



# LOOKING THROUGH *GRIMWADE* GLASS

Russell Grimwade, *Mabel Grimwade at the window*, black and white print,, Sir Wilfrid Grimwade Collection UMA

2022 'MIEGUNYAH' STUDENT PROJECT AWARD  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE  
CATHERINE (CAT) EYRE

I ACKNOWLEDGE  
THAT THIS RESEARCH  
HAS BEEN  
UNDERTAKEN ON THE  
UNCEDDED LANDS OF  
THE WAWURUNDJERI  
AND BOON WURRUNG  
PEOPLE OF THE  
KULIN NATION, AND I  
PAY MY RESPECT TO  
ALL FIRST NATIONS  
PEOPLE.

# FORWARD

THE PROPOSAL FOR THIS PROJECT WAS TO CONSIDER THE **GLASS COLLECTION** THAT FORMS PART OF THE RUSSELL AND MAB GRIMWADE 'MIEGUNYAH' COLLECTION AT THE IAN POTTER MUSEUM OF ART.

TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE ACQUISITION OF A SIGNIFICANT COLLECTION OF GLASS OBJECTS BY RUSSELL AND MAB GRIMWADE IS A SIGNIFIER OF THE BEGINNINGS OF THE FELTON GRIMWADE & CO EMPIRE, SPECIFICALLY MELBOURNE GLASS BOTTLE WORKS, AND THE FORTUNE THAT SUPPORTED THEIR ECONOMIC SUCCESS AND SOCIAL STATUS.

TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE ROLE FELTON GRIMWADE & CO'S MELBOURNE GLASS BOTTLE WORKS PLAYED IN THE HISTORY OF INDUSTRY AND INDUSTRIAL ACTION IN MELBOURNE AS THE FIRST GLASS BOTTLE MANUFACTURER IN AUSTRALIA.

AND TO EXPLORE THE CLASS DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN THE ARTISAN MAKER AND THE LABOURER MAKER AND THE DISJUNCTURE BETWEEN THE DECORATIVE GLASS OBJECT WITHIN THE MUSEUM SPACE AS AN ORNAMENTAL OBJECT, A MATERIAL SIGNIFIER OF PROGRESS AND IMPERIALISM, AND A SOURCE OF 'OTHERING' TO THE

LABOURING CLASS.

WHILE THE PROJECT FOCUSED ON THE PROPOSED RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, GREATER INSIGHT INTO RUSSELL GRIMWADE HAS RESULTED IN THE COLLATION OF INFORMATION THAT SIMPLY INTERROGATES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GLASS COLLECTION, THE LABOURER 'MAKER' AND THE ATTITUDE OF RUSSELL GRIMWADE TO THE LATTER DESPITE HIS ADMIRATION FOR THE HAND-MADE.

THE GLASS OBJECTS WITHIN THE RUSSELL AND MAB GRIMWADE' MIEGUNYAH' COLLECTION AT THE IAN POTTER MUSEUM NUMBER SEVENTY-THREE, OR JUST OVER TEN PER CENT OF THE COLLECTION HOLDINGS. THE GLASS OBJECTS ARE

INCREDIBLY DIVERSE, MADE FROM CONVENTIONAL AND CRYSTAL GLASS, WITH SOME MADE BY WELL-KNOWN EUROPEAN MAKERS AND OTHERS OF YET-TO-BE-IDENTIFIED ORIGINS.

NOTING FELTON GRIMWADE & CO'S ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MELBOURNE GLASS BOTTLE WORKS COMPANY IN 1872, A MANUFACTURER OF HAND-BLOWN GLASS BOTTLES, BEFORE AUTOMATION IN THE NAME OF "PROGRESS", SUCH A COLLECTION IS SIGNIFICANT TO THE BIOGRAPHY OF RUSSELL GRIMWADE. AS IS THE WEALTH AND, BY EXTENSION, THE SOCIAL POSITIONING THAT GLASS MANUFACTURING AFFORDED THE GRIMWADE'S.

MOREOVER, NOTING RUSSELL'S APPRECIATION FOR HAND-MADE AND FINE CRAFTSMANSHIP AS A MAKER HIMSELF, HIS LACK OF RECOGNITION OR VALUE FOR HIS GLASSBLOWER EMPLOYEES SEEMS CURIOUS. HOWEVER, SUCH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ARTISANAL MAKERS AND NOT OF LABOURER MAKERS APPEARS TO BE GROUNDED IN CLASSISM UPHELD BY RUSSELL AND MAINTAINED WITHIN STATE CULTURAL STRUCTURES SUCH AS THE MUSEUM.

POST-STRUCTURALIST THEORY, WHICH ADDRESSES ISSUES OF POWER AND KNOWLEDGE IN SUCH STATE-RUN STRUCTURES, SUGGESTS THAT DECORATIVE OBJECTS ARE MATERIAL SIGNIFIERS OF PROGRESS AND IMPERIALISM AND A SOURCE OF

'OTHERING' TO THE LABOURING CLASS (THE PRODUCER) IN THE MUSEUM SPACE.

AS DECORATIVE GLASS OBJECTS, SUCH AS THOSE I HAVE CHOSEN TO DISPLAY, HAVE MADE THEIR WAY INTO THE MUSEUM SPACE AS *OBJECTS D'ART*, THEY HAVE FOUND THEMSELVES IN A CURIOUS POSITION SAFELY BEHIND CASING, PROTECTING THEM FROM THE LABOURING CLASSES. OBSERVING AN OBJECT OF THEIR MAKING BEFORE AUTOMATION, WHILE SUBJECTED TO STATE CULTURAL IDEOLOGY AS THE OBSERVED MUSEUM GOER, THEY ARE MANIPULATED INTO BETTERING THEIR BEHAVIOUR AND TASTE IN LINE WITH THE STATE.

WHILE THIS RESEARCH PREDOMINANTLY CONSIDERS THE RELEVANCE OF THE

SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF GLASS HOLDINGS IN THE MIEGUNYAH COLLECTION IN RELATION TO THE BIOGRAPHY OF RUSSELL GRIMWADE. IT ATTEMPTS TO INTERROGATE RUSSELL'S RECOGNITION OR LACK THEREOF OF THE "LABOURER-MAKER" AND THE "ARTISANAL-MAKER/ ARTIST" WITH SPECIFIC RELATION TO THE COLLECTION, AND TOUCH ON THE ROLE OF THE MUSEUM AS A CLASSIST INSTITUTION AND CULTURAL IDEOLOGICAL APPARATUS OF THE STATE.

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# PRIVILEGE, WEALTH, AND BOTTLE WORKS

AT THE TIME OF WILFRID RUSSELL GRIMWADE'S (1879-1955) BIRTH, HIS FATHER, FEDERICK SHEPPARD GRIMWADE (1840-1910), AND HIS BUSINESS PARTNER ALFRED FELTON (1831-1904) HAD ESTABLISHED A SUCCESSFUL GROUP OF ENTERPRISES.<sup>1</sup> OWING TO SUCH SUCCESS, F.S. GRIMWADE WAS A WEALTHY MAN WITH SIGNIFICANT STANDING IN MELBOURNE'S BUSINESS, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCENES AND, BY EXTENSION, RUSSELL, A CHILD OF PRIVILEGE AND, LATER, A BUSINESSMAN OF INHERITED INFLUENCE.<sup>2</sup> DESPITE THE ADVANTAGE HE RECEIVED VIA THE RESOURCES THAT

ACCOMPANIED HIS PRIVILEGE, RUSSELL GRIMWADE WAS BY ALL ACCOUNTS A DETERMINED AND SHREWD BUSINESSMAN WITH AN "EVER-EXPLORING BUT PRACTICAL MIND, AN EXCELLENT MEMORY AND AN INFINITE CAPACITY FOR HARD WORK".<sup>3</sup> ONE ENTERPRISE OF F.S. GRIMWADE AND FELTON'S WAS THE MELBOURNE GLASS BOTTLE WORKS COMPANY, ESTABLISHED IN 1872 IN GRAHAM STREET, SOUTH MELBOURNE.<sup>4</sup> IT WAS THE FIRST GLASS MANUFACTURER IN AUSTRALIA AND ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST IMPORTANT SECONDARY INDUSTRIES AT THE TURN OF THE



Unknown, *Russell Grimwade in Flinders Lane offices*, 8 October 1931, black and white print 10 x 7 cm, Sir Wilfrid Russell Grimwade Collection, UMA 2002.0003.0503



TWENTIETH CENTURY.<sup>5</sup>

THE COMPANY, LIKE MANY OF FELTON GRIMWADE & CO'S, WOULD LATER BE RENAMED, BECOMING MELBOURNE GLASS BOTTLE WORKS PTY LTD IN 1903, AUSTRALIAN GLASS MANUFACTURERS LTD IN 1915 AND AUSTRALIAN CONSOLIDATED INDUSTRIES LIMITED IN 1939 OWING TO DIVERSIFICATION, TRANSITION TO A PROPRIETARY COMPANY, AND RESTRUCTURING.<sup>6</sup> ONE DIVERSIFICATION WHICH CAME ABOUT VIA THE ACQUISITION OF THE CROWN CRYSTAL GLASS COMPANY IN 1924 WAS THE ENTRY INTO FLINT PRODUCTION, A REFINED GLASS WITH SUPERIOR SHINE AND FLEXIBILITY, ALLOWING FOR MORE ORNATE AND DECORATIVE DESIGN. UNFORTUNATELY,

HOWEVER, THE HAND-CUT CRYSTAL DIVISION NEVER BECAME PROFITABLE AND WAS CLOSED IN 1939.<sup>7</sup>

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ENTERPRISE, HOWEVER, AND CONSEQUENTIALLY, A LOCAL GLASS MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY WAS INTENDED TO SUPPORT FELTON GRIMWADE & CO'S CORE BUSINESS OPERATIONS AS WHOLESALE DRUGGISTS, AS WELL AS SERVICING THE GLASS BOTTLE NEEDS OF OTHER INDUSTRIES WHICH, LIKE FELTON GRIMWADE & CO'S, WERE AFFECTED BY HIGH COSTS AND BOTTLE SUPPLY ISSUES OWING TO THEIR IMPORTATION FROM GREAT BRITANN.<sup>8</sup> THE COMPANY NOT ONLY BROUGHT THE PARTNERS GREAT WEALTH OVER TIME BUT A MONOPOLY OF SORTS WITHIN THE

Melbourne Glass Bottle Works Co  
Certificate of Title to  
Spottiswoode Land  
South Melbourne

State Library of Victoria. "Melbourne Glass Bottle Works Co".  
Correspondence, 22 August 1899 - 2 August 1904.  
<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/392409>

*Not returned  
see book*

Received from Mr Alfred Felton  
Certificate of Title vol 2710 folio 541970  
Dated 29th December 1898 of Land at  
Spottiswoode in the names of Alfred Felton  
and Frederick Sheppard Grimwade also  
Extract from Register  
22nd August 1899  
P. D. Halliday & Son  
per F. Elbrant

State Library of Victoria. "Melbourne Glass Bottle Works Co".  
Correspondence, 22 August 1899 - 2 August 1904.  
<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/392409>

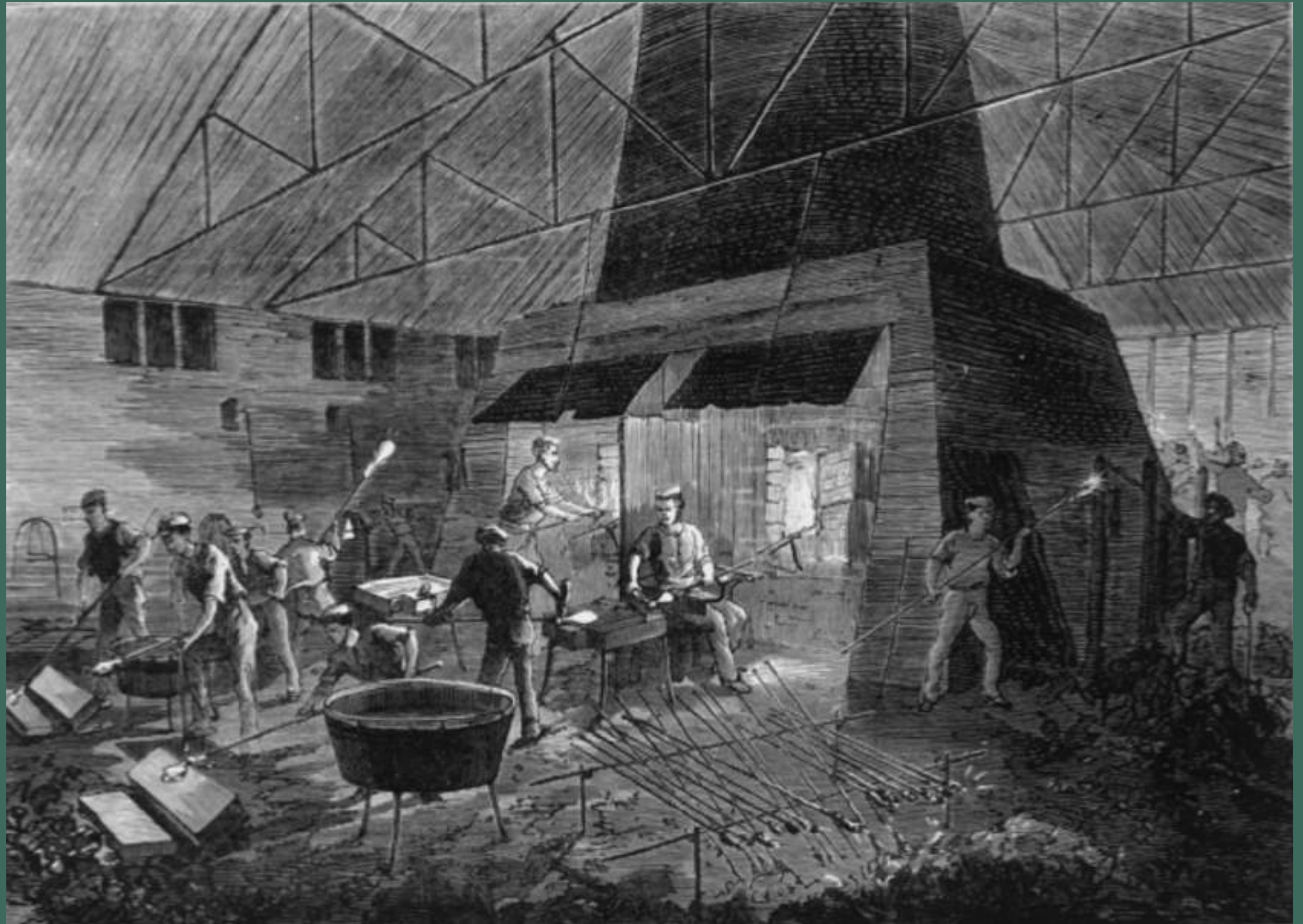
WHOLESALE DRUG INDUSTRY WITH THEIR CONTROL FROM DRUG PRODUCTION TO BOTTLING, HAMPERING COMPETITORS. WITHIN EIGHTY-FIVE YEARS (TWENTY OF WHICH WERE UNDER THE DIRECTORSHIP OF RUSSELL), IT WAS LISTED AS AUSTRALIA'S FOURTH LARGEST PUBLIC COMPANY.<sup>9</sup>

# GLASSBLOWERS, UNIONS, AND PROGRESS

FROM THE OUTSET, THE COMPANY RELIED ON IMPORTED SKILLED GLASSBLOWERS, MAKING IT DEPENDENT UPON THEIR WORKFORCE, NOTABLY THEIR "WORKS MANAGERS" WHO HAD TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE NOT ONLY WITH THE "ANCIENT CRAFT" BUT ALSO WITH THE HARDENED MEN WHO OFTEN CLASHED WITH EACH OTHER.<sup>10</sup> THE WORK WAS HAZARDOUS WITH PRIMATE TECHNOLOGY AND HARD WITH TWELVE-HOUR SHIFTS, 3 AM STARTS AND IRREGULAR HOURS, WHICH ADDED TO THE DIVISIVE WORKING ATMOSPHERE.<sup>11</sup> THREE OF THE HARDENED MEN, LAMBTON LE BRETON MONT, WILLIAM

MCNEILAGE, AND W.J. SMITH, NOT ONLY ROSE TO THE POSITION OF WORKS MANAGERS BUT INTO HIGHER LEADERSHIP ROLES. DESPITE THEIR LABOURER ORIGINS, THEY USED THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE INTERESTS OF THE MEN TO "UNCOMPROMISINGLY" ADVANCE THE INDUSTRY'S INTERESTS, PROVING VITAL TO THE COMPANY'S SUCCESS.<sup>12</sup> MCNEILAGE'S "SKILFUL HANDLING" OF INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES WITH THE VICTORIAN GLASS BLOWERS' UNION, SPECIFICALLY, PROVED VITAL TO THE BOTTLE WORKS.<sup>13</sup>

THE GATHERER, TAKING A WARM BLOW-PIPE FROM THE FURNACE,...[COLLECTED]...HOT GLASS OR 'METAL'...., TURNING THE PIPE CONTINUALLY TO KEEP IT UNDER CONTROL. THE BLOWER THEN TOOK THE PIPE, AND, HAVING MADE THE SUSPENDED GLASS SMOOTH, COMPACT AND APPROXIMATE THE SHAPE OF THE BOTTLE BY ROLLING IT ON A...MARVER, [THEN INTO] THE MOULD. [IT THEN] WENT TO THE MAKER, SITTING... BY THE FURNACE FOR THE RING TO BE FORMED. THE... 'TAKER-IN' THEN TRANSFERRED THE BOTTLE TO THE LEHR TO BE ANNEALED, AND WHEN IT EMERGED FROM THE COLD END, IT WAS INSPECTED BY THE SORTER. THIS WAS THE 'ENGLISH HAND' METHOD OF BOTTLE-MAKING, AND IT WAS HARD AND HOT WORK."



The State Library. *"The Melbourne Glass Bottle Company, the Beach, Emerald-Hill"*. 12 June 1876.  
<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/250764>.

**"MCNEILAGE WAS GOOD IN DEBATING WHAT WAS BEST FOR THE INDUSTRY AND, THEREFORE, BEST IN THE INTERESTS OF THE MEN. THEY UNDERSTOOD HIM. THEY REGARDED HIM AS BEING CLEVER AND GAVE HIM CREDIT FOR ALWAYS TRYING TO BE FAIR TO THE MEN AND TO THE COMPANY, BUT THEY DID NOT AGREE WITH WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS FAIR. HE CLAIMED HE COULD SPEAK THE WORKERS' LANGUAGE. HE COULD, FLUENTLY."**

Poynter, "Business," 78.

INTERESTINGLY, IN 1902, W.J. SMITH WAS SUED BY MELBOURNE GLASS BOTTLE WORKS FOR A BREACH OF THE EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEES ACT OF 1891 FOR DISBANDING HIS APPRENTICESHIP AFTER FOUR YEARS OF INDENTURESHIP OWING TO DISSATISFACTION WITH THE WORK AND WAGE.<sup>15</sup> W.J. SMITH, ALSO KNOWN AS "KNOCK OUT SMITH" OR "GUNBOAT SMITH", HAD COMMENCED WITH THE BOTTLE WORKS AS A 12-YEAR-OLD LABOURER IN 1894 BEFORE TAKING ON THE APPRENTICESHIP.<sup>16</sup> DURING THIS TIME, HE BECAME THE GLASS BLOWERS UNION'S SECRETARY, AND IT WAS MCNEILAGE, HIS ADVERSARY, WHO REPRESENTED MELBOURNE GLASS BOTTLE WORKS IN COURT.<sup>17</sup> SMITH BOUGHT OUT HIS INDENTURE AND CONTINUED HIS UNION ACTIVITY WHILE WORKING FOR THE RIVAL

CALEDONIAN GLASS WORKS IN PORT MELBOURNE, WHICH WAS SOON AFTER ACQUIRED BY MELBOURNE GLASS BOTTLE WORKS IN 1904.<sup>18</sup>

IT WAS MCNEILAGE, HOWEVER, WHO REEMPLOYED SMITH AS MANAGER OF THE PORT MELBOURNE PLANT RECOGNISING HIS ABILITY AND AMBITION.<sup>19</sup> INTERESTINGLY, SMITH AND MCNEILAGE SOURCED AND IMPORTED FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY AND SPECIALISED LABOUR TO TRAIN THE LOCAL WORKERS.<sup>20</sup> MECHANISATION NO DOUBT IMPROVED WORKPLACE SAFETY BUT ULTIMATELY UNDERMINED THE WORKFORCE BY INITIATING THE END OF HAND-CRAFTED GLASSMAKING.<sup>21</sup>



"MOST OF THE SKILLED GLASSBLOWERS WERE DISPLACED AND RELEGATED TO UNSKILLED JOBS...IT BECAME CLEAR THAT EVEN SKILLED GATHERERS COULD NOT KEEP PACE WITH THE BOTTLE-MAKING MACHINES...WITHIN A FEW YEARS, 'NO-BOY' MACHINES REPLACED THE JUVENILES...AND BY 1927, BOTTLE PRODUCTION HAD BECOME AUTOMATED." Poynter, "War, Business and Science," 75.

# SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND SURVEILLANCE

DESPITE THE GRIMWADE'S AND FELTON'S REPORTED APPRECIATION FOR THE HAND-MADE AND WELL-MADE AS WELL AS HARD WORK AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY, SUCH MERITS MAY NOT HAVE EXTENDED GENUINELY TO THEIR LABOUR FORCE OR WHEN IN COMPETITION WITH THEIR ECONOMIC SUCCESS. IN 1891, F.S. GRIMWADE ENTERED VICTORIA'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HIS ASSERTIONS IN THE HOUSE THAT "WORKERS' COMPENSATION WAS MAKING WORKINGMEN NEGLIGENT" SPEAKS TO HIS OPINION OF WORKERS' RIGHTS AT THE TIME.<sup>23</sup> WHAT'S MORE, IT IS REPORTED THAT

AROUND 1892, A TIME OF ECONOMIC DEPRESSION IN AUSTRALIA, F.S. GRIMWADE AND FELTON HAD MARKED THE NAMES OF WORKERS AT THE SPENSER STREET FACTORY IN THE COMPANY WAGE BOOK OF THOSE WHO "SIGNED WILLINGNESS TO HELP THE GOVERNMENT IN SUPPRESSING THE RAILWAY STRIKE" SUGGESTING THEY WERE ANTI-UNION, AND TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY SUPPORTED VIOLENCE TOWARD UNION MEMBERS.<sup>24</sup> NOTING RUSSELL'S RESPECT FOR "THE CREED AND VALUES"... [AND] "THE MORAL CODE IN WHICH HE HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP",

IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT HE HELD THE SAME VIEWS OF THE "WORKING MEN" AS HIS FATHER. THIS IS SUPPORTED BY RUSSELL'S REQUEST IN 1918 FOR A GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE THAT HIS PROPOSED VENTURE TO EXTRACT RAW MATERIALS TO SUPPORT THE AUSTRALIAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRY BY REDUCING ITS DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTATION WOULD HAVE IMMUNITY FROM STRIKES.<sup>26</sup>

INTERESTINGLY, WHEN RUSSELL STARTED WORK WITH FELTON GRIMWADE & CO IN 1903 IN THE FACTORY, WHERE HIS RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDED HANDLING MEN, WHICH HE REPORTEDLY DID "EFFECTIVELY", IT COINCIDED WITH THE COMPANIES IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEY TIME REGISTER, WHICH RUSSELL'S BIOGRAPHER POYNTER, IN AN UNUSUALLY

PERSONAL COMMENT, THE "NEWLY-INVENTED EMPLOYER'S SPY".<sup>27</sup> WHILE THESE DEMANDS AND PRACTICES NO DOUBT MAKE SOUND BUSINESS SENSE, THEY DISREGARD THE RIGHTS OF THE LABOURING CLASS TO BARGAIN FOR BETTER PAY AND CONDITIONS IN EXCHANGE FOR FAIR LABOUR, WHICH ENABLED THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY RUSSELL VALUED SO HIGHLY. WHAT'S MORE, DRAWING ON THE WRITINGS OF THE POST-STRUCTURALIST THEORIST MICHEL FOUCAULT REGARDING THE EFFECTS OF POWER STRUCTURES AND RELATIONS BETWEEN THE POWERFUL AND THE WORKING CLASS, THEY INITIATED A TYPE OF SURVEILLANCE IN THE WORKPLACE THAT EVOLVED FROM JEREMY BETHEM'S CARCERAL SYSTEM AND WAS DESIGNED TO SELF-REGULATE BEHAVIOUR, SQUASH

UNRULINESS AND CURB INDIVIDUALITY VIA  
CONSTANT OBSERVATION.<sup>28</sup>



State Library of New South Wales. "Glassblowers at work". Crown Crystal Studio, Waterloo, Sydney, 1950, from vintage print, for Walkabout magazine. [archival.sl.nsw.gov.au/Details/archive/110312015](https://archival.sl.nsw.gov.au/Details/archive/110312015)

**“MOST OF THE DIFFICULTIES AROSE FROM THE VERY NATURE OF THE INDUSTRY. MECHANIZATION CAME LATE TO BOTTLE-MAKING, AND THE METHODS OF PRODUCTION AT SOUTH MELBOURNE WERE BASICALLY THOSE WHICH HAD PREVAILED SINCE THE INVENTION OF THE GLASS BLOW-PIPE IN ANCIENT ALEXANDRIA”** . Poynter, “A Colonial Partnership,” 20.

# ART AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC TASTE

ACCORDING TO THE BRITISH SOCIOLOGIST TONY BENNETT, THIS INTENTIONAL SELF-REGULATION HAS EXTENDED TO ART INSTITUTIONS. BENNETT'S PURPORTS IN HIS THEORY "THE EXHIBITIONARY COMPLEX" THAT STATE OR NATIONAL CULTURAL BUILDINGS, LIKE THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA, SERVE AS AN IDEOLOGICAL APPARATUS OF THE STATE TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL ORDER BY POSITIONING THEIR PATRONS AS 'THE SPECTACLE' WHICH FACILITATES THE BEHAVIOURAL SELF-REGULATION OF THEIR PATRONS IN LINE WITH NATIONALLY ACCEPTED BEHAVIOURAL STANDARDS VIA

OBSERVATION OF EACH OTHER. IN OTHER WORDS, INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS CONFORM TO BEHAVIOURAL STANDARDS CONCEIVED BY THE STATE AS A METHOD OF CONTROL BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEY ARE BEING OBSERVED. WHEN IN 1904 FELTON DIED, HIS WILL STIPULATED A PROVISION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "FELTON BEQUESTS' COMMITTEE", CHARGED WITH MANAGING HIS SIZABLE BEQUEATHMENT TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA VIA THE ACQUISITION OF WORKS OF ART FOR "ARTISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL VALUE AND BE CALCULATED TO RAISE OR IMPROVE THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC TASTE".<sup>29</sup>

RUSSELL WAS TO BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, WITH IT LATER BECOMING ONE OF HIS CHIEF INTERESTS.<sup>30</sup> WHILE NOT SUPPORTING THE IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC TASTE VIA SURVEILLANCE, THERE EXISTS AN ARROGANT PATERNAL ATTITUDE REGARDING THE NECESSARY BETTERMENT OF THE POPULOUS' TASTES THAT IS PERHAPS ONLY POSSIBLE FROM A POSITION OF WEALTH AND PRIVILEGE WITH LITTLE TO NO UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BELONG TO A CLASS WITH FEWER MEANS. INTERESTINGLY, IN "THE EXHIBITIONARY COMPLEX", BENNET REFERENCES CRYSTAL PALACE (THE STRUCTURE THAT HOUSED THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851) AS AN IDEOLOGICAL APPARATUS OF THE ENGLISH STATE,

HIGHLIGHTING STRATEGIES IT IMPLEMENTED OUT OF FEAR OF SOCIAL CONTAGION BETWEEN THE LABOURING AND UPPER CLASSES WHICH INCLUDED DIFFERENT ADMISSION DAYS, ENTRY PRICES AND INSTRUCTIONAL LITERATURE ON BEHAVIOUR AND DRESS CODE FOR THE WORKING CLASS. THIS PROVIDES AN INTRIGUING CONNECTION TO RUSSELL, WHOSE UNPUBLISHED AUTOBIOGRAPHY CONTAINS A DETAILED RECOLLECTION OF THE AMAZEMENT EXPERIENCED DURING A VISIT TO CRYSTAL PALACE AND ITS GARDENS ON A FAMILY TRIP TO ENGLAND IN 1884 AND 1885.<sup>31</sup> WHAT'S MORE, "THE EXHIBITIONARY COMPLEX" EXPLICITLY IDENTIFIES DECORATIVE OBJECTS AS MATERIAL SIGNIFIERS OF PROGRESS AND IMPERIALISM AND SOURCES OF



'OTHERING' TO THE 'NON-CIVILISED' PEOPLES, WHICH PROVES INTERESTING, NOTING THE LARGE NUMBER OF DECORATIVE ART OBJECTS WITHIN THE MIEGUNYAH COLLECTION AND SPECIFICALLY GLASS DECORATIVE ART OBJECTS.

## RUSSELL THE MAKER AND KEY MASTER

RUSSELL WAS HIMSELF A MAKER WITH "ENORMOUS CURIOSITY ABOUT HOW AND WHY THINGS WORKED, A COMPULSION FOR PRODUCING WITH HIS OWN HANDS, ARTICLES FOR USE, PROFIT OR MERE AMUSEMENT" AND WAS ARGUABLY QUITE CREATIVE.<sup>32</sup> HE TOOK UP DIVERSE INTERESTS WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM. HE WAS A TALENTED PHOTOGRAPHER, AS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIES OF BUDDING AND FLOWERING EUCALYPTS IN HIS BOOK *AN ANTHOGRAPHY OF THE EUCALYPTS*, PUBLISHED IN 1920, WHICH WAS PRAISED IN THE AGE AS "A TRIUMPH OF THE

PHOTOGRAPHIC AND PUBLISHING ARTS".<sup>33</sup> HE WAS AN ENGAGING STORYTELLER, AS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS DESCRIPTIVE WRITING IN *FLINDERS LANE: RECOLLECTIONS OF ALFRED FELTON*, NOTABLY HIS DESCRIPTION OF GLASSBLOWING AT MELBOURNE GLASS BOTTLE WORKS AS GRACEFUL AND LIKENING IT TO FRUIT.<sup>34</sup> AND A FINE WOODWORKER, AS EVIDENCED BY THE OBJECTS OF HIS MAKING IN THE MIEGUNYAH COLLECTION. THE WORKSHOP, IN HIS WORDS, WAS A "THREAD THROUGH THE WHOLE CONTINUOUS WARP OF MY LIFE" AND "THE FOUNDATION OF



Russell Grimwade, *Russell Grimwade self-portrait*, 4 April 1934, black and white print, 12 x 8 cm, Sir Wilfrid Grimwade Collection  
UMA 2002.0003.0068

# FLINDERS LANE

*Recollections of Alfred Felton*

By  
RUSSELL GRIMWADE

*Wood Engravings*  
by  
*Helen Ogilvie*



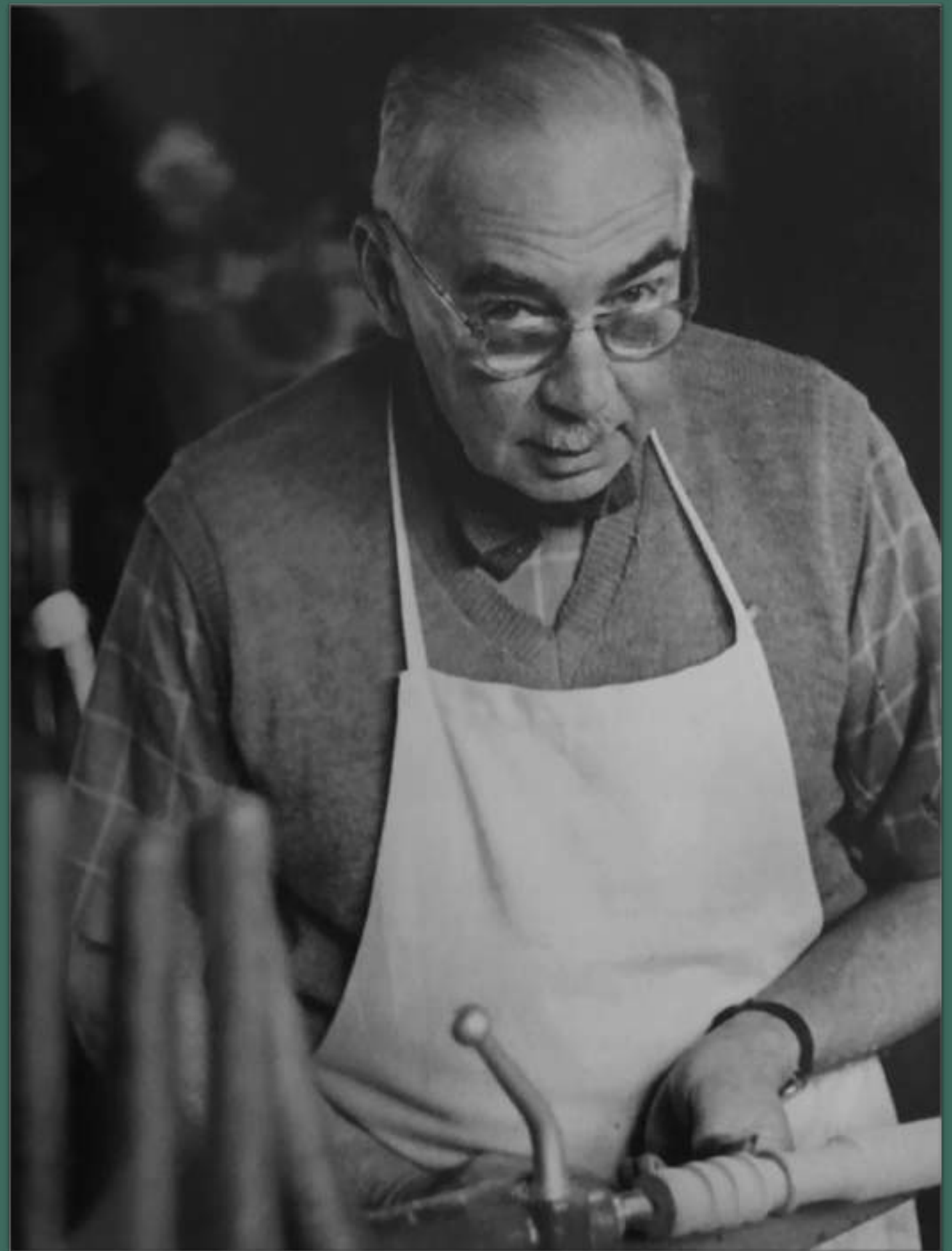
MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Russell Grimwade, *Flinders Lane: Recollections of Alfred Felton*, Melbourne University Press, 1947, title page art by Helen Ogilvie.

A STRUCTURE THAT [GAVE] ME THE GREATEST PLEASURE IN MY LIFE", PROVIDING HIM WITH "YEARS OF HAPPY IF PURPOSELESS EXPERIMENT".<sup>35</sup> "PURPOSELESS" AND "AMUSEMENT" PERHAPS CAPTURE THE ADVANTAGE OF LEISURE TIME THAT WEALTH AFFORDED RUSSELL. WHILE POYNTER REFERS TO RUSSELL AS A HOBBY CABINET MAKER WHO BECAME A "MASTER", WHICH IS EVIDENTLY TRUE, IT WAS PERHAPS A LEVEL OF SKILL ONLY POSSIBLE FOR A HOBBYIST WITH THE PRIVILEGE OF LEISURE TIME AND THE FREEDOM TO "ORDER HIS LIFE MUCH AS HE WISHED" AND ADOPT A PLEASANT MODE OF LIVING.<sup>36</sup> HE ALSO FELT "PITY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT THE KEY TO...PLEASURES" PROVIDED BY THE WORKSHOP,

DEMONSTRATING A LACK OF AWARENESS FOR HOW THE MAJORITY LIVED.<sup>37</sup>

REGARDLESS, HE VALUED ART AND ARTISANAL WORK, APPRECIATING ITS TECHNICAL SKILL AND MATERIALITY. HE ALSO VALUED ART AND ARTEFACTS WITH HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO AUSTRALIA'S INFANCY AS A BRITISH COLONY, WHICH DISPLAYED THE ACHIEVEMENTS MADE BY COLONIAL SETTLERS VIA APPLIED SCIENCE AND INGENUITY, BELIEVING THEY GREATLY BENEFITED AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF AUSTRALIANS.<sup>38</sup> HOWEVER, DESPITE THIS AND HIS CONNECTEDNESS TO "MAKING", HE SEEMS TO HAVE HAD A LOWLY AND DISDAINFUL OPINION OF THE SKILLED MAKER,



*Russell at the lathe, Melbourne University Property, Sir Wilfrid Grimwade Collection.*

**“THE WORKSHOP, RUNS AS A GOLDEN THREAD THROUGH THE WHOLE CONTINUOUS WARP OF MY LIFE.”...“NOT ONLY DID IT GIVE ME YEARS OF HAPPY, IF PURPOSELESS EXPERIMENT, BUT IT SET MY FEET MORE FIRMLY THAN EVER ON THE ROAD OF “MAKING IT YOURSELF”, WHICH PATH I HAVE FOLLOWED FOR SO LONG THAT I COULD NEVER LEAVE IT NOW.”**

Grimwade, “Workshop,” in (The Unpublished) Autobiography Russell Grimwade 2.

WITH HIM NEVER APPEARING TO  
RECOGNISE OF THE SKILL OF HIS OWN  
"LABOURER-MAKERS" AS "ARTISANAL-  
MAKER/ARTIST".



“MANY AUTHORS ACCLAIM THE TRANSCENDENTAL VIRTUES OF WOOD OVER ALL OTHER MEDIA AS A MEANS OF SELF-EXPRESSION. I UPHOLD AND ENDORSE THEM ALL. THEY SPEAK OF IT AS GIVING BIRTH TO THE **ARISTOCRATS OF CRAFTSMEN** – THEY EXTOL ITS VARIETY, ITS SCENTS, ITS INWARD AND INHERENT BEAUTIES.” “I COUNT MYSELF AS VERY FORTUNATE AS HAVING LIVED IN THIS LAND DURING THE PERIOD OF THE SKILLED INVESTIGATIONS OF THE QUALITIES OF OUR NATIVE TIMBERS AND BY THEIR PROPER TREATMENT SEEING THEM PASS FROM THE MATERIAL OF THE **CRUDEST CARPENTER** TO THE TREASURED MEDIUM OF THE **MOST EXPERT CABINET-MAKER**” . Grimwade, “Workshop,” in (The Unpublished) *Autobiography Russell Grimwade* 6.

# THE PRACTICAL AND PRUDENT COLLECTOR

THE DECORATIVE OBJECTS AT MIEGUNYAH APPEAR TO REFLECT RUSSELL'S INTERESTS AND TASTES. INCLUDED IN THE COLLECTION ARE TIMBER FURNITURE AND OBJECTS MADE BY RUSSELL IN HIS WORKSHOP, BOOKS, AUSTRALIANA ABOUT THE COLONIAL HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA, AND A LARGE AND DIVERSE COLLECTION OF EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY DECORATIVE GLASS OBJECTS THAT SIGNIFICANTLY MAKE UP JUST OVER TEN PER CENT TO THE MIEGUNYAH COLLECTION.<sup>39</sup> IN NO WAY OSTENTATIOUS, THEY INDICATE A PRUDENT BUYER INFLUENCED BY CRAFTSMANSHIP,

TECHNICAL SKILL, PRACTICALITY, THE HISTORICAL AND PERSONAL TASTES.<sup>40</sup> THE FURNISHINGS INCLUDED OBJECTS PURCHASED DURING EXTENDED TRIPS TO EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA, INDIA, AND EGYPT, WHERE ART, CULTURE AND ANTIQUITIES WERE OBSERVED.<sup>41</sup> IN 1927, MAB AND RUSSELL SPENT A WEEK IN VENICE, WHERE RUSSELL TOOK A PROFESSIONAL INTEREST IN A GLASS FACTORY WHICH MAY ACCOUNT FOR THE MERINO GLASS IN THE COLLECTION.<sup>42</sup>

THE GLASS OBJECTS WHICH NUMBER SEVENTY-THREE, OR JUST OVER TEN PER.



Russell Grimwade, *Miegunyah interiors*, black and white print, Sir Andrew Grimwade Papers, Box 35, UMA.



Russell Grimwade, *Miegunyah interiors*, black and white print, Sir Andrew Grimwade Papers, Box 35, UMA.



Russell Grimwade's Glass collection, c. 1978, source unknown



Russell Grimwade, *Mabel Grimwade in a gondola in Venice*, 1 October 1927, black and white print, 7.2 x 9.8 cm, Sir Wilfrid Grimwade Collection UMA 2002.0003.0163

CENT OF THE COLLECTION HOLDINGS IS  
SIGNIFICANT TO THE MIEGUNYAH  
COLLECTION, REFLECTING RUSSELL'S LIFE  
AND THE WEALTH THAT SUPPORTED HIM.

## A MATTER OF CLASS

RUSSELL WAS A FORESIGHTFUL COLLECTOR THAT RECOGNISED THAT AUSTRALIAN ART WOULD PROVE HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT TO THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE. HE VALUED ART, SPECIFICALLY HANDMADE OBJECTS THAT DEMONSTRATED CRAFTSMANSHIP. THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GLASS MANUFACTURER IN AUSTRALIA NOT ONLY CONTRIBUTED TO RUSSELL AND AUSTRALIA'S ECONOMIC SUCCESS, BUT ITS PRODUCTS REPRESENTED A CROSSOVER OF ELEMENTS VALUED BY RUSSELL, THE SCIENTIFIC, LOCAL INNOVATION AND THE ARTISTIC.

CONSIDERING THIS, HIS LACK OF RECOGNITION OF THE SKILL AND HARD WORK OF THE GLASSBLOWER IS INTERESTING AND SEEMS TO STEM FROM A CLASSISM THAT IS SUPPORTED WITHIN THE MUSEUM SPACE.



## EXHIBITION PRESENTATION

TO ARTICULATE MY OBJECTIVES VISUALLY AT THE GRANGER MUSEUM, I HAVE POSITIONED THREE GLASS DECORATIVE OBJECTS FROM THE MIEGUNYAH COLLECTION ON HAND-MADE, PLINTH-LIKE STRUCTURES MADE FROM RECYCLED NATIVE AUSTRALIAN TIMBER.

IN DOING SO, I HAVE SOUGHT TO REPLICATE TRADITIONAL GALLERY PRESENTATIONS WHILE REFERENCING RUSSELLS INTEREST IN NATIVE AUSTRALIAN TIMBERS AND WOODWORKING, ALBEIT IN THE FASHION OF THE “CRUDEST OF CARPENTERS”.

I HAVE PLACED THE GLASS OBJECTS BEHIND AN ACRYLIC SHEET WITH AN IMAGE

FROM A WOOD ENGRAVING BY HELEN OGILVIE DEPICTING A LABOURER, REPRESENTATIVE OF A GLASS MANUFACTURER WORKER SHOVELING COAL INTO A FURNACE.

THE ACRYLIC SHEET IS INTENDED TO ACT AS A BARRIER PLACING THE MUSEUM PATRON IN A POSITION WHERE THEY LOOK THROUGH THE WORKER TO SEE THE DECORATIVE GLASS OBJECTS, WHICH ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HAND-BLOWN OBJECTS THEY MADE.

VIA THIS PLACEMENT, I HOPE TO IMITATE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE DECORATIVE OBJECT, THE COLLECTOR OF IT, AND THE LABOURER, DEMONSTRATING ITS EXCLUSIONARY EVOLUTION.

## PRESENTATION *CONT...*

**(ATTRIBUTED) ENGLISH**

**BOTTLE [C. 1840-1900]**

**GREEN GLASS**

**43.0 X 29.0 CM**

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ART  
COLLECTION. GIFT OF THE RUSSELL AND  
MAB GRIMWADE BEQUEST, 1973.



## PRESENTATION *CONT...*

**UNKNOWN MAKER**

**PAIR OF GLASS DECANTERS**

**[EARLY 19TH CENTURY] GLASS**

**22.0 X 11.5 CM (BOTTLE 1)**

**22.2 X 11.6 CM (BOTTLE 2)**

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ART  
COLLECTION. GIFT OF THE RUSSELL AND  
MAB GRIMWADE BEQUEST, 1973.



## PRESENTATION CONT...

HELEN OGILVIE

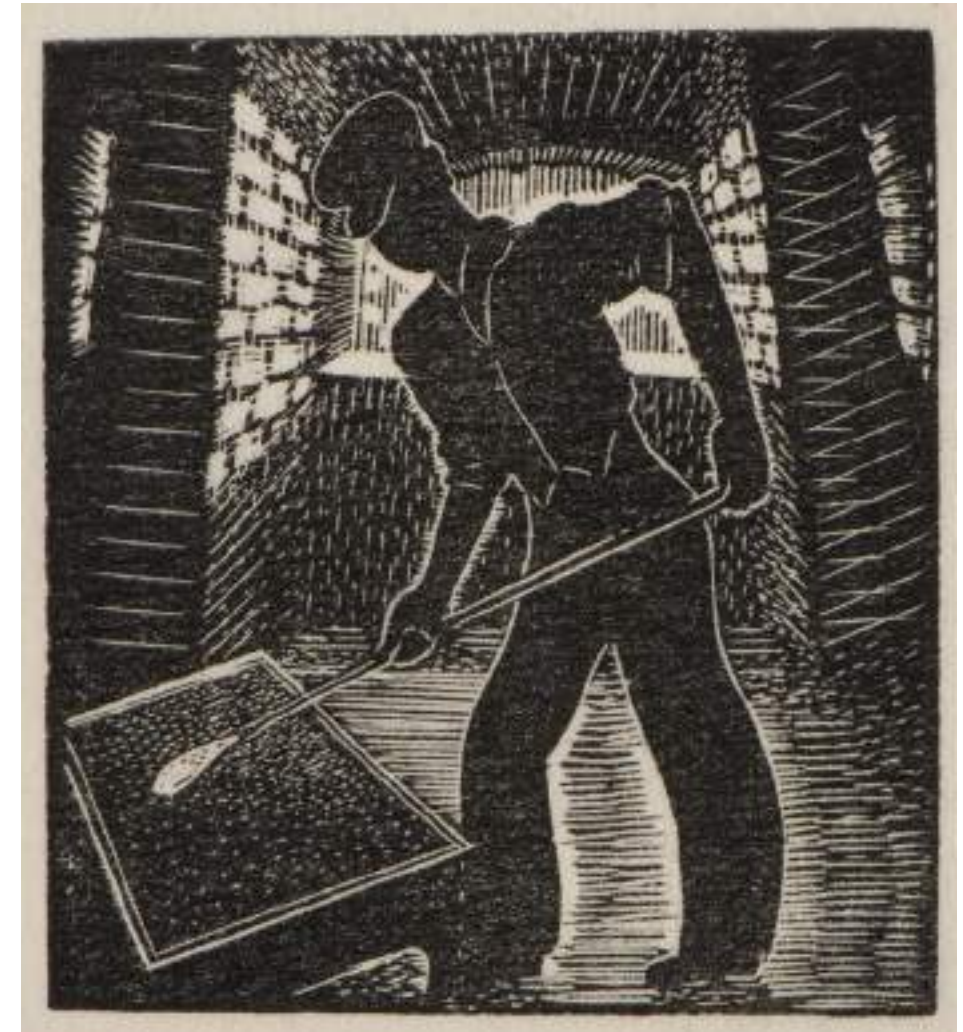
TAILPIECE ILLUSTRATION TO CHAPTER  
FOUR OF *"FLINDERS LANE, RECOLLECTIONS  
OF ALFRED FELTON"* [1947]

WOOD ENGRAVING ON TISSUE PAPER

5.1 X 4.6 CM (IMAGE); 8.0 X 7.2 CM (SHEET)

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ART  
COLLECTION. GIFT OF THE RUSSELL AND  
MAB GRIMWADE BEQUEST, 1973

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33. Poynter, "Marriage, Forests and War," 64.
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