

Daniel Livingstone, I Presume

JOHN HAWKINS

In 1999 I purchased an Australian cedar chair, intrigued by the fine cast bronze back panel of the constellation of the Southern Cross set on the Union Jack (Figures 1a–c).¹ I wondered over the symbolism: ... a possible connection with the Eureka Stockade? ... why or for whom? ... a presentation to a person as yet unknown? ... a memorial of an event that had passed?

In an effort to find the answer I asked my researcher in Melbourne, Ruth Dwyer, to comb the relevant records. Ruth searched many sources including the records of the Victoria Land League and Convention, Ballarat; the history of Peter Lalor, the Eureka Stockade and the diggers' rallying flag depicting the Southern Cross; the Melbourne Trade Unions — in fact any possible connection that was likely to cause the production of such an interesting chair — but she drew a complete blank.

In October 2000 I received a weekend visit from that fountain of knowledge on 'Marvellous Melbourne', Terry Lane, then senior curator of Australian art to 1900 at the National Gallery of Victoria. In a thankyou note he suggested: 'Your hall chair comes, I believe from the main banking chamber of the Bank of Victoria, built in Melbourne in 1862. There is a good photo in the *Australasian Decorator and Painter*, 1 March 1909 ... (Figures 2a and b). Ruth might be able to find an account of the opening of the Bank, which might describe the interior and give the name of the cabinetmaker, Thwaites?'.

I asked Ruth to re-commence the search based on this strong lead, and she discovered that the designs for a new head office for the Bank of Victoria were called for on 22 June 1860. The contract was given to the architect Alfred Louis Smith of Collins Street, who was awarded £100 for the design (Figure 3).² The foundation stone was laid at 34–36 Collins Street on 3 June 1861, and the building was constructed under tender by Mr Hickson at a cost of £20,000. The Melbourne *Argus* reported: 'The capitals to the Corinthian columns in the magnificent banking chamber were made by Mr Apperly ... The Porch is surmounted by two half recumbent figures Commerce and Industry, on which Mr Summers the sculptor is engaged ...'.³ The eight magnificent columns were covered in '... Keane's cement which gives the consistency of marble'.⁴

The sculptor Charles Summers had been appointed in 1856 to be in charge of the carving and modelling of the interior of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly Chambers at Parliament House, Melbourne. He worked with James Scurry and John Simpson Mackennal, father of Bertram Mackennal, on the plaster decoration to the Parliament. They later set up together in an architectural modelling business which operated until at least 1861, and Summers returned to London in 1867.

¹ Bought at Christie's Melbourne, July 1999, lot 200. The chair had a Tasmanian provenance.

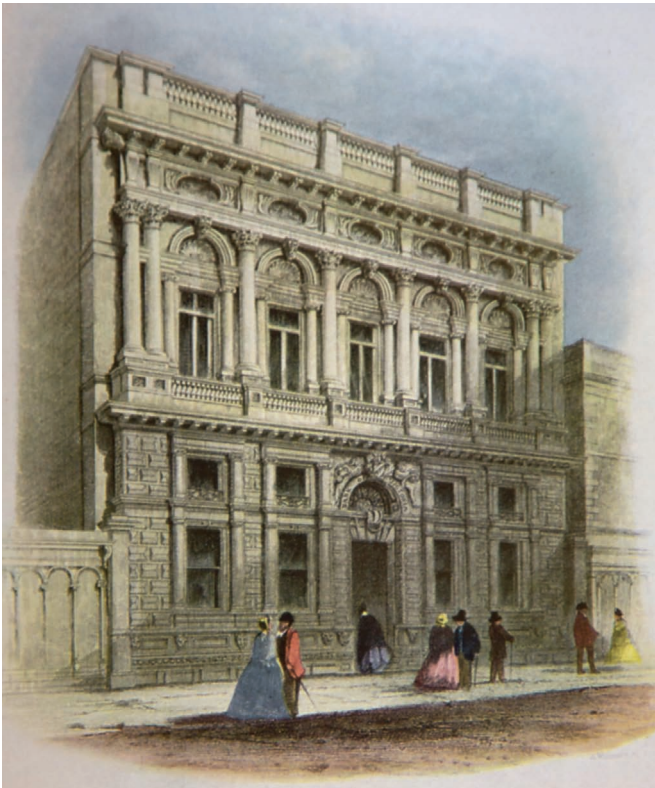
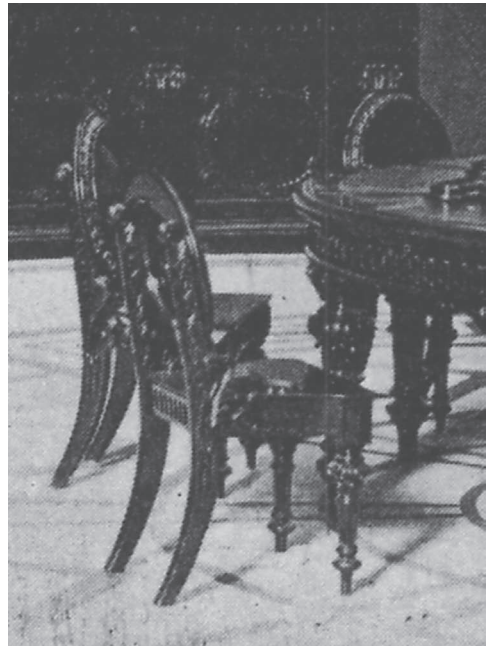
² *Argus*, 8 August 1860.

³ *Argus*, 12 December 1861. H. Apperly was awarded a medal at the 1866 Exhibition for *Two Gothic Spandrels in Plaster of Paris*.

⁴ *Argus*, 18 June 1861.



1a–c Chair of Australian cedar (*Toona ciliata*, M. Roem), the back centred by a bronze plaque of the Southern Cross overlaid onto the Union Jack, the outer egg and dart cast rim is in four sections. Probably carved and cast by Daniel Livingstone for either the National Bank of Australasia or the Australasian Insurance Company between 1866 and 1870. One of a pair. *The author*



2a (top left) The interior of the Bank of Victoria, photographed in 1909. Reproduced from *The Australasian Decorator and Painter*, 1 March 1909.

2b (top right) Detail of 2a, showing a set of late model palmated back leg, hall chairs without bronze fittings.

3 (left) The Bank of Victoria, Collins Street, Melbourne, completed in 1862. Reproduced from *A Century of Banking The Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Ltd 1834-94*, p. 57.



4a and b Chair, c. 1862, probably one of those illustrated in Figure 2b. One of four.
The author

There was still no mention in the *Argus* of who made or designed the chairs, the fittings or the fixtures, yet the interior in the 1909 photograph showed what appeared to be a set of bronze backed chairs of the Southern Cross pattern. As I became more interested in the subject I began to acquire other chairs all obviously by the same hand yet variations on a theme, differing only in their degrees of complexity and detail. I now know of four bronze-mounted cedar chairs, all of which for some reason have a Tasmanian provenance. A further thirteen variations have been identified of what I shall now call ‘target’ hall or bank chairs. Some ten years ago I was able to acquire a set of four target chairs of identical form to those with the bronze backs but without the bronze panels (Figures 4a and b). This led me to reconsider the 1909 photograph which on very close inspection depicts the chairs without the bronze backs, so the mystery as to their origin remained unsolved. An even grander model of target chair with a palmated back leg is put here for purposes of comparison. (Figure 5)

Recently I received an email from Rob La Nauze, asking my advice about George Thwaites, the founder of the cabinet-making firm George Thwaites and Co., in Melbourne in 1842. He had discovered in the Building Committee Minutes of the University of Melbourne for 24 Oct 1864 that the three Council chairs were produced



5 A very grand variant of the 'target' chair, the carving attributed to David Livingstone, c. 1870.
J. B. Hawkins Photographic Archives

after tender by George Thwaites and Co., they being carved by 'Livingston'. Unusually these were in oak; they were not target chairs but a form of Puginian 'Gothic' of superb quality.⁵

As a result of our conversations the pieces of the puzzle have finally begun to fall into place. I knew of a Daniel Livingstone from my interest in nineteenth-century Australian exhibitions. He was an exhibitor at the 1866 Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition where he won a medal:

Exhibit 739. Livingstone D. — Specimens of the manufacture of Ornamental Work in Cast Metals, &c; for excellence of design and workmanship.⁶

There is another entry in the *Supplement of Special Awards* under Class 5:

Livingstone D. Melbourne — For special excellence in the production of Ornamental Metalwork; remarkable for good taste and refinement of design.

⁵ Rob La Nauze, personal communication.

⁶ Anon (1866–67). Other firms in Melbourne were competing in this market: McKendrick & McEwan, Cabinet and Chair manufacturers, 361 Spencer Street, advertised in the *Catalogue of the Victoria Exhibition*: 'Office and Bank fittings made and fitted up on the Shortest Notice'. Also Angus McLean, Lothian Street, North Melbourne, entered Exhibit no. 487 — 'Carving and mounting on Colonial Wood'.

There was no mention of woodwork, so I had filed this material under 'metal-workers' together with the following note taken from the *Argus* of 17 December 1866, regarding the Melbourne 1866 Exhibition:

A portion of the octagon devoted to the iron, brass and zinc castings of Mr D. Livingstone of the corner of Victoria and Swanston Streets Melbourne, demands full attention. The nature and value of the industry comprised will be best expressed in its history. It has been established nearly fourteen years, and during the first ten years its exertions were entirely confined to wood carving. To show that that time was well occupied, it will be sufficient to say that the decorations of the fittings and furniture of the new Houses of Parliament, and almost without exception, of all the new banking houses and public buildings of Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat, Sandhurst, Castlemaine, etc., besides a deal of church work, and numerous private houses, have been turned out of Mr Livingstone's workshop, and there is still as much doing there as ever.

It was a matter of complaint among architects, builders, and contractors, that of all the trades they had to do with that of the construction of ornamental metal work was in the lowest and most unsatisfactory condition. It followed not unnaturally that Mr Livingstone should have it frequently suggested to him to work a reformation in this respect, and that he did so; and did it thoroughly well, the experience of all connected with that branch of business we are informed amply improves. For additional evidence that in this colony ornamental iron work of first class character, both in design and execution, is being daily produced, the inquirer may turn to the railings of the Odd Fellows Hall in Swanston-street; St. Enoch's Church in Collins-street, the fine front railing before Mr Ramsden's terrace, near Fitzroy gardens, the entrance gates to Mr T. B. Payne's house at South Yarra, and the exhibits of balconies, verandah fittings, balusters, pillars, capitals, gates, &c., which we are glad to hear are coming rapidly into demand. The brass or bronze work produced in this establishment is of more recent origin, and dates its commencement from the requirements of the builders of the New Australasian Insurance office. The bronze fittings there are familiar, and the success and actual achievement of economy in connexion therewith has opened up a trade which extends to other colonies, the result being, also, the greater success of the architect and decorator. A class of ornament, durable as it is good in design, is thus supplied at the same price as the cost of the thing in wood, while, if cheapness is a consideration, the production of the same article in zinc can be effected at far less cost, while paint makes it appear equal to that which is more expensive. It is an item of Victorian wealth, that here is employment for highly skilled workmen, and the result cannot but reflect credit on the community which employs, as well as on the skill and enterprise of him who executes. Mr Livingstone employs nearly always five or six carvers, two patternmakers, five or six iron founders others, brass and zinc founders, apprentices at carving and founding, a lot of boys, and all those who attend on such manufactures. This is one of the many industries which, established under free trade, can only be injured by protection, and only be helped by the much needed establishment of a School of Design in Melbourne.

The article states that Livingstone had been in Melbourne for fourteen years, suggesting a date for his arrival of *c.* 1852, or shortly after the discovery of gold in Victoria (the inward passenger lists for Victoria do indeed show that a Daniel Livingstone, aged 24, arrived in Melbourne as an unassisted passenger on the *Moselle* in 1852).⁷ The article also states that for ten years he had practised as a wood carver with links

⁷ Public Record Office, Archives of the State Government of Victoria, *Index to the Unassisted Inward Passenger Lists to Victoria 1852-1923*.

to Parliament House, the banks and the Melbourne churches. After ten years, c. 1862, Livingstone moved on, using his carving skills to become a pattern-maker, then starting his own metal-casting business in partnership with his brother, Alexander.

Thanks to the Australian digital newspaper archive at National Library of Australia, I could easily prove that Livingstone was both a wood carver, designer and ornamental metalworker, so a history of his business could be sketched out. The following references taken from the *Argus* are indicative of the brothers Livingstone and their careers in Melbourne:

8 March 1861 — 'Wood Carvers wanted Daniel Livingstone 15 Queensbury Street ... wanted a man ...'.

4 November 1865 — 'Good Carvers wanted ... good workmen, D Livingstone cnr Swanston and Victoria Streets'.

20 June 1879 — 'Tenders for Insolvent Estate Alexander Livingstone of Little Bourke street Iron Founder. Stock in Trade, pig iron, scrap iron, pattern boxes, mouldings ... £1,228'.

27 January 1882 — 'A letter for ... Mr Daniel Livingstone Woodcarver and Designer late of Melbourne'.

In 1861 Daniel Livingstone won a prize of fifteen pounds for the design of a thirteenth-century style gothic cabinet to display a collection of Victorian gold, a cabinet then under construction in the workshop of George Thwaites and destined for the 1862 London International Exhibition. In a letter to the *Argus*, a disgruntled losing competitor noted that 'Mr Livingstone, a carver in wood', had been awarded the first prize and that the Commissioners had not awarded a second as the rest were unworthy.⁸ This caused Livingstone to reply: 'The two designs are now at Mr Thwaites Little Collins street where the case is now in course of construction ... I beg leave to say that those whose experience has led them to know, Mr Thomas or Mr Rodgers of London; Mr Holden of Manchester and Mr. Kay of Glasgow; will not be as surprised as your correspondent appears to be, that a carver should be able to draw ... Danl. Livingstone'.⁹ Remarkably, at least three images of this gothic cabinet complete with its golden contents at the 1862 London Exhibition are known to survive, its history being seemingly unrecognised (Figure 6).¹⁰ Livingstone, already an exhibitor at the Melbourne 1861 Victorian Exhibition, won a First Class Certificate for this design at the London Exhibition, as did Thwaites and Son for the construction.¹¹

The 'Mr Rodgers' to whom Livingstone refers is in all probability William Gibbs Rogers (1792–1875), of 13 Church Street, Soho, an ornamental carver and collector of antique carvings famous as the Grinling Gibbons of his day. A bracket by him is in the furniture collection at the V&A.¹² The 'Mr Thwaites' is George (senior) of the firm of George Thwaites and Son, who appears to have sub-contracted to Livingstone the carving and possibly some of the design elements of many of the large Melbourne furnishing and fitting out jobs as and when they became available. It would seem

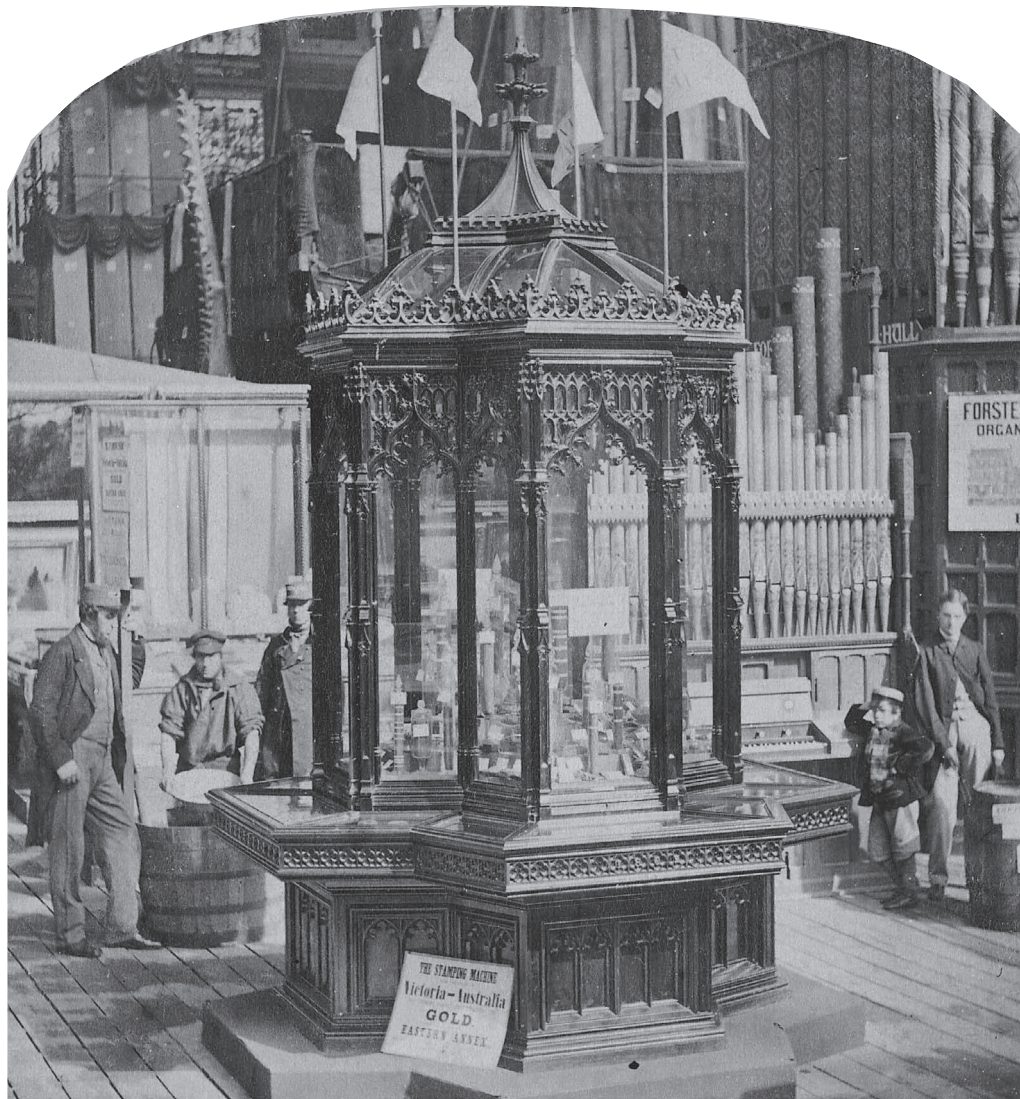
⁸ *Argus*, 9 August 1861.

⁹ *Argus*, 10 August 1861.

¹⁰ The two other images are; an original watercolour by Joseph Nash in the La Trobe picture Collection, Melbourne (Image H5247), and a line engraving in the *Illustrated Melbourne Post*, February 1862, p. 13.

¹¹ Anon (1861), p. 297.

¹² W.28-1972.



6 Half of a stereoscopic view of the Thwaites Victorian gold cabinet at the 1862 International Exhibition, designed and carved by Daniel Livingstone.
National Library of Australia

certain that Livingstone would have carved at least the gothic tracery glazed doors and the gothic decoration to this cabinet of his own design.

The Thwaites family descendants have a letter which possibly links George Thwaites and Son to the Bank of Victoria commission, the complexity of which is well illustrated in the 1909 photograph. It was written by George Thwaites, jnr, to his mother, and



7a-c Chair, c. 1856, Australian cedar (*Toona ciliata* M. Roem), bearing the initials of the Colonial Bank of Australasia. One of a pair.
National Australia Bank Heritage Collection



8a and b Chair, Australian cedar (*Toona ciliata* M. Roem). A more expensive variation using the same CAB monogram but with extra mouldings and decorated feet, probably destined for a more important location within the bank. c. 1856. *Private Collection*

dated 9 December 1862: 'I hope you are in good health also my dear father. I am afraid the hurry and the anxiety over the bank job will be too severe for him'.¹³

Three locally-owned note issuing banks were operational in Melbourne at this date: the Bank of Victoria founded in 1853, with a new headquarters ready for fitting out at the end of 1862; the Colonial Bank of Australasia founded in 1856 with headquarters designed by Lloyd Tayler in that year; and the National Bank of Australasia founded in 1858, for which Lloyd Tayler built new headquarters in 1870. Is it to one of these Banks that Thwaites was referring?

Ruth Dwyer visited the historic collections of banking memorabilia held by the National Australia Bank (NAB, successor to the Bank of Victoria, the Colonial Bank of Australasia and the National Bank of Australasia). The bank has a series of target chairs which illustrate the evolution of the design. Two of the cedar chairs in the NAB collection can be traced back to the Colonial Bank of Australasia (Figures 7a–c) as they are monogrammed CAB.¹⁴ A third slightly different example in a private collection in Queensland was presumably made for the same bank but possibly a different branch or at a different time (Figures 8a and b). Two cedar and blackwood chairs of the same

¹³ Thwaites Papers.

¹⁴ NAB, HC:0708, 0709.



9a–c Chair, c. 1860, Australian cedar (*Toona ciliata* M. Roem). The simple bracket support to the back, the plain frieze to the skirt and, the carved egg and dart external and acanthus internal decoration of these cedar chairs probably predates those chairs with palmated back legs. *J. B. Hawkins*



10 Chair, c. 1855, Australian cedar (*Toona ciliata* M. Roem). An early simple undecorated target back cedar hall chair, the back of unusual slightly oval form. *The National Australia Bank Heritage Collection*



11 Chair, c. 1856, Australian cedar (*Toona ciliata* M. Roem). This version with truss decoration and finely turned legs is also in the NAB collection. *The National Australia Bank Heritage Collection*

form but without the monogram are also in the collection of the NAB, suggesting that the Bank was supplied with two grades of chairs. Both designs have attached carved brackets as the supports from the seat to the back, fluted legs, egg-and-dart mouldings to the skirt and back. These common identifiers allow for them to be part of a suite or more probably a bank pattern for the Colonial Bank of Australasia.¹⁵ One from my collection is illustrated (Figures 9a–c). A set of three very similar chairs in the NAB collection with carved bracket supports, fluted legs and egg-and-dart mouldings to the skirt but a slightly different pattern to the back may also be a part of this commission.¹⁶

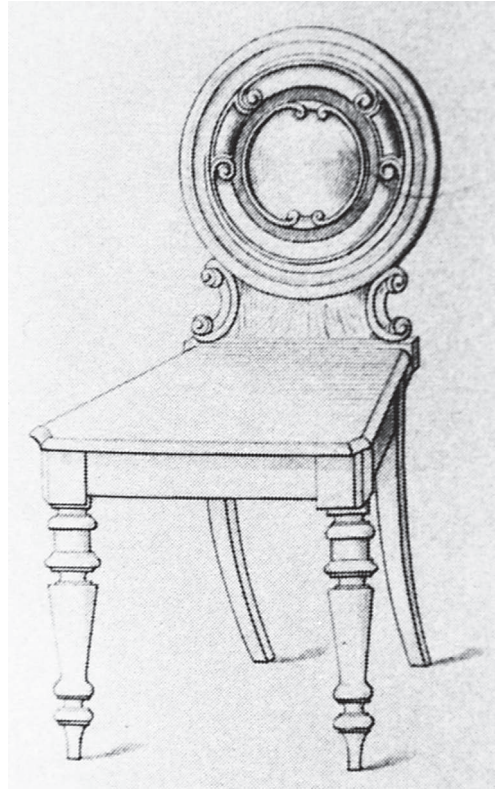
A further group of cedar chairs in the NAB collection have unusual plain oval or circular backs, this being in my opinion the earliest form of target chair designed in Melbourne for bank use (Figures 10–12). They are part of a group loosely based on

¹⁵ NAB, HC:0355, 0356, 0357 with plain backs, 0708 and 0709, with monogrammed backs.

¹⁶ NAB, HC:0705, 0706, 0707.



12 Chair, c. 1855, Australian cedar (*Toona ciliata* M. Roem) of the same form but with much heavier turned legs, a less refined version of those in this group and possibly slightly earlier. *J. B. Hawkins*



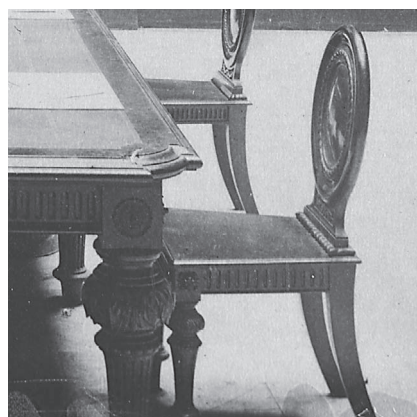
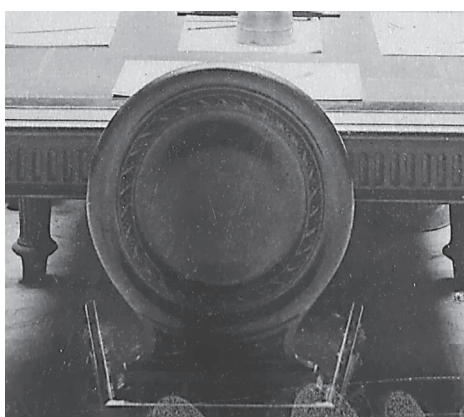
13 Design for a chair, from William Smee & Sons, *Designs for Furniture*, c. 1850.

the design in the Smee pattern book of 1850 (Figure 13) and are recorded as being from an as yet unidentified bank branch at Kyneton.¹⁷ From their simplicity I suggest that they may have come originally from the first Melbourne branch of the Bank of Victoria built in 1853, being sent later at an unknown date to their branch at Kyneton. Again, there could have been different grades of chair for the same commission.

Which Melbourne bank commissioned the remaining group of three chairs in the NAB collection, unusually of cedar and blackwood and similar to figures 9a–c has not, as yet, been established.¹⁸ It is of note that none of the chairs in the 1909 Bank of Victoria photograph (Figures 2a and b), remain in the NAB collection. The new building for the Bank of Victoria was completed in 1863, being the second Head Office for the bank in Melbourne. The first building on another site had opened when the

¹⁷ NAB, HC:0352, 0353, 0354, 0368, of which HC:0354 has been stolen.

¹⁸ NAB, HC: 0355, 0356, 0357



14a (top) An interior view of the National Bank of Australasia 279 Collins Street, Melbourne, c. 1890. *State Library of Victoria, Image No. H82./22/8.*

14b (bottom left) and c (bottom right) Detail of 14a, showing aspects of the target chairs in the National Bank of Australasia. These chairs are seemingly unique, being carved to the rear as well as the front. Perhaps removed from the bank's first building completed in 1858. The leg of the table to the centre of the chamber does not match these chairs. The table is perhaps part of the new furnishings of 1870, specifically commissioned for this grandest of Melbourne bank interiors.

bank was founded after October 1852. The first half yearly report of 2 August 1853 indicates that a profit of £17,312 was made on a paid up capital of £155,000 with assets in kind in the bank of gold, silver and other metals of £571,751.¹⁹ This would suggest the availability of substantial funds for a future lavish commission as evidenced by the interior of the new building.

Rob La Nauze also sent me a fine internal view he had discovered of the second banking chamber of the National Bank of Australasia as designed by Lloyd Tayler and completed in 1870.²⁰ When this photograph is enlarged a comparison can be made between the detail on the chair legs and the legs of the table. The table leg is grander and finer which to me suggests a later date, c. 1870, with an earlier form of target chair positioned for daily use by the public. These chairs, because of their simplicity, may have been constructed for the first branch of this Melbourne bank opened in 1858 (Figures 14a–c).

I suggest that Livingstone and Lloyd Tayler worked together on the Colonial Bank of Australasia chairs in 1859, with Livingstone as the carver and designer of the surviving monogrammed chairs. Livingstone later designed and carved the chairs made by George Thwaites and Son for the Bank of Victoria between 1862 and 1863 with the first use of the expensive and very grand palmated sweeping supports to the back legs. Was this design of back leg reused by Lloyd Tayler and Livingstone for a special set of even grander bronze mounted chairs, probably supplied to the new National Bank of Australasia head office opened in 1870? This possibility is suggested by an entry discovered by Rob in the *Argus* of 11 August 1870:

The cedar fittings for the banking room have been executed by Mr James McEwan cabinet-maker of Spencer street and the bronze work by Mr D Livingstone of Victoria street.

Close inspection of the banking chamber photograph reveals that some of the bronze mounts depicted in the Livingstone Exhibition photograph have been fitted to the supports of the counters in the banking chamber. The heavy bronze-mounted chairs may have been specially commissioned for the boardroom of the National Bank of Australasia for they are both in design and materials a quantum leap ahead of the carved wooden monogram supplied earlier to the Colonial Bank of Australasia and the more old fashioned carved chairs with their seemingly unique carved backs in the photograph of this interior, yet all are expensive concepts symbolising the enormous wealth created by gold in the virtually instant city of Melbourne.

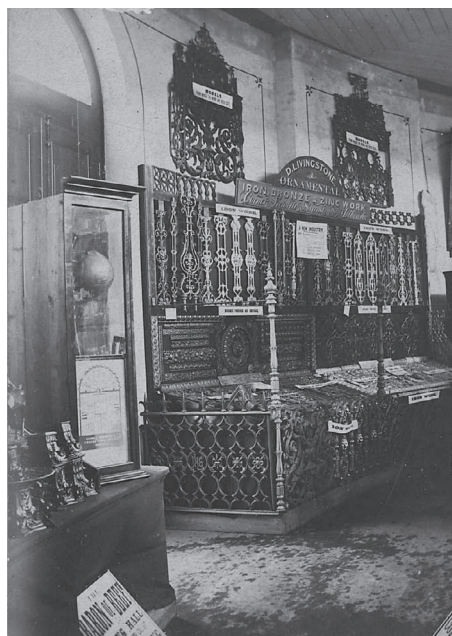
The National Bank of Australasia one pound note, issued in 1858, bears the image of the Southern Cross as a constellation in the heavens. This banknote provides a link with which to provenance the chairs to the bank. The banknote is an early example of the commercial usage of this image, an image seemingly first used by the Tasmanian Anti-Transportation League of c. 1847 who took this constellation design to Victoria in 1851.

All this poses a question; was the design of this bronze chair panel registered by Livingstone? The outer surround is almost certainly illustrated in a recently discovered photograph by Rob La Nauze of the Livingstone stand at the Intercolonial Exhibition

¹⁹ Anon (1934).

²⁰ <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/208164>

15 Daniel Livingstone's stand at the 1866–67 Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition, depicting his products in brass, bronze and cast iron. The patterns for mouldings for interior furnishing are to be seen on the backboard bottom left. *State Library of Victoria, Image No. H4074.*



of 1866–67 (Figure 15). This shows other mouldings certainly used in the interior of the National Bank of Australasia, but in the circular design as exhibited the Southern Cross on a Union Jack is replaced by a lion's mask. The Designs Office of the Department of Patents of the Commonwealth of Australia in Canberra holds the design registers of the individual Australian states in the nineteenth century. Some, but not all, manufacturers patented their designs to prevent pirating. The earliest Victorian protected design I have been able to trace was registered on the 8 April 1870 and both Alexander Livingstone (5 August 1873) and Daniel Livingstone (20 January 1874) registered individual designs for cast iron decorative patterns for architectural external use. I have not so far been able to trace the design for the Southern Cross casting as fitted to the chairs in the surviving Patent Records now in Canberra.

Rob also discovered this most interesting description of the use of the Southern Cross as part of a bronze mounted decorative panel in a building designed by the architects Austin and Ellis in the *Argus* for 30 January 1866:

The Australasian Insurance Company New Offices ... The enrichments of panels in the counter front are not as has hitherto been usual, carved in cedar; bronze metal has been introduced by the architects with a very happy effect and what was at first deemed but an experiment is pronounced by competent judges to be highly successful thanks to the artistic design and skill of the workmanship. Each panel contains a shield with the five stars forming the Southern Cross- the emblem of the company — arranged thereon, surrounded by a laurel wreath, and executed in bold relief ... The bronze metalwork and carving of the internal fittings have been executed by Mr Livingstone.

This entry for January 1866 would appear to indicate the first usage of a bronze Southern Cross constellation as a feature in a panel cast by Livingstone to an architect designed interior. The writer does not link the usage to a chair, nor is there any mention

of the Union Jack. This poses a question, did Livingstone adapt or reuse this pattern when making the bronze backs to these chairs and for whom were they designed? Were they made for the National Bank of Australasia for their new building completed next door in 1870, or for the Australasian Insurance Company at the time of the panelling in 1866?

My suggestion is it was the bank, for this is a very important series of Australian-made and designed chairs; their palmated back legs are a key Livingstone design and not those of an architect. His rights as the caster would provide a more profitable outcome — the kudos derived from such a special commission encapsulates all his very special skills. Finally and probably most importantly the addition of the Union Jack to the background prevents any complaints from next door.

I can go no further so tantalisingly, for the moment, this wonderful series of Australian cedar target chairs still ask the question: ‘Daniel Livingstone I presume?’.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/208164> Collection State Library of Victoria, Interior of the National Bank of Australasia.
<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/imagestudio/gid/slv-pic-aaa03663> Livingstone Stand at the 1866–67 Intercolonial Exhibition Melbourne.

