by an overseas company; its assets stripped and staff made redundant. He then moved through a succession of textile houses including Wilsons Fabrics – which met the same fate, Clifton Joseph, Materialised and Meriton.

David discovered great joy and fulfillment in the world of music. He had a rich and beautiful baritone voice, which he enhanced by undertaking serious vocal training. He became a key singer in the choir of St Barnabas Church at Roseville and for a time seriously considered taking up an operatic career. He had a great love and extensive knowledge of opera. Dame Joan Sutherland remained his all-time favourite but he loved the voices of many singers. They thrilled and delighted him, though he was a perceptive and critical listener. He was also very fond of piano music.

David loved the company of his friends and enjoyed throwing parties and gatherings for them. He was an attentive host, so much so that he would put down a glass holding his beloved brandy and dry to look after their needs, and when asking where his brandy was would be greeted with half a dozen barely touched glasses. He was also very partial to champagne, especially Bollinger. More formal dinners were attended by a richly dressed table and a full kit of stemware, dishes and cutlery. He was a good cook despite, or because of, not following recipes.

David had a love of gardening, which was accompanied by his enthusiasm for native plants and birds. Lorikeets, black and white cockatoos, galahs and magpies were particular favourites. So too were ringtail and brushtail possums. In fact, he loved all animals and supported charities for their protection.

After increasing disillusionment David left the textile industry around 2004 and joined a small architectural heritage practice where he assumed the role of office manager. Despite his best and sometimes desperate endeavours, the company was wound up in the middle of 2010 and he then had to face involuntary retirement. Two things made this easier. The first was the Twentieth Century Heritage Society, of which he was a founder and vice president. His social skills came to the fore as he quickly remembered names and faces and to the astonishment of many could personally greet people when they came to one of our numerous events. He was invaluable in his administrative functions, and in his assistance when putting walking tours together and organising other functions.

The second was Hericon, the consultancy he and I founded. Once again his management skills came to the fore.

It all started to unravel towards the end of 2015, when increasing pain and a serious emergency at home in April 2016 resulted in the discovery of cancer. He put up a courageous fight, never complaining against the constant presence of pain and always maintaining a brave and positive outlook.

He is profoundly missed.
A New Life for the

Sydney Water

Head Office

by Jonathan Bryant

The News – Winter 2018 Twentieth Century Heritage Society of NSW & ACT

The lobby of the Primus Hotel, located in the conserved former Sydney Water Ratings Chamber. (Source: Simon Tuddenham Photography)

The lobby of the Primus Hotel. The soaring ground floor Rating Chamber with its massive red scagliola columns, where the public once came to pay their rates, now welcomes Primus guests and diners. One of Sydney’s great interior spaces, long hidden, has been returned to the public.

Sydney Water

Located at 339 Pitt Street in central Sydney, the building was constructed in 1939 to house the head office of the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board (later known as Sydney Water). The building is now listed on the New South Wales State Heritage Register, partly for its association with the architectural practice of Budden & Mackey, its designers. In their nine years of partnership (1930-39), Budden & Mackey produced three fine office buildings for government instrumentalities: Railway House (1936), Transport House (1938) and what is now the Primus Hotel. The quality of the building’s design, construction and detailing testify to their abilities.

The primary significance of the building arises out of the site’s 116-year association with Sydney Water (and its predecessors). It is considered a fine example of a late 1930s Art Deco/Functionalist Style government building and was among the last (if not the last) major government office building to be completed before the outbreak of World War II. The building demonstrates the progression of the Art Deco Style in the late 1930s, from the decorative geometric influences of the pre-Depression era towards the less ornamental Functionalist Style. The building’s design, construction and detailing testify to their abilities.

The architects did not rely solely on stone and terracotta for effect. The three bronze panels above the main Pitt Street entrance were designed by Stanley J Hammond (1913-2000), the director of the New South Wales Art Gallery (W Ashton) for the competition were the Board’s president (T H Upton), the architect (N C Mackey). Hammond’s panels, cast in the late 1930s, under its then president, T H Upton.

Hammond’s design the judges commented that the subject was…not only appropriate in its symbolism but also in harmony with the strong horizontal and vertical lines of the architecture of the building, part of which the panels are to become. Of Hammond’s design the judges commented that the subject was appropriate and would be readily understood by the passer by:

The panel on the left is symbolic of the primitive methods employed by the colonial pioneers to provide against droughts and floods; the panel on the opposite side depicts man’s present day control over water supply. The central panel symbolises the activities of the Water Board, the major figure holding cornucopias from which ‘unlimited but controlled water runs to supply the needs of humanity and to aid industrial development. These panels were fully conserved as part of the hotel conversion.

The building was constructed by Howie Moffat & Co., and many of the leading building manufacturers and craftsmen of the interwar period are also associated with it. The marble, travertine, terrazzo and scagliola finishes in the building are good examples of the commercial work of the highly regarded master craftsmen, Melocco Bros. of Annandale. The building contains representative materials produced by other major manufacturers or building companies, including Wunderlich Ltd, B G Plummer and Co and R Fowler Ltd. The significant and conspicuous use of high quality materials and finishes throughout the building exemplifies not only the architects’ and craftsmen’s skills, but also the lavish works budget, among the largest for a public building of its day.

The direct association of Sydney Water, the successor of the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board, with the site continued until its sale of the site in 2008, and the removal of Sydney Water to a new Head Office in Parramatta. In 2013 plans commenced to conserve and adapt the building into a hotel, designed by Woods Bagot, architects, with heritage consultancy services provided by GBA Heritage.

The Function of the Former Ratings Chamber

The former Ratings Chamber is significant as one of several monumental public chambers constructed in Sydney during the interwar period. It is the largest chamber to be constructed in the Art Deco Functionalist Style and, upon completion, attracted the most fulsome praise of any space within the newly completed building. Upon completion an article in Building magazine noted:

The Rates Chamber is undoubtedly one of the most striking interiors in Sydney, both in size and general appeal…on entering the great Rates Hall our attention is immediately and unconsciously drawn towards a series of massive freestanding columns, finished to a bright rich tone, which stands out all the more as a reminder of the interior, finished in neutral tones.

…the generous proportions (approximately 140ft x 120ft) and the elegant finish of which is the outstanding architectural feature of the building. Winged on the four sides by the curtain walls of...
The mezzanine floor of the chamber rises thirty-one feet to the great centre light panel beneath the central light area which measures approximately 52 feet by 42 feet.

Supporting the central ceiling and dominating the whole effect, are eight red columns of noble proportions, finished in deep red scagliola.

The walls and the fluted pillars supporting the mezzanine floor are finished in scagliola, while the counter facings and floor are of Travertine marble...

One of the most important requirements for the building, when constructed, was that it be able to grow as the organisation expanded. Firstly, provision was made in the design of the foundations and structural steel columns to allow for the addition of a further three floors at a later date (which never happened). Secondly, the main public area of the building, being the Ratings Chamber and mezzanine, was designed to be ‘oversized’ to meet the projected increase in rate collection over the following twenty years as population increased and the Board’s services expanded.

The Ratings Chamber, occupying the greater portion of the ground floor, was the main area of the building originally visited by the public. This area housed the Board’s Assessor and Receiver Branch, responsible for the assessment and collection of rates and charges. During the 1950s, upwards of 280 staff members were employed by this branch. The Cashiers’ Section was located in the centre of the Ratings Chamber, behind a fully enclosed counter. The northern and southern sides were occupied by the Rates Section, and there were several private cubicles in which customers’ affairs difficulties could be discreetly discussed.

In addition to its grandeur, the Ratings Chamber improved working conditions for staff. The floor’s double glazed windows and acoustic ceiling tiles reduced outside noise such as the ‘nerve-wracking grind of passing tramcars’, and reduced reverberation within the chamber.

During the 1960s, however, the Ratings Chamber was seriously compromised in the name of modernisation. The great space was divided by a concrete floor slab, destroying its original spatial character and grandeur. By 1969 all the Art Deco style plasterwork had been stripped out, the scagliola columns had been partially butchered, the enormous skylight encased between concrete slabs, the main entrance foyer locked off and the travertine floors and marble clad walls saw cut to install cables and partitions. Little evidence remained of the once glorious space, which has been largely hidden from public view since.

Conservation and Adaptation

In 2013 GBA Heritage commenced the conservation of the building and, in particular, the former Ratings Chamber, which involved the work of some of Sydney’s best heritage craftsmen. All the original finishes were conserved including the deteriorated glazed architectural terracotta façade system, the impressive seven-metre tall bronze and timber flagpoles, the historic eight-metre tall scagliola columns, the bronze windows, the rare marbles and...
The Pitt Street entrance to the Primus Hotel with its retained Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board signage and conserved bas relief bronze panels above the main entrance designed by Stanley J Hammond. (Source: Simon Woods Photography)

Jonathan Bryant is a Director, Heritage at Urbis. At the time of writing he was an Associate Director at GBA Heritage. He has two undergraduate degrees in architecture and a Masters Degree in Heritage Conservation from the University of Sydney. He is a member and former committee member of the Twentieth Century Heritage Society of NSW.

Jonathan has undertaken extensive study on Australian architecture with a particular focus on the interwar period. He has over 20 years of professional practice in the design and construction industry in Australia and is passionate about the conservation of significant Twentieth century places.

Jonathan was instrumental in the conservation of the upper levels of the iconic interwar Gowings and State Theatre Buildings which have been adapted into the QT Hotel, Sydney. This hotel project demonstrates the successful meeting of contemporary heritage practice, architecture and interior design and was the 2013 recipient of the Australian Institute of Architects’ Francis Greenway Award for Heritage Architecture Creative Adaptation.

Jonathan is currently working on the conservation and adaptation to hotel use of the historic Lands and Education Department Buildings.

One of the most challenging aspects of the project has been the repair of the deteriorated glazed architectural terracotta façade system.

Working closely with project architect Woods Bagot, GBA Heritage focused on developing an adaptive reuse scheme that would produce a five-star hotel sympathetic to the significance and appearance of the historic building.

One of the most challenging aspects of the project has been the repair of the deteriorated glazed architectural terracotta façade system. This was undertaken by the Traditional Restoration Company, utilising a combination of replacement blocks, sourced from the United States, and Keim Mineral Paints for minor deterioration. The exterior and interior of the building have now been fully conserved. The completed hotel features 172 guest rooms, a lobby restaurant and bar, a ballroom and function rooms and a rooftop pool and bar.

Hidden for almost 50 years, the conserved Ratings Chamber, one of Sydney’s great interwar spaces, is now the publicly accessible lobby. It is a frozen moment in time from 1939, when classically influenced Art Deco style architecture was about to transition into pure, restrained post-war Functionalism.

The completed project was awarded a 2016 Australian Institute of Architects Commendation for Heritage Architecture Creative Adaptation.

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References: Chisolm Kim Snyder, Australian Sculptors, Victoria, Thomas Nelson Australia Pty Ltd. 1985, p. 238; Ibid, pp. 237-8; Building, January 1940
A Life of Purpose
by Zeny Edwards

Australia is indebted to the distinguished architects who migrated here during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Individuals such as Walter Liberty Vernon and Leslie Wilkinson transformed the architecture of the public sector and architectural education in NSW, while Edward Jefferson Jackson and Howard Joseland enriched and advanced the realm of domestic architecture. And then there was the prodigious John Sulman, the subject of Zeny Edwards’ biography, A Life of Purpose.

This ambitious and energetic man was born in Greenwich in Kent. During the 1870s and 1880s he built up a practice that showed exceptional promise. It was responsible for over 70 buildings including numerous Congregational churches. However, Sulman sold the practice and migrated to Australia in 1885 because of his and his wife’s ill health. The following year Sulman entered into partnership with established architect CHE Blackmann, but after Blackmann left Sydney in the company of a barmaid several months later, Sulman inherited debts and the office projects. Between 1889 and 1908 Sulman was in partnership with Joseph Porter Power. In this period his more significant commissions included the Armidale School (1889), Women’s College at University of Sydney (1890-94), Presbyterian churches at Woollahra (1889), Manly (1889-92) and Randwick (1890), and the outstanding Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital at Concord. He was a major contributor to the debate concerning a distinctive Australian “style” of architecture during the second half of the 1890s.

Despite a busy and productive practice, Sulman also found time to found the Palladian Club in 1887, became an honorary corresponding secretary of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and between 1887 and 1912 lectured part-time in architecture in the University of Sydney’s Faculty of Engineering. Perhaps the most important activity he undertook in this period was the preparation of a paper on “the laying out of towns”, which was presented to the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science in 1890. It has been suggested that this “marked the beginning of town planning in Australia as a formal discipline” and the start of a career as an influential town planner - his impress can be seen in Sydney, Canberra (he was chairman of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee between 1921 and 1924) and numerous other places.

Sulman retired from his architectural practice in 1908, but continued to hold influential positions - director and chairman of the Daily Telegraph Newspaper Co. Ltd, president of the Town Planning Association of New South Wales and chairman of the Town Planning Advisory Board to the Department of Local Government (1918). He remained very active in town planning, to the extent that he was knighted in July 1924 for his services.

In 1930 he established the annual Sir John Sulman award for architectural merit, the most prestigious architectural award in NSW. He was also heavily involved with the Art Gallery of New South Wales, being a trustee from 1898 (president from 1919). He purchased items for it while overseas, organised representations in London, commissioned and donated one of the bas-relief bronze panels for its exterior. His family posthumously endowed the Sir John Sulman prize for genre painting or mural decoration.

A Life of Purpose adds to the wide range of publications and books that Zeny Edwards has written or edited on the architects and architecture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and follows from her doctoral thesis on Sulman. It is a handsome book, its text supported by a wealth of illustrations. As the author states, the book is a biography rather than an architectural monograph, though of course much consideration is given to Sulman’s architectural output. The book is divided into two sections that explore his life and career in England and then in Australia. But there was more to Sulman than just architecture, and his multi-faceted career is carefully examined. The author is clear-eyed about her subject, presenting the less agreeable side of Sulman’s character as well as his many strengths. This makes her portrait of Sulman quite a bit more rounded and human.

John Sulman is described in the Australian Dictionary of Biography as “a prodigy of his generation... one of Australia’s great social reformers, and across a range of prestigious and influential positions in public life, he outshone the lives and careers of many other English architects who journeyed to Australia in the nineteenth century... [he] deserves a special place in Australian history for the outstanding and influential role he played in the development of the country’s cultural identity.” If A Life of Purpose is not the last word on Sulman, it certainly takes our understanding and appreciation of him a great deal further, in a very readable and accessible way.

Roy Lumby
envis folk art, providing a strong contrast to the traditional Council designs of the time.

Tragically, in February 1952, while the garden was under construction, King George VI died. Following this, Sydney’s Lord Mayor, Ernest O’Dea, suggested the garden could become a memorial to the late King. It was completed the following November and named the Sandringham Garden in honour of the late King and his association with Sandringham House in Norfolk, now home to Queen Elizabeth II. During April 1953 the State Government offered Dadsowell and Epstein some sort of consolation when they were commissioned to design a memorial to George V and George VI. It took the form of a set of wrought metal gates between stone walls and remodelling the central pool in the garden. The pool was radically recast in brightly coloured mosaic tiles featuring outliers of animals, reminiscent of Aboriginal art and echoing their earlier monolith. The gates were officially opened by the Queen on 5 February 1954.

One of the most important promoters of sculpture in public places during the 1950s was the Society of Sculptors and Associates which was founded in 1951 (and is still active). The Society endeavoured to advance the appreciation of sculpture and encourage its use. Foundation members included influential and progressive architects – Professor Denis Winston (the Society’s first president), John D Moore, Sydney Archer and Arthur Baldwinson.

The Society was initiated by prominent sculptors such as Lyndon Dadsowell, Paul Beadle and Gerald Lewers. Both Dadsowell and Lewers were the fortunate recipients of commissions from the Commonwealth Bank for works to prominently adorn the exterior of its new building in Market Street, completed in 1956, and which are described later in this article. Over the years the Society staged a number of outdoor and indoor exhibitions. One, entitled “Sculpture in Architecture”, was mounted at David Jones’ Gallery in 1957. The Society held workshops and directly approached business interests to promote its cause. Indeed, the private sector played a significant role in embellishing Central Sydney by adorning buildings with artworks that enhanced the civic realm, at the same time proclaiming the taste, cultivation and prestige of the corporations that commissioned them.

Along with the Society of Sculptors and Associates, a number of architects, during the 1950s and 1960s, actively encouraged their clients to commission sculpture and artworks as part of a project. Doubtless they were assisted by positive public perceptions relating to corporate status and enlightened patronage. Quite a significant number of commissions were awarded to Tom Bass (1916-2010). A pupil of Lyndon Dadsowell and a founder member of the Society of Sculptors, Bass firmly believed that sculpture should be accessible to the general public. “[F]inally for me, sculpture is an emblematic totem art - a civic and social art. I want it off the mantelpiece and out of the gallery - under the blue sky where it can speak to people again” - and he enjoyed a good working relationship with architects. A major retrospective of Bass’s work was held at the Opera House in 2006. According to art critic John McDonald, “No artist has done more to shape the face of public art in Australia than Tom Bass.”

Bass certainly installed his fair share of public art in Sydney as well as other major Australian cities. His work embellished the Universities of Sydney and New South Wales, and found its way onto buildings that were completed during the 1950s and 1960s housing major companies: the bold logo for the AMP Society at Circular Quay (1962); the “corporate tree” for AGC House in Sydney (1960); the bold logo for the AMP Society at Circular Quay (1962); the “corporate tree” for AGC House in Sydney (1960); and Tom Bass’ interpretation of the AMP Society’s logo, still in place at Circular Quay (author’s photograph).

The Queen at the opening of the Memorial Gates in Sandringham Gardens, Hyde Park (Australian Women’s Weekly, 28 February 1956).

The wall fountain for the P & O Building in Hunter Street (1963). In most cases Bass delivered accessible and highly attractive symbolism to passers-by and enriched local townscapes, although his fountain at the base of the P & O Building provoked a cruel satirical response. Almost all of these buildings, once the last word in corporate Modernism, proved less than enduring, but the Bass sculptures formerly attached to the demolished AGC House and ICI House have survived. Although relocated into less than satisfactory places, at least they can still be viewed. Bass’s fountain on the podium of the R&B Building (which was heavily worked over in the recent past), which is now demolished as part of Sydney’s Metro project, may end up reinstated in the development over the Martin Place station. Only the AMP sculpture has escaped unsanctified in the place where it was intended to be.
Douglas Annand's work was not so fortunate – the rather extraordinary abstract glass mural in Anzac House (Bunning & Madden, 1956) on College Street, the elegant coats of arms for Royal Exchange Assurance on Kindersley House in O’Connell Street (McConnell Smith & Johnson, 1960), and the marvellous deep green and clear glass stalagmites and fountain associated with Knox House (1946) in Bent Street. All have been swept away and the buildings demolished – if they have survived, their whereabouts are not widely known.

An article by prominent artist, author, art critic and curator Elynn Lynn, published in Art and Australia some 45 years ago, compared three sculptural efforts in two cities - Ken Reinhard’s Marland House sculpture in Bourke Street, Melbourne, Robert Woodward’s Endeavour Fountain in Chifley Square and Stephen Walker’s Tidal Pools (1969-1971) in front of the Bank of NSW (Westpac) building in Martin Place. 8 All three made a stimulating aesthetic contribution to their immediate environs, and all three have since disappeared from these locations - one has disappeared altogether so that of the three, the two privately commissioned sculptures fared far better than the public artwork.

The Marland House sculpture was the subject of a competition, reputedly then Australia’s richest, that was staged in 1971. It attracted some 35 entries. Notwithstanding its innovative character and the critical acclaim the piece attracted, Reinhard’s cubic composition ended up at the McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park (reconfigured now for some years) for more than 40 years, while his Tidal Pools (1980s/early 1990s) and the refurbishment of Chifley Square.

The concept emerged during 1963. The fountain “promises to be even more spectacular than its kinsman at King’s Cross. Its hundreds of vertical bronze stems will create the illusion of a shimmering field of wheat surmounted by a sheet of water.” 9 Sadly, a lack of funds meant it was to remain a concept only. Instead, Robert Woodward’s upright Endeavour Fountain was completed in September 1970. Plagued by technical issues, the fountain was subsequently demolished during the redevelopment of the Commonwealth Centre site in the late 1980s/early 1990s and the refurbishment of Chifley Square.

Woodward was also responsible for the first version of the Sir Leslie Morshhead Memorial Fountain, which was initiated by the LT-General Sir Leslie Morshhead Memorial Fund. The Fund approached the Fountains Committee in 1960. The favoured site was at Shakespeare Place, near proposed gates to the Botanic Gardens. The design of the fountain was finalised during 1963 and it was completed in November 1966. The spare and elegant circle of vertical elements jetting water from their tops was replaced with the present, rather ponderous fountain structure designed by Phil Taranto, in 1988. Another of Woodward’s works, the Wall of Water cascade at Town Hall Square, has managed to endure (albeit obscured now for some years) for more than 40 years, while his spiralling water feature at Darling Harbour (1988) continues to delight. The other Sydney work mentioned by Elynn Lynn was the organic bronze fountain Tidal Pools (1970) by Stephen Walker.
Hardly any of the significant Australian sculptors whose work found its way into Sydney’s public realm during the second half of the twentieth century escaped unscathed. Margel Hinder’s imposing sculpture at the base of the Reserve Bank Building, which was the result of a 1961 competition, still continues to enhance its environs. On the other hand her spiralling organic sculpture known as Growth Forms that was commissioned for the 1960 Western Assurance Building in Pitt Street (1960) was destined to wander from place to place. This work has been described as the first free-standing sculpture to be incorporated into an Australian building. Maybe so, but when the building changed hands in 1980 it was removed from its original location at one end of the Pitt Street porch and cut into a number of pieces.

Following confrontations between the building’s owner, and Margel Hinder and architect Peter Johnson (of McCann Smith & Johnson, the building’s original architects), the sculpture was saved, re-assembled and relocated in 1983 to an undercroft of the splendid State Office Block in Macquarie Street. But not for long – the State Office Block was demolished some years later. The sculpture at least survived. The University of Technology, Sydney received it in 1998 – a gift from developer Land Lease – and it resides in its massive tower building on Broadway.

When Martin Place was progressively closed and pedestrianised during the 1970s, the section between Pitt and Castlereagh Streets was allocated as a site for sculpture. The Sir William Dobell Foundation funded a competition, which was won by the highly regarded sculptor Bert Flugelman. The Dobell Memorial, based on a vertical stack of repeating double pyramids, was presented to

Walker was less fortunate in one particular encounter with the Sydney City Council. In November 1965 he won a competition for a fountain commemorating Australian women’s sporting achievements, to be located in Moore Park. The competition was staged by the Sydney City Council with conditions laid down by the Fountains Committee. A panel of five judges, a group made up of prominent sculptors and architects, awarded the first place to Walker. Alas, its richly organic forms were scorned and reviled by several aldermen and his commission did not proceed. Instead, a far more conventional piece by Diana Hunt was selected. Nevertheless, Walker is represented in Sydney by some fine sculpture. One is the extension to the Commonwealth Bank’s “money box” building on 5 Martin Place. This work was originally installed on a late 1960s relief sculpture situated at the recently completed development at the Reserve Bank Building across the road. Sadly, as with a number of buildings constructed in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the Reserve Bank Building across the road. Sadly, as with a num-

18 19

Still, at least they survive and can be enjoyed, unlike some sculpture. For instance, the fate of Tony Copley’s Towards Unity (1970)

18 Peter Kravan, Flugelman, pp.52-57.
Despite all of the attrition outlined above, some works have endured and continue to add delight and beauty to the city. The Commonwealth Bank Building at 46-48 Market Street, completed in 1956, features three sculptures above street level – a sandstone relief by Gerald Lewers on the York Street facade and aluminium sculptures by Lyndon Dadsell on the Market and George Street facades. The works all demonstrate the tendency to abstraction that prevailed during the post-war era, even in many cases if it was simply a decorative stylisation of figurative forms. They also demonstrate the type of accessible symbolism that could be tailored to suit the character of a particular corporate identity.

Gerald Lewers’ John Christie Wright memorial fountain in Macquarie Place was sponsored by Mrs Jean Hague-Smith in 1960. The result was a free-form copper sculpture enclosing jets of water, which was installed and turned on over the weekend of 6-7 August 1960. The small fountain commemorates John Christie Wright, a Scottish born and educated sculptor who arrived in Australia in 1912, taught art at the Teacher’s College at Sydney University, then in 1916 was appointed Principal of the South Australian School of Arts and Crafts. He was killed in action in France in May 1917.

After a period of neglect, this delightful and rather diminutive piece underwent much needed conservation around 2012. Further afield, there are remnants of the pioneering garden designed by Lewers and his artist wife Margo at the base of the 1950s MLC Building at North Sydney. As originally designed,

The garden was centred on seven sandstone rocks. Some rocks were carved to such a degree at almost (although not quite) stand alone as sculpture; some rocks were simply lightly smoothed to emphasise their organic character. They were placed amid smaller, pebbly-like stones from the Nepean River, and planting of succulents. Margo selected the cacti and positioned them. It was a very restrained horticultural palette, but it was not without variety: there were spiky blades and feathery leaves; leaves that gleamed, and others that were subdued.

The garden was subsequently altered without the concurrence of either Gerald or Margo Lewers.

Of special note are works associated with architect Harry Seidler’s major Central Sydney projects. Major artists from overseas tended to be favoured, but Sydney is no worse off for that, and the artworks that have been gained are of great significance. They include major American sculptor Alexander Calder’s powerful Crossed Blades at the base of the Australia Square Tower in George Street, Charles Perry’s S Place and Joseph Albers’ last work, a relief entitled Wrestling, both located at the MLC Centre in Martin Place.

The work of Albers is particularly significant because of his influence on Seidler. After graduating from Harvard in May 1946 where he studied at the experimental and short-lived Black Mountain College in North Carolina. The College had been established in 1933 by controversial educator John A Rice and developed an innovative curriculum that encouraged experimentation across the fine arts; it became an American successor to the Bauhaus, at least in spirit. Artist Josef Albers, whom Walter Gropius had invited to teach at the Bauhaus in 1923, was hired to be the College’s first art teacher. Here Seidler’s academic and technical skills were enhanced by a powerful and enduring aesthetic influence. Albers was a critical influence on his “core approach” to design. According to Seidler:

... Fundamental principles, why your eye responds in predictable ways to visual stimuli, that is just absolute truth, there is no way you can argue against it. It had nothing to do with architecture, purely your eyes giving you reasons why that is better than this.

Apart from these important sculptures, Seidler commissioned major paintings by Frank Stella that were mounted in the ground floor vestibule of Grosvenor Place, and a ceramic tile mural by Lin Utzon in the vestibule of the former Capita Centre in Castlereagh Street. Long may they stay in their rightful place!

23 Dadsell and prominent Tasmanian sculptor Stephen Walker provided sculpture for the earlier and less adventurous Commonwealth Bank Hobart, completed in 1954.
24 PeterFlinson, Gerald Lewers Sculptor, p.55.
In Great Britain, France and the United States the wartime restrictions on raw materials saw priority supplies directed towards the war effort.

Silk and dye chemicals were the most affected, hence rayon and cotton were the fabrics mostly used for domestic consumption. Reflecting the prevailing consumer sentiments, dress fabric designs featured small prints in a muted, limited colour palette. Patterns during the war years needed to have a technologically simple transition to the cloth, with motifs often inspired by everyday life such as ration coupons and patriotic messages. Some textile manufacturers were even able to adjust the printing process to continue production without the use of metal in screens.

Rationing imposed on dress fabrics in Britain from 1941, and, as war progressed, in other countries, limited not only the quantity but also the type of fabric that could be redeemed with coupons. That meant most women followed the ‘mend and make do’ principle in updating their wardrobes. Often made from offcuts, the low-rationed square-shaped head scarves became popular as they were a quick way to enliven an outfit. Head scarves were often printed with patriotic motifs and at times featured useful messages such as calls to recycle materials into tanks, tyres and bullets.

In occupied France, the break with the Art Deco style in printed textiles was confirmed by the 1943 exhibition of silks produced in Lyons. The ‘Trade’ fabric design shown at the exhibition conveyed a ‘business as usual’ line as adopted by the Vichy government in occupied French territory. Opportunity to promote the local textile industry, however, was lost amid war hostilities.

Economic sanctions imposed on Italy in retaliation for that country’s expansionist policies during the preceding decade lead to textile manufacturers developing innovative production methods. The previously imported raw material used in the production of cellulose was replaced with locally grown plants. Among printed designs created by Italian textile artists was the 1943 design featuring randomly scattered letters of the Gothic alphabet. It provided a fresh substitute for the polka-dot pattern.

By 1940 Australian textile production was well established. In Sydney, one of the first screen-printing firms, Annan Fabrics, was established in 1941. Printing workshops were also operated by Gilkes & Co of Camperdown, Impression Textiles Ltd of Penrith and Silk & Textile Printers Pty Ltd of Darlinghurst to name a few. Prominent interior decorators and retailers such as Marion Best and Margo Lewers commissioned local artists and textile designers to produce fresh, contemporary patterns. Besides such well-known Australian artists as Thea Proctor, other textile designers included Elaine Haxton, Arnie Kingston, Douglas Annand and Dora Sweetapple. Their patterns for soft furnishing fabrics in bright hues were inspired by sea, local flora and fauna, as well as by Aboriginal imagery, and often featured broad stripes and oversized dots. These mostly screen-printed designs were produced in relatively small runs maintaining specific colour combinations within patterns. In 1942, to showcase the Australian textile industry, a Melbourne screen printing workshop operated by France Burke was commissioned to design furnishing fabrics for the first Australian Embassy in Washington, USA.

Fashion historians noted that during the day, to aid the war effort, women were involved in ‘mannish’ occupations but they still wished to look feminine after hours. In Australia, with imports not available and cloth rationing introduced in 1942, the early 1940s saw a dramatic change in the colour palette of fabrics. Gone were the bright hues, as fashion reviews of the war years suggested moderation and sensibility in one’s dress.

With the war over in the spring of 1946, a change in the ideal appearance for women came quite quickly with the shift away from militaristic style towards a softer, more feminine silhouette. Another dramatic change arrived in 1947, with the so-called New Look pioneered by the French designer Christian Dior. Placing emphasis on a cinched waist and often featuring a voluminous skirt, this trend imparted an ultra-feminine appearance on the wearer. Female consumers were being increasingly persuaded by the fashion industry (with an eye on yardage sales) to adopt the...
current style, thus putting pressure on both a department store customer and a home dressmaker alike. By the end of the 1940s, it must be noted, Australian women adopted a somewhat ‘softened’, more practical version of the New Look trend. And so it was that from 1940 to 1950 textile industry output swung from austerity imposed by commodity rationing to cater for a fashion dress style glorifying excess.

A dress historian and Senior Lecturer at the University of Queensland, Margaret Maynard quite rightly states that immediately after the war the Australian economy ‘was one of only a few standing economies in the industrial world’. While clothes rationing in Australia remained in force until June 1948, textile designers were already working on new patterns. If in the past Australian fabric manufacturers had copied imported patterns, they were now able to reproduce designs created by Australian artists.

A seminal publication by influential Sydney art publisher Ure Smith in 1947 flagged the new direction for Australian textile designers. Just as in the art of those post-war years, the modern trend for fabric design moved from whimsical images in the ‘residually’ light-hearted style of the early 1940s towards more abstract shapes in moody colours. In October – November of 1948, the Sydney department store David Jones staged the 7 designers’ exhibition of abstract paintings and sculpture. Among the artworks on display were abstract-patterned textiles by Frances Burke and by the creative duo of Richards and Buchanan. Those last years of the decade brought an explosion of creativity for the Australian textile printing industry, with some designs requiring up to 12 screens to re-create an art work and printers at every stage eagerly debating the progress and merits of a pattern.
In other countries, many smaller textile manufacturers did not survive the World War II. Their enterprises were absorbed by larger corporations with bigger spinning and printing capacities and increased influence on design. A few manufacturers, however, survived and strengthened their position through innovation. After opening his own printing workshop, Zika Ascher commissioned leading European artists and went on to produce dynamic modern screen-printed designs for head scarves. No longer were they called scarves, but ‘squares’. A number of them created sunnier, sometimes vacation-inspired topics of the late 1940s, such as ‘Boats for hire’ or humorous designs, such as ‘Dejeuner’.

We welcome contributions that are not to do with New South Wales or the ACT however they should either be papers or articles relating to what a Member, Friend or Associate has personally experienced of Twentieth Century items & places whilst in other states or overseas. Articles that compare design or aspects of conservation overseas (e.g. how preservation works in Britain compared to New South Wales) are also worthwhile, as are articles that examine impacts of overseas design or artefacts on New South Wales.

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On the whole during the 1940s decade, with no civic commission and foreign manufacturers, many established artists turned to textile design to support themselves. That’s the reason why many of the patterns from those years have a ‘painterly’ look about them. An overview of textile patterns from 1940 to 1950 demonstrates that the story of the humble medium of fabric pattern closely followed world governments’ lines during the Second World War on both sides of the conflict. With hostilities and rationing for clothing over, textile designs of the warring nations gradually shifted away from the subdued, low-key patterns of the war years. Towards the end of the decade, textile designs heralded the arrival of happier times. The mood of the patterns changed to the sunnier, sometimes vacation-inspired topics of the late 1940s, such as ‘Boats for hire’ or humorous designs, such as ‘Dejeuner’.

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2 ‘Shoe’ pattern designed by Dorothy Crossley, 1940s.


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